

“PlayPenn is really a great play development place because it puts all the power in the hands of the artists.”

- France Ya-Chu Cowhig, Playwright

Organization

Since its inception in 2004, PlayPenn has been nationally recognized for its dedication to the development of new plays and playwrights in the heart of Philadelphia. The organization was founded on bringing in writers whose work had potential for production and provided those writers with the resources to be successful. PlayPenn is dedicated to the development of new plays and playwrights. PlayPenn fully supports artists of all cultures, the needs of the writer, and the demands of the play in an ever-evolving process within which playwrights can engage in risk taking, boundary-pushing work.

PlayPenn has overseen the development of more than 140 new plays since its opening and nearly 60 percent of these plays have led to 425 professional productions across the Philadelphia region, nationally, and worldwide. The annual highlight of PlayPenn’s programming is its three-week conference each summer, which has served as an influential force in new play development for American playwrights. In addition, PlayPenn offers year-round workshops, a robust education department, and an emerging writer’s group, culminating in more than 10 new plays each year that serve more than 1,800 artists, producers, and theater goers. PlayPenn is committed to play selection, workshopping, and staged readings that assure high quality, equity, and diversity. PlayPenn is free and open to all; there are no application fees to the playwrights and no admission fees to audience members. The playwright has the unique opportunity of seeing and hearing a live audience respond to the play.

The Foundry, a Philadelphia Playwrights Lab, is a PlayPenn program that provides a three-year membership to support emerging playwrights in city of Philadelphia with professional development, networking opportunities, and exposure as they launch their playwriting careers. Educational programs include both in-person and online classes, weekend masterclasses, and multi-day courses for theater artists, writers, and enthusiasts of all experience levels, along with scholarship opportunities that are available for longtime theatre-lovers and emerging artists alike.

PlayPenn has a 10-member board of trustees, led by Board President Nancy Boykin. The Artistic Director is an active voting member of the board. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, PlayPenn reported revenues of \$1.1 million, with \$1 million from contributions and grants and the balance from earned revenue. Expenses totaled \$469,401 for the year.

Community

PlayPenn is located in Philadelphia, the home of a vibrant arts community fueled by a diverse population of artists. Philadelphia commemorates its past and revels in the present and future as a funky, modern metropolis on a cultural upswing. The city’s population of more than 1.6 million people enjoys world-class entertainment and cultural offerings, restaurants, educational institutions, healthcare, employment opportunities, and other benefits of a major metropolitan area. Over the past decade, the city’s central core has become increasingly attractive as a 24-hour live-work city for a new generation.

Philadelphia celebrates and recognizes the importance of the arts and culture industry. The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance leads, strengthens, and gives voice to more than 400 member organizations that generate over \$3.3 billion in economic impact for the region. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Rodin Museum, Barnes Foundation, African American Museum in Philadelphia, Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, National Museum of American Jewish History, and many more galleries and visual arts organizations energize the dynamic nature of this historic city. Pennsylvania Ballet, Opera Philadelphia, Academy of Music, Arden Theatre, Freedom Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts serve the local and global audience, as well as companies interested in new works such as The Wilma Theater, InterAct Theatre Company, Azuka Theatre, Simpatico Theatre, and hundreds of community-based and culturally diverse organizations.

The area’s many universities and colleges make Philadelphia a top international study destination, as the city has evolved into an educational and economic hub. The University of Pennsylvania is a large presence, along with other

higher education institutions such as Temple University, Drexel University, University of the Arts, and the Curtis Institute of Music. Greater Philadelphia is home to some of the best medical facilities in the United States, including Pennsylvania Hospital, founded in 1751 as the nation's first hospital with the first medical school dedicated exclusively to pediatric medicine.

Sources: visitphilly.com; moveto.com; greatamericancountry.com; phila.gov; philaculture.org

Position Summary

A confident and decisive leader, the Artistic Director will be receptive to new ideas, opportunities, and innovation while effectively leveraging organizational, human, financial, and technological resources. Reporting to the board of trustees, the Artistic Director will oversee PlayPenn's operations, finances, and fundraising. This individual will be an innovative and dynamic leader, consummate fundraiser, and relationship manager. With a keen interest in the development of new plays, they will lead PlayPenn's future development and growth. The Artistic Director will expand anti-racism, diversity, equity, and access initiatives that are embedded within the organization's mission, vision, and programs. They will engage with donors, philanthropic supporters, artists, community leaders, and other regional stakeholders across Philadelphia. The Artistic Director will foster an inclusive environment of excellence, where transparency and accountability build trust among the board, staff, artists, and community. They will collaborate with the staff and artistic partners to assemble a team of collaborators whose values are in harmony with PlayPenn's mission, process, and desire to successfully serve the artistic community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Artistic Vision

- Find and support new plays and playwrights, focusing on implementing selected plays and ensuring that all programs reflect PlayPenn's values.
- Provide visionary and thoughtful leadership that inspires staff, board, and external stakeholders to participate in a vibrant and exciting future for PlayPenn.
- Embrace the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access to ensure an artistic and organizational culture that respects different perspectives and appreciates the significant impacts of both programming and hiring decisions on the relationship between the organization and the artists it serves.
- Intentionally seek opportunities for the selection of new plays that expand the voices, perspectives, and ideas that reflect and amplify cultural diversity and heritage.
- Address systemic racism with thoughtful programmatic vision, embedded governance structures, dynamic staffing, equitable vendor interactions, and intentional audience experiences.
- Lead by sharing power with a collaborative style, creating a climate of respectful inquiry and trust.
- Oversee and implement the annual production of PlayPenn's annual three-week national conference as a flagship event for the organization.
- Engage and motivate board members, leverage their skills and networks, and collaborate with board leadership on strengthening board governance in support of the organization.
- Maintain and bolster PlayPenn's national reputation to serve local, national, and global artist communities as one of the leading theaters for play development in Philadelphia and the United States.
- Oversee ongoing artistic programs and services, including The Foundry and educational programs.
- Liaise with other play development and producing organizations throughout the country.
- Advocate for artists, arts education, and arts access throughout the community and Philadelphia.
- Conduct ongoing, annual evaluations of programs, activities, and staff.
- Keep the board informed and knowledgeable about the artistic and financial impact of PlayPenn's programs.

Revenue Development and External Communications

- Serve as the organization's lead fundraiser, cultivate and nurture relationships with individual and institutional funders, and expand the network of supporters to realize the organization's mission.
- Inspire and increase fundraising strategies and initiatives for PlayPenn as a forward-thinking, enthusiastic fundraiser with an artistic vision to speak compellingly to current and potential donors and board members.

- Collaborate with the board and staff to implement a robust portfolio of contributed revenue, cultivate current and future individual and foundation donors, and identify and secure gifts, grants, and sponsorships from corporations.
- Pursue public funding opportunities; establish and strengthen relationships with local, state, and federal officials; and ensure quality applications to public sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.
- Bring an entrepreneurial approach to marketing and communication strategies that maximizes earned revenue.
- Conceive and implement the development and advancement strategies and tactics that support the organization's creative and financial growth and sustainability.
- Lead the organization's contributed revenue initiatives, growing a team of fundraising staff to focus on nurturing year-round, robust efforts to expand the pipeline of individual, corporate, and institutional donors and support the organization's programming and capital needs.
- Drive the marketing strategy to maximize earned revenue opportunities, partnerships and sponsorships, and additional entrepreneurial approaches.
- Develop other revenue maximization and expanded governance opportunities.

Organizational Management and Fiscal Oversight

- Creatively and strategically reestablish PlayPenn's forward-looking operations in a post-pandemic world, including rebuilding the staff and engaging with returning and new audiences whose behaviors and expectations may have permanently changed as a result of the physical, social, political, and civic changes of 2020.
- Oversee operations, the development of the PlayPenn budget, and communication strategies.
- Collaborate actively with the board to maintain effective financial management and oversight, with a strong understanding of the operating budget, fundraising plans, cash flow, and balance sheet.
- Provide day-to-day management and mentorship to the staff, establish performance standards and workplans, and encourage professional and career development for everyone associated with PlayPenn, including staff, seasonal artists, and the board.
- Foster clarity and transparency with executive functions and provide a safe and welcoming work environment that values creativity, personal accountability, transparency, and mutual respect.
- Liaise with the board as an active, voting member.
- Partner with the board to recruit, cultivate, and onboard new members.
- Maintain the flow of information between the board and the organization by providing timely access to accurate and updated information on finances, policies, key performance indicators, cultural trends, and relevant issues to help board members reach decisions that advance the organization's mission.
- Guide and oversee the staff in human resource policies and procedures and other internal organizational management practices to create a balanced, secure, and well-run organization.
- Recruit staff from local, regional, and national theater resources.

Traits and Characteristics

The Artistic Director will exhibit trust, integrity, and transparency and will lead by example with a passion for the organization's vision and the performing arts. They will demonstrate versatility and adaptability to various situations and be comfortable with change. This individual will possess a commitment to collaborative thinking and leadership, effective listening and communication skills, and a desire to aid in the advancement and edification of others.

Other key competencies of this role include:

- **Personal Accountability** – The willingness to self-evaluate, learn from mistakes, take responsibility for personal actions and decisions, accept setbacks, look for ways to progress, and understand how obstacles impact results.
- **Diplomacy and Leadership** – The capacity to listen to and understand different perspectives, handle difficult issues with sensitivity and respect, and communicate effectively with people across hierarchical and functional borders.

- **Teamwork and Appreciating Others** – The ability to drive the realization of a vision and inspire a team in pursuit of shared goals, identifying the strengths of each individual and offering support, guidance, and feedback.
- **Creativity and Innovation** – The aptitude to create new approaches, designs, processes, and systems to achieve the desired result.

Qualifications

Qualified applicants will have senior management experience with a theater, expertise in the fields of new play development and dramaturgy, and knowledge of theater artists. Candidates will show a commitment to inclusive storytelling as a means of building community and encouraging mutual understanding. A successful track record of artistic leadership, decision making, fundraising, and audience growth is necessary. The ideal candidate will possess a deep appreciation for a substantive, meaningful experience of understanding and working in communities and making collaborative changes built on relationships and partnerships. Evidence of specific commitments and actions to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in previous environments, as well as exceptional written and spoken communication skills, are essential.

Compensation and Benefits

PlayPenn offers a competitive salary, expected to be in the range of \$65,000 to \$75,000, and a benefits package that includes paid vacation and employer contributions to medical, dental, and vision insurance. This position will be based in Philadelphia.

Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred), please click [here](#) or visit artsconsulting.com/employment. For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

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Equal Opportunity Employment Statement

PlayPenn hires on the basis of employment equity. We believe supporting each other's individual stories is essential to our work. The more inclusive we are, the better our collective story will be. We seek collaboration with those who bring a range of perspectives, skills, and experiences to the work of advancing new plays and playwrights.

Non-Discrimination Policy

PlayPenn recognizes and intentionally considers that there is not a level playing field with regard to people's experiences and job qualifications, given the structural injustices that affect marginalized groups, including indigenous people, black people, people of color, women, queer/LGBT+ people, disabled people, people living in poverty, and immigrants (especially those with precarious status). We particularly encourage BIPOC (Black people, Indigenous peoples, and People of Color) to apply. The interview and selection committees will include BIPOC currently involved with the organization.