

National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA)
Position: Executive Director
Location: Maryland (Washington, D.C. area)

The National Council for the Traditional Arts is a national leader in the field of folk and traditional arts, a unique and venerable organization poised to enter a new phase in its long history. We seek a creative, dynamic and enthusiastic Executive Director who will become only the fifth individual to lead the NCTA since its founding over eight decades ago. The ideal candidate will be a confident, proven leader with a passion for the NCTA's mission, vision and values who: is committed to maintaining the organization's high standards of excellence; embraces the challenges of envisioning, shaping and securing the NCTA's future in the 21st century; can inspire and engage the organization's board of directors; and effectively lead the NCTA's highly competent, dedicated and extraordinarily productive staff.

THE ORGANIZATION

Mission

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. Founded in 1933, it is the nation's oldest producing and presenting organization with such a focus. Its programs celebrate and honor deeply rooted cultural expressions—music, dance, crafts, rituals, foodways and stories passed on through time in families, communities, tribal, ethnic, regional and occupational groups. Stressing excellence and traditionality, NCTA presents the nation's very finest artists in festivals, tours, international cultural exchange, workshops, demonstrations and exhibitions, media productions, school programs, and other activities. It works in partnership with communities across America to establish new, sustainable traditional arts events that deliver lasting social, cultural and economic benefits. The NCTA champions the interests of folk and traditional artists and organizations in the arena of public policy.

Values

The NCTA is committed to presenting those arts that collectively define us as a people, that represent continuity from the past to the present and into the future. It believes that bringing diverse grassroots artists of the highest caliber to the people of our nation and the world creates powerful, authentic cultural experiences that are transformative, fostering cultural understanding and strengthening civil society. It supports the keepers of our cultural heritage who ensure the transmission of these arts to future generations. The NCTA's community collaborations are exercises in cultural democracy, and demonstrate the organization's commitment to working at the grassroots level in its many endeavors.

Annually, the NCTA's work provides performance opportunities for 1,400+ traditional artists, and presents predominantly free public programs that serve an estimated live audience of 972,000, and millions more through various media. These programs conservatively generate \$92 million of economic activity in communities around the nation.

MAJOR PROGRAMS

National Folk Festival—First presented in 1934, the National Folk Festival is the oldest and longest-running multicultural traditional arts festival in the nation. It remains the NCTA’s flagship program to this day. This traveling, free event, which relocates on a three-year cycle, showcases the nation’s finest traditional artists, and attracts audiences of over 150,000. Working collaboratively with festival host communities, the National Folk Festival has, in recent decades, been the catalyst for the creation of successful, sustainable legacy festivals in Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Maine, Virginia and Montana.

Partner Festivals—The NCTA continues to partner with a number of former National Folk Festival host cities in the presentation of four major successor festivals, all of them free events: Lowell Folk Festival (Lowell, MA); Richmond Folk Festival, (Richmond, VA); and the Montana Folk Festival (Butte, MT), each with an annual attendance in the range of 150,000-200,000.

NCTA Tours—The first U.S. organization to tour authentic folk artists, the NCTA has organized 57 national performing arts tours since beginning this work in 1978. Among them are: *A La Mode de Chez Nous*, *The Cowboy Tour*, *Khmer Classical Dance*, *Masters of the Folk Violin*, *Echoes of Africa*, *Masters of the Steel*, *String Guitar*, *From Plains, Pueblos & Tundra*, *Celtic Masters*, *Masters of the Banjo*, *Der Yiddisher Caravan*, *America’s Master Storytellers*, *Masters of Mexican Music*, and *Music from the Crooked Road: Mountain Music of Virginia*.

National Parks—For over 40 years, through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, the NCTA has assisted parks across the country with the research, development, production and documentation of cultural programs, exhibits and other special projects. The NCTA works with four to six parks annually.

The NCTA Collection—The NCTA audio archive contains over 8,500 hours (and growing) of precious field and live event recordings dating from the 1930s. A multi-year project to preserve the entire collection is ongoing; significant portions of preserved collection materials are now housed at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.

NEA National Heritage Fellowships—The National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship is the highest honor our nation bestows upon its folk and traditional artists. Since 1983, the NCTA has organized the annual week of NEA activities that honor these “national living treasures” and produced the culminating gala public concert.

Maryland Programs—In partnership with Maryland Traditions, the folklife program of the Maryland State Arts Council, the NCTA produces the annual Maryland Traditions Folklife Festival, the Maryland Traditions Heritage Awards ceremony, among other projects.

Services to Artists—The NCTA is committed to bridge building between highly deserving traditional artists and the public. The artists served during decades of festival and touring work have frequently faced challenges related to minority, ethnic or regional status, or language barriers. In addition to the broad exposure provided through participation in NCTA-produced events, the NCTA supports traditional artists in a variety of other ways.

Services to the Field—Located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the NCTA has long provided services to a variety of federal agencies and other national institutions. It represents the interests of the field in various forums, and works to foster policymakers' appreciation and understanding of folk and traditional arts and artists.

ABOUT SILVER SPRING

The NCTA's offices are located in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. Silver Spring is a major business, entertainment, dining, residential and transportation hub situated at the north apex of Washington, D.C., which, over the past 15 years, has undergone extensive redevelopment. There is nearby access to public transportation, including Metrorail. The Red Line station is located two blocks from the office, with a travel time to downtown Washington of 35-45 minutes.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director (ED) will direct the overall operation of the NCTA and its activities including: event/project planning, programming and production, administrative and fiscal management, strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, staff procurement and management, and board relations. The ED is responsible for advancing the organization's mission; supporting and maintaining the continued excellence of NCTA programs; and leading the organization into its next phase of development.

The ED is responsible for implementing the policies and directives of the NCTA Board of Directors and reports directly to the Chairman of the Board.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Leadership

Provide vision and leadership in the formulation and implementation of strategic priorities.

- Serve as a primary public spokesperson for the organization.
- Encourage new approaches to meeting identified challenges, and continuously evaluate existing programs and services with regard to mission relevance, financial viability, and other considerations.
- Keep abreast of changing economic, social and political climates, and demonstrate the ability to adapt operations, programs and services to changing circumstances.

- Provide direction to the board and staff on the effective deployment and enhancement of human and financial resources to insure the stability and continued success of the organization.
- Lead the visioning and development of new programs and partnerships that further the NCTA's mission.

Branding and institutional visibility

Increase brand awareness and visibility by promoting the public image of the NCTA and its major programs, while clearly articulating its mission, vision, programs and impact.

- Lead the development of a national marketing and promotion plan to include extensive use of digital and social media.
- Activate plans for the educational, digital presentation and dissemination of NCTA's archival holdings.
- Deploy appropriate human and financial resources needed to implement these plans, and oversee their execution.

Fundraising and Development

Develop and direct all fundraising efforts.

- Serve as primary fundraiser for the organization, responsible for creating and executing annual and long-term fundraising strategies.
- Pursue appropriate funding opportunities, including government and foundation grants, contract revenue, sponsorships, and individual and corporate giving.
- Seek out and build relationships with potential funders.
- Maintain long-term relationships with federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, National Park Service, Library of Congress, and the Maryland State Arts Council.
- Effectively leverage board relationships in cultivating and soliciting financial support.

Program Management and Development

Direct and oversee all programs and projects to ensure that the highest artistic and production standards are maintained and advanced, and that all work furthers the mission and vision of the NCTA.

- Direct and oversee program planning and implementation, including the preparation of project budgets, production schedules, staffing plans and post-program reviews.
- Initiate, build, maintain and expand key relationships with community, institutional and other partners and constituencies.
- Lead the exploration, conceptualization, and development of new programs and projects, and seek out institutional collaborations and partnerships.

Governance

NCTA depends on an active and effective Board of Directors. The ED works closely with the Chairman and the membership to promote the financial stability and overall health of the organization. S/he is expected to assist with preparations for regular meetings and to keep members closely advised on matters affecting the organization's well-being.

Administrative

Develop, nurture and sustain an organizational environment conducive to superior achievement and high morale.

- Oversee all aspects of personnel planning to ensure that the organization is effectively structured and staffed.
- Hire and supervise staff and contracted professionals.
- Provide leadership that is motivational, collaborative, team building, ethical, and committed to excellence.
- Monitor staff performance on an ongoing basis with formal year-end evaluations.
- Execute all duties in a manner consistent with NCTA plans, guidelines and procedures, and in compliance with relevant regulatory guidelines of agreements with federal, state and local agencies, which may include the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, the State of Maryland, other state arts councils, and various municipalities hosting NCTA programs.

Financial Management

Oversee all aspects of the organization's financial operation to ensure sound financial management.

- Prepare annual operating budgets in coordination with the Treasurer.
- Present, monitor and report on the annual operating budget to the Board.
- Monitor operating and program budgets to ensure efficient, accurate cost allocation, proper accounting procedures and financial controls.
- Ensure timely, accurate reporting of financial data and compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations.

Policy and Advocacy

- Represent the NCTA and the field of folk and traditional arts at meetings, conferences and public forums where the interests of the organization, field, and artists are affected.
- Keep abreast of national and state initiatives, policies, legislation and funding related to the arts in general, and of relevance to the folk and traditional arts in particular.
- Educate policy-makers on the nature and value of the folk and traditional arts; articulate and defend the interests of folk arts and artists as appropriate.

QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess a strong commitment to, and understanding of, the folk and traditional arts. S/he will have a minimum of five (5) years' experience in a senior role of responsibility for an arts or cultural organization, including the supervision of professional staff, and a minimum of three (3) years in a senior role of responsibility in the conception, programming, production and marketing of cultural programs. Essential qualifications include the proven abilities to: effectively articulate the nature and value of the folk and traditional arts to non-professionals; provide impeccable financial management and oversight for the organization and its many and diverse projects and programs; plan and conduct successful fundraising activities including grant proposals, sponsorships, individual giving, etc.; develop and maintain collegial, collaborative

relationships with coworkers and partners; and negotiate programs and budgets with outside program and funding partners. Excellent verbal and public presentation skills are required, as are excellent, adaptable writing skills, and an understanding of how to employ digital and social media to broaden positive organizational exposure. A Bachelor's degree in a related field is required.

Please include a cover letter explaining why this position is of interest to you, a resume and a minimum of three professional references for the selection committee to contact.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Competitive compensation, commensurate with experience. Benefits package includes health insurance, paid time off and holidays, and participation in the company retirement plan.

APPLICATIONS & INQUIRIES

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

Attn: ED Search Committee
c/o National Council for the Traditional Arts
8757 Georgia Avenue, Suite 450
Silver Spring, MD 20910

executivedirector_search@ncta-usa.org

Applications must be received by March 30, 2018.