



**FOREST FORWARD**  
THE FUTURE IS **HERE**

## Forest Forward Executive Director of Programming and Production

### Organization

Born out of a need to serve the South Dallas community, Forest Forward (FF) is a strategic initiative designed to deliver vigorous neighborhood revitalization. Expanding the dream of community stakeholders and the modernization of the historic Forest Theater, it strives towards a just, healthy, and thriving South Dallas. April 2024 marked the momentous occasion of the long-awaited groundbreaking of the extraordinary Theatre. Originally part of the Interstate Theater chain, it opened in 1949 to provide entertainment to primarily Caucasian middle-class patrons, and then in 1956, it shifted gears and changed its focus to African American families who were moving into the area. As the Theater’s identity evolved, it became a vital hub for African American audiences by hosting unforgettable performances by legends and icons. After decades of ebbs and flows, in honor of its legacy as an African American venue, in 2003, Erykah Badu relaunched it as the Black Forest Theater.



In the fall of 2015, the Black Forest Theater began the Dallas Landmark designation process. In 2017, The Forest Theater was acquired and gifted to City Square by a philanthropic couple who are staunch advocates of equity in the arts and education. Forest Forward has obtained ownership and responsibility for the historic refurbishment and expansive renovation. Taking a holistic approach, Forest Forward is anchored in the restoration and expansion of the Theater’s offerings by harnessing the power of art and culture to align strategic partnerships that result in equitable opportunities, generate revenue, and stimulate entrepreneurship.

As a forward-thinking nonprofit, Forest Forward engages with the community to promote equitable development, economic mobility, and stability and improve outcomes for the children, residents, and families of South Dallas. Following years of hard work and unrelenting fundraising by unspoken heroes and sheroes, the transformational infusion of over \$75 million into the core of zip code 75215 has ignited vigorous revitalization and created a lighthouse for the city. With a focus on the future that is connected to the past, Forest Forward goes beyond the restoration, it elevates community voices and will serve as a catalyst to spur equitable expansion.

A multi-year public-private partnership with the Dallas Independent School District, entitled “Cradle-to-College Education Pathway for our children,” has been established to advance educational opportunities by providing student access to the restored Forest Theater and its component features such as the sensory immersion room, studio theater with ability to convert for animation and CGI technology, and podcast, broadcast, and recording studio. Through this partnership, the Dr. Martin Luther King Center has been transformed into the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Arts Academy, extending its curricular offerings from pre-K through the eighth grade.



The Forest Theater will be restored to its former glory, and the adjoining retail space will be converted into a hub for entertainment and arts education with 45,000 square feet dedicated to the concert hall, a creative laboratory with 13,000 square feet of space, a roof deck, an industrial kitchen, and a studio theater. Forest Forward now owns 22 South Dallas properties and has acquired much of the triangle of land behind the Theater, which was taken by eminent domain years ago to build the SM Wright Highway in 1955.

Existing as a separate entity from Forest Forward, the Forest Theater will be led by the inaugural Forest Theater Executive Director of Programming and Production, who will report to Forest Forward President & CEO Elizabeth Wattley. Chaired by Matrice Ellis-Kirk, the 20-member board of change agents shares a commitment and experiences that uplift healthy neighborhood revitalization. For the fiscal year ending 2023, Forest Forward's annual revenues were \$7,961,657 with \$7,851,098 in contributions. The projected annual budget of Forest Theater is \$4,400,000.

## Community

The ninth largest city in the United States with a population of over 1.3 million, Dallas is a major inland port with a strong industrial and financial center and a thriving IT and insurance presence. Dallas is the largest metropolitan area in the nation not on a navigable body of water. Ranked number 72 for quality of living and 25<sup>th</sup> for it is the third most populated city in Texas. Demonstrating a commitment to conservation, the city has been working to create and activate green space in the urban core and has added 20 acres of green space in the past 20 years. With 234 days of sunshine each year, Dallas has an iconic cowboy culture with lower property taxes and no state income tax. Home to 7-Eleven, Exxon, Texas Instruments, American Airlines, Toyota, Southwest Airlines, and Kimberly Clark with 24 Fortune 500 companies in Dallas, this innovative tech hub is richly diverse: 53.8% White, 42% Hispanic or Latino, 24% Black, 9.3% two or more races, 8.8% some other race, 3.5% Asian, and 5% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and less than one percent Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.

Dallas has something for everyone, with six major sports teams, including the Cowboys, Mavericks, Rangers, Stars, FC Dallas, and WNBA Dallas Wings. Dallas is home to the largest contiguous arts districts in the US, spanning 68 acres and 19 blocks. Classical and contemporary performing arts lovers can enjoy the Dallas Opera, Dallas Ballet Company, and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. There is never a shortage of things to do with 35 museums, over 300 venues for live music, ten annual film festivals, and 35 shopping malls. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy one of the largest municipal park systems in the US, with 410 parks spanning more than 21,109 acres of parkland, 121 beautiful biking and hiking trails covering 627 miles, seven lakes, 33 ponds, and more than 200 golf courses.

Traveling in Dallas is hassle-free with two major airports: Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, one of the most frequently visited superhub airports in the world, and Dallas Love Field Airport. Public transportation is supported by the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), which transports 50,463,300 riders each year and serves Dallas and 12 surrounding cities. Because everything is bigger in Texas, there are 45 US highways and 16 interstate highways. There are 13 4-year colleges within the city limits and 19 within a 15-mile radius. Baylor University is just 90 minutes away, and the University of Texas at Austin is a three-hour drive. Dallas Independent School District is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest in the US, with an enrollment of 157,000 students at 240 schools and employs 22,850 employees. In addition, there are 59 charter schools and 220 private schools in the greater metro area.

South Dallas is a vibrant and historically rich community just south of downtown Dallas, with a population of nearly 32,000 residents. This dynamic part of the city is a focal point for community efforts aimed at revitalization and economic development. South Dallas has a rich African American heritage that is deeply rooted in civil rights. It has become a hallmark of culture, education, and activism, contributing significantly to the broader history of Dallas. Driven by a strong sense of community and ongoing efforts to positively impact the quality of life for its residents, South Dallas continues to evolve and grow.

Sources: [downtowndallas.com/live/resident-resources](https://downtowndallas.com/live/resident-resources); [dallaschamber.org](https://dallaschamber.org); [dallascodev.org/490/Demographics](https://dallascodev.org/490/Demographics); [downtowndallas.com/experience/explore-our-parks](https://downtowndallas.com/experience/explore-our-parks); [tpl.org](https://tpl.org); [dallasparcs.org](https://dallasparcs.org); [investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/050815/top-10-most-developed-cities-us.asp](https://investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/050815/top-10-most-developed-cities-us.asp); [vanpooleproperties.com/2022/05/09/30-facts-about-dallas](https://vanpooleproperties.com/2022/05/09/30-facts-about-dallas); [dallasinnovates.com/dallas-historic-forest-theater-takes-first-step-to-become-an-arts-and-community-hub](https://dallasinnovates.com/dallas-historic-forest-theater-takes-first-step-to-become-an-arts-and-community-hub)

## Position Summary

The Executive Director of Programming and Production will serve as the spokesperson of the Forest Theater in the combined roles of Artistic Programmer and General Manager. They will have a strong non-profit awareness and a solid history of programming as both producer and presenter. They will curate and program exciting and engaging productions through collaboration, model a strong work ethic, and exhibit passion, dedication, and knowledge of the arts, education, and community. The Executive Director of Programming and Production will ensure that Forest Forward programming serves the community and delivers cultural opportunities for all South Dallas and beyond and is known to all constituents locally and regionally. The Executive Director of Programming and Production will report directly to the President/CEO, helping to ensure the organization fulfills its mission through its innovative artistic programming, educational offerings, production, community partnerships, and staffing.

## Role and Responsibilities

### Artistic Programming and Production Supervision

- Develop annual programming of multi-disciplinary offerings, plays, educational programs, and curriculum, and associated year-round scheduled activities at the Forest Theater that appeal to multi-generational audiences with the nuance and context of culturally specific art.
- Foster a close working partnership with the President/CEO, ensuring that artistic decisions of the Forest Theater are made in alignment with Forest Forward's organizational objectives to further the organization's image and visibility, regionally and nationally.
- Nurture strong relationships with presenters and promoters by attending booking conferences, and subsequently negotiating all artist contracts and executing offer letters to agents, managers, artists' agents, and other presenters in the field.
- Implement a vibrant and diverse annual season for the Forest Theater, recognized for its eclectic programming, featuring national touring artists, attractions, and other special events reflective of principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.
- Prioritize a balance of local, regional, and national touring artists and events at the Forest Theater designed to bring dynamic cultural activity to the residents of South Dallas as well as uplift the artists of South Dallas into higher awareness in their communities and beyond.
- Provide artistic leadership and guidance to all artistic teams and partners throughout the entire production process, from selecting art and artistic teams to advising and consulting with the production staff to ensure readiness for each show's opening and run.
- Embrace and support additional artistic programming and production supervision responsibilities as needed.

### Community Engagement and Education

- Serve as a spokesperson engaging with a wide variety of constituents, including business owners; schools and colleges; elected city, county, and state officials; and the media to promote Forest Forward's artistic vision, brand, and reputation, both locally and nationally.
- Collaborate and cultivate relationships with community organizations, cultural institutions, individual artists, business owners, schools and colleges, elected officials, and community leaders in creating meaningful and long-lasting partnerships to reinforce Forest Forward's role as a regional asset.
- Develop, articulate, and implement entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to artistic and educational programming at the Forest Theater that align with Forest Forward's mission and values that are also reflective of, but not exclusively limited to, the Black and Hispanic demographics of South Dallas.
- Raise awareness, contribute to community revitalization, and assist in a change of perception in the broader Dallas community of the culture and the people of South Dallas through providing affordable, accessible programming at the Forest Theater for all members of the community.
- Advance the private-public partnership with the Dallas Independent School District by providing support to DISD employees, teachers, or their agents for school-sponsored events, creating opportunities for students to interact directly with the theater, at other community locations, and/or in the classroom.
- Embrace and support additional community engagement and education responsibilities as needed.

### General Management, Budgeting and Strategic Planning

- Prepare the annual operational budgets for programming at the Forest Theater, as well as individual event budgets, provide tracking, maintain records, and develop financial analysis and policies regarding revenue vs. expenses vs. budget for operations.
- Oversee organizational, production, and education, budgets, controlling expenditures, creating forecasting models, developing financial analysis, as well as providing timely financial reports to the Board Finance and Executive Committees.
- Collaborate with the President/CEO and various Board committees on banking, payroll administration, and development efforts of Forest Forward while also coordinating annual, monthly, and quarterly financial reviews as required.
- Partner with the President/CEO to contribute to, oversee, guide, and implement Forest Forward's long-term strategic planning and financial objectives based on sound financial guidelines and fiscal integrity.
- Embrace and support additional general management, budgeting, and finance responsibilities as needed.

## Operations and Facilities Management

- Manage key business agreements, such as the operations management contract, and ongoing union and lease agreements utilizing relevant experience in programming, logistics, and maintenance of a multi-use multi-venue facility.
- Oversee the hiring, supervision, and mentoring of key production, education, and facility staff positions, providing professional development and growth to attract, retain, and empower highly qualified artistic, production, and education staff members and volunteers to ensure organizational growth and sustainability.
- Guide operations to ensure employees and business practices comply with regulatory and legal requirements, ensuring the facility is maintained in the safest, most creatively conducive environment possible.
- Maximize facility use and access by local and regional art groups, businesses, and educational institutions through partnerships with local groups, service organizations, and the corporate sector in service and outreach to a variety of cultural and socio-economic sectors.
- Advise and manage capital projects regarding facility maintenance, upgrades, large construction multi-year facility renovation projects, capital expenditure planning, and replacement of aging systems and equipment as needed, with an emphasis on safety.
- Embrace and support additional operations and facility management responsibilities as needed.

## Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director of Programming and Production will be a dynamic spokesperson with an entrepreneurial spirit able to ensure that programming resonates with the entirety of the South and greater Dallas communities and upholds the theater's commitment to education, inclusivity, and diversity. They will be resilient, flexible, and positive, as well as an effective, detail-oriented project manager, passionate, knowledgeable, and organized. As a creative, innovative producer and programmer, they will be an effective communicator and consensus builder able to deliver high-quality performances and inspire teams with a clear sense of purpose.

Other key competencies include the following:

- **Personal Accountability, Planning, and Organizing** – The ability to demonstrate integrity and take responsibility for decisions in the process of establishing clear courses of action to ensure that work is completed effectively.
- **Customer Focus and Goal Orientation** – The sensitivity to anticipate, meet, and/or exceed customer needs, wants, and expectations while setting, pursuing, and attaining goals, regardless of obstacles or circumstances.
- **Resiliency and Problem Solving** – The dexterity to quickly recover from adversity while defining, analyzing, and diagnosing key components of a problem to formulate a solution.
- **Time and Priority Management** – The adeptness in prioritizing and completing tasks in order to deliver desired outcomes within allotted time frames while still listening to many points of view and facilitating agreements between two or more parties.

## Qualifications

The Executive Director of Programming and Production will have at least two years or more of an art-focused degree and will bring five to seven years of Senior Management experience in organizations of similar size and scope, with demonstrated growth. They will have experience in and a strong understanding of general management, operations, programming, and facilities management, with a willingness to immerse themselves in the infrastructure of the organization and a commitment to the community as well. The ideal person will have a successful track record of programming and producing multi-disciplinary performing arts and experience building projects from the ground up. Proven success in planning, negotiation, and managing people is required as a function of the artistic role. Familiarity with non-profit management is a must. Qualified professionals will understand budgeting and forecasting, have a deep understanding of theater operations and facility management, and be highly knowledgeable in all areas of production. Familiarity with the local and regional artistic communities is preferred.

## Compensation and Benefits

Forest Forward offers competitive compensation, with a salary range expected between \$175,000 and \$195,000, and a generous benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, life, disability insurance, 401k, paid time off, and holidays.

## 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/opensearches](https://artsconsulting.com/opensearches). For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

Delilah Norris, Senior Advisor  
Ernest A. Figueroa, Associate Vice President



8581 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 406  
Los Angeles, CA 90069-4120  
Tel: (888) 234.4236 Ext. 230 (Ms. Norris) or Ext. 226 (Mr. Figueroa)  
Email: [forestforward@artsconsulting.com](mailto:forestforward@artsconsulting.com)

**Forest Forward (“FF”) is committed to creating and fostering an environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all staff, partners, vendors, community members, and board. As an organization, we embrace our employees’ differences, value their contributions, and promote dignity and respect for all.**

**We celebrate the richness of our community and encourage the representation of all perspectives that are reflected in our mission, programming, staff, and board. We do not tolerate discrimination, biases, or harassment regardless of race, socio-economic status, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, or nationality.**

**Don’t check off every box in the requirements listed above? Please apply anyway!  
Studies have shown that marginalized communities – such as women, LGBTQ+, and people of color – are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification.  
Forest Forward is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values a diverse workforce.**