



Northern Clay Center Executive Director

Organization

Northern Clay Center (NCC) is a nationally-recognized ceramics institution dedicated to advancing the ceramic arts through education, exhibitions, and artist services. Since its founding in 1990, NCC has served as a vibrant hub for artists, learners, collectors, and the broader community—championing innovation, accessibility, and excellence in the field. Located in Minneapolis, NCC is a leader in artist development, fostering creative exploration while preserving and celebrating the rich traditions of ceramics.

NCC envisions a future where the ceramic arts evolve as a dynamic and inclusive medium, reflecting diverse cultural traditions and contemporary artistic practices. Through year-round exhibitions, residencies, educational initiatives, and a dedicated sales gallery, the organization provides a platform for artists at all stages of their careers, supporting both emerging talent and established makers. The annual *American Pottery Festival* serves as a cornerstone event, bringing together artists, collectors, and enthusiasts from across the country. NCC is devoted to artistic accomplishment, always exploring fresh approaches to connect with audiences, embracing new technologies, and ensuring the accessibility and long-term sustainability of the arts.



Education and community engagement are central to NCC's mission. NCC offers a wide range of classes for all skill levels and ages, along with artist-led workshops, demonstrations, and scholarship opportunities that expand access to the ceramic arts. Intergenerational and K–12 outreach partnerships provided in schools and organizations with little or no access to art offer hands-on learning experiences that connect individuals of all backgrounds to the power of clay. Through these efforts, NCC strengthens its role as a catalyst for creativity, artistic expression, and visibility, making ceramics a vital and accessible art form for our community.

With an unwavering dedication to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, NCC is committed to breaking down barriers in the arts and amplifying underrepresented voices. The organization actively cultivates an environment where artists, students, and audiences feel seen, valued, and empowered. By fostering a culture of collaboration and creative discovery, NCC continues to shape the landscape of contemporary ceramics, ensuring that the art form thrives in a rapidly-evolving world.

NCC is governed by a dedicated board of directors led by Chair Mary K. Baumann. NCC operates with a committed team of full-time and part-time staff, along with contract artists and a strong volunteer base. For the fiscal year ending December 2023, the organization reported a total revenue of approximately \$2.15 million, with 42.1% from contributions and grants and 52.5% from program services such as classes and workshops, gallery and exhibition sales, as well as studio license and kiln fees. Expenses for the year totaled \$1.94 million, resulting in a net income of \$206,747.

Community

Situated on the traditional homelands of the Dakota people, Minneapolis is Minnesota's largest city and a dynamic hub of culture, commerce, and natural beauty. With a history that traces back thousands of years, the city's location along the Mississippi River has long been a center for trade, community, and innovation. Today, Minneapolis is

known for its strong economy, nationally-recognized arts institutions, and a deep commitment to sustainability and outdoor recreation.



As one half of the Twin Cities metropolitan area alongside the state capital, St. Paul, Minneapolis plays a vital role in the region's cultural and economic landscape. The city is home to world-class arts organizations, including the Walker Art Center, the Guthrie Theater, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, as well as a thriving music scene that has produced legendary artists like Prince. The University of Minnesota, one of the nation's top research universities, contributes to the city's intellectual and creative vibrancy. Minneapolis is also known for its diverse culinary scene, reflecting the many communities that call the city home. From the Indigenous cuisine at the James Beard Award-winning Owamni to the bustling global food markets along Lake Street, the city showcases a rich tapestry of flavors. Nature is an integral part of Minneapolis's identity. With 22 lakes, the Mississippi River, and an extensive network of parks and trails, the city consistently ranks among the best for outdoor recreation. The Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Falls, and the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway offer residents and visitors countless ways to experience the city's green spaces year-round. Economically, the Twin Cities is a powerhouse in the Midwest, with Fortune 500 companies such as Target, U.S. Bancorp, 3M, General Mills, and Best Buy headquartered in the area. A strong foundation in finance, healthcare, technology, and retail makes it one of the nation's most resilient and

innovative economies.

With a population of approximately 429,000 and a metropolitan area of over 3.6 million, Minneapolis offers a high quality of life, a deep cultural richness, and a progressive, inclusive spirit that continues to shape its future.

Sources: Minneapolis.org; Britannica.com; minneapolismn.gov

Position Summary

The Executive Director will provide strategic leadership and ensure financial sustainability, programmatic excellence, and community impact. Reporting to the board of directors, they will oversee fundraising, financial management, strategic planning, marketing, and operations while developing a long-term vision aligned with NCC's mission and values. As NCC's primary advocate, the Executive Director will engage artists, donors, funders, and community partners, leading efforts to diversify revenue and sustain programming. They will foster a workplace culture that values autonomy, collaboration, and inclusivity, empowering staff and program managers. With a deep commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB), the Executive Director will embed these principles across all operations, partnerships, and programs. They will ensure that NCC's educational initiatives, galleries, and artist services continue to thrive with a focus on accessibility and sustainability. Through strong leadership, financial stewardship, and a passion for the arts, they will continue to position NCC as a leading ceramics institution and vital community resource.

Roles and Responsibilities

Fundraising, Resource Development, and Financial Oversight

- Lead efforts to diversify and grow contributed income, including individual donors, corporate partnerships, foundation grants, and government support.
- Cultivate and steward relationships with major donors, funding agencies, and corporate sponsors to secure long-term financial sustainability.
- Steer grant-writing strategy and execution, actively aggregating organizational data, crafting narratives, and meeting submission deadlines while collaborating with staff to align funding requests with NCC's mission and impact.
- Expand national fundraising efforts and partnerships to increase visibility and support beyond local networks.
- Provide oversight and direction for NCC's financial health, including budgeting, financial reporting, and resource allocation in partnership with the business manager.
- Fortify sustainable growth by balancing revenue generation with fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency.

- Assess and refine programmatic priorities to maximize earned revenue potential while maintaining alignment with NCC's mission.
- Embrace other fundraising, resource development, and financial oversight responsibilities as needed.

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Growth

- Refresh and execute a forward-thinking strategic plan that aligns with NCC's mission and adapts to evolving funding and programming landscapes.
- Guide long-term organizational growth while addressing operational priorities, staffing needs, and financial sustainability.
- Empower and mentor senior leadership to foster a culture of innovation, accountability, and shared purpose.
- Collaborate with the board of directors to align organizational priorities, foster transparency in decision-making processes, and strengthen governance.
- Oversee the development and delivery of impactful exhibitions, educational programs, and community initiatives that reflect NCC's mission and artistic accomplishment in partnership with senior leadership.
- Identify and support opportunities for innovation, including the integration of new technologies in ceramics.
- Adapt to shifts in funding priorities and social-impact initiatives while maintaining NCC's artistic identity and mission.
- Embrace other strategic leadership and organizational growth responsibilities as needed.

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Relations

- Serve as the public face of NCC, strengthening relationships with artists, donors, board members, funders, and the broader arts community.
- Build partnerships with local, national, and international arts organizations to amplify NCC's impact and reach.
- Advocate for the importance of ceramics and its role in contemporary art, positioning NCC as a thought leader in the field.
- Communicate NCC's value and relevance to a broad audience, promoting the organization as a premier arts resource both regionally and internationally.
- Ensure NCC's educational programs remain strong and well-supported, maintaining accessibility for students and artists at all levels.
- Embrace other community engagement and stakeholder relations responsibilities as needed.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) and Organizational Culture

- Lead and champion NCC's commitment to anti-racism and EDIB, ensuring these values are embedded across all areas of programming, staffing, and community engagement.
- Continue building an inclusive workplace culture that attracts and retains diverse talent and perspectives, where staff feel valued, supported, and motivated to stay within the organization.
- Work collaboratively with staff and board to advance equity-driven initiatives and programs that foster greater accessibility and representation.
- Advocate for diversity within the ceramics field and seek opportunities to amplify underrepresented voices.
- Embrace other EDIB and organizational culture responsibilities as needed.

Operational Excellence and Program Administration

- Oversee programs, financial administration, fundraising, staff development, and public relations in alignment with NCC's mission.
- Ensure the efficient use of organizational resources—human, financial, and physical—while maintaining operational efficiency.
- Support a data-driven culture, utilizing impact measurement tools and evaluation frameworks to assess program effectiveness.
- Directly develop and manage special programs, such as visiting artists and special lecture series, exhibitions, and educational content in partnership with senior leadership.

- Provide strategic oversight to ensure NCC's facilities, studios, and equipment remain well-maintained, with proactive investment in repairs and replacements as needed in collaboration with NCC's Infrastructure Manager.
- Balance executive leadership responsibilities with operational oversight, employing effective delegation while maintaining a strong presence across NCC's program areas.
- Embrace other operational excellence and program administration responsibilities as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be a collaborative and empathetic leader who fosters a culture of trust, respect, and transparency. They will approach leadership with humility and active listening, ensuring that staff feel heard, valued, and supported. Adaptable and solution-oriented, they will navigate challenges with composure and encourage open dialogue, empowering team members to take initiative while maintaining a shared sense of purpose.

A clear and effective communicator, the Executive Director will engage with staff, board members, and the broader ceramics community with authenticity and approachability. They will articulate complex ideas with clarity, making financial, operational, and programmatic decisions accessible and inclusive for all stakeholders. With a relationship-driven mindset, they will cultivate meaningful connections across sectors so that NCC's work remains deeply rooted in both local partnerships and national networks.

Committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, the Executive Director will lead with self-awareness and cultural competence, ensuring that NCC is a welcoming and inclusive space for artists, students, and staff of all backgrounds. They will bring flexibility and curiosity, embracing new perspectives and ideas while maintaining a steady and mission-driven leadership approach.

Other key competencies include:

- **Personal Accountability and Integrity** – Taking ownership of actions and decisions with unwavering responsibility while demonstrating transparency, ethical leadership, and a commitment to achieving results.
- **Leadership and Relationship Building** – Inspiring trust and confidence by fostering collaboration, engaging diverse stakeholders, and empowering staff to contribute meaningfully toward shared organizational goals.
- **Diplomacy and Effective Communication** – Navigating complex and sensitive conversations with tact and professionalism, fostering open dialogue, and generating clarity in decision-making and messaging.
- **Futuristic Thinking, Creativity, and Innovation** – Envisioning future trends and possibilities, effectively integrating innovative and creative approaches to enhance the institute's programming and outreach.

Qualifications

Northern Clay Center does not require a specific number of years of experience or minimum educational credentials. Qualified candidates should demonstrate a strong track record of leadership within mission-driven arts or cultural organizations, with experience in fundraising, financial oversight, strategic planning, and community engagement. The ideal candidate will be an adaptable and collaborative leader with exceptional communication skills, a commitment to equity and inclusivity, and the ability to foster a supportive and empowering workplace culture. They should have experience building and maintaining relationships with artists, donors, funders, and other key stakeholders, as well as guiding an organization through change and growth. A passion for ceramics and the broader arts ecosystem is essential, along with the ability to articulate NCC's mission to diverse audiences. The selected candidate must be willing to reside in or relocate to the Minneapolis area.

Compensation and Benefits

Northern Clay Center provides a competitive compensation package with a salary range between \$120,000 and \$125,000, along with a comprehensive benefits package. Benefits include employer-supported health insurance, a retirement plan, paid vacation, holidays, personal and sick days, and access to NCC's programs and events.

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. For questions or further inquiries about this opportunity, please feel free to reach out through the contact options provided on our website. We look forward to your application and to exploring the potential contributions you could bring to Northern Clay Center.

Dat Ngo, Vice President
Jeff Erbach, Associate Vice President



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Northern Clay Center is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment where all individuals can engage with the ceramic arts. NCC actively works to create equitable opportunities in its programming and operations. We welcome applicants of all backgrounds and do not discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected statuses, ensuring an inclusive and supportive workplace. To request this document in a left-justified format, please email the address listed above.