Organization

The Vermont Studio Center (VSC) was founded by artists 38 years ago with the purpose of fostering creativity through community, collaboration, and quiet reflection. Over time, VSC grew to become one of the largest international artists’ and writers’ residency program in the United States, hosting 600+ residents per year with 14,000 alums worldwide.

The 21-building campus includes several resident housing buildings and five studio buildings—one for writers and four for artists. Studio facilities provide equipment for wood and metal work; two modest-sized kilns; a printshop with three etching presses; and a digital lab. The heart of the campus, the Red Mill, houses administrative offices, a communal dining hall, a gallery space, an art book library, and a resident lounge.

VSC reopened to in-person residencies in late February 2022, after a nearly two-year pause, offering residencies of two-, three-, and four-weeks’ duration year-round, hosting 260 residents per year. Each resident is provided with a private bedroom and bath in a shared housing facility, a private studio, and all meals. Every VSC residency is enriched with a vibrant program of readings and artists presentations by residents, and by visiting artists and writers who also give individual studio visits and writers craft talks. Each residency session culminates in an open studios event. All scheduled activities are optional. Residents are encouraged to unplug, completely immerse themselves in their practice, and work at their own pace.

The actions and policies of VSC are rooted in the universal values of humanitarianism, compassion, respect, simplicity, and harmony. These values are fully integrated into a non-competitive community where the arts and their creation are timeless trusts. Centered on inclusivity, equity, and accessibility, the organization supports diverse groups of creative individuals within a safe, equitable, and supportive environment to generate new work, solve artistic problems, and cultivate new connections. Residents are selected through a rigorous application process that results in residency cohorts representing various media, cultures, and demographics. VSC welcomes artists and writers with disabilities; the studios and housing are designed to meet a range of accessibility needs. VSC offers merit-based fellowships and grants to offset residency fees.

VSC is governed by an 18-member board of trustees and supported by a staff of approximately 20-employees. Revenue in 2022 and 2023 is projected to be $3 million with $1.3 million from program and services, and $1.7 million from contributions and grants. It has a permanently restricted endowment of approximately $6.5 million.

Community

Embedded in the village of Johnson Vermont, VSC overlooks the Gihon River in the northern Green Mountains. It reflects the spirit of its natural surroundings—simple, sustainable, and tranquil. The historic buildings have been adapted for reuse as studios, residences, and meeting spaces, utilizing the iconic Red Mill at the center of the village of Johnson, as well as the meeting house, school, church, and several homes. Johnson (pop. 1,420) is in Lamoille County, on the traditional, un-surrendered territory of the Abenaki people; it was chartered in 1792 by the Vermont legislature. Johnson is home to Northern Vermont University, part of the State University system, and several businesses, including Johnson Woolen Mills, a well-known art supply store, and an independent bookstore. Geographically, Johnson is dominated by Sterling and Butternut Mountains and by the Gihon and Lamoille Rivers. The Lamoille rail-trail, popular with hikers, bikers, and cross-country skiers, runs through Johnson. The nearest town to Johnson, Morrisville, has shops, restaurants, and a well-regarded hospital. Also nearby is Stowe, known for Mount Mansfield and The Current, its art center, as well as many stores, restaurants, and breweries. VSC is about forty miles northeast of Vermont’s largest city, Burlington, a vibrant place with abundant cultural resources, located on the shore of Lake Champlain.
Vermont, a small state with a population of about 625,000, offers many opportunities for individuals and organizations to make a meaningful impact. Known as a socially, culturally, and environmentally progressive state, it is highly rated as:

- Safest State in America
- Best State to Live in America
- Best State to Give Birth In
- Healthiest State in America

Vermont is also well known for the number of artists who live and work there and for its attention to the creative economy. A 2019 study showed that 9.3 percent 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 state arts agency, Vermont Arts Council (VAC), is actively implementing its Create VT Action Plan and recently secured $9 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support cultural organizations across the state. Vermont is attractive to those seeking an active, intellectual, and creative life.

Sources: greenmountainbywayvt.com; townofjohnson.com; vermont.org; burlingtonfreepress.com; onlyinyourstate.com

**Position Summary**

The Executive Director will be charged with the strategic and financial leadership of the organization setting a clear vision for revenue growth, community engagement, and program excellence. The Executive Director will serve as the leading spokesperson for VSC, responsible for cultivating connections to the residents, alumni, and community partners. This individual will lead by example and facilitate the efforts of the staff while addressing the needs of admissions, development, communications, finance, facilities, and the overall program of VSC. Reporting to and working with an engaged board of trustees and guiding an experienced staff, the Executive Director will work collaboratively to continue, strengthen, and advance the organization’s founding mission and core values.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Revenue Revitalization and Community Engagement**

- Serve as the primary spokesperson for the organization as an active and visible spokesperson that raises global visibility and inspires board, staff, residents, alumni, supporters, and the local community.
- Collaborate with the Director of Development and the board’s development committee to create a robust plan for fundraising activities, capital projects, and major donor prospecting; identify, develop, and strengthen relationships with individual and institutional funders as well as others who advocate for and support VSC.
- Engage publicly with the state of Vermont and Johnson communities, working closely with other professional, civic, government, tourism, and business organizations to preserve its brand as an iconic destination.
- Participate actively in national and international meetings and conversations with peer organizations and existing stewards while developing new relationships.
- Embrace other revenue revitalization and community engagement responsibilities, as needed.

**Strategic Direction and Business Model Resiliency**

- Spearhead a strategic planning and community engagement process that ensures robust conversations with internal and external stakeholders about VSC’s past, present, and future.
- Evaluate, evolve, and update policies in collaboration with the board, staff, and program committee that consider how best to leverage VSC’s unique business model.
- Develop alliances and partnerships with arts programs, associations, and other arts organizations to increase the visibility of VSC in the broader global arts community.
- Ensure that programs, facilities, staffing, and operations support the needs of residents and those who participate in a digital environment.
- Oversee the physical plant, including its maintenance, ongoing development, and implementation of the campus master plan in collaboration with the board’s Plant Operations Committee.
- Clarify strategic needs that support future program development, facility maintenance, and capacity utilization.
- Embrace other strategic direction and business model resiliency responsibilities, as needed.
Governance, Finance, and Administration

- Inspire and support the board and its committees in policy making, fundraising, governance, and community ambassadorship for VSC and its programs.
- Assist the board’s Governance Committee to identify, cultivate, and recruit board members whose diversity, experience, networks, and capacity meet the organization’s goals.
- Ensure that the management of the organization’s resources and finances are compliant with current laws and regulations and the endowment is managed in accordance with approved guidelines established by the board with a clear commitment to donor intent.
- Oversee the preparation of the annual financial budget and operating plans for submission to the full board, collaborating with the treasurer and the finance committee.
- Monitor the budget throughout the year, present monthly or periodic reports to the finance committee, and establish the appropriate internal controls for all financial matters of the institution.
- Support staff members’ professional development, promote a work environment that fosters high-level professional performance, and commit to employee diversity, engagement, and satisfaction.
- Maintain sensitivity to all personnel matters and ensure that policies and procedures used by the Human Resources Office are compliant and up to date with current laws, regulations, and equitable practices.
- Embrace other governance, finance, and administration responsibilities, as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be an inspiring and visionary leader who builds authentic relationships and values frequent interaction with a wide array of local, regional, and national constituencies. Honoring the past and charting a course to a bright future for VSC and its artists and writers, this individual will be solutions-oriented and adept at addressing challenges and embracing opportunities that keep VSC at the forefront of a welcoming, hospitable, and creative environment. Warm, likeable, and accessible, the Executive Director will have a passion to guide a collaborative team founded on trust and the freedom to do excellent work. As an optimistic and decisive leader, the Executive Director will value creativity and foster camaraderie in a harmonious environment with an eye towards systematic approaches that increase organizational resiliency.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership** – The capability to organize and inspire others to believe in the vision, building trust and demonstrating integrity while encouraging active participation of artists, writers, and alumni, as well as aligning with board, staff, and community members.
- **Diplomacy and Interpersonal Skills** – The ability to handle difficult or sensitive issues, model respect, understand the culture and climate of an organization, and communicate effectively while building rapport and fostering relationships both internally and externally effectively and tactfully.
- **Flexibility** – The capacity to be responsive to shifts in direction, priorities, and needs while demonstrating agility in accepting new ideas, approaches, and methods to advance individual and organizational goals.
- **Personal and Professional Accountability** – The integrity to meet the highest ethical standards in establishing relevant, realistic, and attainable goals and objectives while anticipating the effects, outcomes, and calculated risks of various options.

Qualifications

At least seven years’ experience with progressive responsibility in a senior management role, ideally in a nonprofit cultural or educational institution with comparable operating budget size, is needed. Experience with residency or comparable educational programs, including international participation, is preferred. An understanding of the creative process and general knowledge of the contemporary art and literary worlds is welcomed. Candidates must bring experience in strategic planning, budget development, fiscal management, and fundraising with a successful record in donor solicitation and stewardship of major gifts and managing multi-year campaigns. A demonstrated commitment to foster a diverse, equitable, inclusive, accessible, and respectful workplace culture is required. Maintaining primary residence in the Johnson area with the ability to travel regionally and nationally for donor meetings and to network with alumni, attend conferences, and give presentations is required.
Compensation and Benefits
VSC provides a competitive base salary estimated to be in the range of $130,000 to $150,000, as well as comprehensive employee benefits that include health, vision, and dental insurance; a 401k plan; and studio space on campus.

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. For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, including the anticipated salary range, please contact:

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Vermont Studio Center is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to apply. Staff are selected based on ability without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or gender identity.