

western arts alliance

Executive Director Opportunity Guide

westarts.org



About Western Arts Alliance

Western Arts Alliance (WAA) is a Portland, Oregon based membership association of touring and performing arts professionals, promoting, and presenting the performing arts throughout the western states/provinces of the United States and Canada. Throughout the past decade, WAA's member base has expanded to include presenters, agents and managers across all 50 states and internationally in the Pacific Rim and Latin America. Serving members since 1967, WAA is renowned for its signature annual conference and year-round programs which provide essential advocacy, networking, resources and professional development for artists, artist managers, presenters, and other performing arts professionals.

As a voice for professionals working in a continually shifting environment, WAA continues to adapt to current social, economic, cultural, public health, and political challenges. WAA's Professional Development program seeks to enhance artists' and organizations' ability to realize their artistic and public service goals by offering educational opportunities that build cultural competency, stimulate ingenuity, and foster leadership.

WAA is recognized by its peers as a leader in promoting social equity in the arts profession, and commitment to equity is a vital part of its mission and values. WAA's pacesetter leadership fosters professional development, mentoring, networking, and recognition through competitive awards by:

- Creating an Equity Council, comprised of members from the association's Black, Latinx, LBGTQIA+, Asian Pacific Islander, and Indigenous affinity groups.
- Launching the Advancing Indigenous Performance (AIP) program in 2018 to uplift Native artists by building capacity and networks for Indigenous performance in the US and Canada through professional development, mentoring, showcasing, networking, and competitive awards programs.
- International engagement through its Performing Arts Discovery program.

WAA's signature annual conference provides opportunities to spark industry connections, discover and learn, strengthen ties, and generate business opportunities. The 2022 conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta, from August 29 to September 1 and will represent a joyful return to an in-person format.



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CONTRA-TIEMPO

The Opportunity: Executive Director

Western Arts Alliance seeks its next Executive Director (ED) following the accomplished leadership of the organization's current leader, Tim Wilson, for the past 25 years. Reporting to an engaged Board of Directors, the Executive Director will oversee an organizational operating budget of just over \$1 million and a team currently comprised of five, including a Conference Manager, Advancing Indigenous Performance Program Manager, Membership and Communications Manager, Administrative Assistant, and Video Production Coordinator (part time).

The next Executive Director will strive to advance excellence in performing arts presenting in the West, moving beyond WAA's current annual conference and membership model. Artists, managers, producers, and presenters are struggling with the concurrent crises of

the pandemic, racism, climate change, and social division. The Executive Director will create vision and strategy for the sector to identify and navigate current and future challenges and find solutions which inspire lasting change. This is an excellent opportunity for an entrepreneurial program builder who, with the Board of Directors, will take WAA out of a pandemic-related contraction period, and into the future with a robust strategic plan that includes strategies for significant increase in earned, membership, and contributed revenue. The next Executive Director will recognize the huge opportunity that WAA has to help shape arts programming presented in the region, and to help envision and create the future of the arts sector. This is a unique opportunity to engage people's minds and hearts during a watershed moment in the performing arts.



Larissa FastHorse

Performance Objectives

Vision, Leadership and Strategy

- Serve as a resource to the Board of Directors and members in the development and execution of long and short-term strategies, vision, and adherence to mission.
- Ensure that WAA's programs are mission driven, in line with strategic plan goals, and support the needs and purpose of membership and the field.
- Drive membership engagement for the organization, ensuring the organization continues to attract, sustain and advocate on behalf of a diverse membership base.
- Oversee administration and operations of the organization, consistent with WAA's by-laws and governance policies, in a legally compliant, ethical, and transparent manner.
- Champion the continued and evolving ED&I work throughout the organization and the performing arts sector so that WAA may best serve all members, artists, and professionals in the ecosystem fairly, giving a voice to all. Ensure follow through and support for all ED&I work at WAA.
- Serve as a recognized leader in performing arts related business and commerce with a balance of attention paid to performers, agents, and presenters.
- Seek to better understand the "real time" fundamental shift in live arts and entertainment, and work to ensure that WAA has a leadership seat at the table when discussions relevant to the industry and membership are raised regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Act as a trusted and thoughtful spokesperson for the performing arts field and its constituents.
- Fortify and encourage a sense of community among all regional arts organizations and associations.
- Build a framework for listening, engagement and learning for performing arts sector and industry ecosystem.

Board Relations

- Maintain a strong relationship with the Board of Directors, allowing for a strong partnership and effective governance; ensure training is provided, effective two-way communication established, and information is current and accurate to inform decision making.
- Ensure continuity of engagement at the Board and Committee levels.
- Support the Board in their work to seek and cultivate new potential Board members, engaging them in the leadership pipeline with volunteer opportunities.
- Empower members of the Board to serve to the highest degree possible, and equip each board member to be an ambassador, fundraiser, and mission advocate.
- Work with, provide training for, and mentor the Board to create an overall culture of philanthropy and to enhance fundraising activities.



Performance Objectives

Membership and Conference Services

- Develop an operational plan incorporating goals and objectives that work toward the strategic direction of the organization. Oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of the organization's programs, conference, and advocacy activities.
- Engage membership outside of the conference and continue to actively cultivate and steward conference attendees between conferences.
- Develop strategies and tools to rebuild membership and conference attendee numbers after a pandemic-caused retraction period.
- Implement innovative marketing and outreach strategies to increase visibility of the organization for diverse, new audiences. Seek innovative methods to attract and engage new members and conference attendees while energizing current members.
- Advocate on behalf of WAA and promote its successes and influence in the arts to strategic leaders.
- Ensure that membership offers the highest value and opportunities for connection to current members, conference exhibitors, vendors, and sponsors.
- Amplify diverse voices in leadership discussions and planning that represent an array of robust, active and passionate affinity groups representing specialized segments of members and stakeholders.
- Identify, develop and nurture leadership within WAA membership. Create a pipeline and path for membership to committees, Board, etc.

Revenue and Financial Management

- Create, in collaboration with the Board, a strategy for long-term diversification of revenue which includes paths toward increased earned membership and conference revenue, grant and foundation funding, and other philanthropic and partnership opportunities.
- Develop an annual operating budget and ensure that the organization and departments operate within budget guidelines. Regularly monitor budgets and cash flow statements.
- Maintain consistent reporting on the organization's financial position and outlook and ensure fiscal responsibility. Work in partnership with auditors, investment managers, other vendors, and the Board's finance committee to ensure fiscal health and financial transparency.
- Demonstrate prudent and efficient use of all organizational resources, establish internal controls and record keeping, and ensure and expertly manage finances including external financial reviews and audits.
- Strong non-profit financial management to maintain consistent reporting on the organization's financial position and outlook and ensure fiscal responsibility. Work in partnership with auditors, investment managers, other vendors, and the Board's finance committee.

Administration & Staff Management

- Maintain a positive, healthy, and collaborative work environment which encourages creativity and efficiency.
- Mentor and lead staff in maximizing their performance in executing operational aspects of the Association.
- Evaluate policies, roles, and infrastructure, making certain that roles are clearly defined and accountable, to achieve maximum impact of WAA's vision.
- Assess prospects for new organizational partnerships, creating increased opportunities for members.
- Implement plans for the growth of the organization that are collaborative and foster partnership opportunities.



The Qualified Candidate

Western Arts Alliance is seeking an entrepreneurial minded, optimistic, and creative leader. The next leader will enthusiastically relish the opportunities presented by the organization's and industry's next lifecycle stage. The leader will nurture and strengthen existing and establish new relevant partnerships, seeking opportunities for WAA to step even more decidedly into a national and international leadership role promoting connectivity in the performing arts sector. The successful candidate will demonstrate an innovative mindset, superior customer service and the ability to take complex ideas and convert them into actionable activities to achieve or exceed goals. In the current recovery from the pandemic, the successful leader will seek opportunities to elevate the platform and influence of WAA, thinking broadly about opportunities to enhance or reshape elements of the conference and other programs. Given WAA's geographic reach, this is a prime opportunity for a dynamic leader to make a sector-wide impact.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Passion for WAA and its mission, augmented by demonstrated experience in similar arts, nonprofit or association service areas. Experience in the performing arts preferred.
- A minimum of 7 years of progressive experience in leadership in arts or association management, including 3 years documented ability to manage staff and lead teams.
- Three or more years of partnering with a nonprofit or association Board to shape and advance organizational strategy.
- Proven ability to build strong external relationships with a variety of volunteers, constituents, partner organizations and other stakeholders.
- Strong background in nonprofit financial management, stewardship, and revenue development. Experience with hands on financial tasks such as bookkeeping and creating reports.
- Proven success in building strong and productive work teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development.
- Demonstrated track record in leadership development.
- Commitment to equity in all aspects of the association and prior experience managing and leading ED&I programs and initiatives.
- Strong analytic and strategic-thinking skills, with a demonstrated ability to create, implement, and monitor complex plans and then translate those plans into goals and concrete steps to achieve them.
- Career track record that shows stability with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships culminating in overall success.
- Experience managing complex membership or other conference is preferred.



Okaidja Afroso

How To Apply



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This position offers a competitive salary of \$140,000 – \$160,000 dependent on experience with strong benefits. Relocation assistance is negotiable. This position will be based in Portland, OR at WAA’s office location. Remote working from other locations will not be considered at this time.

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Western Arts Alliance will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Western Arts Alliance does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the bases of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Western Arts Alliance stands in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and is based respectfully in the now occupied traditional lands of the Chinook, Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tualatin Kalapuya, and Molalla tribes.

[APPLY HERE](#)

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. All candidate submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Laura Weinman, Vice President of KEES. Questions may be addressed to lweinman@kees2success.com.

About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.

More about Western Arts Alliance

VALUES

WAA envisions a world where:

- Communities throughout the West believe the performing arts are essential to their daily life.
- The arts celebrate humanity and engage people across cultural, social, and economic orientations.
- Artists and a vibrant touring network connect audiences and communities.
- The field attracts, sustains, and advances a diverse cohort of professionals representing the full spectrum of the performing arts.
- The West leads the way in innovation and creativity.

VISION

- WAA is an expansive community where members connect, build strong relationships, share, and develop ideas.
- WAA strives to support and serve an educated and engaged field of artists, agents, managers, and presenters in the West.
- WAA continuously adapts to changes and shifts in the field.
- WAA values inclusion and promotes diversity of thought, expression and culture that is inherent in our world.
- WAA embraces colleagues at every stage of their career.

About Portland, Oregon

Travel Portland states “Above all, the people of Portland are why the city is so exceptional. Portland has a thriving community of **artists and makers** who encourage innovation in design and craft (whether it be creating a sneaker or a new flavor of doughnut). In Portland, it’s good to experiment with what you love.

Portlanders also place a high value on sustainability, which can be seen in the way locals maintain and enjoy the city’s public **gardens and green spaces**, urban forests, miles of protected **bike lanes**, efficient **public transportation** and preserved natural areas.”

