

OPEN CALL: UFS Arts Residency—Reverberations

The Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program (UFS Arts) is currently accepting applications for the 2024 cohort of its Virtual Arts Residency Program. We accept applications from artists in any form of expression related to sound, including music, recorded sound, written and spoken word, or other forms with a connection to sound.

Theme: Reverberations: Nature sound as experience

How do we experience the natural and human world around us? What cues do we use to learn about our world, in the interests of scientific knowledge, and security, joy, and wonder? With a focus on the sounds of our environment, these are the key motivations of the “Reverberations” project. “*Reverberations*”, led by scientists from the USDA Forest Service and partners in the arts, civil society, and state government, is a diverse and ambitious program that connects art, science, practice, and learning.

Participating Cities:

The science/practice teams (“partner team”) the artists would be collaborating with is the [USDA Forest Service Region 9](#) Urban Connections unit, in their selected city. [Urban Connections](#) is based on a simple idea: reaching out to urban communities and building alliances that compliment the Forest Service motto of “Caring for the Land and Serving People.” There are a total of four residency positions for artists located in any of six cities: Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Boston. See the teams in the **Urban Connections Teams** section below.

About UFS Arts Residency Program

The Arts Residency Program is a hybrid virtual, community-centered residency program hosted by the USDA Forest Service in partnership with The Nature of Cities. A collaborative transdisciplinary program where artists are paired with natural and or social scientists, land managers, or practitioners to work together, drawing on knowledge from their discipline respectively to explore urban social-ecological systems. Works of art may result, but the aim of this program is to foster transdisciplinary collaboration, mutual understanding, diverse representation, and enhanced communication, above the production of a final work or project. (See Program Aims for more information.)

Urban Connections Team

The Urban Connections Program was started in 2001 in the Eastern Region of the USDA Forest Service to reach out to urban communities and build alliances that complement the Forest Service’s mission. At the time, it was recognized that while much of the Region’s population lived in urban areas, urban stakeholders had little

awareness of or opportunity to be involved with management of their national forests. The program is unique to the Eastern Region, though other Regions have related programs and ways of interacting with urban populations. The Urban Connections Program stands out within the Forest Service for its focus on working with local organizations, leaders, and community members to develop programming that meets their needs, as well as facilitating connections among partners across different units and branches of the agency.

Currently, the program has a strong focus on working with partners to engage diverse and underserved communities, providing meaningful nature-based educational programming and experiences that connect urban residents to the green space around them and their national forests. The program directly supports the Forest Service mission and values by working to ensure more people understand the importance of sustaining forests and the benefits they provide, and that the benefits, outcomes, and opportunities to participate are made available to all, especially in urban places and with populations that have historically been marginalized or overlooked.

The program currently has Urban Connections City Coordinators in Detroit, Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and St. Louis. We also have ongoing partnerships in Milwaukee and Chicago.

Team Bios

Minneapolis/St. Paul: Dan Dressler is the Urban Connections Coordinator for Minneapolis/St. Paul and joined the team in January 2023. He spent the past 20 years as an interpretive park ranger with the National Park Service. Most of that time was at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Before that, he spent four years working at the National Mall in D.C. He's excited to get back to the Forest Service where he started his federal career. He is committed to public lands and has worked in public lands his entire working life, largely in urban areas. He loves teaching people about the outdoors and helping them have great experiences outside.

St. Louis: Jenniqua Johnson is the Urban Connections Coordinator for St. Louis. St. Louis is the newest Urban Connections city, with Jenniqua being the first coordinator, starting in April 2022. Community engagement and organizing runs deep through her professional experience. She served in the Army straight out of high school before attending college. She has a BS in Business Administration, MA in Human Resources, and recently finished a MA of Professional Studies with an emphasis in Community Leadership and Public Advocacy. She is excited to connect many of the organizations that she has long worked with in the St. Louis metro area to opportunities with the Forest Service.

Chicago/Milwaukee: Sonja Lin is the Urban Connections Program Manager based in the Chicago metro area. She has a professional and educational background in both social and ecological aspects of natural resources management. Prior to starting this

position in 2021, she worked on land management planning in California for 9 years, first as a social scientist, focusing on the social and human aspects of planning, including community engagement, and then as a strategic planner. She believes that public lands offer our society something very special and aims to work across boundaries to connect more people with their public lands and nature in general.

Detroit: Lisa Perez is the Urban Connections Coordinator for Detroit. She has always been passionate about enjoying nature and is thrilled with the opportunity to share this passion with others. She earned a Master of Arts in Public Affairs, with a concentration in Natural Resource Management from Indiana University, and then served with the US Peace Corps in Panama teaching environmental education. Her first Forest Service job was on the planning team for the 2002 Olympics, then 7 years at the Logan Ranger District. For the last 10 years, she has been in Detroit connecting area residents with America's forests.

Boston: Jessie Scott is the Urban Connections Coordinator for Boston. He's held this position since late-2008. Prior to that he has worked on the Siuslaw, Umpqua, Ouachita, Ocala, Cibola, Kaibab, and Santa Fe National Forests. He has interned as a firefighter and forestry technician, worked as a forester in silviculture and timber, been a recreation planner on a district, and completed several details as a recreation program manager and as a Forest Service University Liaison. He originally joined the Forest Service after receiving a Forest Service-sponsored scholarship to study urban forestry and had the opportunity to participate in several internships as well as SCEP as a graduate student. The mission of the agency has always resonated with him along with the community atmosphere he has experienced within the agency throughout his Forest Service career.

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- Applicants can be established in any discipline
- Proposals must address the theme; we are open to diverse interpretations.
- Applicants must reside in Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, or Boston; or have a strong and active connection to the location upon which they are basing their proposal.

Residence Program Overview:

- 12 months residence, commencing at the end of January.
- Virtual residency, but on-site in-person work is encouraged
- Honorarium of \$3,000 USD + project development support from the UFS Arts team
- Collaborative development support from a science or natural resources management team member group, selected by the artist
- Featured content opportunities on [The Nature of Cities](#) website, if desired

Artist's Contribution:

- Work collaboratively with the selected partner team member throughout the artistic process. Will include meeting with a point person from this team regularly, as needed.
- Check in periodically with the UFS Arts organizers as needed to support your progress.
- Create a piece of virtual content (essay, photo series, blog, etc., as suits the ideas) for The Nature of Cities exploring the ideas embedded in any resulting artistic work that resulted from the collaborative efforts during the residence. This content can be authored in collaboration with Agency Teams.
- Participate in a joint exhibition of work with other resident artists, if desired.
 - Works shown may be from any period in the artist's career that relate to the key ideas explored in the residency. The creation of new work during the residency is welcome but not a requirement.

How to apply:

Submit a complete application to the [UFS ARTS Program Portal](#) by 1 October 2023. Please follow the prompts in the online application form carefully to ensure you select the desired location you are applying for. Applicants will be notified of decisions early December.

Program Aims:

- Build understanding of and engagement with urban social-ecological systems through arts.
- Facilitate trans-disciplinary collaboration between artists, scientists, and land managers.
- Curate events and public programs that explore ideas emerging from these collaborations.

Our Artist Residency program exists in collaboration with (1) a network of Urban Field Stations and other locations supported by the USDA Forest Service and in collaboration with municipal, state, nonprofit, and academic partners across the United States and internationally; and (2) a group of global collaborators with USDA Forest Service International Program. These networks, in partnership with [The Nature of Cities](#) and others, aim to bring new perspectives, unique planning and design ideas, and creative problem solving from the arts and humanities to advance our collective understanding and management of urban social-ecological systems.

Application Checklist:

- ☐ **Letter of interest** – 800 words max.
 - ☐ Include a statement that describes your proposed topic or approach for the duration of the residency.
 - ☐ Tell us what attracts you to a collaborative residency like this, and what guided your selection of the team and/or city you choose

☐ **Examples of previous work**

- ☐ Please label the submission file with last name, date (dd-mm-yy), in a format that suits the artistic work (e.g. up to 5 images, up to 2500 words of text, or a link to up to 5 minutes of audio/video)

☐ **The names and contact information for at least one reference** of people familiar with your work.

☐ **Resume or CV**

Application Review Criteria:

- Demonstrate artistic merit
- Propose an innovative perspective on the theme
- Align with the program's goal, which is to explore new knowledge and perspectives about urban social-ecological systems and natural resources management
- Reveal new possibilities for collaboration between artists, scientists, and land managers
- Have a solid connection to the physical locations of the call
- Support our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. See our [DEI Fact Sheet](#).

Rights and Responsibilities:

- Artists retain all intellectual and moral property rights over any artwork created during the residence.
- Any artwork created by a resident artist (including copyright and intellectual property) are fully retained by the artist (with the exception of the next item).
- Residency artists provide UFS Arts and collaborating partners with an unlimited royalty free license in perpetuity to use artworks and images of art works for any non-commercial purposes related to the program.
- All intellectual property rights of the research and data of the agency teams is held by the teams.
- Co-created work will be credited to all participating team members.

Please email UFSarts@thenatureofcities.com with any questions or comments.

Check out <https://ufsarts.com/> to see the work of past cohorts and learn more about the program.