



Access Statement

We encourage all people who are excited by the promise of the Castanea Fellowship and meet our basic requirements to apply, including people with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or other conditions that may impact access to programming.

We will make all good-faith efforts to accommodate any disability, and ability/disability bear no weight in our application process. Applicants with or without disabilities who are accepted into the fellowship will have multiple opportunities to voluntarily share their access needs.

What is an “Access Need”?

- An access need is any need or accommodation that is required for a participant to be able to participate fully in any given space, activity, programming, etc.
- People with disabilities can have access needs, but people who do not consider themselves to be disabled can, too.
- Examples of access needs:
 - Meeting spaces or housing that can accommodate assistive devices such as wheelchairs - meaning that the wheelchair or other assistive device can comfortably enter, fit, maneuver, and access all the parts of a space, such as bathrooms, kitchen, living area, etc.
 - Translation services (ASL, a non-English language, etc.)
 - Physical and/or programmatic space that allows participants to attend to physical needs, such as stretching, sitting, standing, or lying down to attend to pain or other physical needs
 - Captions on video/virtual programming
 - Accommodating food allergies
 - Accommodating different learning styles, or providing plenty of time and space to attend to various cognitive needs
 - One-on-one support to attend to cognitive or emotional needs
 - A chemical-free, fragrance-free, or low-fragrance/chemical space to accommodate those with chemical injury and/or Multiple Chemical Sensitivities
 - Time to attend to personal, familial, or other needs. e.g. A participant may need time for a critical personal phone call, to pump breastmilk or chestmilk, or to attend to a time-sensitive work matter.

- Meeting outdoors, or wearing masks and ventilating/filtering air indoors to minimize COVID-19 risk
- And more! This is not an exhaustive list.

Castanea Fellowship Programming

It should be noted that a core component of the fellowship program requires travel to multiple locations, including one international location. We know that travel is often complicated for people with disabilities, and moreso in the age of COVID-19 and other viral diseases such as Monkeypox. We, like many organizations, have run the gamut in responses to COVID-19 as the situation has evolved over the past years, including canceling in-person programming, transitioning to virtual programming, and hybridizing/resuming some in-person programming with increased precautions in place. You may find our current COVID-19 protocol on our [FAQ page](#). However, we realize that these precautions do not provide complete protection from COVID-19, and we further recognize that many in our communities, including those who are immunocompromised and/or disabled, are caregivers, or simply want to minimize exposure and risk of contracting COVID-19 and/or other diseases may not be comfortable with the level of risk inherent in traveling.

Our current in-person programming is designed such that remote participation is not possible. We connect with partners on the ground and learn about and support their various projects that often involve land, agriculture, and food. This means we travel via various modes of transportation, sometimes to remote areas without phone reception or internet access, and that a core component of community visits are often “hands-on” in one way or another. This unfortunately means that we are unable to accommodate remote participation in place-based immersions, a core component of the fellowship program.

It should also be noted that, as a small organization, we do not currently have capacity to house Fellows’ family members during in-person gatherings.

Therefore, applicants should be aware that confirming their place in the fellowship, should they be accepted, includes a commitment to attending in-person gatherings as described above as a means of fully participating in the program.

Castanea Fellowship recognizes that this current iteration of our programming is not universally accessible. We remain genuinely open to input and feedback about how to evolve our program to be more accessible, and we hold this statement and these practices and protocols as dynamic. We have an eye toward disability justice as we iterate the fellowship with each cohort cycle and look forward to building an ever-more accessible movement alongside you.