



## POSITION PROFILE

### DIRECTORS or CO-DIRECTORS

**Location:** National, candidates can be based anywhere in the U.S. (The fiscal sponsor, [Earth Island](#), is based in the San Francisco Bay Area).

*The national leadership program, [Castanea Fellowship](#), is seeking a new Director, or pair of Co-Directors, passionate about supporting leaders working for transformational change and a world where our food system is a source of health, equity, and wellbeing for all.*

### A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The Castanea Fellowship envisions a world where our food is a source of health, equity, and well-being for all. The Fellowship was founded with the understanding that our food system is a key driver of some of our most entrenched problems, from needless hunger to racial inequality and epidemics of chronic illness; from environmental crises to consolidation of corporate power; from worker exploitation to devastated rural communities. As our country wrestles with these systemic issues and the impact of the pandemic, the climate crisis, and ongoing racial injustice, there is an urgent need for a Fellowship to support movement leaders who are developing the ideas, initiatives, and policies to transform the food system.

Rooted in racial equity and justice, the Castanea Fellowship is committed to creating a collaborative space for leaders to grow and leverage their collective talent and to help diverse leaders drive change. The Fellowship is a two-year program for leaders working for food system transformation across a range of issue areas, including public health, farming, environmental justice, regional economies, food workers' rights, community development, and more.

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The Fellowship offers food movement leaders—particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders—a network of support and collaboration, holistic leadership skills building, and increased prominence, helping expand their collective power and impact in their own communities and nationwide.

The spirit of the Fellowship is one of collaboration, intersectional leadership, and movement building. Since its first cohort launched in 2019, the Fellowship has been connecting with other organizations and emergent fellowships, and we seek a leader who will continue to nurture these relationships and cross-organizational learning. Some of these fellowships and organizations include: HEAL Food Alliance’s School of Political Leadership, Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action’s Kuleana Academy, the Seeding Power Fellowship in the Northeast, the Food Systems Leadership Network, the National Black Food and Justice Alliance, Native Farm Bill Coalition, and the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship of the First Nations Development Institute, among others.

Castanea enjoys a strong reputation, two cohorts of highly accomplished Fellows, clarity around its racial justice framework, and the support of committed funders. The Steering Committee and fiscal sponsor, Earth Island Institute, seek a Director, or Co-Directors, to lead the organization to its next level of impact. Working in concert with the Steering Committee and Fellows in a collaborative process, the Director or Co-Directors will have the opportunity to develop and guide the vision, strategy, and structure of the organization.

## THE ORGANIZATION

The Castanea Fellowship was developed in partnership with leaders across the country and inspired by the twelve-year-long W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Food & Society Fellowship. Over the course of its life, WKKF’s Fellowship served nearly one hundred leaders and sparked numerous groundbreaking organizations, launched careers in food system change, and deepened the networks of change makers working nationwide to transform the food system. When the program ended in 2013, alumni from the fellowship expressed concern about the gap in the field: the lack of a national program serving food change leaders that focused on racial justice and essential leadership skills and relationship building. Several years later, former fellows, funders, and community leaders conducted a landscape mapping and listening tour to hear from leaders and develop the concept for a fellowship program to meet this moment. The Castanea Fellowship was born out of those conversations; its name inspired by *Castanea dentata*, the American Chestnut tree, which embodies the principles of resilience, innovation, and abundance.

Today, as the Castanea Fellowship moves from a Founding Executive Director to bring on new leadership, it is nurtured by a committed Steering Committee, supported by a network of partner organizations, and builds on relationships developed with its first two cohorts of Fellows.

## THE FELLOWSHIP

Castanea Fellows build power to shift culture, structures, and institutions towards the creation of a more equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system for all. Over the course of the two-year fellowship, Castanea Fellows receive time, space, and resources to connect and innovate together. The Fellowship has a commitment to cohorts of diverse participants, including a majority of Black, Indigenous and people of color in each cohort, as well as a commitment to diversity in geographic representation, gender and sexual identity, issue-focus, and strategic intervention. This commitment extends to design of all programming and ensuring that all vendor relationships, consultants, etc., uphold the values and vision of Castanea.

The Fellowship was designed as a program for cohorts of twelve leaders working across the United States to gather over two years in 6 in-person immersions, including one international immersion.

Additional areas of programmatic focus include:

- Skills-building holistic leadership development in key areas (communications, organizing, policy, and finance) and explorations of collective power building;
- Quarterly on-line check-ins or webinars and quarterly 1:1 coaching;
- Alumni relationship building post-fellowship;
- A \$20,000 stipend each year of the two-year Fellowship.

Castanea's [inaugural class](#) of 12 Fellows launched in 2019. Its [second class](#) of twelve Fellows was launched in 2020.

COVID-19 has made the place-based design impossible for much of the first cohort's, and to date all of the second cohort's, experiences. Knowing that the Fellowship has been so profoundly impacted by COVID-19 and that other crises will occur, we seek a leader who can be flexible and emergent, exploring what's possible in this political, economic, and social moment. The new leader will be tasked both with holding space for and transitioning the current community of the first two cohorts of Fellows—and learning from these first several years of operation—while also laying the groundwork for the next cohorts. In addition, in the midst of, and wake of COVID-19, there has also been increasing interest from Fellows and the broader movement community about the desire for space for healing and retreat, so we also seek a leader who can explore the balance between the external and internal needs of the program and its leaders.

The Director (or Co-Directors) reports to a Steering Committee and the fiscal sponsor Earth Island Institute, and is supported by an Operations Manager and several consultants. We acknowledge that one person may not have all of the skills and resources to fulfill the responsibilities of this position and our imaginations are not limited to the idea of a sole Director. If two people are interested in applying as Co-Directors, we welcome this. Please look to the application steps for further instructions. The new leader(s) can be located anywhere in the United States.



## 2020 CASTANEA FELLOWS



**INTRODUCING THE  
2020 CASTANEA FELLOWS**

- Alex Askew**  
*Chef Provocateur*
- Shane Bernardo**  
*Culture Keeper*
- Shantell Bingham**  
*Community Organizer*
- Tavia Benjamin**  
*Systems Healer*
- Kelly Carlisle**  
*Local Activator*
- Anthony Chang**  
*Farmer Champion*
- Helga Garza**  
*Systems Weaver*
- Deepa Iyer**  
*Farmer-Educator*
- Chris Newman**  
*Farmer*
- Jose Oliva**  
*Alliance Builder*
- Esperanza Pallana**  
*Strategic Investor*
- Bren Smith**  
*Ocean Farmer*

## 2019 CASTANEA FELLOWS



**INTRODUCING THE  
2019 CASTANEA FELLOWS**

- Erika Allen**  
*Ecosystem Innovator*
- Shorlette Ammons**  
*Food Equity Educator*
- Leonard Diggs**  
*Farmer*
- Lilian Hill**  
*Land Steward*
- Martin Lemos**  
*Farmer Advocate*
- Geeta Maker-Clark**  
*Activist Physician*
- Emily Moose**  
*Sustainable Farm Promoter*
- Eduardo Rivera**  
*Farmer*
- Maeraj Sheikh**  
*Community Builder*
- Aileen Suzara**  
*Culinary Connector*
- Rowen White**  
*Seed Keeper*
- Mark Winston Griffith**  
*Cooperative Organizer*



## THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director (or Co-Directors) has an exciting mandate to guide Castanea Fellowship. The D/CD will have the strategic acumen to think boldly and broadly about the vision of the Fellowship, the operational skills to execute the program with excellence, and the relationship skills to develop trust and support collaboration with Fellows and stakeholders.

The D/CD will:

**1. Embrace, embody, and advance the mission of Castanea Fellowship**

- Lead and manage with an anti-racist, intersectional approach.
- Be the public face and voice of Castanea and continue to build its national profile.
- Engage others to invest in leaders who envision a world where our food is a source of health, equity, and well-being for all, and are working to bring that vision to life.
- Lead with an understanding of historically rooted racism and the benefits of multi-sector and multi-racial work.

**2. Establish and execute programs responsive to current environment and leadership needs**

- Building upon a strong framework, design and deliver the next iteration of the program, including facilitating an inclusive recruitment and application process, that provides a rich and rewarding experience for current and future Fellows, including for example in-person learning immersions, coaching, facilitation, holding space, and holistic skills building opportunities.
- Engage Fellows and stakeholders to collaborate on future programming of the Fellowship.
- Continue to provide Fellows the time, space, and resources to connect and innovate on long-term solutions that foster vibrant communities and a racially just food system.
- Lead staff and consultants to ensure program planning and execution is managed and delivered in a responsive and timely manner.

**3. Deliver operational excellence and strong fiscal management.**

- Foster strong management processes including setting objectives and priorities, ensuring budgetary oversight and alignment of income and expenditures.
- Interface regularly with our fiscal sponsor Earth Island Institute and in quarterly meetings with the Steering Committee to ensure transparent communication regarding the ongoing fiscal status.
- Assess current staffing and consultant model and adjust and augment as needed.

**4. Raise funds and steward resources.**

- Share the compelling story of the Castanea Fellowship with funders.
- Ensure a tight fundraising process is developed and executed, including building relationships with current and new donors, managing funding proposals for individual donors and foundation partners, and developing updates to funders and the broader community.

## THE CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate(s) will share the Fellowship's vision of a racially just food system. They will apply their skills and experience in adaptive management with proven organizational leadership and a heart for serving, facilitating, and growing the leadership of others.

The candidate(s) will bring:

- Deep understanding of the intersections of race, gender, economic, and ecological justice, and a proven track record of leading with anti-racist values. Note: While Castanea Fellows are focused on food system change, a leader who brings deep experience in an adjacent movement and who is focused on transformational change and addressing systemic racism and inequity could also thrive in this position.
- Experience with community organizing and movement building.
- Low-ego leadership style committed to lifting and centering the work of the Fellows.
- The ability to be an "edgeworker," familiar connecting within and across a wide range of identities, organizational and institutional partners, and paradigms.
- A builder mentality, comfortable with ambiguity, sensing the emergent, willing to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them, and willing and able to shape a vision for the future of the Fellowship.
- Prior organizational leadership of a nonprofit or fellowship.
- Ability to raise and steward resources among institutional donors and individuals.
- Generative, creative leadership style aligned with our values of co-creation and shared leadership.
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate others to effective decisions.
- Experience building and working effectively with teams, partnerships, and coalitions.
- A collaborative style that values and includes diverse people and ideas.
- Ability to build trust, consensus, and forward momentum.
- Excellent interpersonal and public communication skills.

Salary for the Director is \$120,000 with a generous vacation and benefits package, including a three-month sabbatical after each 7 years with the organization. (If you are applying as Co-Directors, this salary would be split across two part-time candidates, both of whom would receive the generous benefits package. Depending on the experience and available hours of the pair of Co-Directors, there is potential flexibility around total compensation).

*The Castanea Fellowship is an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or belief, disability, gender and gender identity or expression, nationality, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, sexual orientation or any other status protected by law. Women, people of color, LGBTQ candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.*

## TO APPLY

Please submit a cover letter, resume or CV, and up to two relevant work samples. If you're applying as Co-Directors, please submit your cover letter together with each of your resumes.

In your letter of interest, in addition to addressing how your background has helped equip you with the skills and experiences for this position, please consider any further reflections you'd like to share on the following questions:

- Please share how a commitment to racial justice has expressed itself in your life's work.
- Please share any experiences you have building community, either in fellowships, organizations, or movements.
- We have a strong commitment to collaborative leadership, what does this mean to you and how have you brought this style of leadership into your work?
- Please describe some of the existing networks or relationships to grassroots organizations, alliances, and/or funders that connect with this work.

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For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect,  
please email [Castanea@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:Castanea@BoardWalkConsulting.com)  
or call Crystal Stephens or Diane Westmore at 404-262-7392.

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