



International Festival of Arts & Ideas

Executive Director

“A happening hard to top for sheer scale and variety.”

- *The New York Times*

Organization

The International Festival of Arts & Ideas (Festival) was founded in 1996 by Anne Calabresi, Jean Handley, and Roslyn Meyer. Its mission is to create an internationally renowned festival in New Haven of the highest quality, with world-class artists, thinkers, and leaders, attracting and engaging a broad and diverse audience, celebrating and building community, and advancing economic development. Completing its first 25 years and excited about the next 25 years, the Festival is entrepreneurial and moving forward in new and exciting ways. It envisions a flourishing city and state in which a festival of arts and ideas plays a vital role in enriching lives and leading people to understand how their futures are intertwined. The Festival values excellence in performance and leadership, integrity, stewardship, collaboration, diversity, inclusiveness, and openness to new ideas, new arts, new cultures, new individuals.

The 2019 Festival hosted 78,000 attendees from throughout Connecticut, 30 states, and 15 countries—the vast majority of whom attended at no charge. It engaged 891 artists and speakers, had 187 seasonal employees, and generated an economic impact of \$9.2 million. The Festival is the region’s premier arts and culture destination, with more than 200 events annually, of which at least 85 percent are free. The 2020 Festival, entitled *Democracy: We the People*, will inspire conversation, spark civic action, and build community in New Haven, Connecticut, the United States, and the world. The Festival will attempt to address national and international issues that affect all of humanity through the microcosm of the community. Its Ideas programming—featuring acclaimed authors, speakers, and thought leaders—will be rooted in the values of creating connection, community voice, equity and justice, radical joy, and liberation. Other year-round programs include the Visionary Leadership Award, town hall events, a youth fellowship program, and mini festivals in New Haven’s culturally rich and under-resourced neighborhoods. It provides an eclectic mix of entertaining and inspiring programs featuring internationally acclaimed dance troupes, world-class musicians from diverse genres, breathtaking circus performers, groundbreaking theater, and engaging speakers.

The Festival has welcomed global visionaries and artists such as Angeliqe Kidjo, Bristol Old Vic, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Handspring Puppet Company, Rosanne Cash, Claudia Rankine, Mark Morris Dance Group, National Theatre of Scotland, Yo-Yo Ma, Bassem Youssef, Druid Theatre, Kronos Quartet, Taylor Mac, Spike Lee, and Salman Rushdie. It centers around the historic New Haven Green, the city’s walkable downtown core adjacent to the Yale University campus. Along with the warm June weather, the location creates the perfect backdrop for this highly accessible 15-day festival.

The Festival is governed by a 34-member board of directors, led by Chair Gordon Geballe. It has a year-round staff of 12 full-time employees and up to 160 seasonal contractors. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, total revenue was \$2.6 million, with \$2.4 million from contributions and grants and the remaining from program service revenue.

Community

The Quinnipiac are the Indigenous inhabitants along the Atlantic shoreline of what is now New Haven, Connecticut. Incorporated in 1638 as one of the first planned cities in America, New Haven today offers access to renowned art museums, music, theater, and lectures featuring internationally known speakers. The Greater New Haven area hosts a rich diversity of higher education institutions, including Yale University, Quinnipiac University, University of New Haven, Southern Connecticut State University, Albertus Magnus College, and Gateway Community College.

New Haven is recognized as a city of innovation and prosperity with a small town feel and diverse neighborhoods. The New Haven Green is a privately-owned park and recreation area that was established in 1810 to preserve its history, prevent its commercialization, and ensure that it remains an open and beautiful green space for enjoyment by the community. As the birthplace of wide variety of inventions—from the Frisbee to the hamburger—it is no surprise that New Haven’s entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well, whether in the start-ups at Science Park or the

craft breweries and artisanal bakeries appearing in converted warehouses. The local economy is defined by health care and social services. New Haven also has a strong tech community and a world-renowned architecture and design sector. Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital provide many of the area's job opportunities, attracting highly specialized physicians, researchers, and academics.

Set amongst beautiful hills and estuaries, New Haven is the cultural capital of Connecticut. The region has a rich array of recreational activities and accessible transportation locally and throughout the Northeast corridor. This richly diverse city has a long tradition of welcoming immigrants from all over the world. In fact, one out of every eight residents are foreign-born and local students speak more than 100 languages at home. This inclusivity has spurred a growing population in contrast to other places in Connecticut and the Northeast.

A recent study by FiveThirtyEight that reviewed the education level, age, and ethnic diversity of every metropolitan area in the United States concluded that, of any place in America, New Haven most accurately reflects the demographics of the country as a whole in those areas. Demographically, the city is approximately 35 percent black or African-American, 32 percent white, 27 percent Hispanic or Latino, 5 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.5 percent Native American or Alaska Native, and 4 percent of people who identify as two or more ethnic backgrounds. Its surrounding region of 860,000 residents is 65 percent white, 14 percent black or African American, 17 percent Hispanic or Latino, 4 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.5 percent Native American or Alaska Native, and 2 percent claiming two or more racial identities. The changing face of America as part of a global community is personified in New Haven, and the arts and ideas in New Haven reflect the world.

Sources: bls.gov; usnews.com; gnhcc.com; fivethirtyeight.com

Position Summary

The Executive Director will provide imaginative leadership toward the development and realization of the Festival's world-class artistic and intellectual programs. They will passionately articulate an organizational vision that weaves positive values of cultural diversity into the fabric of the Festival, where artistic inclusion and audience access are paramount. Interacting with a wide variety of constituencies, the Executive Director will engage those in the national and international arts and humanities sectors; community members in business, government, and local neighborhoods; regional tourism and economic planners; major arts organizations; donors; board, staff, and volunteers; the media; and multicultural and multigenerational audiences, among others.

Roles and Responsibilities

Artistic and Intellectual Vision

- Produce an internationally diverse and distinctive program that energizes artistic innovation, inspires intellectual exploration, and creates an international cultural destination embedded in community collaborations.
- Spearhead a new strategic planning and community engagement process that will best lead to the organization's artistic, social, educational, and economic outcomes.
- Respond to current issues, social trends, and global themes to ensure that the Festival remains timely and relevant.
- Commission and curate new works that receive national and international acclaim while keeping artistic and programmatic content at the outer edge of extraordinary.
- Expand and raise the profile of the Ideas program during the Festival and year-round.
- Develop effective partnerships focused on inquisitiveness, inspiration, and cultural exploration.
- Assess and engage a broad array of unique and traditional presentation venues and locations.
- Create incubator opportunities that foster and promote local artists and thinkers for shared learning and growth.
- Design a means for board and staff to evaluate results-oriented progress towards achievement of strategic goals and outcomes.
- Accept other artistic and intellectual vision responsibilities, as needed.

Audience Access and Inclusion

- Create a platform for dialogue and exchange among diverse people, communities, and multicultural neighborhoods throughout Connecticut.
- Advance the brand identity of the Festival and its host city based on core values, distinctiveness, and thought-provoking placemaking.

- Identify and seek the major financial support necessary to expand audience accessibility, include new voices, and highlight the overall footprint of the Festival.
- Expand the Festival's Fellowship and other educational programs as an anchor for lifelong learning and career development initiatives.
- Celebrate the Visionary Leadership Award and continue to identify diverse honorees.
- Convey the public messages of the Festival in the media, with educational institutions, and among community members and strategic partners.
- Mobilize technological advances for podcasts, social media, and opportunities that signal a commitment to regional and international innovation.
- Inspire financial and technological investments that ensure the broadest and deepest audience experiences.
- Oversee communication plans that express the impacts of the Festival's programs.
- Accept other audience access and inclusion responsibilities, as needed.

Governance and Administrative Infrastructure

- Cultivate board members and their connections to secure the Festival's future vitality and community relevance.
- Listen to board and staff perspectives, consider futuristic ideas, and deliver on the Festival's mission.
- Inspire and motivate a professional development team as the chief fundraiser and advocate for the Festival.
- Lead, mentor, and guide succession planning for an experienced team of staff, volunteers, and independent contractors that ensures ongoing diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- Invest in professional and community development that advances organizational effectiveness and community vibrancy.
- Actively ensure a healthy workplace and organizational policies that value experience and new ideas.
- Initiate dialogues where board and staff voices inspire innovation and long-term impacts.
- Delegate appropriate responsibilities and perform succession planning in keeping with a well-managed operation and infrastructure that supports the organization and the communities it serves.
- Perform other governance and administrative infrastructure responsibilities, as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be an innovative strategist who is motivated by artistic ideas, intellectual endeavors, and practical results. They will be a courageous community leader, builder, and networker who understands the critical nature of local and regional partnerships while stimulating an international perspective on global issues. The Executive Director will be flexible and optimistic in their approach to challenges and opportunities as they seek out creative solutions. A visible and people-oriented professional, the Executive Director will value social, artistic, educational, and economic impacts that are embedded in thought leadership and artistic vibrancy. They will be inspired by and an inspirational force for local and international issues where societal impacts are grounded in the interconnectedness of the human spirit.

Other key competencies include:

- **Planning, Organizing, and Prioritizing** – The agility to collaboratively establish strategic goals while assessing risks, organizing activities, and operationalizing priorities.
- **Leadership and Interpersonal Skills** – The ingenuity to develop, set, and pursue strategic initiatives while adapting to societal changes and delivering external messages that resonate with diverse communities.
- **Innovation and Accountability** – The capacity to build diverse and innovative local and international partnerships, respond proactively to community needs, and embrace professional accountability standards.
- **Diplomacy and Teamwork** – The ability to be socially savvy, respectful of differing viewpoints, fair regardless of personal biases, and productive in reaching mutually beneficial outcomes.

Qualifications

A bachelor's degree and at least eight years of senior leadership experience in an entrepreneurial, cultural, higher education, and/or social action organization are required (advanced degree or equivalent experience preferred). A track record of results-oriented success in donor relations, including major gift solicitation, fiscal responsibility, and organizational vibrancy is necessary. Multiple language skills and nonprofit governance expertise are greatly appreciated.

Compensation and Benefits

The Festival offers very competitive compensation with employee benefits that include an excellent individual health insurance plan, dental benefits, paid parental and bereavement leave, vacation, paid time off, tax deferred annuity, and flexible spending account plan, among others.

Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments, please click [here](#) or visit artsconsulting.com/employment. For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact us at Festival@ArtsConsulting.com.

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