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New Mexico Film Office and Stowe Story Labs announce 2nd annual training for emerging New Mexico screenwriters

Santa Fe, NM - The New Mexico Film Office is partnering with Stowe Story Labs to provide the second edition of “New Voices New Mexico,” the training program for emerging New Mexican screenwriters. The program will be administered in three parts over six months by Stowe Story Labs Founder and Director David Rocchio and is designed to support emerging screenwriters in developing foundational skills necessary for writing feature film or television scripts.

The “New Voices New Mexico” inaugural program ran in 2022 and aims to help emerging screenwriters and filmmakers learn skills and approaches to building a new feature film or TV script, starting with the foundation of a story. Participants come out of the program with a completed first draft of a script, the confidence to pitch their project, and the preparation to push their work forward. In addition, “New Voices New Mexico” will be a springboard for participants for future partnerships with the New Mexico Media Academy.

“Helping our above-the-line talent to hone their craft is the next step in creating a vibrant eco-system in this important economic development sector in New Mexico,” Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. “We’re grateful to our studio partners, Netflix and NBCUniversal, for contributing financially to make this training a reality for our screenwriters.”

The 2023 program will begin in June and includes an online narrative lab curriculum focusing on skill development, story structure, and learning elements of pitching a project in various environments and packaging, including elements of creative production, casting, adaptation, and finance and distribution. Other program highlights include direct access to working industry professionals, peer-to-peer script note sessions, roundtables, and networking opportunities to gain skills to navigate the film industry and create a network of talented peers.

“Running the lab online makes the program even more accessible,” Rocchio said. “We find our online programs help forge community, and especially given that the writers’ retreat will be in person, we are confident we will achieve the goals with this model.”

The lab will be followed by a long-form writing program, led by Stowe Co-Founder David Pope, involving twelve three-hour online sessions; blocks of structured

writing time; one-on-one meetings at critical points in the process; and focus on building stories from a character-centered approach focusing on internal conflict as the touchstone for development. Participants will also benefit from networking at shared mealtimes and activities, allowing broader conversations between peers and mentors. Most importantly, the retreat will include time to write and reflect on the scripts.

By the end of the program, writers will have written a first draft and a synopsis of a new narrative feature or television script.

The writing program will take place from July 9 – October 15, with writing time slated on October 23.

November 4 – 7 will conclude the program with a writers’ retreat in Las Cruces (venue TBD).

The program is open to ten emerging screenwriters and filmmakers developing their first or second feature film or TV project. If selected to participate, there are no program fees, and meals and lodging costs will be covered. Participants will only pay a \$10 application fee and travel expenses.

“Our unique collaboration with Stowe Story Labs’ ‘New Voices New Mexico’ has proven to be a highly effective incubator supporting New Mexican screenwriters, providing them the mentorship, tools, and access needed to transform an idea into a script,” Amber Dodson, Director of the New Mexico Film Office said. “‘New Voices New Mexico’ expands upon New Mexico’s blueprint and legacy of phenomenal storytellers and cultivates our growing creative ecosystem.”

“We appreciate the Film Office’s faith in our work and are excited to run the ‘New Voices’ program again in 2023,” Rocchio said. “The entire process in 2022 — from reviewing applications to wrapping the writers’ retreat in November — was energizing and exciting. Watching the screenwriters find their voices and footing was a wonderful experience.”

2022 program participant Enrique Cruz Torres said, “Not only have I learned more about the writing process and how to execute my story, but I’ve also gained the confidence that I deserve to have my stories written. My experience with Stowe Story Labs has genuinely been a pleasure and an experience I will continue for the rest of my career.”

Ten participants will be selected through a competitive application process. Eligible applicants must be current residents of New Mexico or New Mexican students studying out-of-state. Applications will be evaluated and chosen based on a demonstrable ability to write a feature or television script, the capacity to learn and incorporate new skills and approaches into their work, a collaborative nature, and a willingness to develop a strong story idea.

Applications are currently open, and the deadline is Monday, May 1. Interested New Mexicans can [apply here](#).

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ABOUT STOWE STORY LABS

Stowe Story Labs is a Vermont-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2013. Stowe offers development support and skills training for top emerging screenwriters, filmmakers, and creative producers from around the world to help them get their work made and seen, thereby bending the world through story. Programming includes narrative labs, writers’ retreats, remote long form writing programs, ongoing mentoring, community building, and advanced development programs. [Click here to learn more](#).

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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