

**OPEN CALL:** NaturePLACE Arts Residency—Newark, NJ

**Deadline : 28 Feb 2025**

The NaturePLACE: Collaborative Arts Program, formerly the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program, is currently accepting applications for the 2025 cohort of its virtual Arts Residency Program. We accept applications from artists in any form (visual, writing, social practice, music, performance, film, etc.).

**About the NaturePLACE**

NaturePLACE (**P**eople, **L**andscape, **A**rts, **C**reativity, **E**cologies) 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, and practitioners to work together, drawing on knowledge from their discipline respectively to explore 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. (See Program Aims for more information.)

**Theme: Nature Connects Us: Newark & Nature**

- *Why does nature matter to you?*
- *Where do you find nature?*
- *What place in nature feels like home?*
- *How do you care for nature and how does nature care for you?*

We are seeking an artist interested in collaborating and engaging with the Newark, NJ communities around these questions, tied to exploring and understanding people's relationship to and with nature. This call for artists is inspired by the USDA Forest Service's Campaign "[Nature Connects Us](#)," which centers individuals and their unique experiences with national forests and grasslands by exploring a sense of place. We aim to apply these exploratory questions about relationships to urban nature in Newark to further build relationships with communities in a way meaningful to them. See more about the "Nature Connects Us" campaign [here](#).

**Participating City:**

The science/practice teams ("partner team") the artists would be collaborating with the [USDA Forest Service Region 9](#) Urban Connections unit, in Newark, New Jersey. [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."

Antoinette “Tonee” is the Urban Connections Coordinator for Newark, NJ. She has been employed by the USDA for over 24 years. A native of Jacksonville, FL, she credits her interest and love for the environment to her participation in Girl Scouts, where she earned the highest award, the Gold Award. Throughout her career, Tonee has had the opportunity to work on the Ocala, Sumter, Francis Marion, Klamath, Kisatchie, and Mendocino National Forests where she has managed recreation, special uses, lands, fire, partnerships, conservation education, and volunteer programs. Tonee uses creative methods to educate and inform various audiences about the Forest Service and natural resources. She was a USDA Multicultural Scholar where she attended Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and the University of Florida receiving a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Forest Resource Conservation simultaneously. In 2014, Tonee graduated from Walden University with a Master of Science in Project Management.

### **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 Newark, Detroit, Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and St. Louis. We also have ongoing partnerships in Milwaukee and Chicago.

**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 Newark, NJ or have a strong and active connection to the location upon which they are basing their proposal.

**Program Aims:**

- Build understanding of and engagement with 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 social-ecological systems.

**Residence Program Overview:**

- 12 months residence, commencing June 2025.
- Virtual residency, but on-site in-person work is encouraged
- Honorarium of \$3,000 USD + project development support from the NaturePLACE 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. It will include meeting with a point person from this team regularly, as needed.
- Check in periodically with the NaturePLACE 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 mutually agreed.
  - 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 [NaturePLACE Program Portal](#) by **28 February 2025**. 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 in May with the program beginning June 2025.

### **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 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 NaturePLACE 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 [NaturePLACE@thenatureofcities.com](mailto:NaturePLACE@thenatureofcities.com) with any questions or comments.

Check out [our website](#) to see the work of past cohorts and learn more about the program.