

CHICAGO DANCEMAKERS FORUM

Executive Director – Job Description

The Executive Director (ED) is responsible for leading Chicago Dancemakers Forum to ensure the fullest expression of its mission and the consistent achievement of its financial objectives. The ED is responsible for all organizational strategy and planning (Strategic, Programming, Fundraising, Financial, and Marketing), as well as oversight of all day-to-day business in development, operations, program expansion, human resources, administration, fundraising, finances, board governance, public relations, and artistic programs. The ED reports to the board of directors, oversees all staff, and works in partnership with all key stakeholders.

Fundraising (40%): Assures the successful execution of fundraising efforts by developing, coordinating and implementing a comprehensive strategy to sufficiently fund existing and new programs, as special initiatives and to support a healthy reserve to maintain organizational responsiveness and flexibility.

1. Individual giving: develop the strategies for and oversee all individual giving initiatives, including the cultivation and solicitation of major donors.
2. Institutional giving: develop and oversee all institutional giving initiatives (government, foundation, corporate), including grant research, writing, submission, reporting, and sponsorships.
3. Events: plan and direct all fundraising events including sponsorships and assuring cohesion with CDF programs and mission.
4. Gift tracking and acknowledgement: oversee the implementation and maintenance of an accurate data system for gift tracking, pledge management, gift receipts and acknowledgements.

Board/Governance Relations (15%): Maintains strong relationship with the board of directors; serves on each committee, seeks and builds board involvement with strategic direction for ongoing programs as well as new initiatives and partners.

1. Assist with the selection, recruitment, onboarding and evaluation of board members.
2. Organize materials for all board meetings, including committee and financial reports.
3. Communicate with the board in a manner that keeps them inspired as well and as fully informed about the condition of the organization and all-important factors influencing it.
4. Assist Board committees as needed.

Finance & Compliance (20%): Ensures consistent quality and communication of financial management and administration.

1. Create annual budget for Board approval with oversight from Board.
2. Coordinate the annual operations plan and budget, ensuring ample funds are available to empower the organization to carry out its work.
3. In partnership with the Board Treasurer and professional consultant, manage all financial and physical resources, including banking and bookkeeping.
4. Oversee, with the Board Treasurer, all Payroll and Benefits administration management.
5. Work with the Finance Committee and outside accountants to prepare timely financial reports for board review, year-end reports and annual financial audits.

6. Maintain official records and documents to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Maintain up-to-date employee procedures and policies, including Ethics and Conflict of Interest.
7. Legal oversight and management of all letters of agreement, contracts and negotiations with partners involving financial commitments.

Organizational Management (15%): Create and promote an organizational culture and environment that attracts, retains, and motivates a diverse staff and volunteer core of top highly qualified people.

1. Leadership expertise: maintain a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field.
2. Staff support management: provide all staff support and key volunteer stakeholders a strong day-to-day leadership presence.
3. Human resource management: oversee hiring and firing, orientation, training, mentorship, and performance evaluation.

Program Management (10%): In collaboration with the programming evaluation committee of the board and the program director, ensure excellence and relevance.

1. Partnership development: strategically use public presence and relationships to garner new opportunities, build local and national partnerships, and establish relationships with the funders, venues, institutions, and other potential partners to expand opportunities for CDF artists.
2. Program oversight: regularly evaluate programs, initiatives and special projects to measure effectiveness and relevance. Communicate regularly both internally and externally regarding program strategy, health and direction.
3. Communications and marketing: oversee all aspects of organizational communications with the goal of creating and conveying a clear public identity and brand for CDF. Serve as the public face of the organization and primary community representative for CDF for the field as well as for media and/or public relations initiatives.
4. Information management: oversee the creation and maintenance of systems necessary to best support CDF artists with program information and resources.

Requirements

Education: Bachelor's degree, or commensurate experience

Experience: A minimum of seven years of work experience in arts management

Proven track record of accomplishment in solicitation and cultivation of prospective donors

Substantial experience managing organizational finances

Networks of relationships with a diversity of local and national dance communities

Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the life of the individual, unincorporated artist in Chicago

Substantial experience in antiracism work

Competencies: Excellent organizational and staff management skills

Outstanding interpersonal and communication skills

Knowledge of financial management systems

Knowledge of fundraising databases

Knowledge of DEI strategies

Strong leadership qualities, including the ability to both delegate and execute

Ability to work collegially and collaboratively as part of a team and with a diversity of stakeholders

Ability to manage and support staff in professional development

Willingness and ability to work evenings and weekends required

Salary/Benefits

\$75K-80K with maximum allowable HSA contribution

To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé to the Search Committee at apply@chicagodancemakers.org. The Search will remain open until the position is filled.

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Organization Background

For 18 years, Chicago Dancemakers Forum (CDF) has been dedicated to nurturing artistic advancement in dancemaking. CDF was created in 2003 in direct response to findings that Chicago's dancemakers needed multi-layered support to fulfill their potential. Through the Chicago Community Trust's "Excellence in Dance Initiative" key stakeholders in the field formed a consortium to design and lead an initiative that was specifically intended to be a catalyst for innovation and a means to increase dynamic interaction among Chicago's dancemakers.

CDF has become the single largest source of support for individual dancemakers in Chicago, using an open call process. It has invested over \$1.2 million in aesthetically and culturally diverse dancemakers primarily through its flagship Lab Artists program, which supports the evolution of these creators with an extended period of research, development, and presentation of new work; its Greenhouse awards for emerging dancemakers; and its recent pandemic-responsive Digital Dance Grants. Additionally, CDF provides programs that enable interaction and learning among the broader dance community and the public through workshops, public showings, and critical forums.

CDF was unincorporated and led and fiscally sponsored by its three founding consortium organizations for its first 11 years. In 2014, CDF incorporated as a 501(c)3 and appointed its first full time executive director, Ginger Farley. During this transition, Farley successfully led a capital campaign, raising \$1 million to fund CDF's granting programs and associated costs for a multi-year period, allowing time for CDF to expand its Board, and strengthen its infrastructure and programming.

Acknowledging the need to consciously center racial equity in all of its operations, CDF's expanded leadership and members of the Chicago dance community developed a shared mission and articulated core beliefs, setting the stage for strategic planning. CDF finalized its strategic plan in 2019, and among the changes the plan acknowledged is leadership transition. At the end of 2021, Ginger Farley will leave her position as CDF's highly successful executive director and CDF will hire its first-ever paid executive director. CDF's Board is highly engaged and is ready to partner with a new ED to shape the organization's future. The new executive director will work closely with the Board and with Arts Consulting Group to raise funds for the next phase of CDF's evolution. They will also strengthen and deepen its racial equity work and work closely with the staff and Chicago's diverse dance community to design and evolve programming.

CDF has an annual budget of about \$500,000 and serves about 2,000 dancemakers a year through grants, public programs, and resource sharing. The dancemakers it serves reflect the racial makeup of the city of Chicago. CDF currently has a staff of 3, a Board of 9, and an enlarged list of Consortium organizations: The City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, High Concept Laboratories, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Pivot Arts, Rebuild Foundation, and the Ruth Page Center for the Arts.