Film New Mexico

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New Mexico Film Office Celebrates Second Successful Year of Screenwriting Incubator 'New Voices • New Mexico'

Santa Fe, NM - The New Mexico Film Office (NMFO), in partnership with Stowe Story Labs, is proud to announce the overwhelming success of the second annual New Voices • New Mexico screenwriting incubator program. This program, designed to nurture and cultivate the next generation of New Mexico-based film and television writers, has proven to have an immensely positive impact.

New Voices • New Mexico 2023 fellows, mentors, and staff in Mesilla, New Mexico for the 2023 Writers' Retreat

Launched in 2022, New Voices • New Mexico has offered aspiring screenwriters a unique opportunity to refine their craft under the guidance of top working industry professionals. Throughout the six-month program, participants took part in intensive workshops, received one-on-one mentorship, and gained access to exclusive networking opportunities. They also benefited from the program's residency in New Mexico, which allowed New Mexicans to workshop their screenplays in their home state among diverse landscapes and vibrant cultures, which served as inspiration for their writing.

One of the program's mentors for this year's program in Mesilla, Melody Cooper, also a screenwriter, stated, "I loved mentoring at the New Voices • New Mexico program…the participants came to us with such strong story ideas and positive energy. They were appreciative, eager, determined, and wonderfully talented. I wish them all the very best of luck with the work and cannot wait to see the final products. Most importantly, I appreciate the support New Mexico is giving emerging artists. It's an essential leg-up that is often all we need."

From a pool of more than 100 applicants, ten writers were selected to participate by Stowe Story Labs. Participants were required to be New Mexico residents and submit a story idea along with other basic information and goals. NMFO funded the program via workforce development funds, making it nearly free for anyone selected to participate. The 2023 Writers' Retreat was held at the Hacienda de Mesilla in Mesilla, New Mexico, which partnered with the

Film Office to make the program possible.

Melody Cooper leads a workshop on pitch-decks at 2023 Writers' Retreat

"The program was integral to my growth as a writer, and it also fostered community among our local creatives," New Voices • New Mexico fellow Larkin Bell stated. "I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. It has greatly impacted me and my career trajectory in the best ways."

Amber Dodson, NMFO director, said, "New Voices • New Mexico has not only identified and nurtured talented writers, but it has also demonstrated the immense potential within New Mexico to become a thriving center for film and television script development and screenwriting."

"This program was a game changer," New Voices• New Mexico participant Lava G. Khonsuwon stated. "Stowe Story Labs gave us extensive sessions on writing a great feature, then ended with how to pursue a writing career. I was very close to quitting the film industry, but after the retreat, I feel like I have a much clearer path to write/direct."

Creative Producer Jonathan Duffy mentored in Mesilla as well this past November. "As a working and award-winning feature film producer, I find immersive experiences like the Stowe New Mexico Writers' Retreat to be an essential opportunity for regional talent to be mentored by those who are presently working inside the industry," Duffy said. "Curated experiences like the Stowe New Mexico Writers' Retreat have the potential to bridge the divide between industry and the unique emerging writers and directors in New Mexico that have the ability to be the next breakout storytellers of the future. Participating in this year's lab also reminded me of my own company's potential to travel back to New Mexico for upcoming feature film productions."

"Stowe Story Labs is honored to partner with NMFO on this transformative program," David Rocchio, director of Stowe Story Labs, said. "We are committed to fostering diverse voices and stories and New Voices • New Mexico provides a valuable platform for emerging New Mexican writers to share their unique perspectives with the world. And on a personal note, working with the emerging talents through this program was such a positive force and a joy," he added. "I wish the artists the best of luck with their good works."

"Since the retreat, I've started meeting with local filmmakers who I've worked with in the past to build a team and self produce the feature I developed during the program," New Voices • New Mexico 2023 fellow Ellen Humphreys stated. "I don't know if I would have had the confidence to do that otherwise."

2023 Writers' Retreat Fellows in Peer Group Script Note Session

The success of the second year has solidified New Voices • New Mexico as a vital opportunity for aspiring New Mexico resident screenwriters. The New Mexico Film Office hopes to continue programs such as these for years to come to help foster future generations of creative talent and position New Mexico as a leading hub for storytelling excellence.

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The New Mexico Film Office (NMFO), a division of the Economic Development Department, works to ensure the longevity and progress of New Mexico's film incentive, grow the film, television, and digital media industry, and expand entertainment economic opportunities for New Mexico businesses and residents.

- *Named one of Deadline's Hot Spots.*
- *Three New Mexico cities were selected as "2023 Best Place to Live and Work as a Moviemaker" by MovieMaker Magazine.*

To learn more, visit nmfilm.com.

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A division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department

The Economic Development Department's Mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.

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