



Chief Executive Officer Position Prospectus

Location: Lynchburg, VA





About the Academy Center of the Arts

Located in the heart of downtown Lynchburg, the Academy Center of the Arts is a vibrant multi-venue arts organization that serves as a cultural anchor for Central Virginia. With a history dating back more than a century, the Academy began as a 1905 vaudeville house and has grown into a dynamic, inclusive home for the arts, education, and community connection. After decades of advocacy and restoration, the historic Academy Theatre reopened in 2018, marking a major milestone in the organization's growth and regional impact.

Today, the Academy operates four distinct venues: the beautifully restored **Historic Academy Theatre** (800 seats), the flexible **Warehouse Theatre** (340 seats), the intimate **Music Hall** (100 seats), and a **Visual Arts Studio** that houses gallery exhibitions, community art classes, and camps. Each year, the Academy presents more than **250 programs** across music, theatre, dance, film, comedy, and other disciplines. These offerings feature national touring artists, local and regional talent, and community-centered productions.

The Academy is also a leader in arts education, providing year-round programs for children, youth, and adults in both visual and performing arts. From in-school residencies to summer camps, studio classes to community partnerships, the Academy fosters creative exploration and lifelong learning. Its outreach efforts focus on reducing barriers to participation through scholarships, free events, and collaborations with schools and nonprofit partners.

As both a presenter and a convener, the Academy supports a wide range of collaborators—including the **Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra**, **Opera on the James**, **Charlottesville Ballet**, **Jefferson Choral Society**, and many other civic and cultural organizations. Its venues serve as a creative commons for the community, strengthening local arts infrastructure and providing access to meaningful artistic experiences for audiences and artists alike.





Position Overview

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the strategic, operational, and public leader of the Academy Center of the Arts. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the CEO is responsible for advancing the organization's mission and ensuring its long-term vitality—programmatically, financially, and culturally.

This role requires a clear-eyed, collaborative leader who can connect vision to execution. The CEO guides a talented staff across all departments, ensuring that programming, operations, education, marketing, development, and finance work in concert to deliver meaningful experiences and deep community impact. Strong internal leadership, alignment, and trust-building across teams are essential to success.

The ideal candidate brings a blend of nonprofit management experience, proven fundraising and financial leadership, and a deep belief in the power of the arts to strengthen communities. This is a hands-on position suited to someone who thrives in a multi-venue environment, values internal culture as much as public presence, and is ready to invest in both the organization and the city it serves by being a visible and engaged presence in Lynchburg.



Key Responsibilities

Strategic and Operational Leadership

- Lead the implementation of the strategic plan, connecting long-term vision to daily execution.
- Establish a culture of accountability with clear goals, measurable outcomes, and consistent team rhythms (e.g., EOS, Pinnacle, or similar systems).
- Make thoughtful, timely decisions that reflect organizational values and strategic priorities.
- Ensure operational excellence across programming, facilities, guest experience, development, education, and administration.

Culture and Team Building

- Foster a joyful, inclusive, and collaborative workplace.
- Model and cultivate emotional intelligence, open communication, and mutual respect.
- Strengthen cohesion across the senior team and broader staff, ensuring alignment and morale.
- Provide ongoing, constructive feedback and celebrate team successes.
- Champion and uphold a healthy, values-driven organizational culture.

Financial Stewardship

- Oversee the development and management of sound, sustainable budgets.
- Monitor financial performance across all departments and venues.
- Communicate key financial insights clearly to staff and the Board.
- Balance mission impact with long-term financial stability.
- Serve as chief fundraiser, working closely with the Advancement team to lead donor cultivation, stewardship, and major giving strategies.
- Build and sustain relationships with donors, foundations, sponsors, and other funders.



Community and External Relations

- Serve as the Academy's primary public representative within the community and beyond.
- Be a visible and accessible presence in Lynchburg, strengthening trust and enthusiasm for the Academy.
- Build and sustain relationships with civic leaders, cultural partners, and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with schools and nonprofit partners to expand access and outreach.
- Act as a vocal advocate for the arts locally and regionally.

Board Engagement and Communication

- Maintain open, transparent, and timely communication with the Board of Trustees.
- Partner with the Board to shape strategic direction, policy, and organizational goals.
- Engage Trustees as active ambassadors, advocates, and thought partners.





Key Qualifications

- Demonstrated success in nonprofit or arts leadership, ideally within a multi-venue arts center.
- Proven ability to lead both the business side (fundraising, financial management, operations) and the artistic/mission side (community programs, education, partnerships).
- Strong track record in fundraising, including donor cultivation, major gifts, and philanthropic partnerships.
- Skilled at building community trust, civic relationships, and cultural partnerships.
- Experience fostering a healthy organizational culture, with attention to staff cohesion, morale, and emotional intelligence in leadership.
- Understanding of programming and artist booking in a presenting environment, with the judgment to balance artistic vision with financial sustainability.
- Strong communication and public presence; able to serve as a compelling advocate for the arts.
- Strategic thinker with operational expertise; able to connect vision to execution.
- Willingness to reside in Lynchburg and serve as a visible, engaged leader in the community.



Compensation & Benefits

Compensation for the CEO is **\$130,000 to \$150,000 annually based on experience** and includes an excellent package of employee benefits.

To Apply

The Academy Center of the Arts has retained the services of ThinkingAhead Executive Search's Nonprofit Division to serve as our recruitment partner.

Contact Information

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