

BLACKFOOT PATHWAYS: SCULPTURE IN THE WILD

Job Announcement and Description for the Public Outreach and Engagement Director

Cultural Programming Synthetic Essay #2

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Job Announcement – Public Outreach & Engagement Director

Situated amongst the unique industrial, environmental and cultural heritage of the Blackfoot Valley, Lincoln, Montana is home to the Blackfoot Pathways Sculpture Park, a newly created project enabled to celebrate the rich history of the Lincoln community as well as help stimulate creativity and diversify the area's economy. Lincoln is at the helm of the conflict and change that is ravaging rural communities that previously have relied on traditional industry, in this case a long logging heritage. Mining, logging and ranching have been the key economic factors that have sustained the community, but these have subsided over the past 25 years and the community finds itself at a crossroads in both economic and cultural development. National and international sculptors are invited to create significant site-specific works of art using natural and industrial materials native to the landscape and associated with the community and place. Through contemporary art practice, the artists work on site to engage with landscape, exploring its historical, environment, and industrial history. Development of the long-term project will promote Lincoln as an “art destination” providing cultural, educational and economic development (Blackfoot Pathways, 2015).

Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild invites applications for the position of Public Outreach and Engagement Director. This is a full-time, 12-month staff position supervised by and reporting to the Executive Director.

Responsibilities

This is a newly created position that will require its incumbent to develop public outreach and education strategies, direction and programming throughout the year, especially the summer, connecting resident artists with the community and its people. The Public Outreach and Engagement Director is responsible for developing strategic direction for Blackfoot Pathways

public programs and educational activities, managing general communications to and from the public, updating program-related content for the web and social media, recruiting and managing volunteers, assisting with marketing, especially marketing associated with public programs and educational events, planning and implementing program evaluation strategies, researching program development and funding, and performing other duties as required.

Requirements

Candidates must possess strong written, oral communication and interpersonal skills to work with diverse audiences as well as communicate with donors. Must be able to handle multiple, concurrent tasks and responsibilities. Candidates must be knowledgeable of contemporary art trends and practices and strategic approaches related to public art and public programming or education. Experience organizing and managing projects or programs is essential. Grant writing experience preferred. Ideal candidates possess a bachelor's degree (B.A.) in art, public art, art history, arts management, public policy or other related field from a four year college or university and a minimum of four years' experience in administrative staff or professional work, two of which must have been with public programs. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be accepted. Ability to work in a small team environment. Competency with Microsoft Office, Adobe, web and social media.

Applications

Submit a cover letter, resume, and a list of three professional references to Executive Director, Rick Dunkerley (dunkerleyknives@gmail.com). Position will remain open until the staffing need is met. To learn more about Blackfoot Pathways, visit:

<http://www.sculptureinthewild.com/home.html>

Job Description – Public Outreach & Engagement Director

The Public Outreach and Engagement Director is the full-time public programs arm of the Blackfoot Pathways project, connecting artwork and artists to the community of Lincoln, Montana and the surrounding Blackfoot Valley. Arts participation in general has increased in recent decades, but has declined within public schools, providing an opportunity for local arts organizations and projects, such as Blackfoot Pathways, to supplement curriculum in the schools with programs that provide arts-focused learning opportunities and experiences as well as act as a catalyst for creativity and arts support among diverse community members. These programs are more important than ever, sometimes providing the only outlet for arts experience and learning, essential for stimulating youth creativity, cultural understanding, collaboration and creative problem solving.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Director works closely with the Artistic Director/Curator and is supervised by the Executive Director. The individual in this position will develop exceptional educational experiences that support and supplement the artwork and concepts of current resident artists and the project itself, linking the community to the art and artists but also to the larger conversation involving place, heritage and people. They are responsible for all tasks associated with developing, implementing, evaluating (and sustaining) programs as well as all necessary outreach associated with such programs, projects and events. As such, it is vital that this individual be well-versed in program and project planning and management as well as have a passion for the organization's mission, rooted in the unique heritage of the Blackfoot Valley.

While the Public Outreach and Engagement Director is supervised by the Executive Director, he or she is part of an intimate team that works very closely together at every level.

Strong communication and honesty are highly important, as well as the ability to work well both independently and within a team for the continued betterment of the organization and the community. It is important to be self-motivated and resourceful, seeking continued growth and development of the organization's programs and effectiveness. The Public Outreach and Engagement Director will work closely with the Artistic Director/Curator in order to develop programs that complement and support the current artists, their work, and the corresponding themes and concepts.

Functions and Responsibilities

The functions associated with arts programming include needs assessment and community evaluation, program development (utilizing this needs assessment), program implementation to achieve program goals and objectives, program evaluation to determine effectiveness, and program modification to ensure continued growth and development (Carpenter, 2008)

1. Develop strategic direction and plan for Blackfoot Pathways public programs and education, based on community needs and organizational capacity. Using a combination of both community process approaches and investigative approaches, plan and implement complementary and diverse programs that create connections between the artwork and artists with the people and heritage of the Blackfoot Valley, providing opportunities for arts-focused experiences and learning to both youth and adults (Rossman, 2008).

It is important to have an understanding of how to work with a diverse range of people within communities, involving them in planning processes in order to achieve development of programs and projects that are responsive to community needs, identity and interests. This skill requires understanding and competency of the surrounding

community and environment within which the programs are situated. It also requires the Outreach Director to cultivate a network within the community, forging relationships with community leaders and other influential stakeholders. Ideal candidates should have knowledge of ethnographic approaches to data collection in order to conduct situational analyses of audiences (Rossman, 2008). Utilizing information collected from community needs assessment, the Outreach Director will develop program goals and objectives, as well as specific outcomes for evaluative purposes. Especially when creating programming that relates to local heritage, the programmer must be especially aware of representation, working closely with community members who bear these cultural traditions to ensure ethical incorporation of local culture. These preparations will ensure quality, relevancy and structure as well as allow for proper evaluation of program effectiveness.

2. Manage every element of program implementation, including program format, policies and procedures, leadership and staffing, risk management and day-of activities. This will vary for each program, project or event depending on audience, location and objectives. Appropriate format will ensure that the program content is delivered in the most engaging and relevant manner depending on specific circumstances, making it more likely to be of higher quality and to achieve objectives. Taking the steps to prepare for any risks and challenges is essential to program planning and must be considered at every step during the planning process. This ensures participants have a safe and enjoyable experience, that may still be challenging, but in the end is something on which they can positively reflect.
3. Recruit, train, supervise and schedule volunteers for programming and events. Due to restricted financial resources, volunteers are highly valued and appreciated, but this

requires strong management to ensure effectiveness of volunteer work and the sustainability of mutually beneficial relationships between volunteers and the organization.

4. Cultivate program audiences and manage all communications and inquiries regarding public outreach, education and programs. Assist with the maintenance and development of mailing and e-mail lists. Update all program-related content for the web and social media on a regular basis. The first step to cultivating actively engaged program audiences is by developing engaging programs that are responsive to the specific community and constituencies. It is important to consider how to incorporate relevant technologies, expand ways of thinking, explore new roles for more traditional art forms, and find new ways to engage audiences in participatory art experiences (Congdon, 2008).
5. Document program activities for marketing and evaluation purposes. Work with the Artistic Director/Curator and Executive Director on marketing and branding projects as needed and specifically with recruitment and marketing for public programs and educational events. Marketing must align program objectives with audience expectations and understanding as well as the overall organizational brand identity. This message must be consistent throughout all communications. There is a balance in programming between satisfying market/audience needs and achieving organizational mission which must be consistently revisited as programming and communications develop. Marketing plans should be responsive to specific audiences, targeted at constituents of highest interest for a particular program. Effective marketing will distinguish the organization and its unique mission and programs from other organizations and activities competing for the precious time and support of a small rural community. Fortunately, within such a small location,

there is little arts-specific competition, but there are also fewer possible stakeholders and participants, so the organization must infiltrate more of the community in order to be effective and sustainable.

6. Manage program budgets and expenses, ensuring sustainable use of resources.

Budgetary awareness is essential at every step of the programming process as well as in every aspect of the organization, and “organizations must embrace financial analysis tools as part of their programming, for both budgetary and strategic reasons” (Burgess, 2008). Much like evaluation, finances must be in mind at every step of the process.

7. Research development and funding opportunities for public programs and education.

Provide support to the Executive Director for organizational strategic planning and development as necessary. All members of the team will take part in researching and identifying potential sponsors and donors. This research is vital to development of public programs, which may continue to grow as more support is generated. Developing close connections with local businesses is also extremely important to generating fiscal sustainability and responsive programming. It is important to have a thorough understanding of cash and in-kind donations, earned and unearned income, direct and indirect costs in order to create a realistic budget that is responsive to the actualities of the organization and that correlates to the programs goals and objectives. (Burgess, 2008)

8. Plan and implement program evaluation strategies and methods to track program

performance and for continued organizational/programmatic growth and effectiveness.

Effective evaluation that truly contributes to the growth of the organization and its programs requires regular, critical reflection and analysis. It is vital to embed evaluative processes along every step of the programming process, from initial conception to that

actual day of the program or event, making it a part of the planning process entirely. In this way, evaluation serves to help the organization learn about its own effectiveness, make adjustments to achieve greater results, and in the end continue to develop.

Sustainability in evaluation is increasingly “linked with doing ‘what works’—and discontinuing programs that don’t achieve their goals (Mizell, 2005),” and is more focused on results rather than gaining enough funding. Similar to programming, evaluation methods must be engaging and carefully planned according to audience in order to achieve adequate participation.

9. Perform other duties and assist with other special projects as required. Nonprofit organizations, especially small projects such as the Blackfoot Pathways Sculpture Park, require flexible staff who are willing to take on a wide range of responsibilities.

Qualifications

Two or more years of experience in public programming or education is required, and experience organizing and managing projects or programs is essential. There are many aspects of programming that can only be learned through experience. Grant writing experience preferred as it is essential to research and acquire diverse funding streams to ensure sustainability. Ideal candidates possess a bachelor’s degree in art, public art, art history, arts management, public policy or other related field from a four year college or university and a minimum of four years’ experience in administrative staff or professional work, two of which must have been with public programs. Higher level degree preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be accepted. A combination of knowledge in public programming, education, community arts, community cultural development, and contemporary art practice will balance relevant experience to allow for thorough, strategic planning that is responsive to change and grounded in

real practice. Candidates should have an interest in connecting with a rural community and living in the northern Rocky Mountains, where the harsh environment produces uniquely genuine people.

Compensation

Salary commensurate with candidate's qualifications, but will be a minimum of \$30,000.

Benefits package available.

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