

The Tony Award-winning Eugene O'Neill Theater Center seeks a dynamic individual for the role of Artistic Director of the National Playwrights Conference, taking the helm of this storied new play development program as it enters its sixtieth year in operation.

Organization

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (the O'Neill) is the country's preeminent organization dedicated to the development of new works and new voices for the stage. Founded in 1964 by George C. White and named in honor of Eugene O'Neill, four-time Pulitzer Prize-winner and America's only playwright to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, the O'Neill has launched some of the most important voices and works in American theater and has revolutionized the way new work is developed. In the ground-breaking spirit of its namesake, the O'Neill champions, develops, and empowers new work, new voices, and creative risk-taking. By introducing innovative artists, essential to broadening the national cultural landscape, the O'Neill serves as the Launchpad of the American Theater. From its campus in Waterford, Connecticut, the O'Neill has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and thousands more emerging artists.

O'Neill programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, National Critics Institute, National Puppetry Conference, Cabaret & Performance Conference, and National Theater Institute. Writers, directors, puppeteers, singers, students, and audiences alike take their first steps in exploring, revising, and understanding their work and the potential of the theater they help create. Scores of projects developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full production at theaters around the world. Work first performed at the O'Neill have gone on to regional theaters, Broadway, film, and television. Staff and alumni from the O'Neill have won every major award in theater arts. The O'Neill itself is the recipient of two Tony Awards, in 2010 for Regional Theatre and in 1979 for Theatrical Excellence. Additionally, the O'Neill has received the National Opera Award, the Jujamcyn Award of Theater Excellence, and the Arts and Business Council Encore Award. In September 2016, the O'Neill was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Obama in a White House ceremony celebrating the O'Neill's contribution to American culture.

Among the hundreds of plays and musicals developed and premiered at the O'Neill are such notable works as John Guare's *The House Of Blue Leaves*; Brian Crawley and Jeanine Tesori's *Violet*; Wendy Wasserstein's *Uncommon Women and Others*; August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, and *The Piano Lesson*; Lee Blessing's *A Walk In The Woods*; *Nine* by Arthur Kopit, Mario Fratti, and Maury Yeston; *Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty; *In the Heights* by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegria Hudes; *[title of show]* by Jeff Bowen and Hunter Bell; and Jennifer Haley's *The Nether*.

Tiffani Gavin serves as the O'Neill's Executive Director, joining in September 2020 after leadership roles at Clear Channel Entertainment and the American Repertory Theater, overseeing a staff of 38 full-time employees. The 32-member Board of Trustees is chaired by Tom Viertel, a Tony Award winning producer and the former Executive Director of the Commercial Theater Institute. For the fiscal year ending August 30, 2022, the O'Neill reported a total revenue of \$5.1 million, with \$3 million in contributions and grants and \$2 million from programs and services. Total expenses were \$5.4 million.

Community

The O'Neill's campus sits on the traditional lands of the Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, and Nehantic tribes. They honor and respect these nations, peoples, and their enduring relationship to this land. The town of Waterford, Connecticut is located in New London County, in the southeastern part of the state, and is surrounded by water on three sides. According to the American Community Survey of November 2022, Waterford has a population of 19,558 people, of whom 83% are white, 6% Black, 5% Hispanic, 3% AAPI, and 3% two or more races. The median household income is \$67,333.

Waterford and the surrounding area have a diverse economy with various industries contributing to its growth including healthcare, education, and manufacturing sectors. The Lawrence + Memorial Hospital is one of the major

employers and the area is also home to several educational institutions, including Connecticut College, the Coast Guard Academy, the University of Connecticut Avery Point campus, and Mitchell College. Manufacturing companies, particularly in the fields of pharmaceuticals, technology, and defense, are significant contributors to the local economy. Additionally, Waterford benefits from its proximity to the neighboring cities of New London and Groton, which are known for their naval and submarine manufacturing industries. This provides employment opportunities for Waterford residents as well.

Waterford offers a high quality of life to its residents. The town has a suburban feel with a mix of residential areas, commercial districts, and natural landscapes. Waterford is located along the coastline, providing beautiful views and access to beaches. The Niantic Bay and Long Island Sound offer recreational opportunities for boating, fishing, and other water activities.

Waterford has a well-regarded public school system and also has numerous parks, walking trails, and recreational facilities that promote an active lifestyle. Residents can enjoy a balance between the tranquility of suburban living and the convenience of nearby cities. Waterford has a strong community focus and supports local arts and culture. The town hosts annual events such as the Waterford Arts & Crafts Festival, which showcases the work of local artisans. There are also community centers and organizations that offer art classes, music lessons, and other cultural programs.

Sources: ctvisit.com, waterfordct.org; towncharts.com; censusreporter.org; areavibes.com; datausa.io; point2homes.com

Position Summary

The Artistic Director of the National Playwrights Conference (NPC) reports to the O'Neill's Executive Director and leads and represents the NPC while in residence at the O'Neill's campus in Waterford, CT, during the five weeks of the conference each summer and throughout the rest of the year. They will build upon NPC's leadership in the field of new play development. The Artistic Director of the NPC will be responsible for setting short, medium, and long-term goals that align with the Executive Director's and board's vision for the O'Neill as a whole and must be available for quarterly board meetings (at least two of four each year). It is expected that the Artistic Director of the NPC will work collaboratively with their fellow Artistic Directors and programs, of which the NPC overlaps directly with the National Music Theater Conference, the National Theater Institute, and the National Critics Institute, to find synergies and best use of shared spaces.

Role and Responsibilities

Artistic Leadership and Process

- Create the application guidelines for prospective applicants each fall in partnership with the O'Neill's literary office. (N.B. The O'Neill is firmly committed to an open submissions policy for its applicants, with specific guidelines and processes to be shaped by the Artistic Director.)
- Provide artistic leadership in the selection process for the Conference, including establishing the group of readers and guidelines for the reading process that value how new writers are addressing form and content and includes a diversity of writing styles.
- Finalize, for the Executive Director's approval, a slate of six to eight pieces for each summer's Conference, reflecting the broad range of styles, perspectives, and voices in the American theater.
- Champion equity, diversity, inclusion, and access strategies, in alignment with the O'Neill's mission and values, both through the work chosen and the artists and staff employed.

Teaching and Community Building

- Attend the National Theater Institute each fall and spring semester for four to seven days to teach, lead a directing workshop, or guide a related seminar.
- Maintain and increase active contacts and outreach to both notable and early career artists and peer programs across the national landscape.
- Create and/or sustain a nationally visible presence by developing and nurturing relationships with new and established playwrights and other artists.
- Serve as a key spokesperson, representative, and ambassador for the NPC.
- Take an active role in the wider community and cultivate key relationships and associations with regional and national centers of influence.

Revenue Enhancement, Fiscal Oversight, and Marketing

- Participate in fundraising for the NPC and the O'Neill, including meetings with funders, attending events, and introducing potential funders to the O'Neill.
- Support the financial health of the organization by working in partnership with the Executive Director and senior staff to develop and track budgets and accounting systems that support the work of the Conference.
- Collaborate closely with the Director of External Relations to promote the NPC across platforms.

Conference Hiring, Project Casting, and Production Support

- Foster a work environment prioritizing and modeling the O'Neill's core values in collaboration with the other conferences.
- Consult with the Line Producer to hire the NPC's stage managers and other NPC-specific personnel with the intention to build and maintain a diverse team.
- Collaborate with the playwrights to identify and select the directors, designers, and casts for their respective plays.
- Partner with the Line Producer, General Manager, Production Manager, and other staff on all logistical details of the Conference.

Traits and Characteristics

The Artistic Director of the National Playwrights Conference will be an artist of eclectic taste and sound judgement, with an extensive network in the theatrical community. The successful candidate will be able to guide the Conference with equanimity, addressing unexpected events fairly and decisively and defusing any conflicts. While prioritizing the playwrights, they will also consider and support the needs of the staff.

Other key competencies include:

- **Diplomacy** – The ability to handle difficult or sensitive issues effectively and tactfully.
- **Teamwork and Appreciating Others** –The facility to collaborate, encourage, and cooperate with others to meet objectives using a human centered lens and honoring the lived experiences of their collaborators.
- **Resiliency and Flexibility** – The ability to recover quickly from adversity, and to readily modify, respond, and adapt to change with minimal resistance.
- **Decision Making and Project Management** - The capability to make prompt, sound decisions while identifying and overseeing all resources, tasks, systems, and people to obtain results.

Qualifications

The National Playwrights Conference does not require a minimum number of years of experience or specific educational credentials. Qualified candidates must possess dramaturgical skills and substantial experience with new play development as well as strong relationships with established and new playwrights across form and genre. Producing experience and a network of existing relationships and connections to artists, patrons, and audiences across the country are desired. They should demonstrate an active commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, anti-bias, and anti-racism policies. Experience partnering with fundraising teams is preferred. The position requires flexible work hours reflective of the dynamic schedule. Candidates with currently atypical paths toward artistic leadership are encouraged to apply (e.g., dramaturgs, literary managers, artistic program administrators, independent producers, freelance directors, playwrights, etc.).

Compensation and Benefits

The O'Neill provides a competitive salary of \$40,000 - \$48,000 based on the position's seasonal workflow, that varies throughout the year. Benefits of health, dental, and 403(b) are included. The Artistic Director position offers great flexibility and candidates are free to pursue other endeavors throughout the year, though such endeavors cannot conflict with leading the NPC. While the Artistic Director need not relocate to Waterford or Connecticut, they must be in residence at the O'Neill for the National Playwrights Conference. Housing and meals at the O'Neill are provided during the Conference.

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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The Eugene O’Neill Theater Center is committed to diversifying the future of the American theater through the stories we tell, the artists telling those stories, the staff supporting our work, and the audiences in our theaters. The O’Neill strives to cultivate a healthy and diverse community that recognizes the value of each individual and helps foster safety, civility, and respect for all people. All participants and employees in any O’Neill program, including students, staff, faculty, guests, and visitors, have the right to be free from racial, sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence and all other forms of prohibited conduct.