



Arts Leadership RESIDENCY

ARTS LEADERSHIP RESIDENCY 2026-2027 GUIDELINES

Applications close August 31, 2026 at 5:00 PM Pacific.

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ABOUT THE RESIDENCY

Theatre Bay Area's Arts Leadership Residency is designed to give freelance theatre artists the experience, skills, and connections they need to become the artistic directors and managing directors of the future and assist our member theatres in hiring the best and brightest emerging talent.

The program will place three theatre artists in residencies with professional theatres between August 31, 2026 and December 31, 2027, during which they will be mentored by the Artistic Director or Managing Director and be provided at least one opportunity to direct or produce a significant project.

Each theatre company and its prospective resident must apply together. We cannot accept applications from prospective residents or host companies applying alone.

The Company/Resident Relationship

- Residents will be required to spend the equivalent of 12–16 full-time weeks (480–640 hours) in residence with the host theatre, arranged in whatever units of time work best for both parties.
- Artistic Directors and Managing Directors will introduce their respective residents to the myriad tasks that comprise their jobs.
 - This can include programming, budget-making, fundraising, marketing, audience development, talent acquisition and retention, project management, and working with a board of directors.
 - By working closely with leadership, residents will also be introduced to artists and leaders throughout the larger theatre community.
- Each resident will have the opportunity to direct or produce at least one significant creative project during the host theatre's regular season.
 - For the purposes of this residency, staged readings do not count toward a significant creative project.
- Each resident will also work in an administrative capacity at the host company, according to the resident's talent and experience and the host company's needs.
- Each grant provides \$12,000 in funding, paid to the company to cover the cost of hiring the resident for the 480–640-hour residency under current California law, conforming to wage guidelines in the host theatre's city.
 - Funding is disbursed in two payments: October 2026 and April 2027.
- During the granting period, residents will be expected to attend California Theatre Conference: Artistic Intelligence (Monday, October 26) as our guest to be presented to the attendees as Arts Leadership Residents. .

The grant and the administration thereof will be in full compliance with federal non-discrimination law.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Please note: Applicants may submit only ONE application per round. Submitting more than one application will result in all applications being disqualified.

Companies

1. Your company must be a 501c3 registered nonprofit or in a fiscal sponsorship agreement with one.
2. Your company must be located in any of the counties within Theatre Bay Area's Northern California service area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties.
3. Your company must be a current member of Theatre Bay Area as of the application date and maintain TBA membership through December 31, 2027.
4. Your company was not awarded the Arts Leadership Residency in the previous cycle.
5. Your company must confirm that the artist is not currently employed by the company in a similar role and must agree to hire the artist under current California law.
 - a. Your company understands that the grant is intended to cover payroll taxes and other expenses as required by California employment law.
6. Your company is committed to providing mentorship to the resident by the artistic director or managing director of the company and introducing the resident to the tasks and concerns that comprise theatre leadership roles.
7. Your company is committed to providing the resident at least one opportunity to direct or produce a significant project in your regular season between August 31, 2026 and December 31, 2027.

Residents

1. You must be based in any of the counties within Theatre Bay Area's Northern California service area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties.
2. You are 18+ years of age and legally able to work in the United States.

3. You are not enrolled as a full-time student in a college, university, or professional training program.
4. You are not currently serving on TBA's Board or employed as TBA staff.
5. You have not previously been awarded the Arts Leadership Residency.
6. You are available to work the equivalent of 12–16 full-time weeks (480–640 hours) between August 31, 2026 and December 31, 2027.
7. You are not currently employed by the company, and are committed to working for the company during the residency period in administrative areas such as literary management, fundraising and development, audience development, marketing, hiring, and/or other areas which fit the resident's skills and experience and the company's needs.
8. You are committed to directing or producing at least one significant creative project in the company's regular season during the residency between August 31, 2026 and December 31, 2027.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to the following applicants:

Individuals who:

- Have not yet produced or directed at the LORT level.
- Show exceptional promise in arts leadership.
- Bring a new perspective to the host company, its work, its mission, and/or its audience outreach.
- Clearly outline the benefits of the program to themselves and to the host company.
- Clearly outline administrative and leadership skills, experience, and/or potential they bring to the company.
- Clearly articulate their artistic vision, values, and goals.

Companies that:

- Outline the proposed relationship between the company and the artist, including the methods of support offered by the company.
- Have the resources to provide meaningful mentorship and networking opportunities.
- Detail the expected benefits to the company and the artist.

- Clearly articulate the company's artistic vision, values, and goals, and the new perspective the artist will bring to the host company.

How Decisions Are Made

The Arts Leadership Residency is decided by a peer panel of five, made up of former Arts Leadership Residents, former Arts Leadership host company leadership, and Bay Area theatre community members. Panelists are guided by the funding priorities listed above. Panelists read all applications and then make their final decisions at a panel meeting.

If you're interested in applying to serve on a TBA grant panel, [click here to read the guidelines](#) that describe the types of grant panels we're looking to staff and the pay for each (all TBA grant panelists are paid) and [click here to register](#) to be a TBA grant panelist.

TIMELINE

All times are Pacific.

- July 29, 2026: Applications open at 9:00 AM
- August 17, 2026: Application Walkthrough Webinar and Meet and Greet for Prospective Companies and Residents, 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- August 31, 2026: Applications close at 5:00 PM
- Early October 2026: Notification of awardees
- October 26, 2026: TBA Conference
- October 2026: First payment to companies
- April 2027: Second payment to companies

We're unable to accept late applications or extend the application deadline. Please plan on submitting early to allow for troubleshooting any technical issues.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Each theatre company and its prospective resident must apply together. We cannot accept applications from prospective residents or host companies applying alone.

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE by 5:00 PM (Pacific),
August 31, 2026.**

[Click here to apply](#)

Important notes about the application:

- **You cannot edit the form once submitted;** if there is an issue, please contact Melissa Hillman at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org.
- **You do not need to register for an account to apply,** but that also means that you cannot save your progress and return to the application. If you partially complete the application and navigate away, your answers will not be saved. The entire application needs to be completed in one sitting.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Please note: All documents must be submitted as PDFs. Submitting documents in other formats could result in your application being disqualified.

Company:

BASIC INFORMATION: You will be asked to submit basic information such as the company name, the company contact person and their contact information, and the counties in which the company is based and primarily produces theatre (to help determine eligibility).

APPLICATION LETTER: You may submit this as either a written letter or as a video. This letter should address:

- Why do you want to work with this particular theatremaker?

- What administrative work will they be doing for your company?
- How will you support their learning/mentorship?
- What kind of significant project will they be directing or producing for you, and what will be the artistic goals of the project?
- How will this residency benefit your theatre? What fresh perspective does the potential resident bring to your company?

Written Letter: No more than 750 words, 1.15 or 1.5 spaced in a font no smaller than 11 pts. **This must be submitted as a PDF.**

Video: No more than five minutes in length, submitted as a YouTube or Vimeo link. Please note: The video can be unlisted, but not password-protected or set to “private.”

COMPANY HISTORY: If your production history is on your website, you may submit a link. Otherwise, you may upload a document of no more than two pages itemizing key productions, artistic achievements, awards, and/or programs. **If you submit a document, it must be submitted as a PDF.**

MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES STATEMENT: If your mission statement and values statement are available on your website, you may submit a link. Otherwise, you may submit a .pdf. **If you submit a document, it must be submitted as a PDF.**

KEY PERSONNEL: If your company’s staff and board members are listed on your website, you may submit a link. Otherwise, you may submit a PDF with the names and bios of three to five of your company’s key personnel. Be sure to include personnel with whom your resident would be directly working. **If you submit a document, it must be submitted as a PDF.**

Resident:

BASIC INFORMATION: You will be asked to submit your name, contact information, and county of residence (to help determine eligibility).

APPLICATION LETTER: You may submit this as either a written letter or a video. This letter should address:

- What are your career goals?
- Why do you want to work with this particular company?

- What administrative skills do you bring to the relationship?
- What kind of significant project will you be directing or producing?
- How will this residency benefit the theatre? What fresh perspective do you bring to the company?

Written Letter: No more than 750 words, 1.15 or 1.5 spaced in a font no smaller than 11 pts. **This must be submitted as a PDF.**

Video: No more than five minutes in length, submitted as a YouTube or Vimeo link. Please note: The video can be unlisted, but not password-protected or set to “private.”

RESUME: Resume should be no longer than two pages and focus on experience, education, achievements, and awards directly related to the work you will be doing with the company. The resume should be formatted as a theatre resume. Please do not submit your business resume. **This must be submitted as a PDF.**

ARTIST STATEMENT: This can be submitted as a written letter or as a video. The Artist Statement should detail your approach, values, goals, and/or vision as a theatremaker.

Written letter: No more than 750 words, 1.15 or 1.5 spaced in a font no smaller than 11 pts. **If you submit a document, this must be submitted as a PDF.**

Video: No more than five minutes in length, submitted as a YouTube or Vimeo link. Please note: The video can be unlisted, but not password-protected or set to “private.”

Questions? Contact Melissa Hillman, Programs Officer at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org.