



The Island Institute is currently seeking community requests for the placement of Island Fellows during the 2008 – 09 program year. The placements will begin in September 2008. Please read through the entire packet before completing the Project Request form.

Program Overview

How does the Island Institute Fellows Program work?

The Island Fellows Program, first launched in 1999, has become one of the most successful programs developed by the Island Institute, serving communities from Casco Bay to Downeast. The Island Institute recruits recent college and masters-level graduates to work for one to two years on community-identified projects in Maine's year-round islands and remote coastal towns.

Island Fellows provide expertise, knowledge, technical skills, and the ever-important extra set of hands to their host communities. In many cases, where each community member often wears several different volunteer "hats", a full-time Fellow devoted exclusively to a community project can complete tasks that would otherwise be difficult within the constraints of volunteer time – and financial resources – that exist that within small municipal or community organizations.

The Island Institute Fellows Program's goals are to provide support for Maine's island and remote coastal communities by:

- **Building capacity by meeting community needs through project-based work.**
Communities request a fellow to assist with a specific need that community members may not have the resources to address. Fellows bring in resources to complete projects, in addition to training community volunteers in relevant skills to ensure that the fellow's work is sustained after his/her service year is completed.
- **Increasing capacity for the local management of historical, cultural, natural, economic and information resources.**
Fellows help to expand and improve upon community initiatives by utilizing and writing grants for technological resource-management tools such as Geographic Information Systems, library and historical society software, or improved databases for information management.
- **Assisting local research, planning, education and technology projects.**
Fellows have served communities by assisting on projects that help improve research methods and databases, and by training volunteers in the use of new technologies. Fellows have assisted communities with planning projects such as the drafting of comprehensive plans and neighborhood plans. Fellows have been placed with schools to implement place-based education projects.
- **Offering enriching professional development opportunities for Island Institute Fellows.**
The Island Institute provides extensive professional development training for fellows through a weeklong orientation and quarterly retreats. Fellows are also encouraged to seek out project-specific training. It is expected that the host communities will also provide mentorship and cultural training for the fellow's experience.

Island Fellow Awards are available to new or recent college or university graduates in the fields of marine science, library science, ecology, education, arts (music, theater, fine arts), historical preservation, community planning and development, GIS, and related fields (or equivalent experience with clearly demonstrated knowledge and skills in the project area). Award recipients are recruited and selected on a competitive basis. Candidates must submit a complete application packet, and have an interview with the Community Development Director. For each placement, the top candidates will attend an on-island interview to meet with project advisors. Ultimately, the community has the final decision about which Fellow is selected.

The Institute provides the Fellow with a stipend and living allowance as well as covering health insurance and approved work-related expenses such as travel and supplies. The Island Institute received a grant from the Training Resource Center's Community Response Corps, which provides Fellows with deferred student loans and an education award of \$4,725 upon their successful completion of 1 year of service (please note that not all Fellow placements receive this benefit).

The Island Institute's Community Development Director oversees the Fellow selection, orientation, placement and evaluation process in collaboration with other Institute staff and partner communities. Fellows are not allowed to have a second job, ensuring that their placement site and projects are their primary focus and that they are available to participate in community initiatives outside the central scope of their project(s)- i.e.: volunteering at the Senior Lunch, coaching an after school hockey club, starting up a book club, etc. This creates an added value for the community, allowing the fellow to serve in the role of mentor, volunteer, and friend.

Will my community project benefit from having a Fellow?

Maine's year-round island organizations and remote coastal community organizations are all encouraged to submit a proposal requesting a Fellows placement. The most important questions for an interested group to consider are: can a Fellow can be of assistance to the community?; and what kind of quality experience can the community provide for a Fellow? Fellows traditionally serve for one to two-year assignments. The Island Institute has worked closely with island community groups to learn about the issues that threaten the viability of survival of the year-round population, and has placed Fellows to address some of these most pressing needs, including: affordable housing, tax revaluation, year-round school funding and consolidation, comprehensive planning and development, technology enhancement and implementation, transportation, education curriculum development focused on place-based education, and natural resource planning. Fellows have been effective in helping communities meet these needs, while creating projects that are sustained by communities once the fellow's term of service is complete.

The following are examples of projects completed by 06 – 07 Fellows:

- Assisted the Peaks Island Land Preserve with a baseline data monitoring project
- Researched and compiled data for the publication, Island Indicators
- Assisted the Chebeague Island Historical Society with exhibits and cataloging
- Obtained Emergency Medical Technician certification to assist the Chebeague Island Volunteer Fire Department with medical emergencies
- Created GIS maps and collected data for Long Island's revaluation project

- Assisted with clean-up efforts after the Patriot's Day storm
- Obtained over \$25,000 in grants for on-island projects
- Assisted the Town of Cranberry Isles with their Harbor Ordinance Plan
- Worked with the North Haven Community School teachers to enhance and implement a place-based education curriculum
- Designed and implemented a music education program for the Frenchboro School
- Assisted with the coordination and expansion of Stonington Opera House's Digital Media Studio
- Led a group of students on a week-long fall field trip with the North Haven Community School
- Assisted with the negotiation of a municipal wireless internet contract for Cranberry Isles
- Organized and hosted a 2-week service trip for 13 teenagers to assist multiple organizations on Swan's Island
- Organized and hosted a community talent show on Frenchboro
- Provided free private music lessons for children on Frenchboro

It is important, when drafting a proposal, to think in terms of what can realistically be accomplished within a 1 – 2 year period, and what projects will extend beyond the Fellow's term of service. Fellowships often include multiple projects, some of which are completed and implemented and some which lay the groundwork for the community to continue the project beyond the Fellow's tenure. Fellowships are most successful, however, when the Fellow experience a sense of accomplishment in at least one of their projects

What does hosting an Island Fellow entail?

The Institute asks that a community or organization interested in hosting a fellow be able to identify a meaningful project that the Fellow could accomplish in the mutually agreed upon placement period. Furthermore, because this is a professional development program for early-career professionals, the host community or organization must be able to provide a committed advisor who will provide the Fellow with regular direction and feedback. Although the Island Institute Fellows Program provides the bulk of financial support for the fellow, the Institute asks that the community provide for some of the Fellow's support. For example, the community may help to underwrite some of the following expenses:

- Work-related travel expenses (printing, copying, etc.)
- Access to necessary office equipment (computer, typewriter, copier, phone, etc.)
- Office space
- Office supplies
- Assistance with housing (if housing is provided for a Fellow- i.e.: a town apartment/house is made available at no cost to the Fellow- the community can use this savings to the Fellow, at a value of \$450/month to offset their cash match toward the Fellow placement
- Insurance: if a school placement can provide health insurance through the school, this can offset the cost of insurance at the value of \$110/month- this is based on the cost of the insurance we provide for Fellows.
- Cash match contribution toward the placement of a Fellow. The Institute asks each community for a cash match to contribute to the success and viability of the goals of the placement. For community organizations (small non-profits without full-time, paid staff), the Institute requests \$3,500. For schools, town offices, and small nonprofit

organizations (budgets under \$250,000), the Institute requests a cash match of \$6,000. For larger nonprofits, and state agencies, which have grant writers and development departments, the Institute requests the equivalent of ½ of the direct costs, or \$16,000.

What qualities are necessary for an advisor?

Because Fellows have most of their day-to-day interactions with the host communities, the Institute asks the community to identify a local Advisor. The Advisor should be directly affiliated with the primary project on which the fellow will be working. Some communities have two Advisors: a Social Advisor who can ensure that the fellow is included and aware of social happenings within the community; and the Project Advisor who provides daily oversight of projects. If the Fellow is splitting his/her time between several community organizations (i.e.: the land trust, the neighborhood association, and the school), one person will need to be the primary Advisor who manages the Fellow's time, and ensures that the Fellow is not spread too thinly among multiple projects. Within each of the collaborating organizations, there should be a primary contact who communicates regularly with the Fellow's primary Advisor. The Advisor should help the Fellow integrate into the host community and should work with the Fellow on a regular basis, making suggestions and providing moral support and guidance where necessary. Advisors are asked to formally evaluate their Fellows at 3 and 6-month intervals, as well as at the completion of their placement year, using a brief evaluation form provided by the Institute. Advisors are also asked to give regular informal feedback and advice to the Island Institute Community Development Director to help evaluate the fellowship experience.

How do you request a Fellow?

If you feel your community could provide a worthwhile experience for an early-career professional while better achieving your own community objectives, please complete the project request form that is included in this packet of information and return it to the Institute by March 14, 2008. The Island Institute's Community Development Director, Chris Wolff, would be happy to meet/talk with any community group(s) interested in the placement of a Fellow to discuss project or placement ideas and submitting a Fellow proposal.

Included in this packet of information are Application Instructions and Guidelines, a Project Request Form, a Letter of Support Form, and the 2007 – 08 Island Fellows First Quarter Accomplishment Report with Fellow bios and quotes. This report will provide applicants with an overview of the Fellows Program along with accomplishments and placement information. This should also provide a broad base of ideas for possible Fellow placements. Please note that fellows are not necessarily bound to only one type of project within their placement year. A Fellow focusing on GIS mapping projects may work with the school to plan hiking trails, and assist a neighborhood-planning group with invasive plant eradication.

Feel free to call Chris Wolff, Community Development Director, to discuss ideas or to set up a meeting. Chris can be reached at 207/594-9209, ext. 102, or by e-mail: cwolff@islandinstitute.org.

The deadline for submitting a project request is Friday, March 14, 2008. However, depending on the availability of Fellowship grants, requests may be submitted throughout the year. The Institute has created this deadline in order to have accurate site information for Fellow recruitment efforts.