



Position Specification

Houston Arts Alliance

Chief Executive Officer

Private and Confidential

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Ref: Chief Executive Officer
Houston Arts Alliance

Our Client

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) is the local nonprofit arts and culture agency that enhances the city's quality of life through advancing and investing in the arts and diverse cultural programming. The work of HAA encourages Houston's development and shapes its global reputation by fostering tourism and supporting and promoting the city's creative economy.

HAA is the city's designated local arts and culture agency. HAA invests in Houston as a place to visit, live, work, honor, and create in. HAA does this by:

- providing grants to arts, culture, and community organizations and individual artists;
- commissioning, conserving and promoting public art and enlivening public spaces;
- celebrating the region's rich folklife and diverse cultural traditions
- helping arts and culture organizations develop business acumen;
- engaging neighborhoods and civic partners to advance equity in and access to arts and culture;
- furthering the arts and culture field through research and convenings;
- funding, in part, cultural tourism initiatives; and
- endeavoring to expand the overall creative economy.

Ultimately, HAA works to improve the quality of life for Houstonians and visitors alike, while promoting Houston as a premier arts and culture destination. HAA is a nonprofit, public-private initiative whose primary partner is the City of Houston. Approximately 55% of HAA's budget comes from Hotel Occupancy Tax and 30% from the City of Houston's Percent for Art Program, which supports commissions of new civic art projects as well as conservation of existing artworks. The remaining 15% of HAA's budget comes from private fundraising (grants/contributions/other revenue) for programs and special projects. HAA is committed to raising funds for only those projects and initiatives that the Arts Alliance is uniquely positioned to provide the community. In broader terms, Houston Arts Alliance is defined as a Local Arts Agency (LAA) as well as a governmental component unit. More information can be found at www.houstonartsalliance.com.

The Role

Reporting to the Board, the CEO will have responsibility for the management of the organization including strategic, programmatic, fiscal, and operational accountability. S/he will work to inspire a diverse team and foster and ensure a collaborative work environment which retains and attracts top talent. S/he will build a culture focused on communication, results-orientation, cost-effective execution, and accountability across all departments so that organizational objectives and defined goals are accomplished and celebrated. S/he will encourage transparency, openness and mutual respect.

The CEO will work with the Board and staff to manage a strategic review focused on the long-term viability of the business model. Subsequently, s/he will drive this strategy and achieve measurable results against the organization's ambitious goals of enhancing the city's quality of life through advancing and investing in the arts and diverse cultural programming. Ideally, the candidate will have experience in change management within an organization. The CEO will manage against the budget and ensure that strategic

objectives are collectively agreed upon and attained in a fiscally responsible manner. S/he will approach financial administration with resourcefulness, sound judgment, and a clear understanding of budgets. The CEO will be a good steward of the public funding that HAA manages for the City of Houston.

As the public face, the CEO will represent the organization's mission and programs among a wide array of stakeholders and will be the driving force to articulate a succinct and powerful brand. S/he will build awareness of the organization's pivotal role in the community of encouraging Houston's development and shaping its global reputation. The CEO will build strong relations among the entire artistic community with equal emphasis on visual and performing, large and small organizations. It is key that the CEO have strong charisma, presence and gravitas in dealings with partners from a variety of backgrounds. S/he will foster a culture of engagement while convening and leading diverse constituencies from across the community to achieve the goals of the organization, increase financial support and amplify impact. The CEO must be highly visible and a willing spokesperson.

Critical to the CEO's success will be the ability to fundraise effectively and approach partnership- and resource-building with significant creativity and clarity of purpose. Ensuring a wide range of donors feel included and involved, the CEO will work to increase and diversify financial support from individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government funders.

Candidate Profile

The Houston Arts Alliance is seeking a visionary leader who possesses a record of senior-level management experience, preferably in a mission-driven organization. There is a strong preference that this be an arts (visual or performing) organization operating in a complex, multi-channel environment. The successful candidate will possess a rare combination of operational, marketing, financial, and development experience, ensuring that they will be applied to an organization which intends to be recognized as "best in class". Ideal candidates will have a track-record of identifying strategic opportunities for improvement and growth and successfully leading that change. S/he will have experience working closely with a board, staff, and other constituents to achieve ambitious goals and measurable results in a fiscally responsible manner while building unity and shared vision across all stakeholders.

S/he will have outstanding communication skills, both written and verbal, and the ability to represent the HAA effectively to diverse audiences. Given the importance of external stakeholders to the HAA's work, candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the ability to develop relationships, collaborate, listen to and learn from leaders across government, not-for-profit, cultural institutions and the broader community. S/he will have the capacity to build constructive dialogue and collaboration among people and across organizational structures.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Communicating, Influencing, and Building Relationships: S/he will be an inspiring and proficient communicator who can articulate the Houston Arts Alliance's vision and direction to a wide and diverse

audience as well as being authentic one-on-one. S/he will have the ability to connect with and work collaboratively with a wide range of constituents including government, big and small arts and culture organizations, donors, corporate partners, Board, staff and the wider community. S/he will possess the ability to influence internally and externally through informed vision, political skill and networking – while bringing multi-constituency sensitivity and commitment to building relationships with the range of communities that constitute the Houston area.

Setting Strategy / Executing for Results: The successful candidate will be outcome driven and have demonstrated executive-level experience in setting priorities, leading organizations through transition and evolution, and delivering measurable results. S/he will have the ability to set priorities decisively, delegate responsibilities, assure and value accountability, and accurately allocate resources appropriate to achieving desirable results. S/he will be a transparent leader and strategic thinker who will work with the Houston Arts Alliance’s leadership team, Board and key stakeholders to establish plans and methods to reach strategic goals, bring clarity and focus to the existing programs, and develop a model that enables the organization to realize its full potential.

Management of Teams and Resources: As a collaborative leader, the CEO will build a positive and affirming work environment and ensure that the management, staffing and culture of the organization are suitably aligned with the mission, evolving goals and strategic ambitions. S/he will manage a highly effective staff and recommend organizational structures that allow for the supervision and evaluation of quality execution while building unity and shared vision across teams. Additionally, as a steward of public dollars, the successful candidate will be a model of excellent fiscal governance. S/he will approach the financial oversight of the Houston Arts Alliance with dispassion and balance, with an even-handed and reasoned approach to budgetary decision-making based on a clear understanding of the strategic objectives of the organization.

Resource Development: The successful candidate will build upon the Houston Arts Alliance’s current funding base to increase and diversify financial support. S/he will actively promote the organization to advance the development of appropriate partnerships in the Houston area and beyond. S/he will have a demonstrated ability to fundraise effectively and to recruit the leadership necessary to meet these goals.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Prospective candidates are invited to email HAA@russellreynolds.com. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.