



# NEA•TCG

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### for Theatre Designers

WITH MAJOR SUPPORT FROM THE  
FORD FOUNDATION

A program to nurture and support exceptional early-career theatre designers tailored to fit the goals of the artist. The recipient receives \$25,000 plus \$2,000 for ongoing life needs and \$1,500 for supplemental travel.

**2009–2011**

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program offers six exceptionally talented, early-career theatre designers the opportunity to spend six months over a two-year period developing their design skills, expanding their artistic boundaries and increasing their knowledge of the field. Each experience is hand-tailored, matching recipients' goals to appropriate and challenging assignments.

**A successful program will include a majority of the following:**

Travel and research;

Advanced study such as design workshops and master classes;

Cross-disciplinary forays such as language study or work with a dramaturg or director;

Observing companies and/or artists of distinction in their rehearsal or planning process;

Prolonged residencies, often working as an assistant;

Developing a new piece with a designated mentor in the final months of the program.

Under the program, recipient designers will receive \$25,000, which represents six stipend payments of \$3,900 and a final payment of \$1,600. These stipends cannot be used to underwrite fees for design jobs, unless those assignments are related to the goals the recipient articulates in their application and interview.

**In addition, each recipient will receive:**

Up to \$2,000 to support ongoing life needs such as health insurance, child care or elder care and up to \$1,500 in supplementary travel.

Applicants of diverse backgrounds representing the full spectrum of theatrical activity, including those who have worked in non-traditional venues, are encouraged to apply to this program. No applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin.

There is a large time commitment expected of each recipient selected. Recipients will be required to complete six months of activity within a two-year period, beginning October 1, 2009, and ending September 30, 2011, and will be asked to treat all activities within the program as professional engagements. It is assumed that the selected recipients will arrange their schedules in order to accommodate the Career Development Program.

TCG understands that advance scheduling of large blocks of time can prove extremely challenging for freelance designers, so the program activity need not be consecutive and the TCG staff will work with each recipient to match placements and develop a timeline for completing the program. However, potential recipients should be prepared and able to relocate during the program period, if necessary. And while they may accept work outside the program, **they may not maintain salaried positions while completing program activities.**

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## ELIGIBILITY

- Must have submitted online registration and mailed completed application packet by the postmark deadline. (Midnight, January 23, 2009)
- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States at the time of the application postmark deadline;
- Must have designed three fully staged professional productions;
  - Productions are considered professional if all artists are compensated at least a minimal amount for their work.
  - Productions at educational institutions or community theatres do not meet this requirement.
  - It is not necessary for the production to have operated on a union contract.
- Must **not** be enrolled in, or on leave from, a university or conservatory training program at the commencement of the program period (October 1, 2009);
- Must **not** work exclusively in other disciplines (e.g. opera, dance);
- Previous recipients of this program, the National Endowment for the Arts Designer Fellowship or the NEA/TCG Designer Fellowship are **not** eligible to apply.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

## **JANUARY 23, 2009 - Postmark and Registration Deadline**

**STEP 1.** All eligible applicants must complete an online registration by the postmark deadline. You may access this form on the designers program guidelines page, located on the TCG website.

Applicants should remember to print out a copy of the confirmation e-mail for their files.

**STEP 2.** All applications and portfolios must be submitted by the postmark deadline to: **NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Theatre Designers, 520 Eighth Avenue, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4156.** Faxed or e-mailed applications and materials will not be accepted. Use the checklist on page five of the guidelines to ensure that all requested materials have been included.

All application materials must be complete, using a font no smaller than 11 point Times New Roman and should be submitted single-sided and unstapled. No handwritten applications or materials will be accepted. All materials must adhere to the space or page restrictions specified and any additional pages will not be forwarded to the panel.

### **COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKAGES WILL INCLUDE:**

#### **SIGNED APPLICATION FORM, plus one copy**

The application form may not be re-formatted and applicants must use the space provided for each question.

#### **APPLICANT'S RESUME, plus one copy**

Two copies of the applicant's resume should be submitted and must be no more than two single-sided pages in length.

Within the resume, professional productions (see definition in the ELIGIBILITY section of the guidelines) must be marked with a "P"; student or academic productions must be marked with an "S"; and any production in which the applicant worked in the capacity of an assistant must be marked with an "A." The P, S, and A notations may be handwritten on a typed resume.

#### **PROOF OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP/RESIDENCY**

Any of the following documents would satisfy the proof of citizenship requirement:

- Birth Certificate
- Voter Registration Card
- Passport
- Green Card

Please send copies of your proof and no originals.

And note that a driver's license or social security card is **not** an acceptable form of proof.

#### **PORTFOLIO MATERIALS**

Applicants must provide materials from at least TWO, but no more than FOUR, projects that best represent their work. Material may be from a project that has not been produced but one of the submitted projects must include materials from the production described in Question #3 of the application form. Candidates applying in more than one design discipline should submit all of the required artwork for each discipline, still adhering to no more than FOUR projects.

**Acceptable material includes:** slides, 8.5x11" photographs (preferred), plot or technical drawings, swatches, models, renderings, cue sheets, image boards, collages, CDs, DVDs, NTSC videocassette and electronic portfolios. Photographs of applicant's visual artwork as example of their artistry such as installations, sculptures and/or paintings are also acceptable.

#### **Materials by discipline:**

**Costume Designer:** sketches, swatches, and photographs or slides of completed costumes.

**Lighting Designer:** concepts, light plots, hook-ups, and photographs or slides of completed lighting designs.

**Scenic Designer:** technical drawings (indicate if drawn by applicant or other), renderings, and photographs, slides or models of completed sets.

**Sound Designer:** system design, technical drawings (indicate if drawn by applicant or other), cue sheets (with cues in progression; for multi-channel productions note spatial placement of cues), score, and CD's. Contextualize all sound samples by providing visual or written materials.

Portfolios will be reviewed by the panel both on an individual basis and as a group, so material should maintain the flexibility to be shown via "passing around the table" or as a display. Applicants should organize material exactly as they want it to be reviewed by the panel. Each item should be labeled with the applicant's name, separated by project and affixed to a binder or portfolio whenever possible.

Portfolios that have included exact postage and return packaging will be returned to the applicant when the selection process has ended. TCG does not guarantee return of materials without proper return shipping materials and postage payment.

## SELECTION PROCESS

The recipients will be chosen through a competitive application and interview process, by a national, independent and aesthetically diverse selection panel comprised of professional costume, lighting, scenic and sound designers; an artistic director; and a lay person, jointly appointed by TCG and the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### **THE PROCESS TAKES PLACE IN TWO STAGES:**

**ROUND 1** - Based on the application and portfolio materials, finalists are selected for interview and will be notified the week of March 30, 2009. Upon notification, finalists will be required to submit three letters of recommendation. (Please note that no letters of recommendation will be accepted prior to notification.) Finalists will also be given the opportunity to change or add to their submitted portfolio for the second round of the process.

**ROUND 2** - Finalist interviews will be at the TCG offices in New York City where they will be interviewed by members of the selection panel, who will also review applicant portfolios and make recipient selection. Round-trip transportation and hotel accommodations will be provided to finalists who live outside of the New York City area.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

- Talent, creativity and innovation;
- Potential for future excellence as a theatre designer;
- Skills and professional experience;
- Degree to which the program can contribute to the applicant's artistic and career growth;
- Capacity to carry out the program, including receptivity to new ideas;
- Commitment to a career in the not-for-profit professional theatre.

## TIMELINE

Application Postmark and Online Registration Deadline  
**JANUARY 23, 2009**

Finalist Notification  
**WEEK OF MARCH 30, 2009**

(Finalists Only) Letters of Recommendation Deadline  
**APRIL 24, 2009**

Finalist Interviews in New York City  
**JULY 9 - 10, 2009**

Recipient Notification  
**WEEK OF JULY 20, 2009**

Recipient Orientation  
**AUGUST 2009**

Activity Start Date  
**OCTOBER 1, 2009**

TCG National Conference - Location TBA  
**JUNE 2011**

Activity End Date  
**SEPTEMBER 30, 2011**

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## STRAIGHT TALK

So often it's hard to convey the true intent in grant guidelines. Applicants often try to read between the lines and draw conclusions that could be to the detriment of their application. As a response, we have added this section of "straight talk" as a way to demystify the application process.

Over the years, the term "early-career" has broadened. A wider range of individual experience in the application pool has produced recipients who, for example, are artistic leaders of theatre companies or individuals who are embarking on a second career as a designer. If you have only recently completed your training, or just meet the minimum requirements, you will need to especially emphasize why this is the right time for you to apply for the program.

As you prepare to write your application, we suggest you consider your entire body of work as an artist. The panel is searching for a well-rounded representation of you, not just a report on the next steps you feel are needed in your design career. How is your art in your life? How is your life in your art?

For your portfolio, it is strongly suggested that submitted materials thoroughly document the creative process from inspiration through completion. If research materials are included, they should be juxtaposed with the completed design to show how the process informs product. The selection panel expects each portfolio to clearly convey the applicant's artistic vision.

Flexibility must be your mantra. Although the panel will want you to be as specific as possible about your program goals and the types of artists who interest you, we suggest that you not be overly attached to specific workshops, productions, festivals, etc., as nearly all are subject to change and may not be possible within the program period.

An ideal candidate for this program is aware of and can articulate their aesthetic sensibilities. At the same time, s/he is willing to explore forms that might be wholly new to them.

## HISTORY

Since 1987, the National Endowment for the Arts and Theatre Communications Group have provided financial support and creative opportunities to exceptional early-career stage directors who seek a career in America's not-for-profit professional theatres.



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation  
deserves great art.

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established, bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)

## FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than half a century it has been a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide, guided by its goals of strengthening democratic values, reducing poverty and injustice, promoting international cooperation and advancing human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Russia.

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Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, offers a wide array of services in line with its mission: to strengthen, nurture, and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Through its artistic, management, and international programs, advocacy activities, and publications, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field, and promote a larger public understanding of and appreciation for the theatre field. TCG has nearly 500 member theatres nationwide.