



Organization

The mission of the Vermont Arts Council (VAC) is to cultivate and advance the arts and creativity throughout Vermont. The Council is committed to building a state where art, culture, and creativity are at the heart of its communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individual lives, connects people more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. The Council prioritizes expanding arts opportunities, cultivating creative placemaking, and energizing Vermont's creative economy.

VAC was founded in 1965 and is the state's primary provider of arts funding, advocacy, and information. Supported by private and public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Vermont, a total of \$2,923,181 in Arts Council funding was awarded in FY2022. Grants were awarded to 121 individual artists, 217 organizations in every county, and 121 towns across Vermont. Headquartered in Montpelier, VAC is the only state arts agency in the United States that is also an independent nonprofit, allowing VAC to advocate in the state legislature for funding and policies. VAC delivers funding to the state's creative sector in several ways including direct grants for artists, grants for the creation of public art and art in state buildings, grants to arts and cultural organizations, and support for arts programs in schools. VAC also supports artists and the cultural community by fostering connections with each other and with a variety of educational, accessibility, and funding resources; arts directories; and statewide classified ads.

In recent years, VAC asserted itself as a vital resource by assisting the cultural community in navigating the intense (and continuing) disruptions of the pandemic. VAC successfully advocated for and administered unprecedented amounts of relief to Vermont artists and cultural organizations. In FY2022, the state legislature and the governor made a unique investment—the allocation of \$9 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds—to the Vermont Arts Council designated for grants to creative sector nonprofits and for-profit entities to help them recover from the pandemic. In addition, funding allocated in the last legislative session was deployed statewide to transform and expand traditional arts and cultural programming into the new digital space. New philanthropic partnerships increased the size and scope of Arts Council grants to artists and cultural organizations, helping to strengthen the state's cultural landscape in its pandemic recovery and to build the long-term sustainability of the state's vibrant creative sector. VAC's COVID-19 relief programs have included Digital Capacity Grants, Rapid Response Artist Relief Grants, Cultural Relief Grants and Cultural Recovery Grants for organizations (in partnership with Vermont Humanities), and sponsorships for outdoor arts events.

One of VAC's main initiatives is the Vermont Creative Network (VCN), which was established by the Vermont Legislature in May 2016. The VCN is a broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals working to advance Vermont's creative sector and is focused on promoting statewide investment in systems that allow creatives to grow and thrive. In 2021, the VCN launched a statewide CreateVT Action Plan, which won state and regional Plan of the Year awards and was instrumental in making the case for the \$9 million COVID-19 relief grant program for the creative sector. The advocacy agenda focuses on investing in cultural infrastructure, promoting creative local economies, investing in digital capacity, and developing entrepreneurial and business skills.

VAC works with the Governor's office to recognize contributions in the Vermont arts community each year, honoring individuals and organizations with a variety of awards. Awards are given for excellence and achievement in the arts, arts education, arts advocacy, and service to the arts.

Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) initiatives are prioritized internally and externally. In 2020, a staff committee was formed devoted to pursuing IDEA in all VAC activities and have been implemented in employment policies, grantmaking practices, and outreach procedures. In 2022, the committee established a network of IDEA advisors from the field in order to continue and expand this work. The IDEA Advisory Network brings together creative leaders, community organizers, and working artists with expertise and lived experiences in pursuing social justice in and through the arts; it will help set and pursue IDEA priorities and disseminates the work to diverse communities.

Vermont Arts Council has a 16-member Board of Trustees led by Chair Rebecca McMeekin. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, Vermont Arts Council reported a total revenue of \$4,392,446 and total expenses were \$4,367,031.

Community

Known as the Green Mountain State, Vermont is a socially, culturally, and environmentally progressive state that is home to some of the country's most beautiful natural settings. Located at the westernmost edge of the New England region, the population is about 625,000 and is made up of small vibrant cities and quaint towns, all offering their own distinct environment with a common throughline of community, civic pride, and creativity. A unique and dynamic culture, Vermont is consistently ranked one of the safest places to live, one of the best states to live in and to raise a family, and one of the healthiest states in America. The educational system is highly ranked and the strong transportation infrastructure makes even the most rural areas accessible.

With a long tradition of respect for the land, Vermont is the most environmentally-conscious state in the country and is a leader in self-sufficient living. Vermonters are serious about year-round outdoor recreation and the state offers everything from skiing and hiking to cycling and sailing. There is a thriving culinary scene featuring innovative local food systems, inventive farm-to-table offerings, artisan cheesemakers, and the most craft breweries per capita in the United States. The state is well-known for its number of living and working artists and for its commitment to the creative economy. A 2019 study showed that 9.3% of Vermont jobs—more than 40,000—are in the creative sector, defined as design, specialty foods, visual arts and fine crafts, performing arts, film and media, literary arts, and culture and heritage.

The Vermont Arts Council offices are located in Montpelier, across the street from the Vermont State House, in a historic house that was the childhood home of Senator Patrick Leahy. The capital of Vermont, Montpelier is a micropolitan area in the foothills of the Green Mountains. It sits on Abenaki homeland at the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch Rivers. With a population of 8,000, it is one of the smallest state capitals in the country, but it boasts a vibrant community that is both sophisticated and welcoming. Montpelier is home to a thriving arts community featuring theatre, live music venues, and a bustling business district that includes many independently owned shops. "Local is a way of life" in Montpelier and it is distinctly the only state capital without a Walmart, McDonalds, or a Starbucks. It is conveniently located 3 hours from Boston, 5 hours from New York and 2.5 hours from Montreal. There is an Amtrak Vermonter station and Burlington International Airport is 32 miles away. The Vermont College of Fine Arts and Community College of Vermont call Montpelier home and the elementary and secondary schools are rated as some of the best in the state.

Sources: [usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2021-04-14/these-are-the-greenest-states-in-the-us](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2021-04-14/these-are-the-greenest-states-in-the-us)

Position Summary

The Executive Director will serve as a dynamic and collaborative leader for the Vermont Arts Council and for the state's creative sector to ensure everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their lives and communities. This individual will develop an inclusive strategic vision to strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of arts, cultural, and creative sector organizations and individuals across the state. The Executive Director will collaborate with the Board of Directors, community, and civic partners in the active pursuit of resources to support the organization's goals and strategic direction. A visible leader, they will energize the state's creative economy and advocate for the creative sector. This individual will establish and nurture authentic and transparent relationships with elected officials, local and state agencies, cultural partners, artists, institutional funders, and individual donors. The Executive Director will be responsible for ensuring the success of the organization's fundraising, financial, operations, marketing, administration, and programmatic strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic Vision and Leadership

- Provide a vision and strategy for Vermont Arts Council that balances the needs of the state's creative economy with a realistic understanding of local, state, and federal policy and the political and environmental factors impacting the region and the cultural sector.
- Demonstrate a commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access throughout the organization with policies and practices that foster transformative change.
- Foster a culture of innovation throughout the Council to realize new ideas, concepts, and strategies that amplify the cultural vitality of communities across the state.

- Partner with the Board of Directors and staff to develop and ensure the implementation of a strategic plan, aligning goals with the organization's core mission and allocating financial and human resources to achieve the goals.
- Cultivate and nurture authentic and positive relationships and partnerships with organizations, grant recipients, artists, and other key stakeholders, ensuring open communication and an honest assessment of programmatic and performance milestones.
- Keep abreast of the latest cultural sector issues and trends through active participation in regional and national cultural service organizations.
- Embrace other strategic vision and leadership duties as needed.

Resource Development and External Relations

- Identify, establish, and maintain cooperative and collaborative partnerships with state agencies, municipal governments, local and national funders, and regional and national organizations, such as the New England Foundation for the Arts, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and National Endowment for the Arts.
- Serve as a primary fundraiser for the organization, setting strategy, identifying, and stewarding philanthropic relationships, and working with donors across all divisions of the organization.
- Partner with the Board Chair to engage board members and leverage their networks to secure resources that will advance the organization's mission.
- Direct the development and implementation of comprehensive marketing, branding, and development strategies that maximize revenue opportunities from individual donors, foundations, and corporations.
- Embrace other resource development and external relations duties as needed.

Community Engagement

- Serve as the principal spokesperson and chief storyteller, seeking opportunities to communicate with donors, the media, and the community to share VAC's impact on the vitality of the state's arts.
- Strengthen VAC's image through effective community activities, including frequent visits and communication with cultural leaders and artists, conducting site visits to partner and grantee organizations to promote the organization's work, and enhancing the entire cultural sector.
- Maintain and strengthen positive relationships with elected officials and policymakers at the local, state, and national levels while advocating for the importance of funding the arts and the impact of the arts and culture sector.
- Embrace other community engagement duties as necessary.

Governance and Operations

- Establish strong communication channels with the board, present timely and accurate briefs and reports to support their policy and decision-making and attend meetings and sub-committee meetings as necessary.
- Partner with the Board Executive and Nominating Committees to identify, cultivate, recruit, and engage diverse board members whose skills, interests, and commitment will further VAC's mission.
- Serve as ex officio and member of assigned committees, seek and build board involvement, build relationships, and further development.
- Recruit, hire, develop, and support a diverse staff team; regularly evaluating both individual and team performance.
- Ensure ongoing service and programmatic excellence through rigorous program evaluation.
- Implement consistent operational policies, processes, and procedures that increase efficiency, establish high standards of customer service, promote open and transparent communication, strengthen internal controls, and ensure a safe and healthy workplace for the staff.
- Collaborate with the Finance Director and Board Treasurer in the oversight of the organization's financial health, establish short- and long-range financial goals, develop and monitor the annual budget, and ensure adherence to strong financial controls.
- Embrace other governance and operations duties as necessary.

Traits and Characteristics

A strategic and authentic advocate for the arts, the Executive Director will be a collaborative leader with excellent communication skills and the ability to interact with and energize a diverse group of citizens and partners across the state. This individual will be an altruistic leader who is driven to support the cultural sector and creative economy without the need for individual recognition. Receptive to new methods and ideas, the Executive Director will be willing to undertake non-traditional opportunities that expand the reach and impact of the sector. They will use their passion for the arts to inspire and build relationships that strengthen the support systems for Vermont's cultural sector.

Other key competencies include:

- **Diplomacy and Interpersonal Skills** – The capacity to recognize multiple perspectives, demonstrate sincere interest in divergent voices and opinions and tactfully address complex or challenging issues with respect and sensitivity.
- **Personal Accountability and Resiliency** – The capability to evaluate personal actions, accept responsibility for mistakes, and overcome setbacks to reach a positive outcome.
- **Teamwork and Appreciating Others** – The ability to identify with and care about others, leading a team toward consensus, recognizing and appreciating member contributions, and providing constructive feedback to enhance the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the team.
- **Problem Solving** – The facility to define, analyze, and diagnose key components of a problem to formulate a solution.

Experience and Qualifications

A strong background in and passion for the arts is essential, as well as a demonstrated understanding of the value of creativity for the social and economic wellbeing of people and communities. A proven record of leadership and experience with advanced communication strategies as well as a background in coalescing diverse interests and managing complex collaborative partnerships is required. Progressive senior management experience in a government agency, nonprofit organization, university, or creative industry setting is necessary. Qualified candidates will be knowledgeable in cultural policy development and implementation at the local, state, or federal level, possessing a keen understanding of public policy and legislative priorities. The ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker with a wealth of experience in public administration, particularly with programs involving public funds. Knowledge of the Vermont arts and culture environment, as well as the political landscape, are helpful attributes. The Executive Director is required to live in Vermont. Qualified applicants will be committed to embracing and advancing the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. Qualified candidates will have demonstrated experience in staff management and program development and will have exceptional written and verbal communication skills.

Compensation and Benefits

VAC provides a competitive compensation package with a salary range between \$110,000 and \$125,000 and a benefits package that includes health, life, vision, and dental insurance; short- and long-term disability; vacation, holiday, and sick pay; and an employee retirement plan.

Applications and Inquiries

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

Jenna Deja, Vice President
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The Vermont Arts Council will mobilize our collective energies toward the broader anti-racist transformation of Vermont. We believe that focusing our attention on anti-racism and continuing our work on accessibility are the most powerful ways we begin to make true our vision that “everyone in Vermont has access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities.”

The Vermont Arts Council is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, or genetic information. Vermont Arts Council is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities in employment, its services, programs, and activities. To request reasonable accommodation, contact Jenna Deja 773.308.6970 jdeja@artsconsulting.com.