



Durham Arts Council Executive Director

Organization

The Durham Arts Council (DAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and leading local arts agency in North Carolina dedicated to supporting the arts in Durham and the Triangle Region. For 71 years, DAC has served as a catalyst in the cultural development of Durham—it leads, inspires, and promotes excellence in and access to the creation, experience, and active support of the arts for all community members throughout Durham County and beyond. Each year, DAC serves over 500,000 visitors, program participants, more than 2,000 artists, and more than 300 arts and culture organizations. The DAC creates a vibrant arts community by:



Serving the Public: Providing and supporting arts programs, life-long learning classes, arts camps, exhibits, festivals, arts integration programs in schools, and events for residents, students, and visitors of all ages. DAC provides programming for all ages at the Durham Arts Council Building and serves over 25,000 children annually in public schools, private and charter schools, and community centers. DAC's CenterFest Arts Festival and Durham Art Walk showcase the arts and drive economic impact.

Serving the Arts & Cultural Community: Providing facility space, grant support, employment, exhibition, sales and performance opportunities, training, advocacy, and information services for artists and arts and cultural organizations. DAC has significantly increased its fundraising and grantmaking to support the arts and cultural sector and currently provides over \$2.2 million in arts jobs, cash grants, and facility space grants annually. The online Durham Arts Network, created and managed by DAC, serves as a valuable resource, connecting artists, creatives, and cultural workers while fostering educational opportunities in the arts.

Leading Arts and Cultural Planning, Advocacy, and Creative Placemaking: Providing arts and creative economy research, arts advocacy and planning, and development of the SmART downtown arts corridor. DAC leads the Arts & Economic Prosperity studies in partnership with Americans for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council to gauge the economic impact of Durham's nonprofit arts and cultural sector.

The Durham Arts Council Building, a city owned, multi-purpose community arts center in downtown Durham, is operated, maintained, and programmed by DAC. The 52,000 square foot historically landmarked building features two theaters, four exhibition galleries, art studios, classrooms, rehearsal space, meeting and event space with a kitchen and workroom, plus offices for the DAC and eight local arts organizations.

The Durham Arts Council is currently led by Executive Director Sherry L. DeVries, who will be retiring after 23 years of service to the organization. It is governed by a 19-member Board of Trustees led by President Tabitha Concepcion. The executive director leads a full-time staff of 12, plus four contract service teams in financial operations, human resources, payroll, and information technology, and more than 200 contracted



program providers and seasonal volunteers. DAC's FY2025 operating budget is \$3.4 million, with 26% from earned program revenue and 74% from contributed revenue from individuals, corporations, government grants, and foundations.

Community

Durham, North Carolina, is a vibrant, diverse, and fast-growing city with a population of approximately 300,000. Durham is part of the larger Triangle region, with a metro population of over 2.4 million. The area is a center for education, research, health care, and technology industries that require a strong cultural, educational, and entertainment base to attract qualified employees. Durham's celebrated food scene, with award-winning eateries, and its buzzing start-up culture, drive an authentic, energetic urban tapestry of adventures and opportunities to engage. The city and its cultural partners, including DAC, are developing a new strategic cultural roadmap that will foster cohesive, engaged, and diverse communities, providing residents with equitable access to resources and a high quality of life. The Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study from 2022 shows that Durham's nonprofit arts and cultural sector provides \$232 million annually in economic activity. Durham is home to 134 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, dozens of creative businesses, and more than 5,000 creative sector artists/workers. The Carolina Theatre is adjacent to the Durham Arts Council and serves the city and region through over 100 performing arts events throughout the year. Other major local and national performing arts organizations in Durham include American Dance Festival, Durham Symphony Orchestra, and Durham Performing Arts Center.



Durham thrives on its celebration of local authenticity and has garnered national attention for its remarkable restorations and repurposing of classic tobacco warehouses. The American Tobacco District, Brightleaf Square, and Golden Belt are just a few examples that embrace a vibrant live, work, shop, and play scene. For outdoor enthusiasts, Durham boasts numerous parks and recreational facilities. The Durham Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs and activities, including after-school programs, summer camps, and special events that cater to all ages. The city's cultural heritage parks provide opportunities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, and learning about Durham's rich history through tours and programs. Residents and visitors alike can enjoy a blend of nature and history within these well-maintained spaces.

Durham is home to the prestigious Duke University, renowned for its world-class medical center, cutting-edge research, and top-ranked programs in law, business, and engineering. Nearby, North Carolina Central University (NCCU), a respected public historically Black university, offers strong programs in law, business, and the sciences. The city is also part of the Research Triangle, with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and North Carolina State University (NCSU) within proximity. These institutions contribute to Durham's vibrant intellectual atmosphere, driving innovation, fostering talent, and supporting the local economy through education and research initiatives. Durham is also home to major corporations, including Google, GSK, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, which have significant operations in the city, employing thousands of residents. The presence of such companies contributes to a robust local economy and offers diverse employment opportunities.

Housing in Durham offers a range of options, from historic homes to modern apartments. The median property value in 2021 was \$264,100, slightly above the national average. The homeownership rate stood at 51.9%, indicating a balanced market between renters and homeowners. The cost of living in Durham is relatively moderate. While housing expenses are about 8% higher than the national average, other costs, such as groceries and transportation are more in line with national figures. This balance makes Durham an attractive place for individuals and families seeking a high quality of life without the high costs associated with larger metropolitan areas. Durham has received several accolades that highlight its appeal. The Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area was recognized as a top choice for recent college graduates, thanks to competitive wages and high hiring rates. Such recognition underscores Durham's commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

Sources: durhamarts.org/economic_impact; durhamartsnetwork.org; discoverdurham.com; durhamrealtors.org; americantobacco.co; brightleafdurham.com; goldenbeltarts.com

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) will guide the strategic vision and direction of the Durham Arts Council. The ED will be responsible for all aspects of strategic planning, fundraising, public visibility, and operational and financial oversight. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the ED will lead and mentor a professional staff, navigating change, building relationships, and fostering an environment of excellence in the arts. The ED will cultivate DAC's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, bringing diverse groups together towards a common goal and creating a synergistic community impact.

Roles and Responsibilities

Visionary and Transformational Leadership/Fiscal Management

- Provide the vision and strategy for DAC to ensure the citizens of Durham and surrounding regions have access and engagement with a thriving arts culture enhancing the region's quality of life and economic vibrancy.
- Foster a culture of innovation at the DAC to realize new ideas, concepts, and strategies that amplify the cultural vitality of the Durham region. Cultivate a collaborative organizational structure and culture with cohesive, creative, communicative, and productive partnerships for internal and external stakeholders, and build upon the significant growth and success that has been achieved by DAC.
- Conduct periodic assessments of strategic priorities, resources, and direction, with analysis of program success, performance, financial position, ongoing relevance, and mission achievement. Lead and support community-wide planning initiatives for the arts and cultural sector.
- Guide staff in the development and delivery of excellent mission-based programs and services in response to the needs of the arts and cultural sector and the public.
- Oversee and direct the financial operations team and department heads, ensuring that accurate and timely financial procedures, monthly and year-end reporting, and audit processes are accomplished. Direct cash flow management and resource allocation. Develop and monitor annual organizational and department budgets working with department staff and finance team. Ensure DAC is appropriately insured for all operations, facilities, and programs. Build and maintain a viable and sustainable financial model.
- Supervise the effective development and use of operational systems needed to achieve strategic goals and objectives, with a focus on human and financial resources, governance, communications, community relations, and technology.
- Perform other visionary and transformational leadership duties and fiscal management duties as needed.

Board Development/Governance and Community/External Relations

- Serve as chief spokesperson and advocate for Durham Arts Council and the value and needs of the organization and the arts and cultural sector more broadly, speaking passionately about the power of the arts to positively change lives and the community.
- Build a deep partnership with the Board of Directors and staff to support the advancement of Durham Arts Council while honoring its legacy and charting a course for a dynamic future.
- Compile annual performance data of DAC and ensure that appropriate reports are generated, including annual reports and major funder reports.
- Assess and prioritize fundraising capacity and needs of Durham Arts Council while structuring and pursuing contributed and earned revenue goals, including donor campaigns, major gifts, sponsorships, fundraising events, grants, work-place campaigns, local, state and federal government funding, and other development and program efforts that increase the number and depth of supporters and participants in partnership with the board of trustees and staff.
- Ensure that DAC achieves annual Charitable Solicitation License and complies with all requirements.
- Work with staff to engineer and drive strategies in fundraising, resource development, marketing, and communications to significantly enhance revenues and create a wider base of support from the community.
- Provide fundraising leadership for DAC and the sector in times of emergency response or other special needs.
- Oversee and manage endowed and restricted funds and related reporting to ensure donor directives are met.
- Perform other board development, governance, fundraising, and community/external relations duties as needed.

Personnel, Programs, and Facilities Management

- Recruit, screen, hire, train, and evaluate DAC staff and specialized contract outsource teams, ensuring all appropriate personnel policies, benefits, practices, and training are implemented and supported.
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, and be able to attract and retain high-performing staff and volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.
- Work with department heads to support the hiring of teaching artists, visual, performing, and literary artists in 800+ contract positions annually, ensuring that all appropriate recruitment, background checks, and contract procedures are followed.
- Initiate and negotiate multi-year facility management contracts and extensions with City of Durham for the DAC building and ensure that all aspects of facility management and facility maintenance plan are accomplished by facility staff for the DAC building and any ancillary facilities.
- Work with DAC Director of Facilities and City of Durham to plan and advocate for major capital repairs or improvements while ensuring all annual contractual performance objectives and required reporting are accomplished in the facility management contract with the City of Durham.
- Support staff in the management of more than 5,000 events and programs in the building annually.
- Provide leadership and overall direction for major organization-wide programs and initiatives such as CenterFest Arts Festival, Art Walk, Music Friendly City program, and DPLEX program. Ensure that appropriate permits, risk management, resources, volunteers, and staffing teams are secured and directed appropriately.
- Perform other personnel, programs, and facilities management duties as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

A creative, collaborative, and visionary leader, the Executive Director will be recognized for their ability to engage with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, driving action that advances the impact of the Durham Arts Council. An effective consensus builder, communicator, and negotiator, the ED will inspire trust and confidence with a respectful and diplomatic approach to varying points of view. The ED will value collaboration, have a history of personal involvement in and appreciation for local and regional arts councils, and possess a deep awareness of issues and trends impacting the arts and culture sector regionally and nationally.

Other key competencies include the following:

- **Leadership & Personal Accountability** – The clarity to use positional and relational influence to organize people to pursue a collective vision, managed with a sense of purpose and direction.
- **Diplomacy & Interpersonal Skills** – The integrity to uphold the highest ethical standards while exhibiting tact when communicating with all members of the DAC and Durham community.
- **Problem Solving & Time and Priority Management** – The resiliency to solve problems from a variety of vantage points while understanding the limited capacity of the organization and that resources must be allocated to solve these issues in a planned, measured, and orderly fashion.
- **Teamwork and Employee Development/Coaching** – The dexterity to organize and motivate staff members, mentoring and assisting in professional development throughout the organization.

Qualifications

Seven to 10 years of increasing responsibility in arts administration is required. A proven track record of strategic leadership, with experience in strategic fundraising, program planning, and implementation in comparable grant making and community service organizations is preferred. Demonstrated knowledge of visual and performing arts, arts education, festival and event planning, fundraising, community engagement, human relations, and nonprofit financial management and governance practices is ideal. Superior oral and written communication skills and the ability to engage diverse audiences and stakeholders at every level of local, regional, statewide, and national influence is needed.

Compensation and Benefits

The Durham Arts Council offers a comprehensive compensation and benefits package, including an annual salary range of \$120,000 to \$130,000. DAC offers a generous benefits package (after 90 days) for full time employees with 100% employer paid medical insurance, paid time off and holidays, long and short-term disability, dental, life insurance, FSA plan, retirement IRA with 3% employer match, and professional development opportunities.

Applications and Inquiries

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

Josyane Roche, Vice President
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Durham Arts Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Durham Arts Council is committed to Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion. Diverse candidates are encouraged to apply.

Durham Arts Council serves a diverse community and is committed to workplace equity through ongoing learning, discussion, investment in training, and continual recommitment to our core values. Our organization considers applicants equally of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, marital status, age, gender, gender identity, disability, hairstyle, or sexual orientation.