

Organization

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (The Hobby Center) is a state-of-the-art complex located in the Theater District in the heart of downtown Houston. Located across from Tranquility Park and City Hall, The Hobby Center offers breath-taking panoramic views of downtown, two magnificent performance halls, and an award-winning restaurant. The Hobby Center is a city-owned facility and operated by The Hobby Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The mission of The Hobby Center is to expand Houston's reputation as a world-class cultural center by providing a premier performing arts facility, fostering accessibility to the performing arts, and promoting arts education, with an emphasis on musical theater. As it emerges from the pandemic, programming is back in high swing with upcoming productions that include *Hamilton*, *Come From Away*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Jersey Boys*, *Beautiful*, *Frozen*, *Mean Girls*, and *Wicked*.

The Hobby Center was designed by Robert A. M. Stern and opened in 2002. Its purpose was to bring the best of musical theater and Broadway to the city of Houston. Today, The Hobby Center includes two theaters, including Sarofim Hall, seating 2,650 on three levels, which was built with touring music theater in mind. Zilkha Hall, is a jewel-box theater with seating for 500 on two levels and provides an intimate setting for performances and events. These distinct spaces allow for flexibility in performances and events both large and small, including resident organizations Broadway Across America, Theatre Under the Stars, Ars Lyrica Houston, and Texas Medical Center Orchestra, as well as other concerts, receptions, weddings, and corporate events.

The Hobby Center has a robust arts education and community engagement program. Its Discovery Series is a dynamic arts education community partnership and a successful affiliation with regional school districts and local performing arts groups. It addresses an important need in local schools, providing an opportunity for teachers and students to experience arts outside of the classroom in a downtown Theater District venue. The series reaches thousands of Houston-area students annually, many from Title I schools, and helps cultivate an appreciation for the arts in today's students and tomorrow's performers and audience members. Many of these students would not have the opportunity to attend an educational theatrical performance without this program. The free performances and support materials provide teachers with connections that integrate the learning experience from the theater back into the classroom. The Discovery Series is offered free of charge to the students and the participating schools, including the reimbursement of school bus transportation for those that take advantage of it. For each season, the Foundation subsidizes the majority of the costs associated with presenting the programming.

The Hobby Center is also known for its programs with continual growth in offerings for patrons with accessibility needs. These programs include the ongoing training and activation of a team of volunteers, known as the Access Team, who aid patrons with mobility needs. The Hobby Center also works closely with Broadway Across America and Theatre Under the Stars to coordinate American Sign Language interpreted, open captioning, and audio described performances along with backstage "touch tours" for patrons with low or limited vision. Braille and large print Playbills are also made available for Broadway series performances. The Hobby Center's Autism Theatre initiative provides sensory friendly performances in both its Discovery Series and for the Broadway series of performances when the opportunity arises. To date these have included sensory friendly presentations of *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular* and Disney's *Aladdin*. Houston, through The Hobby Center, was the first city to provide an autism friendly performance of a national touring production with the presentation of *The Lion King*. These performance experiences are specifically tailored for those with sensory sensitivities and their families to create a welcoming and supportive environment which allows for a more relaxed and inclusive experience.

The Hobby Center is governed by the 15-member Hobby Center Foundation Board of Directors, led by Rob Doty, Chairman. The staff includes approximately 28 full-time and 60 part-time staff members, as well as numerous independent contractors and almost 375 volunteers. For the pre-pandemic fiscal year ending August 31, 2019, The Hobby Center reported total revenue of \$31.5 million, with \$20 million from ticket sales, \$9 million from theater operations and parking fees; \$1.4 million contributions and grants, and the remainder from restaurant rental and investment income. The Hobby Center's August 31, 2022, total revenue is budgeted at \$35.6 million, with \$21 million from ticket sales, \$9.4 million from theater operations and parking fees, \$4.7 million in sponsorship, contributions and grants, and the remainder from restaurant rental and investment income.

Community

Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States with a multi-county metropolitan area population of seven million people. A global, sophisticated city with an entrepreneurial bent, Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the nation, with large Hispanic/Latinx, White, Black/African American, and Asian populations. Houston is one of the fastest growing and most affordable big cities in the nation with a cost-of-living five percent below the national average. The city operates two major airports that serve 118 domestic and 71 international destinations.

A deeply generous philanthropic community fuels Houston's arts and cultural sector. The city is home to leading symphony, ballet, opera, and theater companies and has the highest concentration of working artists in Texas. Houston boasts seven Actors' Equity Association member theaters, presenting a wide array of perspectives and programming. The downtown theater district is known to have more theater seats than any city outside of New York. Home to more than 150 museums and cultural institutions, Houston also offers plentiful outdoor recreation opportunities, including more than 300 parks, many hike and bike trails, gardens, and a wide range of sporting activities.

Sources: Houston.org, visithoustontexas.com, datausa.io

Position Summary

The President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will provide strategic leadership and community engagement as The Hobby Center continues its exciting path forward. The CEO will be the organization's primary spokesperson in advancing its public image and increasing brand awareness regionally and nationally. The CEO will actively engage in the cultivation and stewardship of donors and foster authentic, collaborative, and meaningful relationships. Partnering with resident companies and other organizations throughout the Houston community and nationally, the CEO will advance programmatic and operational goals with clarity on how those initiatives also embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in an organization that exists in one of the most diverse cities in America. The CEO will work with the board and experienced staff members to expand access, leverage earned revenues, increase contributed revenues, and evolve education and community engagement programs while overseeing cost-effective management of human, financial, and technological resources.

Role and Responsibilities

Strategic Vision and Organizational Leadership

- Create and implement a strategic direction that recognizes the effectiveness of the current business model and leverages its strengths.
- Envision and implement an entrepreneurial approach that also honors traditional business models that are low-risk and high impact.
- Manage the activities of the organization in a manner that results in excellent business decisions and allows the leadership team independence and responsibility.
- Understand the demographic trends of Houston and identify a course of action for projects and programs that are engaging and accessible.
- Amplify equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility as a key factor in future audience development, board participation, and workforce vibrancy.
- Consider venue utilization, capacity, and opportunities for growth in presented programs, partnerships, and rentals.
- Cultivate strong relationships with current board members and develop strategies to identify, cultivate, and recruit more diverse professional and cultural perspectives on the board.
- Convey relevant, concise, and timely information to the board so it can fulfill its policy, decision-making, and community ambassadorship responsibilities.
- Engage an effective organizational structure, policies, system controls, and procedures that support the resiliency of the business model.
- Oversee marketing, public relations, and communication strategies to expand a clear identity and reputation for The Hobby Center regionally and nationally.
- Embrace other strategic vision and organizational leadership responsibilities, as needed.

Public Visibility and Community Engagement

- Embody the role of primary spokesperson, working with the board, staff, and other stakeholders to communicate goals, mission, vision, and values to local and national audiences.
- Ensure that The Hobby Center's amenities, including food, beverage, parking, and others create the highest-level customer experience.
- Embrace a community engagement process that focuses on a mission-based approach in achieving a dynamic vision.
- Develop and enhance relationships with key strategic partners, cultivating relationships with and connections between government agencies, the media, arts organizations, and funding partners.
- Collaborate with Houston First Corporation in supporting its efforts to promote Houston as one of the great cities of the world.
- Build alliances and deepen relationships with other artistic, educational, and civic organizations.
- Engage with educators, schools, and districts to strengthen the alignment, focus, and quality of educational programs.
- Extend the reach of The Hobby Center to augment its on-site programs through online, social media, and digital offerings.
- Lead conversations around equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility with a deep awareness of engaging the vibrant community that The Hobby Center serves.
- Collaborate with community influencers, government officials, and arts advocates in attaining beneficial community impacts.
- Embrace other public visibility and community engagement responsibilities, as needed.

Financial Planning and Team Leadership

- Recommend staffing structures, guide succession planning, facilitate employee retention strategies, and maintain an environment where diverse individuals are valued and appreciated.
- Balance available human, financial, and technological resources with staff capacity and output to maintain measured growth.
- Identify, cultivate, and secure support from foundations, business partners, corporate sponsors, and major individual donors to broaden funding sources.
- Collaborate with and guide the board in its fundraising role, supporting its efforts to attract new donors in all giving categories.
- Oversee budget development, monitoring, and reporting that is timely and ensures that board members are regularly apprised of the organization's fiscal health.
- Leverage institutional knowledge, skills, abilities, and cultural competencies of the team to achieve common goals.
- Mentor an experienced team of professionals who deliver high-quality experiences expected by audiences and artists alike.
- Embrace other financial planning and team leadership responsibilities, as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The CEO will be a customer-oriented, highly interactive professional who is resourceful in the effective mobilization of human, financial, and technological resources. A team-oriented collaborator, the CEO will be actively engaged in the community and engage with an array of arts organizations, business and community leaders, and donors as a visible leader in the Houston community. The CEO will be flexible and adaptable in recognizing the strengths of a solid business model while navigating the changing landscape of the arts and arts education. Intuitive and diplomatic by nature, the CEO will recognize, respect, and promote diversity in all forms and will balance internal priorities with external opportunities.

Other key competencies include:

- **Goal Orientation and Self-Starting** – The acuity to envision and develop new approaches, programs, processes, technologies, and systems that achieve desired short- and long-term results.

- **Diplomacy and Customer Orientation** – The capacity to actively listen and appreciate multiple perspectives; develop and nurture positive relationships with people across racial, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds; and demonstrate sensitivity in facing challenging issues.
- **Teamwork** – The ability to inspire and build trust, lead with confidence, act with integrity and authenticity, respect team members’ perspectives, and make equitable decisions.
- **Time and Priority Management** – The dexterity to understand existing and evolving business models while prioritizing opportunities and responding to changing economic circumstances with specific and attainable plans.
- **Professional and Personal Accountability** – The capacity to take responsibility for professional and personal actions, recognizing that mistakes create opportunities for learning and growth.

Qualifications

A minimum of eight years of senior management experience that includes a track record of fiscally responsible business models and strong strategic partnerships in the arts, entertainment, or other creative industries is required. A track record of increasing earned and contributed revenues with financial resiliency is expected. Exceptional interpersonal, written, and verbal presentation skills are needed. Experience overseeing food, beverage, and concession operations is a plus. Bilingual English-Spanish skills are greatly appreciated.

Compensation and Benefits

The Hobby Center provides a compensation package that will be very competitive with the best performing arts centers in the United States. Benefits include paid vacation, sick leave, and holidays, as well as health, dental, and life insurances, among other benefits.

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, including the estimated salary range, please contact:

Dr. Bruce D. Thibodeau, President
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The Hobby Center is an equal opportunity employer where equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are deeply valued and celebrated.