



# Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts

## Executive Director

### Organization

Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts (The Bray) was founded at the foothills of the Montana Rockies in 1951 by entrepreneur, brickmaker, and avid arts patron Archie Bray, who intended it to be a place to “make available for all who are seriously interested in the ceramic arts, a fine place to work.” The primary mission is to provide an environment and connection with other serious artists that stimulates creative work in ceramics. Located on the site of the former Western Clay Manufacturing Company, the 26-acre historic brickyard campus has more than 17 buildings, including a 12,000-square-foot resident artist studio facility, a new education and research facility, multiple sales and exhibition galleries, renovated administrative offices, and a facility for ceramic retail and manufacturing. The property is open to artists, students, gallery visitors, and ceramic supply customers, as well as the general public for classes, gallery visits, retail activity, guided walking tours, and structured group visits. In 2021 The Bray celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and its commitment to contributing to equity in the field of ceramics is stronger than ever. The organization is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among its artists, staff, board, and all members of the community.

Through year-round and short-term residency programs, The Bray provides studio space, facilities, and a supportive community for ceramic artists with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and aesthetic approaches. The residency programs vary in length, emphasize the cross-fertilization of ideas among artists, and provide kilns and facilities geared toward experimentation and exploration. The Bray offers 10 long-term residences that last up to two years, 10 summer residencies, and 10 to 15 short-term residencies throughout the year. Artists come to The Bray to work intensively on creating new bodies of work and/or to examine, explore, and challenge what is possible in their individual studio practice. All resident artists receive free studio space, access to a vast range of kilns and equipment, exhibition opportunities and promotion, discounts on materials and firings, and access to a clay manufacturing facility. The organization also has substantial international impact, bringing together artists from all around the world, providing them with the facilities and freedom to explore their creative voices. Since its inception, more than 600 ceramic artists have come to The Bray to work.

The Bray has a 20-member board of directors led by Chair Sue Tirrell, ceramic artist and former Bray resident. The Bray employs 22 staff members who are aided by a dynamic core of community volunteers. In a typical year (pre-pandemic), The Bray’s cash budget is about \$1.8 million. Earned revenue is approximately \$1.3 million and contributed revenue for current use is approximately \$500,000. These numbers do not include depreciation on plant and equipment or unrealized gains and losses on investments. The net assets of The Bray are currently \$9.5 million, including \$5.3 million in plant and equipment.

### Community

With a population of approximately 32,000 residents, Helena grew out of a mining camp during the Montana gold rush. The city was established in 1864 and became the capital in 1875. At the turn of the last century, the city’s beautiful architecture rivaled most cities in the West due to the money that poured in from the 1864 gold strike, leading to Helena becoming known as “The Queen City of the Rockies.” The city is more widely known for its unmatched natural beauty and support of art and culture. Sitting at the eastern foot of the Continental Divide, it is a stunning region graced by mountains, including Mount Helena and Mount Ascension, which boast some of the best single-track hiking/biking trails in the northwest. Surrounded by national forests, trout-laden rivers, including the majestic Missouri River, and broad, sweeping valleys, Helena is also a world-class destination for skiing, fly-fishing, and rafting.

The city is also rich with history and offers a unique blend of the past and the present. The Montana State Capitol building is built in Greek neoclassical style and features several paintings by famed Montana cowboy artist Charlie Russell. The city is also home to a museum at the Montana Historical Society, showcasing more than 50,000 artifacts detailing the state’s rich culture and history. Reeder’s Alley began life in the 1860s as housing for miners and today it is home to specialty shops, offices, restaurants, and a restored miner’s lodging. One of the premier attractions of Helena is its unique shopping district, the Helena Walking Mall. The three-block-long strip of shops, clubs, and restaurants is along the original path of the Last Chance Gulch, the name of the actual place where gold was discovered in 1864. The local arts and culture scene is a thriving part of the city, including The Myrna Loy,

Grandstreet Theatre, and Helena Symphony. The Holter Museum of Art opened in 1987 and is considered one of the finest in the state, offering more than 20 rotating exhibitions each year.

Helena has a long record of economic stability. Its capital city status makes it a major hub of activity at the county, state, and federal level. Education is a major employer, with Carroll College, Helena College (part of the University of Montana), two high schools, as well as accompanying elementary and middle schools for K–12 students. Helena's economy is also bolstered by Fort William Henry Harrison, a National Guard base located just outside the city.

Source: [helenachamber.com](http://helenachamber.com), [helenamt.com](http://helenamt.com), [helenapublicarts.com](http://helenapublicarts.com)

## Position Summary

Reporting to the board of directors, the Executive Director will be responsible for the overall leadership and administration of The Bray, including artistic direction, strategic programming, business operations, financial management, fundraising, community engagement, and equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. The Executive Director will oversee the daily operations of the organization, providing leadership in the areas of program compliance, quality assurance, program efficiency, and fiscal integrity. They will manage staff and be responsible for the direction and execution of all programs, including artists in residence, visiting artists, education, exhibitions, sales gallery, and ceramic supplies.

The Executive Director will be actively engaged in the world of contemporary ceramic art and will work to attract top artists. This person will activate their broad knowledge of and passion for ceramics and contemporary art to deepen the Bray's global impact and build on its more than 70 years of success. Serving as The Bray's primary ambassador to the local, national, and international clay community, the Executive Director will inspire excellence and provide leadership to ensure the resources, systems, and structures are in place to meet The Bray's strategic goals and community needs. The Executive Director will value and prioritize equity and diversity, creating an environment that is sustainably inclusive, while working creatively and collaboratively to build strong external relationships with individuals and institutions.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Strategic Vision and Leadership

- Embody and provide positive and collaborative leadership to the staff and board with the goal of shaping the organization's future.
- Provide strategic vision and executable goals and objectives to achieve the mission of the organization.
- Inspire and engage stakeholders to support The Bray, as the chief spokesperson and ambassador for the organization.
- Serve as a committed, visionary, and accessible leader for The Bray with a true connection to the organization's stakeholders, including artists, staff, board, donors, and community members.
- Embrace the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access to ensure an artistic and organizational culture that respects different perspectives.
- Nurture an environment of goodwill, inclusion, and empowerment at all levels of constituents through consistent practice of integrity, respect, and active listening.
- Communicate effectively with the board and provide all information necessary for the board to function properly and make informed decisions.
- Lead financial planning for the well-being of the organization, ensuring transparency, integrity, and accuracy in all financial reporting.

### Artistic Vision and Programming

- Provide leadership and mentorship to resident artists, emerging artists, and students of all levels.
- Utilize creative problem-solving skills to lead The Bray through growth and change.
- Activate strategic partnerships with artists and community to present and promote a mix of programs that align with The Bray's mission.
- Plan and implement artistic and educational programming to achieve a balance of locally, nationally, and internationally sourced collaborations and events.

## Staff Management and Empowerment

- Lead and inspire The Bray staff, promoting professional growth, development, and achievement in a supportive environment.
- Champion transparency and collaboration throughout the organization and the community.
- Create a plan to secure appropriate human resources, structures, systems, and technological platforms to attract and retain top talent.
- Empower those at all levels of the organization to have a voice in its future, with the goal of building and securing a sustainable team.
- Establish accountability measures while actively ensuring a safe, respectful, and healthy work environment.

## Fundraising and Earned Revenue Enhancement

- Inspire and engage stakeholders and the community to support positive fundraising efforts for The Bray.
- Collaborate with the Development Director and the board to develop long-term goals and strategies, as well as short-term objectives for all areas of contributed revenue.
- Maintain and grow authentic and productive relationships with individual donors, corporate sponsors, and other private and public funders in collaboration with the development department.
- Actively participate in fundraising events and campaigns.
- Partner with the Communications Director to oversee the creation of all external communication materials, including the website, marketing materials, newsletters, and social media content.
- Attend cultural events and engage with audiences, donors, and other stakeholders to build visibility for the organization.

## Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be a creative, collaborative, and decisive leader, driven by new ideas and results, as well as understanding the needs of artists. This individual will be versatile and able to adapt rapidly to changing priorities while maintaining a positive demeanor. The successful candidate will provide artistic vision, achievable goals, and executable strategy. A people-oriented and diplomatic leader, the Executive Director will inspire excellence and provide support to resident artists and staff. This person will be innovative, curious by nature, and have the ability to see and solve problems from different perspectives. The selected individual will value frequent interaction with internal and external stakeholders and possess excellent time and priority management skills. The successful candidate will bring energy and a deep passion for and knowledge of ceramics and contemporary art.

Other key competencies include:

- **Diplomacy**– The ability to be socially savvy, respectful of differing viewpoints, fair regardless of personal biases, and productive in reaching mutually beneficial outcomes.
- **Leadership** – The aptitude for organizing and motivating people to accomplish goals, analyze needs, and create a sense of order and direction and for gaining active participation among a variety of stakeholders.
- **Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills** – The dexterity and sensitivity to respect team members and their perspectives; to share responsibility for successes and failures and to effectively communicate, build rapport, and relate well to diverse people and perspectives.
- **Professional and Personal Accountability** – The capacity to take responsibility for professional and personal actions, recognizing that mistakes create opportunities for learning and growth.

## Experience and Qualifications

Qualified applicants will ideally have at least five years of senior-level executive leadership experience. Current or previous practice as an artist (ceramic and/or other mediums), art historian, educator, or curator is highly desired. A deep, current connection to, passion for, and knowledge of the ceramics field and contemporary art world are crucial. A demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access is required. The Bray does not require specific educational requirements for this role but credentials in nonprofit management, arts education, studio art, or a related field are useful. Successful candidates will possess a proven record of success that includes financial and operational management, fundraising, marketing, and building strategic partnerships. Previous experience working alongside a board is highly desirable. Exceptional writing abilities and verbal presentation skills are required.

## Compensation and Benefits

The Bray offers competitive compensation, commensurate with arts organizations of a similar size and annual budget. Salary range begins at \$80,000 depending on experience. Benefits include health, dental, and vision insurance; retirement contributions; paid time off; and generous paid holiday time. Compensation package may include studio space or other artistic support.

## Application and Inquires

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

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**The Archie Bray Foundation recognizes and honors the Indigenous peoples of this region (Helena, Montana) on whose ancestral lands the Foundation now stands. Indigenous people have inhabited the valley in which Helena is situated for more than 12,000 years; the valley acting as a crossover for Salish, Crow, Bannock, and Blackfeet tribes among others. We respectfully acknowledge and honor all Indigenous communities whose land we reside on in what is now known as Montana—past, present, future—and are grateful for their ongoing and vibrant presence. We believe that acknowledging and reflecting upon the contemporary lived experience and history of the Indigenous peoples here in Montana and around the world are essential steps toward creating a more equitable world. Learn more through the [#HonorNativeLand](#) initiative of the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture and consider contributing to Indigenous-led organizations doing important work to further health and wellness, sovereignty, and self-determination of the first peoples of this land.**

**The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts is an equal opportunity employer committed to a diverse staff, equitable hiring practices and an inclusive workplace. The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts is a safe environment for all its employees, free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment of any kind.**