

Program Synopsis

The Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the not-for-profit foundation affiliated with the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), offers its Observership Program to give early-career Directors and Choreographers the opportunity to observe the work of master Directors and Choreographers as they create new productions on Broadway, Off-Broadway and at leading regional theatres across the country. SDCF Observers have access to the entire rehearsal process, from first rehearsal through previews to opening night.

Observers are guaranteed the opportunity to observe, first-hand, the techniques, disciplines, approaches and insights of master artists as they create new productions and revive classics. The exact nature of each Observership will vary depending on the needs and desires of the Mentor Director or Choreographer.

Each Observership includes a weekly stipend to help defray the recipient's expenses during the rehearsal period, including a small travel stipend and a housing supplement if appropriate. The Observer receives the first half of the stipend at the start of the Observership and the second half upon SDCF's receipt of the Observer's Final Report. In addition, any Observer who is not already a member of SDC will be awarded a free one-year SDC Associate Membership upon SDCF's receipt of the Final Report.

Applicant Eligibility

Anyone with serious interest in pursuing a career in Directing and/or Choreography may apply for the Observership Program. Previous Observers are eligible to re-apply.

Application Process

The Observership Application can be downloaded at www.SDCweb.org/sdcf. Along with this form, applicants are asked to supply:

- a one-page statement explaining why an Observership would be beneficial
- a one-page resume of their directing and/or choreographic experience
- a signed recommendation from a peer artist or mentor with whom the applicant has worked (waived for 2010-2011 applicants)
- an application fee of \$25 by check or money order (fee waived for SDC Members and Associates).

Please note that completed application materials cannot be submitted online, they must be submitted by mail or by hand delivery.

Application Timeline

Application workshop	April 28, 2011
Application workshop posted online	May 16, 2011
Recommended application deadline*	June 10, 2011
Observerships begin	July 1, 2012
Observership Open House	July 12, 2011
Application deadline – late eligibility*	September 15, 2011
Observership Season completed	no later than June 30, 2012

*Return completed application materials to SDCF by June 10, 2011 to be considered for all opportunities beginning July 1. Those applying after June 10 will only be eligible for Observerships after September 1.

All applicants will be invited to the Observership Open House as well as other SDCF Programs and special SDC events throughout the year regardless of acceptance into the program. Most events are free of charge.

Evaluation Process

Each completed Observership application is evaluated by at least two members of the Observership Review Committee. The Committee will review all applications and select those best suited for Observership opportunities. These accepted applicants will be invited to apply for Observership opportunities throughout the season (until June 2012) across the country.

Applicants whose applications are received by June 10 will be notified of their acceptance status by July 15. Those applying after June 10 will hear within two months of SDCF receiving their applications. In the event of early Observerships, beginning prior to July 15, all applicants who apply by June 10 will be eligible, regardless of evaluation.

Evaluative Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- **COMMITMENT:** Demonstrated commitment to the craft and deep interest in having a future as a director or choreographer
- **MATURITY:** Appropriate maturity level required to be in the rehearsal room, to understand nuanced environments, and respond accordingly
- **ARTICULATION:** Ability to articulate an artistic focus or viewpoint
- **INITIATIVE:** Demonstrated pursuit of experience or education; viable candidates should be honing their craft as much as possible, not waiting for opportunities or programs to enable them to do so.
- **IMPACT OF OPPORTUNITY:** Would this give access (s)he does not presently have?
- **TIMELINESS:** Ability to benefit from this specific experience at this specific time in candidate's career
- **BALANCE:** We are seeking a variety of experience, geography, and artistic pursuits among accepted candidates as Observerships vary in place and level of responsibility.

Placement Process

In 2010 – 2011, 135 of a total 252 applicants were accepted into the Observership Program. There is no fixed number of spots for acceptances; all applicants who are evaluated as ready for this program are accepted, whether that is 100 applicants or 160 applicants.

Following acceptance into the program, candidates will be notified of each Observership opportunity. Interested candidates will submit a two-paragraph statement to SDCF about why they are best suited for that Observership to demonstrate their interest. The Mentor will then interview selected candidates and choose one individual to be the Observer for that project. Candidates not selected may apply for all future Observerships.

It should be noted that we offer 25 Observerships each season. While we have far more candidates than opportunities, many accepted candidates do not apply for any of the 25 opportunities.

We will offer a workshop on submitting for opportunities in late July or early August. A recording of this workshop will be posted online for those who are unable to attend.

Responsibilities

The Observer is expected to attend and participate in all rehearsals, meetings and events as specified by the Mentor. Each Observership begins with the first rehearsal, continues through previews, and concludes upon the show's press opening. *Observer must be available for the entirety of this process – it's hard to be part of the team if you are not in the room.*

SDCF staff will be available to the Observer at all times to address any questions or concerns.

Within two weeks of the completion of the Observership, the Observer will submit a brief Final Report outlining his/her experiences and thoughts on the program as well as the impact on his/her career and/or work. Upon receipt of the final report, the Observer will be sent an application for a free one-year Associate Membership to SDC and the final installment of his/her stipend. NOTE: The free Associate Membership only applies to those not already members of SDC.

Observership opportunities are selected by committee; applicants may not solicit placements on their own.

Submitting an Application

Mail application materials to SDC Foundation ATTN: Observerships at:
1501 Broadway Suite 1701, New York, NY, 10036.

Please make all checks payable to SDC Foundation and in the memo, please write "Observership."

Contact

E-mail Foundation@SDCweb.org or call (212) 391-1070 ext. 244 with any questions.

SDCF's Observership Program is made possible by generous support from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and many individual donors, and public funds from the New York State Council of the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

