



Source Water Protection Collaborative

Call for creative engagement specialist/artist-in-residence

Date issued: Nov. 14, 2022

Application deadline: Dec. 30, 2022

Application link: https://bit.ly/SWPC_CallForArtists

Application review and interviews: Jan. 2023

Project awards: Feb. 2023

Project Overview

The Source Water Protection Collaborative is a Minnesota-based initiative engaging individuals involved in different aspects of protecting sources of drinking water from across Minnesota in state and local agencies, nonprofits, academia, agriculture, and more. The purpose of the Collaborative is to bring together diverse groups and perspectives to advance collective action for protecting drinking water.

This pilot project works on collective action around drinking water by bringing in one or a team of creative engagement specialist(s)/artist(s)-in-residence to work on issues around drinking water protection with relevant agencies and with one or more small communities in greater Minnesota. The individual or team would work to foster deeper community engagement around local water challenges. They would build relationships and trust among stakeholders, including state and local government units and the local community.

There are many ways the specialist/artist could approach this source water protection work. Their approach, be it community conversations on water pollution, engagement with growers who work the land close to community well water sources, community engagement with their water treatment plant, or something else, will depend on the community they chose out of a short list of interested Minnesota communities.

Project Background

Throughout 2021, Source Water Protection Collaborative members discussed various ideas for ways to develop community connections to drinking water. As water is intrinsically linked to geography, one approach the group discussed was a place-based approach. Collaborative members know that greater Minnesota communities

often do not have the same engagement resources when it comes to drinking water yet many have unique circumstances around drinking water sources and delivery mechanisms that can make conversations about drinking water difficult.

Collaborative members have witnessed the success found with using engagement specialists to address the nuance and humanity in communities that can make transformational change possible. While some had not worked with creative engagement specialists/artist(s)-in-residence before, the idea of using one in a focused, community-based project generated great interest and enthusiasm for the work.

Project purpose

- Foster deep community engagement and relationship building around local water challenges.
- Build relationships and trust among stakeholders including state and local government and local community.
- Increase collective engagement in land use impact on drinking water.
- Leverage the collaborative members and community projects to change systemic approaches to drinking water.

Project partners

- Lead: [Source Water Protection Collaborative](#)
 - This collaborative is facilitated by Environmental Initiative and funded by a Minnesota Department of Health grant.
- Support: [Environmental Initiative](#)
 - A nonprofit organization in Minneapolis collaborating across perspectives, power, and systems and implementing on-the-ground projects to improve our air, land, and water for all beings.
- Funders: The Minnesota Department of Health, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Assets for creative engagement specialist/artist(s)-in-residence

- Access to state and local agency water-focused technical and outreach staff.
- Opportunities to attend water-related conferences and events.
- Opportunities to present work at water-related conferences and events.
- Access to a videographer and photographer through Collaborative member organizations.

- Training and capacity building opportunities through Collaborative member organizations.
- Support finding housing within the host community, if needed.

Project Structure

Duration of artist in residence/creative engagement specialist will be approximately 10.5 months. We anticipate this would be a part time project, with the specialist averaging approximately 15-20 hours of work per week. Work will occur in three main phases, outlined below, with Phase Two likely being the most time intensive phase of work:

Phase One: The artist/creative engagement specialist will work with the Source Water Protection Collaborative and related agencies to start a relationship building process. Work with the engagement work group to select a community for engagement work from a pre-determined list of interested rural Minnesota communities. These Minnesota communities include:

- [Chatfield](#)
- [Fairmont](#)
- [Little Falls](#)
- If there is a community from this list you are already interested in working with or a different community that is not on the list, let the work group know this in your application.

Phase Two: From spring-fall, the artist/creative engagement specialist will be embedded in a rural Minnesota community.

- What exactly being embedded in the community looks like is up to the creative engagement specialist/artist.
 - We expect the specialist/artist spend at least half their cumulative time in community. Phase Two will be the most community intensive. We will help to provide housing for that time if needed.
- Artist/ creative engagement specialist will build relationships with community members and learn about local water challenges.
- Artist/creative engagement specialist will develop and produce one or more projects on topics related to water.

Phase Three: In the last phase of work, the creative engagement specialist/artist will have time to provide feedback on what they saw in community, lessons learned, and changes needed.

Additional Information

- Artist/creative engagement specialist will be a part-time contractor for Environmental Initiative.
- Artist/creative engagement specialist retains copyright to produced work.

Phase 1: ~3 months

Relationship building with Collaborative and agencies, identify host site

Phase 2: ~6 months

Relationship building in host community, development and implementation of artistic project(s)

Phase 3: ~3 months

Lesson sharing with Collaborative and agencies

Residency tasks

Phase 1

- Build relationships with members of the Source Water Protection Collaborative and other relevant stakeholders.
- Co-lead process to choose a host community in greater Minnesota from a pre-determined list of communities interested in hosting an artist/creative engagement specialist to focus on issues related to drinking water and water quality.

Phase 2

- Build relationships with community members and relevant stakeholders in host community.
- Spend at least half of their cumulative time of the full project in the host community; this phase will be when most of the in-community time occurs.
 - Participate in community events as relevant to the project.
- Develop one or more projects, implementing after review by the Collaborative.
- Document the project process through visual, written, video, or other forms of documentation to provide context for future artists-in-residence.

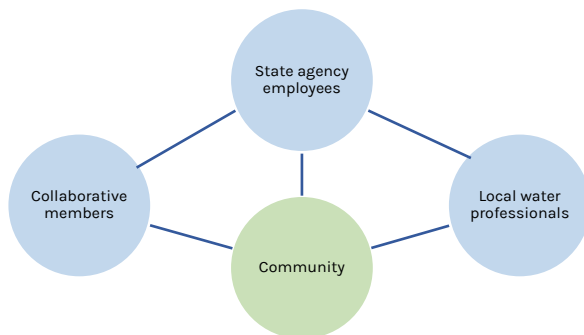
Phase 3

- Present on the experience and lessons learned to the full Source Water Protection Collaborative.
- Develop final project documentation (i.e. case study, summary video, webpage).

Ongoing

- Participate in check-in calls with Environmental Initiative staff every two weeks.
- Engage with and facilitate conversations around project updates and lessons learned at Source Water Protection Collaborative Engagement Pilot work group meetings every other month.
- Track work hours and project expenses, and invoice Environmental Initiative on a quarterly basis.

Diagram of relationship building



Throughout the work period, the creative engagement specialist/artist will be working on topics where there may be differing opinions, low trust, or lack of mutual understanding. The creative engagement specialist/artist should be comfortable working in situations like these. Their work should help to bridge these gaps and create mutual relationship building between the community and local water professionals, Collaborative members, and state agency employees.

Selection criteria

- Artistic merit and professional qualifications demonstrated in a portfolio of past work.
- Ability to communicate effectively and synthesize complex concepts.
- Demonstrated ability to constructively work with rural and historically underserved communities.
- Knowledge and experience in community engagement and place-based work.
- Prior experience working with state or local governments is not required but preferred.
- The reviewing team will rate applicants on how well their work meets the guiding principles of the Source Water Protection Collaborative, in that their work is collaborative, place-based, trust-building, and creates space for mutual exchange, non-dominant perspectives, and behavior change.

Eligibility

- Over 18, able to work in U.S.
- Any level of career.
- Has access to reliable transportation to be able to go to the host community if not already living in the host community.

- Specialist/artist must be able to be deeply embedded and spend half of their cumulative work time in the selected community.
 - Living expenses are eligible project expenses.
- We encourage and support artist collaboration. We seek a lead specialist/artist to serve as the primary contact and liaison with the Collaborative but encourage teamwork and would work with an individual or a team of specialists/artists for this project.

Online application process

1. Identify the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number of the primary contact person for your submission. (Environmental Initiative will use this information to provide an update to you on the status of your proposal.)
2. In 600 words or 2 minutes of audio/video responses, please provide a general overview of your community building approach and an overview of how you engage with equity.
3. In 300 words or 1 minute of audio/video responses, please provide information on your approach to project management/direction/exhibit curation.
4. In 600 words or 2 minutes of audio/video responses, please provide information on two or three relevant past projects including why the prior projects are relevant.
 - You can provide supplemental project information for this question; please keep submissions to 10 photos, 5 minutes of audio materials/videos, write ups below 500 words, or another media that takes fewer than 10 minutes to review.
5. Please provide the name and contact information for three references.

Budget

\$45,000 stipend for artist and an additional \$15,000 of funding for project implementation (this could cover materials, accommodations, rental space, or other).

Timeline

- Applications open through Dec. 30, 2022.
- The selection committee will review applications and interview applicants in Jan. 2023.
- The goal is to have the creative engagement specialist(s)/artist(s)-in-residence start work by mid-Feb. 2023.
- This position is part-time, at an average of 15-20 hours per week, through Dec. 2023.