



## City Announces New Arts & Culture Department Director Chelsey Johnson

**SANTA FE, September 5, 2023** – Chelsey Johnson has joined the City of Santa Fe as the new Director of the Arts & Culture Department, a part of the Community Development Department.

Chelsey was previously an associate professor of English at Northern Arizona University, where she also directed the undergraduate and MFA programs in creative writing. She has also worked as an associate professor at the College of William & Mary and as a visiting assistant professor at Oberlin College.

Prior to her academic career, Chelsey held research and editing roles at magazines including "Out," "Spin," and "Opera News." Her community work in arts and public engagement includes Kínlaní Mutual Aid, the Flagstaff Family Food Center, the Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project, Portland's Writers in the Schools program, and the Rock & Roll Camp for Girls, where she served on the board of directors.

"After three rounds of interviews and over twelve candidates, I am excited to bring Chelsey on board the Community Development team as the Director of Arts and Culture. She brings a healthy dose of curiosity, emotional intelligence, academic rigor and a focus on the future and expansion of the arts. Her sensitivity and passion to achieve cultural harmony will be a main undertaking to marry the past, present, and future of our arts and culture for the 21st century," said Rich Brown, Director of Community Development.

Johnson will lead key initiatives in the department, including the Art in Public Places program, naming the new City Historian and Poet Laureate, collaborating with the Arts Commission on the strategic action plan, cultural investment grants and programs, jump-starting Santa Fe's creative industries sector with the Office of Economic Development, installations at the community gallery, 2024 local festival and event sponsorships, and more.

"Art is how we understand and define ourselves as humans and cultures, and Santa Fe is a place of extraordinary artistic talent and diversity. With our revitalized arts and culture team, I'm looking forward to expanding access, opportunity, and resources to build flourishing arts scenes and spaces for all Santa Feans," said Johnson.