



# American Craft Council

## Executive Director

### Organization

The American Craft Council (ACC) connects and galvanizes diverse craft communities to advance craft's impact in contemporary American life. Aileen Osborn Webb, a supporter of the American Craft movement during the Great Depression, founded ACC in 1939 to develop markets in metropolitan areas for rural craftsmen. The organization has grown into a national resource and supporter of a broad range of makers, collectors, and supporters. ACC opened the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City in 1956 and housed the ACC library in the new building. Since then, the museum has established as a separate organization called the American Craft Museum and in 2002 changed its name to Museum of Arts and Design. ACC continues its mission to the field and after 67 years in New York City, relocated its headquarters, library, and archives to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2010.

ACC's initiatives have evolved over time and through the pandemic. The current 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is guided with an eye toward future planning. There are four pillars that frame its strategies:

- **Creative Economies:** Investing in makers and their entrepreneurial efforts so they can fully live creative and sustainable lives.
- **Public Voice for Craft:** Serving as the nexus of information, content producer, and the national network building broader audiences who participate in and support craft.
- **Stewardship and Legacy:** Documenting and preserving generational knowledge and supporting new research and scholarship in the field.
- **Social Impact and Community:** Investing in and supporting the diverse ways that craft impacts communities and culture, the humanity it evokes, and the futures it is creating.

Historically, ACC hosts annual juried shows in Atlanta, Baltimore, San Francisco, and St. Paul, bringing together artists, shoppers, students, regional entrepreneurs, and community organizations to celebrate and engage in the craft marketplace. The February 2020 show in Baltimore (held just prior to the pandemic closures) welcomed 17,000 attendees and generated \$3.4 million in sales. ACC has responded to the pandemic by building creative ways to support artists' livelihoods online, including new e-commerce marketplaces, and will return to in-person events in 2022. ACC has also developed new programs, including the Emerging Artists Cohort, which supports 13 innovative early career artists, and created an original series of virtual seminars for the craft community in the quarterly American Craft Forums. ACC also has more than 12,000 members in a thriving membership program.

ACC publishes four innovative issues of *American Craft* magazine, with a readership of more than 50,000 people per issue. The ACC Library and Archives, housed in the main offices in Minneapolis, is comprised of more than 20,000 books and exhibition catalogues and more than 4,000 individual artist files. It serves as a unique resource in the field to help celebrate craft's history while supporting new work in the field. The collections have expanded digital access and support a network of various craft archives. ACC is an agent of change and growth for the future of the field as an active site of interrogation, research, documentation, and exploration of the expanding definitions of craft in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

ACC believes that craft—with its deep roots across all cultures—connects people to one another and the world around us, carries forward collective traditions, and serves as a powerful medium for addressing the issues we face as a society. In that spirit, ACC is committed to diversity and continues to build a more inclusive, just, and equitable community. ACC has partnered with the World Craft Council, participated in the Smithsonian's African American Craft Initiative, and helped organize the National Racial Equity in Craft Cohort.

The 24-member board of trustees, chaired by Gary J. Smith, represents a national spectrum of the craft community. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, ACC reported a total operating revenue of approximately \$2.6 million and expenses of approximately \$2.9 million. Fiscal year 2022 is projected to have \$3.3 million in operating revenue and \$3.8 million in expenses as the organization resumes activities that have been impacted by the pandemic and returns to its pre-pandemic budget of \$4.7 million dollars.

## Community

With an urban population of 430,000 people, Minneapolis is the western twin to St. Paul. Together, they comprise the Twin Cities, a multi-county metropolitan area of 3 million people. The Twin Cities are highly regarded for their quality of life, economic vibrancy, and cultural ecosystem. Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP) is home to 16 Fortune 500 headquarters—the highest concentration in the country—including 3M, Best Buy, Ecolab, General Mills, Land O’Lakes, Target, United Health Group, and US Bancorp.

The Twin Cities offer a range of schools, including neighborhood public schools, charter schools, 200 private schools, and a variety of online options. MSP is home to 36 universities, colleges, and technical schools and the state of Minnesota leads the nation in college preparedness. In 2020, Minneapolis’ renowned urban park system—spanning nearly 7,000 acres of parkland and water—was named the best city park system in the United States on Trust for Public Land’s Annual ParkScore Index. Featured among its 180 park properties are 55 miles of parkways, 102 miles of Grand Rounds bike trails and walking paths, 22 lakes, 12 formal gardens, seven golf courses, and 49 recreation centers. Minnesotans enjoy the outdoors all year long with activities such as running, hiking, skiing, boating, paddling, fishing, golfing, and cycling.

The Twin Cities ranked fourth on SMU DataArts’ 2019 list of the “Top 40 Most Arts-Vibrant Communities in America.” With nationally recognized, premier organizations like Children’s Theatre Company, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota Orchestra, The Guthrie Theatre, and Walker Art Center (all located in Minneapolis), the arts and culture scene in the Twin Cities rivals those of larger United States urban centers.

ACC’s national headquarters are located in the historic Grain Belt Brewery in Northeast Minneapolis, bordered by the Mississippi River, which separates Northeast Minneapolis from the downtown business district. Home to thriving local businesses and artist studios, this neighborhood also hosts Art-A-Whirl, the largest open studio tour in the country. With homespun restaurants, breweries, and distilleries, Northeast Minneapolis has a food and drink scene as innovative and diverse as the generations that live there.

Sources: census.gov; culturedata.org; makeitmsp.org; minneapolis.org; nema.org

## Position Summary

The Executive Director will serve as ACC’s chief executive, providing a strategic and collaborative vision that strengthens ACC and ensures the engagement of the field, inclusion of diverse voices, and fulfillment of ACC’s mission. A passionate champion of craft who will serve as an ambassador and spokesperson, the Executive Director will heighten ACC’s national and international visibility and influence while cultivating positive relationships and support for the organization. This individual will be responsible for all aspects of operations, finances, publications, membership, and programs. They will take the lead in developing a business model for the next phase of the organization’s growth, operationalize strategic priorities, and create effective work plans. Reporting to ACC’s board of trustees, the Executive Director will leverage the organization’s professional and volunteer resources to effectively achieve organizational goals, enhance capacity, build philanthropic support, broaden membership, and ensure financial sustainability. The Executive Director will oversee a staff of 22 full-time professionals who are primarily based in the MSP area. Direct reports currently include the Editor of *American Craft* magazine, a Publisher/Membership Director, Director of Marketing and Communications, Director of Development, Marketplace Director, Director of Finance and Administration, and a Librarian.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Resource Development and Governance

- Diversify philanthropic resources that support ACC’s strategic vision, support its growth and sustainability, and cultivate and engage new audiences for craft.
- Develop contributed revenue strategies with donors locally and nationally, engaging new funders and stewarding existing supporters.
- Encourage innovative membership program services and growth in publications, research, and emerging technologies for new and renewed memberships.
- Build and implement annual and multi-year fundraising plans to increase earned and sponsorship income for operations, programs, and special initiatives with the Director of Development.
- Identify, cultivate, and assist in the recruitment of board members whose skills, experience, financial connections, and diversity meet the council’s needs and can help achieve its strategic goals.

- Maintain a strong partnership with the board of trustees, engaging in open and transparent communication with individual members and all committees to enable the board to fulfil its fiscal and fiduciary responsibility.
- Guide the board, staff, and members in building a culture of philanthropy, developing strategies, and defining key messages to ensure that revenues meet organizational goals.
- Embrace other resource development and governance roles and responsibilities as needed.

### **Strategic Leadership and Engagement with the Field of Craft**

- Implement the four pillars of the ACC Strategic Plan.
- Guide a new strategic planning process that builds on the organization's current pillars and supports annual and multi-year work plans to achieve defined priorities.
- Identify and articulate critical issues within the craft field, serve as a champion, and proactively advocate for the importance of craft as a cultural resource with strategic partners, donors, funders, the media, and others.
- Advance the field through advocacy and foster alliances with other organizations across the field that deepen the impact of ACC and the communities it serves.
- Execute strategies to grow participation in ACC programs and the craft community.
- Welcome and engage culturally diverse perspectives and communities as part of ACC's mission.
- Stay abreast of public policy issues and trends affecting the field, emerging artists, and practices.
- Serve as a thought leader enhancing the ACC reputation and brand.
- Guide the implementation of the marketing plan to grow engagement with all audience segments for ACC programs.
- Lead ACC as a national hub and resource for artists and makers with opportunities for education, professional development, online sales platforms, and community support.
- Embrace other strategic leadership and field engagement roles and responsibilities as needed.

### **Fiscal and Organizational Oversight**

- Lead ACC's day-to-day operations to meet fiscal and operational goals and ensure an inclusive, productive, and collaborative work environment.
- Demonstrate a collaborative leadership and communication style toward ACC's staff, board members, and community.
- Recruit, support, evaluate, and mentor a diverse staff and set of contractors to support ACC's short- and long-term goals and programs.
- Ensure that ACC's personnel policies, procedures, and performance standards are equitable and support employee empowerment and retention.
- Guide the preparation, monitoring, and monthly reporting of the annual budget, financial policies, and cash management.
- Determine organizational resources that are needed to ensure short-term effectiveness and long-term sustainability.
- Oversee all corporate and legal matters.
- Embrace other fiscal and organizational oversight roles and responsibilities as needed.

### **Traits and Characteristics**

The Executive Director will be a knowledgeable and passionate advocate for craft and a future-oriented connector and storyteller. As a persuasive and dynamic leader, the Executive Director will be driven by new ideas and opportunities to set and achieve collective goals. With a focus on ACC's role in service to its members and the greater craft community, the Executive Director will have a collaborative and inclusive leadership approach in advancing strategic initiatives that achieve positive impacts for the multi-faceted craft field. Driven by altruism and deeply appreciative of subjective viewpoints, the Executive Director will recognize, respect, and promote diversity and inclusion in all its forms. An experienced leader with a commitment to public policy and advocacy, the Executive Director will demonstrate exceptional teambuilding capabilities, adapt to various situations with ease, and interact frequently with an array of stakeholders.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership and Personal Accountability** – The ability to organize and inspire others to action with a sense of purpose and direction while being accountable for personal and professional actions.
- **Diplomacy** – The capacity to build authentic rapport and relate well to a variety of people and experiential perspectives regardless of cultural background.
- **Time and Priority Management** – The adeptness to develop goals and objectives, identify and resolve issues, determine realistic timelines, and establish top priorities that result in significant and positive outcomes.
- **Futuristic Thinking, Creativity, and Innovation** – The ability to connect the dots and see the big picture along with the curiosity to explore, evaluate, and pursue non-traditional perspectives and novel approaches while imagining innovative concepts that achieve desired results.
- **Continuous Learning** – The initiative to acquire and master new skills and learn new concepts, technologies, and methods

## Qualifications

A minimum of 10 years of senior management experience at a national association, cultural organization, educational institution, government agency, or similar nonprofit entity is required. Previous experience successfully managing complex teams and working with a board of trustees is necessary. A connection to ACC's commitment to equity, mission, and activities is essential. Experience in fundraising, advocacy, program development, and various media and extraordinary interpersonal and written skills are needed. Leading candidates will have experience in the craft community and a proven track record working with a diverse group of individuals who come from a range of cultural backgrounds, ideological approaches, professional experiences, and geographic areas.

## Compensation and Benefits

ACC offers competitive compensation, expected to be in the range of \$150,000 and \$200,000. Benefits, include healthcare, vision, and dental insurance; paid time off; short-and long-term disability insurance; and a 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](https://artsconsulting.com/employment). For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

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**The American Craft Council is committed to justice, inclusiveness, and equity. Drawing on craft's rich legacy of openness and its deep roots in all cultures, the Council will work to create opportunities for creative people from all walks of life.**