

## Organization

The mission of the Academy of American Poets (The Academy) is to support American poets at all stages of their careers and to foster the appreciation of contemporary poetry. The Academy is a New York-based national nonprofit and the nation's leading champion of poets and poetry, with supporters in all 50 states and beyond. For over three generations, the organization has connected millions of people to poetry.

Founded in 1934 by Marie Bullock, the Academy celebrates poets and poetry through Poets.org, Poem-a-Day, its prize program, *American Poets* magazine, National Poetry Month, readings, educational offerings, and events. Other current programs include Teach This Poem, the Dear Poet project, National Poem in Your Pocket Day, and an annual gala Poetry & the Creative Mind. The combined reach of the programs and publications is approximately two million individuals a month, and the website hosts twenty million visitors a year. In addition, the Academy helped create and is a key member of the Poetry Coalition, a national organization dedicated to highlighting the value poets bring to our culture. It also helps to regrant funds to support poetry programming nationwide.

The Academy sustains its efforts through the generosity of individual members and donors, advertising, corporate sponsorships, and support from major foundations and government organizations such as the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. It has a \$9 million endowment that underwrites its legacy prizes for poets. The Academy is headquartered in New York City's Financial District.

Governed by a 21-member Board of Directors chaired by Tess O'Dwyer, the Academy has a staff of 13 full-time employees responsible for its daily operations. The Board of Chancellors, composed of 15 distinguished poets, advises the Academy on literary matters and participates in Academy programs. The Academy's annual budget is \$6 million, with \$3,300,000 from grants; \$1,125,000 from individuals; \$650,000 from advertising and corporate sponsorship (including in-kind); \$500,000 from other fundraising; and \$450,000 from earned and endowment income. The Academy awards a total of \$1.25 million annually to poets at various points in their careers.

## Position Summary

The Executive Director & President of the Academy of American Poets will be an experienced leader with a deep appreciation of poetry and an understanding of the literary landscape. This is a full-time position, reporting to the Board of Directors. In addition, the Executive Director serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board as its President. The successful candidate will provide vision, leadership, strategy, and fundraising skills to manage the Academy's wide-ranging portfolio of programs and activities. The Executive Director will be skilled in engaging diverse constituencies and staff with keen understanding and diplomacy. Strategic planning is an ongoing process at the Academy, and the new Executive Director will guide and fully participate in that process. A deep and active commitment to implementing the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and access must be part of the Executive Director's approach to managing the organization. The Executive Director will have expertise in leading and managing a national nonprofit organization, and will develop innovative, leading-edge ways to expand the organization's reach. Since the Academy has a strong organizational foundation in place, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to guide the organization forward to its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and beyond, broadening its service to all its constituents and the larger literary community.

## Role and Responsibilities

### Artistic Programming, Strategic Leadership, Operations

- Carry out all board-approved plans and policies, ensuring alignment with the mission, vision, and values.
- Oversee and ensure the integrity of all programs, publications, educational resources, events, services, and prize and grant programs.
- Lead ongoing strategic planning and DEIA initiatives, monitoring progress toward goals and objectives.
- Apply organizational policies, guidelines, and processes in managing finance and budgeting, human resources, and general administration to maintain the smooth functioning of the Academy's day-to-day operations.
- Hire, supervise, and evaluate staff, with attention to supporting their efforts and developing and enriching their skills.

- Plan and execute innovative activities that move the organization's mission forward and create momentum for the future.
- Develop activities in a systematic and sustainable manner.

### **External Relations and Communications**

- Build on the positive public understanding of the Academy's mission and programs as its spokesperson and champion of poetry today, while coordinating with the board and chancellors on official public statements.
- Advocate for poetry and the organization's work and programs to the arts, education, humanities, media, publishing, and philanthropic communities.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy that leverages technology and social media, stewards the brand, and broadens the Academy's audience and that of poetry generally.
- Preside over the Academy's public events, represent the organization at other literary and cultural events, and maintain contact with poets, writers, translators, publishers, and editors.
- Maintain positive working relationships with existing partners, and expand partnerships and collaborations with attention to those that can extend the Academy's reach and ability to provide assistance to the field.

### **Fundraising**

- Oversee all annual and special fundraising efforts, including all existing bases of support, the annual gala, advertising, and the year-end and spring fundraising campaigns.
- Develop and execute new strategies that expand the base of individual supporters in celebration of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024 and beyond.
- Maintain the organization's relationships with major individual donors, government funders, and private foundations; develop new contacts; and work in close partnership with other organizations to help grow financial support for poetry.

### **Board and Chancellor Relations**

- Coordinate and support the efforts of the Board of Directors, apprising them of regular operations and appropriate benchmarks and engaging with them on all new initiatives.
- Advise the board chair on matters of internal and external importance. Attend and participate in all board and committee meetings.
- Communicate regularly with the board and solicit its advice on the Academy's activities.
- Execute contracts and documents, and act on behalf of the Academy in its day-to-day business and other matters as authorized by the board.
- Identify potential new board members, focusing on those from diverse backgrounds whose talents and contacts align with the needs of the organization.
- Communicate regularly with the Board of Chancellors, chair its annual business meeting, oversee chancellor elections, support the efforts of chancellor committees and the participation of chancellors in programs, and ensure that the role of chancellor continues to be valued and visible.

### **Traits and Characteristics**

The Executive Director & President will be an effective communicator and collaborator, with a commitment to transparency, trust, and respect. The successful candidate will lead teamwork and team building, both supporting and supervising the staff. They will build relationships both internally and externally to enhance the Academy's work, and contribute their vision and entrepreneurial spirit to build on the organization's purpose and mission.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership and Teamwork** – The capability to unite people in support of a vision, creating a sense of purpose and direction and working toward consensus when team decisions are required.
- **Diplomacy and Personal Accountability** – The ability to utilize tact and diplomacy in working with people across organizational, functional, and/or cultural borders, and the capacity to learn from mistakes.
- **Project Management and Planning and Organizing** – The facility to identify and oversee all resources, tasks, systems, and people to obtain desired results, prioritizing tasks for optimal productivity and utilizing practical, efficient approaches.

- **Self-Starting** – The dexterity and initiative to do whatever it takes to achieve objectives, projecting self-assurance and demonstrating a strong work ethic.

## Qualifications

The successful candidate will have approximately 10 years' experience in nonprofit administration at the executive or senior level; a bachelor's degree in a related field is preferred. A master of fine arts is desirable but is not required. The President & Executive Director should have a true passion for literature, and ideally an extensive knowledge of poetry and the contemporary poetry community. Proficiency in strategic planning, as well as management, finance, development, and staff leadership, is essential. A track record of successful fundraising and donor and board relations is key to the success of this position, as is technical proficiency, including an understanding of digital publishing, social media, and web and content management. A personal commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is crucial, with professional experience in implementing best practices.

## Compensation and Benefits

The Academy of American Poets provides a competitive and equitable compensation package in the estimated range of \$180,000 to \$200,000, with benefits that include: health insurance, life insurance, long-term disability, paid time off (10 vacation days, five sick days, three personal days, one week off at the end of December, paid summer hours, 12 holidays), a 403(b) savings plan, and a commitment to work/life balance. A relocation stipend is available. The role is based in New York City with a hybrid/remote schedule for the foreseeable future.

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

Mario Garcia Durham, Vice President



1030 15th Street NW, Suite 283

Washington, DC 20005-1500

Tel (888) 234.4236 Ext. 209

Email [AcademyofAmericanPoets@ArtsConsulting.com](mailto:AcademyofAmericanPoets@ArtsConsulting.com)

**The Academy of American Poets is an Equal Opportunity Employer, committed to building a diverse and inclusive staff. Qualified candidates of all backgrounds are welcome to apply. The Academy of American Poets does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of religion, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression, or any other characteristics protected by law. Candidates of color are strongly encouraged to apply.**