

# TheAmistadCenter forArt&Culture

AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

[www.amistadcenter.org](http://www.amistadcenter.org)

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### **ORGANIZATION**

The Amistad Center for Art & Culture (The Amistad) celebrates and presents art and culture influenced by people of African descent through education, scholarship, and social experiences, guided by the vision “minds are opened, lives are changed.” Its legacy is to ensure that the collection is cared for and made available to the public for generations to come. A "museum within a museum," The Amistad enjoys a unique institutional relationship with the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art that promotes rich cross-cultural conversations between art and audiences.

In 1987, a handful of local visionaries created The Amistad Foundation and joined forces with private foundations, corporations, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and the State of Connecticut to purchase and provide public access to an extraordinary private assemblage of 6,000 works of art, artifacts, and archives. This remarkable compilation documents more than 300 years of the Black experience in America—a truly rich resource of immense educational value and testimony to America's diverse and dynamic culture. The collection was placed at the Wadsworth Atheneum, the nation's oldest and continuously open public art museum and the first major museum in the region to devote a gallery to African-American art. The first exhibition was held in 1990, entitled *Stand in the Place: Images from The Amistad Foundation's African American Collection*. The organization is now steward to a collection of 7,000 works of art, artifacts, and popular culture objects.

More than two decades after acquiring the collection, The Amistad has evolved into a major cultural resource which has created and presented over 50 exhibitions to the general public, has a growing membership, and provides a multitude of educational program offerings. Over the past several years, the organization has gained acclaim and recognition by bringing art luminaries before live audiences to explore their creative work; developing programs that bring families together for free hands-on arts, crafts, and learning opportunities; and creating a teen advisory group that invites community participation from the group's peers to keep The Amistad relevant and engaging for young audiences.

While programs at The Amistad have become a staple in the cultural life of Greater Hartford, the key element of its institutional identity is the collection. It speaks to the origins and spread of slavery, Black resistance and the abolitionist movement, the Civil War and Emancipation, Reconstruction, the daily life of slaves, the civil rights movement, and many other topics that tell the story of people of African descent during the last 300 years in America. It also tells the stories of many artistic, literary, and political figures in American history. Mid-to-late twentieth-century works such as William Anderson's photographic documentation of daily life in Georgia in the 1970s and the paintings and prints of important artists such as Hale Woodruff, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Herbert Gentry, and the recently discovered Connecticut folk artist Ellis Ruley bring the collection into the twenty-first century.

The Amistad Center for Art & Culture is an independently incorporated and managed 501(c)3 organization, governed by an engaged and committed 25-member Board of Directors. The organization employs three full-time and one part-time staff members, has a 2015-2016 operating budget of \$600,000 and an endowment of \$100,000. Approximately 60 percent of revenue is contributed through foundation, corporate, and individual support and 40 percent is earned through memberships and special events. The Board expects the new Executive Director to work with them to diversify revenues and develop opportunities to grow earned and contributed revenue in the future.

*Executive Director –The Amistad Center for Art and Culture*

*12/17/15*

## **COMMUNITY**

Hartford is Connecticut's capital city, birthplace of the Boys & Girls Club, and the first FM station to begin broadcasting in the world. Its 18 square miles are home to 125,000 residents, world-class dining, international cultural attractions, award-winning entertainment venues, and some of the largest corporations in the nation.

Hartford and the region are ranked highly for workforce productivity, accessibility, income levels, technology, education, the arts, and heritage. Hartford is resource-rich, with desirable residential real estate, communications, infrastructure, parkland and nature trails, health care, public safety, and other amenities. Because of the city's vibrant arts, culture, and entertainment sector, noted economist Richard Florida ranked Hartford as one of the "Top 20" coolest places to live, work, start a family, and have fun. Greater Hartford also is one of the best regions in the U.S. for supporting the arts, with the tenth-largest United Arts Fund in the nation. The music scene is vibrant, with a symphony, the Hartt School of Music, and a rich tradition of jazz performance.

Hartford serves as the headquarters for several Fortune 500 companies, including United Technologies Corporation, The Hartford Financial Services Group, Aetna Inc., and Northeast Utilities. Hailed as "the insurance capital of the world," Hartford employs seven times more people in the insurance field than the average metropolitan area. Hartford has also attracted many significant businesses in other industries including aerospace, precision machining, information technology, and medicine.

More than 23.5 million people live within a two-hour drive of Hartford. An estimated 33 percent of U.S. and 68 percent of Canadian residents and consumers are within a day's drive of New England's Knowledge Corridor. The Corridor stretches from Springfield, Massachusetts, to New Haven, Connecticut, and is home to 41 colleges and universities and 215,000 students. The city of Hartford is home to Trinity College and the University of Hartford. Connecticut ranks third in the nation for advanced degrees. 34.9 percent of residents in the Hartford County Metropolitan Statistical Area have at least a Bachelor's degree. Connecticut's school systems get high marks nationally with students ranking #1 in mathematics, writing, and reading, according to standardized tests.

An extensive transportation network includes major interstates, an international airport, easy access to rail service, and regional bus and Bus Rapid Transit service. The Hartford region boasts more than 150 local arts, cultural, and heritage organizations including the Wadsworth Atheneum and the New Britain Museum of American Art; the Tony Award-winning Hartford Stage; the Mark Twain House and Harriet Beecher Stowe Center; and America's first public park, Bushnell Park. The region's scenic countryside includes nature preserves, hiking and biking trails, vineyards, and seasonal farm stands. Local athletics include the University of Connecticut Huskies and the Travelers Championship PGA Tour golf tournament. Also, ground was recently broken on a \$56 million minor league baseball stadium, which will open in Downtown Hartford in 2016 as the new home to an AA-affiliate of the Colorado Rockies.

In addition to the abundance of education, arts, heritage, culture, sports, and entertainment, the area is close to many other attractions. Connecticut's shoreline and beaches are a 45-minute drive south. Two of the world's largest casinos are just a 40-minute drive away. To the north are some of New England's highest mountains, perfect for skiing and hiking. Sources: [www.metrohartford.com](http://www.metrohartford.com), [www.enjoyhartford.com](http://www.enjoyhartford.com), [www.hartford.gov](http://www.hartford.gov)

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Executive Director must be a creative thinker and visionary with the ability to create new opportunities to introduce audiences to African American Art while expanding The Amistad's impact locally and nationally. Reporting to the President of the Board of Directors and working in partnership with the staff, the Executive Director will be charged with leading The Amistad, with its mission, vision, and community values as guides. The scope of responsibility will include oversight of external and community relations, audience engagement, fund

development, long-range planning, collection development, and overall internal operational, financial, and administrative responsibilities. The Executive Director will maintain a positive, team-spirited organizational culture, which builds on The Amistad's history of delivering stellar artistic and cultural experiences with the efficacy of best business practices, fiscal accountability, and institutional impact.

## **DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Leadership, Outreach, and Community Relations***

Create opportunities for learning and collaboration that further the mission, vision, programs, and impact of The Amistad and act as a primary spokesperson with the Board President, positioning the organization as a relevant cultural asset in the community.

- Nurture the long-standing institutional affiliation with the Wadsworth Atheneum to support a mutually beneficial relationship that strengthens The Amistad's stature in the community.
- Cultivate appropriate strategic partnerships throughout the community to embrace the diverse needs of the Hartford community and advance educational programs, outreach, and community activities.
- Communicate the work and mission of the organization to the public in a manner that enhances its reputation and standing locally and nationally.
- Cultivate good relations with civic leaders throughout the region, other arts and cultural organizations, community service organizations, and the media.
- Support the Education Coordinator to deliver stellar experiential and object-based programs and lifelong learning opportunities onsite, off-site, and digitally.

### ***Institutional Advancement***

Take a leadership role in all fund development programs, including endowment, planned giving, and annual operating efforts and identify appropriate funding opportunities from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies with the Board of Directors and staff. Ensure the highest levels of customer service, effective audience interaction, and community engagement.

- Identify stakeholders, develop strategies, and define how key messages will be delivered to various individuals and institutions to maximize the visibility, brand, relevancy, and earned and contributed revenues.
- Lead staff and Board in development activities, maintain strong relationships with the funding community, and develop the most effective donor stewardship and cultivations methods with Board and staff.
- Develop marketing, communication, and public relations programs -- including social media platforms -- with the Board and staff that achieve earned income goals from memberships, special programs, and events while enhancing The Amistad's visibility, value, and reputation in the community.
- Continue to create outstanding social experiences, which have become the hallmark of the organization and recommend other opportunities to grow and develop new revenue streams.

### ***Collections Stewardship, Exhibition, and Program Planning***

Ensure the careful, sound, and responsible management of the collection, including legal, social, and ethical obligations to provide proper care as well as intellectual control. In collaboration with the Curator, develop a coordinated exhibition and program schedule that maximizes use of The Amistad's collection and resources.

- Support the development, management, and care of the permanent collection.
- Create new opportunities to use the collection to advance the mission, including a plan to digitize the collection.
- Develop and implement a rotation of stellar, diverse, and relevant exhibitions and programs that engage and educate the Hartford community while increasing The Amistad's reach nationwide.
- Seek opportunities to strengthen connections with other arts and culture organizations in support of the collection and exhibitions.

### ***Operational and Strategic Planning***

Lead short-term operational and long-range strategic planning and implementation processes, including routine assessment of operations, mentoring and supervision of human resources, mobilization of technological resources, and decision-making related to appropriate use of fiscal resources.

- Direct administrative personnel relations to maximize effectiveness and productivity, administering decisive fiscal and organizational leadership.
- Coordinate activities with Wadsworth Atheneum staff and leadership and foster a positive and productive relationship between the two institutions.
- Establish an administrative presence and internal relations that promote a professionally kind working atmosphere and attainment of mutually established goals.
- Build a strategy to effectively mobilize and utilize volunteers in support the mission and programs.
- Generate, implement, and monitor a long-term institutional plan and vision in coordination with the Board and staff, building on the 2011-2016 strategic plan.

### ***Governance and Financial Management***

Be responsible for the development of financial resources to advance the mission. Ensure that financial activities comply with generally accepted accounting practices. Provide support to best utilize the talents and resources of the Board, stimulate involvement, recruit new members, and work closely with them to ensure strong fiscal health and organizational governance.

- Maintain fiscal responsibility for overall budget and ensure the most effective use of resources.
- Manage cash flow and present appropriate balance sheets, income statements, and other financial oversight tools for Board review.
- Initiate and maintain effective communications with the Board President, Treasurer, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers.
- Partner with the Board in prospect identification, cultivation, and recruitment of new Board members.
- Orient, educate, and engage Board members to maximize their effectiveness.
- Celebrate the successes of individual Board members and the Board as a whole in recognizing their contribution of time and resources as community ambassadors.
- Help Board committees develop and implement their goals and objectives, and name appropriate staff liaisons to work closely with committees.

### **TRAITS & CHARACTERISTICS**

The Executive Director will bring an optimistic, pragmatic, and entrepreneurial perspective in building an effective management team and organizational structure that best serves The Amistad's mission, vision, and goals. An intellectually curious and assertive professional who is a confident manager, the selected individual will have a proven track record and possess exceptional teamwork, conflict management, communication, revenue enhancement, and leadership skills. He/she will have an appreciation of the values, history, and traditions of the Black experience in America. The selected candidate will act as a strong partner to the Board, staff, and community stakeholders and should also demonstrate the following competencies:

- ***Leadership and Stakeholder Focus:*** The ability to organize and motivate other people to accomplish goals while understanding that plans may need to be altered, and therefore also have the agility and adaptability to embrace and implement change. Working to strategically place a high value on internal and external stakeholders with a keen focus on listening to, understanding, and appreciating feedback.
- ***Planning and Organization:*** The capacity to set relevant, realistic, and attainable goals and prioritize activities to meet those goals and objectives. The ability to anticipate effects, outcomes, and risks and manage resources according to priorities.
- ***Decision-making and Personal Accountability:*** The ability to effectively utilize processes to make informed decisions and then assume accountability for business and personal actions.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

The Executive Director should have demonstrated skills in all aspects of non-profit management, possess an avid interest in and/or knowledge of the fine arts, African-American art, or a closely related art form, and at least five to seven years of senior management experience with increasing levels of responsibility. Experience with direct stewardship of Boards of Directors is preferred. A Bachelor's degree is required and an advanced degree preferred. The position requires excellent knowledge of and ability in fundraising, marketing, audience development, branding, and operations. Although it is highly likely that the successful candidate will have career experience at a senior management level of a museum or cultural arts organization, it is also possible that the individual could come from another background or industry.

## **COMPENSATION & BENEFITS**

Competitive compensation commensurate with experience and a generous benefits package, including health insurance (medical, dental, and vision), life insurance, flexible spending accounts, paid time off and holidays, museum membership, and other discounts. Participation in a 401(a) Retirement Savings Plan with a 5 percent employer contribution is also included.

## **APPLICATIONS & INQUIRIES**

Please submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments, electronic submission preferred to:

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