

EXECUTIVE SEARCH SPECIFICATION FOR THE POSITION OF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DALLAS, TEXAS

CLIENT:

Tara Lewis
Board of Directors, Chair Elect

VICTORY SEARCH GROUP TEAM:

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- CONFIDENTIAL -

The information contained in this search specification is confidential and must be treated with the utmost of discretion. Candidate and organizational considerations demand the highest level of confidentiality ensuring the interest and priorities of all involved are addressed most professionally.

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Scottsdale, Dallas, Chicago, Milwaukee, Miami

**EXECUTIVE SEARCH SPECIFICATION
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE ARTS COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

THE ORGANIZATION

For 50 years, The Arts Community Alliance (TACA) has worked to establish North Texas' cultural community as one of the strongest in the nation. Originally founded in 1967 as an annual charity event, it has grown to be a valued arts funding and service organization, widely respected for its immense contribution to the greater North Texas artistic landscape. Its investment in the arts translates to new premieres and productions, impactful residencies and community initiatives, and extended opportunities for artists and audiences to connect – all enhancing Dallas as a great place to live and work.

TACA envisions an innovative, inclusive, sustainable cultural sector recognized for its essential contribution to a vibrant, prosperous community. To realize its vision, [TACA](#) has undergone a transformation – from a cornerstone grantmaking institution to one that also offers multifaceted support for the arts community. Accordingly, in 2017, TACA revised its mission to: support excellence and impact in the arts through grantmaking, capacity-building and thought leadership.

The City of Dallas, through the Office of Cultural Affairs' 2018 Cultural Plan, reported that the arts in Dallas had grown to an \$891 million industry responsible for driving 33,000 jobs. "These jobs and their economic benefit for our region are significant alone and research has proven that arts and culture contribute to social wellbeing,ⁱ and are essential to creating more livable, safe, memorable, and connected communities.ⁱⁱ"

Yet, despite this community impact, Dallas ranks just 42nd out of 66 large metropolitan areas for arts vibrancy, according to the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR). Nonprofit arts organizations are challenged by limits on funding, rising costs, and a lack of access to other important resources. TACA's support of small- and mid- sized organizations is even more critical, as a definitive study conducted by the Helicon Collaborative found that over 50% of all arts funding in the United States goes to the top 5% of the largest cultural institutions. According to the NCAR, 75% of arts organizations in Dallas County have a budget of less than \$1M, demonstrating the magnitude of local support needed—and underscoring the essential role played by an organization like TACA.

TACA believes in this transformative power of the arts. To support a thriving arts community, TACA provides a wide-range of support that nurtures the entire arts ecosystem in Dallas and North Texas through three strategies: grantmaking, capacity building, and thought leadership.



*Photo Courtesy of TACA
Beneficiary Bruce Wood Dance*

Grantmaking

Since its establishment, grantmaking has been at TACA's core, resulting in more than \$29 million in grants being awarded to over 150 emerging and established nonprofit arts organizations, large and small, throughout Dallas County. The grantmaking program consistently receives high accolades from grantees, peers, and donors to the organization. Through its detailed grants review process, TACA recruits and trains more than 70 volunteers from the community and nationally to research, evaluate and select grant recipients, through the following:

The [Arts General Operating Grant Program](#) is TACA's largest granting program. It provides annual, unrestricted grants to nonprofit performing and visual arts organizations in Dallas County. General operating grants help build strong and sustainable infrastructure among beneficiary organizations.

[New Work Fund Grants](#) are vital to a vibrant arts community – supporting local artists, bringing forth new ideas, inspiring innovation, and keeping art fresh and relevant. Since its inception in 2012, the New Works Fund has distributed \$750,000 to support the creation of 20 new works of performing art productions, further establishing North Texas as one of the nation's major cultural incubators.

[Artist Residency Fund Grants](#) support community-centric artist residencies within Dallas County arts organizations. Since its inception in 2015, the Artist Residency Fund has distributed \$300,000 to support the creation of 10 such residencies in music, theatre and dance institutions.

Capacity Building

TACA believes capacity building is a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of sustainable and effective organizations. TACA designs and hosts a series of training workshops aimed at arming nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with the tools they need to tackle difficult challenges and to strengthen their organization. The [Amplifier Workshops](#) offer the opportunity for organizations to directly engage with local and national experts, and to network and learn from their peers. In 2018, TACA hosted five workshops building capacity across 52 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations on topics such as collaboration, growing audiences, increasing effectiveness within arts organizations, and pushing forward racial equity.

Thought Leadership

Thought leadership programming at TACA aims to nurture new ideas and practices in the arts community and seeks to drive forward the evolution of the arts sector. Its most well-respected program in this area is [TACA Perforum](#), an annual, community-wide arts symposium designed to advance a collective vision for what a thriving arts and cultural community can look like for Dallas and North Texas. Through conversations facilitated by expert panelists and roundtable discussions, TACA seeks an infusion of ideas to explore, debate, and develop for local implementation. The 2018 Perforum provided more than 275 attendees with insights from experts across the nation on the importance of authentically engaging with the community to generate valuable relevant programming that responds to a changing world.



2018 TACA Perforum Panel (from left to right): Dr. Zannie Giraud Voss, Director of SMU DataArts and TACA Board Member; Ken Tabachnick, Executive Director, Merce Cunningham Trust (New York, NY); Jon Hinojosa, Artistic & Executive Director, SAY Sí (San Antonio, TX); Elizabeth Merritt, VP of Strategic Foresight, AAM & Founding Director, Center for the Future of Museums (Arlington, VA); Carlos Contreras, Director of Marketing and Innovation, City of Albuquerque (Albuquerque, NM)

FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

While many grantmaking institutions draw from an endowment, TACA's business model relies on the generous ongoing support from individuals, corporations, and foundations to support its mission. Providing this steadfast support for cultural institutions across the region is achieved through robust fundraising programs that have exceeded \$2M in recent years. Traditionally individuals have contributed the majority of revenue to TACA, through three avenues:

TACA Silver Cup Award Luncheon presented by JP Morgan Chase & Co and Neiman Marcus:

Celebrated annually this event recognizes two individuals for their outstanding volunteer leadership and contributions to the arts in North Texas. The 2019 Silver Cup Award recipients are Margot B. Perot and J. Davis Hamlin. Former award receipts are listed [here](#). The Silver Cup Award was founded by former Dallas Mayor Annette Strauss in 1979.

Founder's Circle: TACA's celebrated major giving program includes the organization's most committed and sustaining donors, with multi-year gifts ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

TACA Lexus Party on the Green: This annual event is a local, celebrity chef-driven fundraising event featuring the best of North Texas cuisine and local arts organizations, and held in Dallas' Arts District.

The organization also receives generous support from local foundations, Arts Ambassadors (individual memberships), North Texas Giving Day and Giving Tuesday, and its Corporate Council.

TACA is a 501c3 organization governed by a forty-member [Board of Directors](#) and supported by ten staff and contractors. More than 50 volunteers serve on the grants review committees contributing over 2,600 hours annually.



2019 TACA Grants Celebration

THE OPPORTUNITY

When Becky Young stepped down as Executive Director of TACA in 2016, after leading the organization for seventeen years, Board member Wolford McCue stepped into the role to lead the organization through the implementation of a new strategic plan and a particular focus on attracting millennials to embrace the arts. After three years as Executive Director, Wolford is retiring, and the organization now seeks a leader to sustain the organization’s influence and lead it forward.

Reporting to the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will be based at the organization’s offices in One Arts Plaza in the Dallas Arts District, and will partner with the Board in developing a new vision and focused priorities for the organization to include sustainable fundraising strategies and impactful programming. The successful candidate will implement these strategies with support from a committed staff and distinguished Board, and oversee efforts to boost fundraising, embrace continuous improvement, and seek opportunities and resources to build a thriving arts community. The Executive Director will cultivate and manage relationships with a broad set of stakeholders— donors, civic stakeholders, nonprofits, volunteers, corporate and foundation partners, current and past Board members, community leaders and arts patrons – to build the effectiveness and impact of TACA. As the face of TACA, the Executive Director will energize the community to drive the vibrancy of the arts community.

The Executive Director will provide proactive, effective leadership to secure and manage TACA’s resources, so as to enable the achievement of the organization’s strategic plan. She/he will work in partnership with board and staff, to create fundraising programs that resonate with the evolving

philanthropic landscape, build long-standing/meaningful relationships with donors, grow revenue sources and maintain a balanced budget.

General categories of responsibilities are as follows:

Design and lead effective and ongoing fundraising campaigns that will give TACA the financial strength to achieve its mission on an ongoing basis.	70%
Provide overall leadership and administration of TACA, and stewardship of TACA Funds.	20%
Build and facilitate relationships among our beneficiaries and within the broader Dallas arts community.	10%

More specifically, the Executive Director’s responsibilities will include:

- Serve as the fundraising lead for TACA and the champion for relationships with existing and prospective donors. Direct fundraising programs including special events, memberships (individual, corporate, foundation), grants, and Board giving. Lead high-level cultivation of prospects. Be the public face of TACA.
- Develop and recommend to the Board short- and long-term goals and strategies. Work with the Board on the implementation of the strategic plan, its periodic review, and modifications to its assumptions.
- Manage Board relations in such a manner that elicits Board involvement in TACA’s fundraising, programs and initiatives, attracts new Board members who bring even greater capabilities to its service, and assures the effective discharge of the Board’s governance responsibilities. Enlist all Board members to advocate for TACA’s mission and to help connect in raising funds.
- Oversee effective and meaningful programs and services to TACA beneficiaries. Regularly assess if such programs and services meet expectations of beneficiaries, Board members, and funders; identify to the Board areas that are in need of development, expansion, or scaling back/cessation.
- Ensure that TACA is staffed with individuals with the appropriate skills, ambition, and maturity to meet the organization’s goals. Enable staff to take independent responsibility, exercise dutiful decision-making, and be accountable.
- Direct and be accountable for TACA’s financial management, “owning” budgets and approving expenditures within Board guidelines. Assure that timely and accurate financial and program outcome results are readily provided. Closely monitor financial performance and initiate and/or propose mid-course corrections to stay on budget.

Through this work the ED is expected to communicate the mission, programs, and services of TACA in an effective, clear and concise manner. The ED will by her/his decisions, actions, and statements, represent the values and mission of TACA.

The ED will promote open two-way communications and information-sharing between the Board, the staff, and committees. Current standing committees include: Executive, Development, Finance, Nominating, Profile and Brand Management, and Grants.

The successful candidate will lead TACA, with staff currently in the following roles:

- Director of Development (vacant)
 - Senior Development Manager
 - Development Assistant
 - Contract Event Planner
- Director of Finance and Administration
- Executive Assistant
- Deputy Director Programs and Marketing
 - Program and Marketing Manager
 - Contract Public Relations



Courtesy of TACA Beneficiary Fine Arts Chamber Players

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE OVERVIEW

TACA is seeking an experienced, visionary leader who will work collaboratively with the Board of Directors, staff, and arts community, to define and realize a new vision for the organization and play a critical role stimulating growth in the Dallas arts community. With a more than fifty-year history of providing critical operating support to arts and cultural organizations in Dallas and a deep understanding of the local arts community, TACA is primed to increase its impact.

The organization decidedly seeks a discerning leader to help prioritize where its efforts will add the greatest value and stimulus across the arts community. The successful candidate will be a charismatic, transformational leader who will refresh TACA's brand and reputation to remain highly relevant with future generations. Further, TACA seeks an innovative and proven fundraising professional to design and execute a strategic development plan so as to be able to distribute over \$1M in grant funds annually.

Essential experience of candidates:

- Five+ years of experience in high-level administration or management, with particular preference for experience in the nonprofit sector.
- Strong evidence of previous fundraising success – setting fundraising strategy and securing major gifts
- Knowledge of the local arts and/or philanthropic landscape, preferred
- College degree from an accredited college or university
- An equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered

- Favorable experience leading and managing a staff

Successful candidates will demonstrate the following competencies:

- Enterprise or program leadership: Understands a broad array of enterprise functions, how they interrelate to drive growth and goal achievement, and how to motivate and supervise others (demonstrated by having achieved programmatic, financial management, development, and growth objectives)
- Resource development: Secures financial and other resources for a nonprofit, based upon a common vision for, and valuation of, the institution (measured through fundraising dollars raised; significant partnerships; creative approaches to raise funds; and similar metrics).
- Relationship building: Builds relationships with ease and authenticity. Proven ability to navigate and energize a diverse group of highly engaged stake-holders, ranging from Board members, to donors, volunteers, and staff, and external audiences. Exhibits high emotional intelligence.
- Marketing communications: Possesses an accomplished presence in public settings and a knowledge of ways to utilize communications to promote the vision and programs of the organization. Presents ideas orally and in writing to others in a manner that achieves clarity, buy-in and commitment, and energizes and inspires.
- Financial acumen: “Literate” in business (demonstrated by having successfully created and managed to budgets, and made mid-period expense adjustments to meet budgetary goals).
- People skills: Personal leadership and management style that promotes teamwork and accessibility, retains high performing staff, and delegates and encourages individual accountability (evaluated through evidence of leading a work environment recognized for a high level of organization, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accuracy, and results).

Successful candidates will also demonstrate the following key personal characteristics:

- Passion for the mission of TACA
- Visionary—imagines what is possible and persuasively articulates that vision
- Original thinker, who inquisitively challenges assumptions
- Team player, collaborating broadly
- Achievement orientation; takes initiative
- Dives into this work and becomes knowledgeable
- Enthusiasm for high-level networking and donor cultivation
- Commitment to diversity and working within diverse communities
- Servant leader mentality
- Believes there is no task too big or too small to take on
- Demonstrates and promotes a climate of courtesy, respect and professionalism

VICTORY SEARCH GROUP PROFILE

Victory Search Group is a senior level retained executive search firm serving a select group of clients from five offices across the United States. [Victory Search Group](#) has successfully identified, assessed and recruited senior leadership for 16 years. Victory Search Group is highly collaborative and focused on customer service; we prize partnering with our clients and are trusted by them for our judgment, integrity and responsiveness.

We follow a detailed five step search process that places significant emphasis on understanding our Client's needs, organizational issues and the critical factors required for success by an outside executive. Our success is simply an intense focus on executing each step of the search process, without cutting any corners, while maintaining a constant dialog with both clients and candidates.

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Courtesy of TACA Beneficiary Uptown Players

ⁱ Stern, M. J. and S. Seifert, *The Social Wellbeing of New York City's Neighborhoods: The Contribution of Culture and the Arts*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project, March, 2017.

ⁱⁱ See: 1) Fine Arts Fund, "The Arts Ripple Effect: A Research-Based Strategy to Build Shared Responsibility for the Arts" (2010), http://www.topospartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Arts_topos_1-10.pdf. Accessed 27 March 2018. 2) ArtPlace America's online Library for links to numerous resources, <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/resources>. Accessed 27 March 2018.