

FOR RELEASE: Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 9:00am CDT

## Chicago Dancemakers Forum Announces New Executive Director

[Chicago Dancemakers Forum](#) announces the selection of a new Executive Director, [Joanna Furnans](#).

Furnans, who starts in the position on February 7, 2022, has a strong history with Chicago Dancemakers Forum as a 2018 Lab Artist, *Elevate Chicago Dance* participating artist, 2020 Lab Artists Program Mentor, and partner in the Embedded Writers Program. Leading the search committee were Board Member, Lorna Bates and Board Chair, Angel Ysaguirre, who shares,

"The search process made clear how much Chicago Dancemakers Forum means to so many dance artists in the city. We're thrilled that an alum of the organization's programming and a close collaborator is joining the organization as its Executive Director. Joanna Furnans brings an exciting vision for supporting Chicago's dance artists, important administrative skills, and a strong commitment to equity."

Furnans joins [Shawn Lent](#), Programs and Communications Director and [La Mar Brown](#), Operations Manager in leadership of Chicago Dancemakers Forum during what the City recently designated as the [Year of Chicago Dance](#) (#YearofChicagoDance).

Chicago Dancemakers Forum (CDF) was developed in 2003 as a demonstration project of the Chicago Community Trust. In the years following, CDF transitioned gracefully from an unincorporated project to a fully-fledged organization whose work is led by a diverse, dynamic [Board of Directors](#) and amplified by a committed [Consortium](#) of 9 dance incubating and presenting institutions. When CDF incorporated as a 501(c)3 in 2014, the organization engaged its first Executive Director, Ginger Farley, who waived her salary, making it possible for CDF to deliver and enhance its essential programs while planning for sustainability, succession, and growth. Farley stepped down on December 31, 2021 after 18 years of involvement including seven years of in-kind leadership. CDF's [Revv Campaign](#), co-chaired by Kim D. Ricardo and Suzanne Griffith, was launched in late 2021 and has already raised more than a third of its \$1M goal to support the transition to paid leadership and grant dollars for local dancemaking artists over a multi-year period.

Furnans expresses her excitement on joining the organization, "It's an honor to step into this role. CDF's staff is remarkable, the board is stellar, the interns, volunteers, donors, and partner organizations are dedicated and encouraging. And most importantly, Chicago dance artists are endlessly inspiring. This is a dream job. I can't wait to get started."

For more information, please contact Shawn Lent, Programs and Communications Director at [shawn@chicagodancemakers.org](mailto:shawn@chicagodancemakers.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

[Joanna Furnans](#) (she/her) is a dance artist, writer, and administrator. Her work has been supported by a MANCC Forward Dialogues Laboratory, a Schonberg Offshore Creation Residency at the Yard, an Institutional Incubator Sponsorship at High Concept Labs, a Chicago Dancemaker's Forum Lab Artist Award, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), the Chicago Dancers' Fund, the Chicago Moving Company, Links Hall, and the Walker Art Center's Choreographer's Evening.

As a dancer in the works of independent artists Karen Sherman and Morgan Thorson she has performed at Jacob's Pillow (Becket), the American Realness Festival (NYC), the Fusebox Festival (Austin), the TBA Festival (Portland), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston), the Chocolate Factory (NYC), PS122 (NYC), and the UCLA Center for the Art of Performance (LA). Additionally, Furnans has performed in the works of Chris Schlichting, Kim Brandt, Laurie Van Wieren, the BodyCartography Project, and Ginger Krebs.

In 2016 Joanna co-founded the [Performance Response Journal](#), an online platform for writing about dance and hybrid performance in Chicago. To date, this grassroots endeavor has engaged over forty Chicago-based writers and published over eighty creative and critical responses to dance and performance in the city. Her recent graduate research at the University of New Mexico focused on the lived experiences of marginalized, independent dance artists working outside of New York City in the era of global neoliberalism. While pursuing her graduate studies, Furnans held positions in the university's Division for Equity & Inclusion and the LGBTQ and Women's Resource Centers.