Desert Dialogues

APPLICATION PREVIEW

Below are the full application questions for your reference only. All applications must be submitted online using the form provided.

Thank you for your interest in Desert Dialogues, an 18-month hybrid community of practice for rural museum teams in the Intermountain West. This program supports museums and their community partners in building meaningful, place-based learning experiences rooted in local knowledge, environments, and relationships.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All travel expenses covered
  (lodging, meals, transportation to Bend, Oregon)

- $2,500 to support your community program

- Monthly virtual learning sessions and two multi-day in-person workshops

- Access to expertise, resources, and a regional network of practitioners

YOUR TEAM'S CONTRIBUTION

- Staff time for participation (approximately 3-4 hours per month per team member, plus travel time)

- A portion of local costs, which can include in-kind support, for implementing your community program (venue, materials, refreshments, etc.)

- Capacity to track and report staff time and cost share for grant compliance

- Contribution to a shared toolkit of activities, examples, and lessons learned

Application Deadline: MARCH 31, 2026

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

Preparing Your Application

STEP 1

Form a team of 2-3 individuals and confirm their commitment to participating in the program.

Your team must include:

- 1-2 staff members from a museum or informal learning organization (nature center, science center, historic site, cultural center, etc.)
- 1 representative from a community partner, which may include staff from community organizations (culturally specific nonprofit, library, 4-H, after-school program, local/state agency, etc.), Elders, knowledge keepers, or consultants/advisors
- Both the museum/informal learning organization and the community partner must be based in or primarily serve rural communities in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington or Wyoming.

Select one team member from the informal learning organization to serve as the Team Leader. Team Leaders serve as the main point of contact for general questions and coordination, including submitting the application and project materials.

Guidance on community partners:

- _For the From Place to Practice pathway:_ This community partner will help co-create the family workshop series alongside you. This individual or organization may bring a variety of assets to the collaboration, such as: knowledge of local families and community needs; expertise in cultural traditions, local history, or place-based skills; connections to other resources and opportunities in the region; or content expertise in areas like STEAM, storytelling, outdoor education, or traditional practices. They can help ensure the program is rooted in community strengths and responsive to local interests.
- _For the High Desert Project pathway:_ This community partner will serve as an advisor for helping to construct your event series and your approach to these community conversations. This individual or organization should be a "community connector"— someone who has connections with a variety of groups within the community and can provide insights into different perspectives on issues and can connect you to individuals who can share their perspectives during the event series or become participants.

STEP 2

Secure approval from your Executive Sponsors or Community Partners. The museum/informal learning organization must have executive approval from a senior leader.

If your community partner is an organization, secure executive approval from their senior leadership.

If your community partner is an individual (Elder, knowledge keeper, consultant/advisor), confirm their personal commitment to participate.

Executive sponsors may participate as team members. Executive sponsors and community partners ensure team members have time to engage fully and support the team's work beyond the program.

STEP 3

Review the program timeline below to ensure your team can participate fully.

Program Timeline

Monthly Virtual Sessions (June 2026 – November 2027):

- Pathway 1: From Place to Practice: 1st Thursday of each month, 9:00-10:30 am (PST)
- Pathway 2: High Desert Project: 4th Thursday of each month, 9:00-10:30 am (PST) *Meets 3rd Thursday in Nov/Dec each year (due to holidays)*
- 30-60 minutes prep work between sessions

In-Person Gatherings in Bend, Oregon:

- Gathering 1: September 10-11, 2026
- Gathering 2: September 2027 (dates TBD)

Lodging, meals, and travel expenses will be covered.

Community Program

Design and implement a multi-session program in your community.

$2,500 provided from a grant awarded to the High Desert Museum; organizations provide cost share for remaining expenses.

STEP 4

Choose how you'd like to respond to the team and individual narrative questions:

- Written responses (complete within the application)
- Audio recording (upload within the application)
- Scheduled conversation with the Desert Dialogues team (we'll contact you to schedule)

If you selected audio, leave the narrative text boxes blank.

If you selected scheduled conversation, we will contact you to schedule a meeting.

Application Preview

TEAM COMPOSITION

Team Leader Information *(must be from the informal learning organization)*:

- Name: [Text field]
- Title: [Text field]
- Organization: [Text field]
- Email: [Text field]
- Phone: [Text field]

Team Member #2:

- Name: [Text field]
- Title: [Text field]
- Organization: [Text field]
- Email: [Text field]
- Phone: [Text field]

Team Member #3 *(if applicable)*:

- Name: [Text field]
- Title: [Text field]
- Organization: [Text field]
- Email: [Text field]
- Phone: [Text field]

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Complete this section once for each participating partner.

Organization #1 (Museum or Informal Learning Organization)

- Organization name: [Text field]
- Organization type: [drop down]
  - Culturally specific museum
  - Aquarium
  - Art museum
  - Children's museum

- o Community museum
- o General museum
- o Interdisciplinary museum
- o History museum (societies, historic houses, historic sites)
- o Park/Preserve (zoos, gardens, arboretums, nature centers)
- o Planetarium
- o Science/natural history museum
- o Tribal museum
- o Other: [Text field for self-description]
- Mission (250 words max): [Text box]
- How many full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) work at your organization?
  [Dropdown: 0-5 / 6-10 / 11-25 / 26-50 / 51-100 / 100+]
- How many volunteers support your organization?
  [Dropdown: 0 / 1-10 / 11-25 / 26-50 / 51-100 / 100+]
- Location:
  - o Street address: [Text field]
  - o City: [Text field]
  - o State: [Text field]
  - o Zip: [Text field]
- Is your organization in a rural community? (Rural communities are defined as those with low population density, typically outside metropolitan areas)
  - o Yes
  - o No
  - o Unsure

Partner #2 (Community Organization or Individual)

- Check one:
  - o Community partner is an organization
  - o Community partner is an individual (Elder, knowledge keeper, consultant/advisor)
- Name (Organization name or individual's name): [Text field]
- Organization type or role [Text field]
  - o For organizations: culturally specific nonprofit, community-based organization, library, 4-H, after-school program, local/state agency, tribal organization, etc.
  - o For individuals: Elder, knowledge keeper, cultural consultant, community advisor, etc.)
- Mission or role description (250 words max): [Text box]
  - o Organization mission or brief description of the individual's expertise and community role.
- How many full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) work at your organization?
  [Dropdown: 0-5 / 6-10 / 11-25 / 26-50 / 51-100 / 100+ / N/A – Individual partner]

- How many volunteers support your organization?
  [Dropdown: 0 / 1-10 / 11-25 / 26-50 / 51-100 / 100+, / N/A – Individual partner]
- Location:
    - Street address: [Text field]
    - City: [Text field]
    - State: [Dropdown: CA, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY]
    - Zip: [Text field]
- Are you based in or primarily serving a rural community? (Rural communities are defined as those with low population density, typically outside metropolitan areas)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Unsure

EXECUTIVE APPROVAL & PARTNER CONFIRMATION

Organization #1 Executive Sponsor:

- Name: [Text field]
- Title: [Text field]
- Email: [Text field]

Partner #2 Approval: *If your community partner is an organization, complete this section.*

- Name: [Text field]
- Title: [Text field]
- Email: [Text field]

Partner #2 Approval: *If your community partner is an individual (Elder, knowledge keeper, consultant/advisor), complete this section.*

- Name: [Text field] (Should match Partner #2 name above)
- Email: [Text field]

Executive Sponsor & Partner Confirmation (Check all that apply):

- Our Executive Sponsor(s) and community partners are familiar with Desert Dialogues goals, requirements, and benefits
- Our Executive Sponsor(s) approve our participation and the required staff time (3-4 hours/month per person plus travel)
- Our community partner confirms their ability to commit the required time and travel expectations outlined in the application
- Our Executive Sponsor(s) approve the cost share requirement for local program implementation

PROGRAM COMMITMENT

Can all team members commit to the full program schedule outlined above?

- Yes, all team members can attend all virtual sessions and both in-person gatherings
- Yes, with occasional limited conflicts for virtual sessions
- Possibly, pending final travel approval for in-person gatherings
- No (please explain): [Text box]

Can your organizations/community partners commit approximately 9-12 hours/month total across all team members (3-4 hours each for a 3-person team; 6-8 hours for a 2-person team)?

- Yes
- Yes, but slightly less than recommended
- No (please explain): [Text box]

Can your organizations/community partner provide cost share, which can include in-kind support, for local program costs (venue, materials, refreshments, etc.) beyond the $2,500 grant?

- Yes
- Yes, but we'd like more information about estimated amounts
- Uncertain—we'd like to discuss further
- No (please explain): [Text box]

Our organizations/community partner can track and report staff time and cost share contributions for federal grant compliance. (check to confirm)

- Yes
- No

PATHWAY SELECTION

Which pathway(s) are you interested in? (Select one or both. If you select both, indicate your preference and we'll work to place you in your top choice.)

- *Pathway 1: From Place to Practice* - Design multi-day, place-based experiences where families explore STEAM through their own lives and landscapes, including shared meals, field experiences, and hands-on activities.
- *Pathway 2: The High Desert Project* - Design multi-event learning experiences for small, diverse groups focused on local issues, using structured conversation and shared experiences to build understanding across different perspectives.

If you selected both pathways, which is your top choice?

- Pathway 1
- Pathway 2
- No preference

Why are you interested in this pathway (or these pathways)? (250 words max) [Text box]

TEAM NARRATIVE

Answer the following questions collectively as a team (250 words maximum per question or 1.30 minute audio per question):

1. Why are your two groups interested in participating in Desert Dialogues together?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

2. Describe any previous collaborations between your two groups. If you haven't collaborated before, why is this the right time to start

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

3. Please describe the community(ies) you aim to reach. What are assets or strengths of the community or communities?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

4. Share a story about an initiative where one of your organizations centered community voices and experiences (such as exhibits, programs, oral history projects, or community advocacy). If you haven't done this yet, describe an initiative you'd like to undertake if you had the time and resources. How does (or would) this initiative align with your organization's mission and long-term goals?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

5. What experiences, strengths or insights does your team bring that could benefit other participants?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

6. What strengths does each partner (organization or invidual) bring to this partnership? How will you leverage these strengths together?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

7. What values or ideas do you think are important to bring to authentic collaboration?

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES

Each team member should answer these questions individually (150 words maximum per question or 1 minute audio per question):

[Team Member Name] – Individual Narrative

1. How do you balance community needs and individual goals in your work? Provide a specific example, or if this is a growth area for you, explain how you might prioritize community needs and why this is important.

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

2. How do you create space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their authentic selves? Share a personal experience.

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

3. What do you hope to gain from this community of practice? (What do you want to learn? What can you share? What connections do you want to make?)

[Text box]   [Audio upload]

Repeat for Team Member #2 and Team Member #3.

SUBMISSION

By submitting this application, we confirm that:

- All information provided is accurate and complete
- Our Executive Sponsors and Community Partners have reviewed and approved our participation
- We understand the time commitment and cost share requirements
- We are committed to participating fully in the 18-month program
- We agree to contribute to the shared knowledge toolkit

Team Leader Signature: [Electronic signature field]

Date: [Auto-populate]

_____

Questions?

Contact: Christina Cid at 541-382-4754 x233 or email ccid@highdesertmuseum.org.