CASTANEA FELLOWSHIP
COMMUNITY. POWER. JUSTICE.

ACCESS STATEMENT

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

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

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.

A few 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.
- Physical and/or programmatic space that allows participants to attend to physical needs, such as stretching, sitting, standing, or lying down
- Captions on video/virtual programming
- Accommodating food allergies
- Accommodating varying learning styles; providing time/space to attend to cognitive 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 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/purifying indoor air to minimize the risk of COVID-19, flu, and other airborne illnesses
- And more! This is not an exhaustive list.

Castanea Fellowship Programming and Travel

It should be noted that a core component of the fellowship program requires travel to multiple locations. We know that travel is often complicated for people with disabilities, and moreso in the age of COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses. We, like many organizations, have run the gamut in responses to COVID-19 over the past years, including canceling in-person programming, transitioning to virtual programming, and hybridizing/resuming in-person programming with increased precautions in place. You may find our current COVID-19 protocol here. We realize that these precautions do not provide complete protection from airborne illnesses, and we further recognize that many in our communities, including those who are immunocompromised, disabled, are caregivers, or simply want to minimize exposure may not be comfortable with this level of risk.

Access and our Current Capacity

During our in-person programming, we connect with partners on the ground and learn about their various projects that involve land, agriculture, and food. We travel via various modes of transportation, sometimes to remote areas without phone reception or internet access, and some components of community visits are often "hands-on". There are always options for participation, accommodating various needs and abilities, but this does mean that we are **unable to accommodate remote participation** in the fellowship program.

Additionally, our structure does not allow us to include Fellows' family members, including children, in our in-person programs. Due to logistical and budgetary constraints, we do not have capacity to house Fellows' family members during in-person gatherings, except in case of caregiver support needs.

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

Castanea Fellowship recognizes that this 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.