



Association of Writers & Writing Programs

Executive Director

“Now, at this moment, it’s extremely important for writers to come together; we need each other.”

- Brenda Hillman

Organization

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) fosters literary achievement, advances the art of writing as essential to a good education, and serves the makers, teachers, students, and readers of contemporary writing. Established in 1967, the organization has grown to provide support, advocacy, resources, and community to nearly 50,000 writers, 550 university and college creative writing programs, and 200 literary organizations, publishers, writers’ conferences, and centers.

AWP’s extensive range of programs and services supports writers at every stage of their careers. The annual AWP Conference & Bookfair—which will be in Portland, Oregon, in March 2019—is the largest and most inclusive literary conference in North America, attracting more than 12,000 attendees, while the Bookfair hosts over 800 presses, journals, and literary organizations from around the world. Published continually since 1970, AWP’s journal, *The Writer’s Chronicle*, has a subscription topping 27,000. The organization also sponsors 10 literary awards and provides an extensive listing of grants, awards, and publication opportunities for writers available from organizations and publishers throughout North America.

AWP maintains a comprehensive overview of hundreds of writing programs in the United States and throughout the world as well as a directory of writer’s conferences, centers, retreats, festivals, and residencies. Other services include writer mentorship programs and career development support, including a job list featuring academic, nonprofit, commercial, and internship opportunities for writers of every background. The organization works to promote the diversity of the literary community through its activities and to ensure that the conference and organization reflect the many perspectives and experiences of the greater community. In recent years the keynote speakers at the annual conference have included Claudia Rankine, Annie Proulx, Art Spiegelman, Derek Walcott, and Azar Nafisi.

AWP’s 2018-19 budget is just under \$3.5 million, of which approximately 55 percent comes from the annual conference and 24 percent from membership services. It is governed by a 14-member board of trustees that represents the creative writing programs and individual members of AWP, with support from a staff of 23 employees. AWP’s Strategic Plan 2010-2020 focuses on five key goals to promote excellence in the teaching of writing, establish a robust online literary community, improve and expand core services, strengthen governance, and build a development program. The organization is currently engaged in an update of that plan to guide the organization into the next decade.

Since its inception, AWP has been affiliated with a college or university, most recently the University of Maryland. Recognizing that the organization is financially and institutionally strong enough to be autonomous, AWP reorganized its operations to become an independent nonprofit organization in August 2018. Committed to maintaining its offices in the National Capital Region, AWP is currently located in Riverdale Park, Maryland, with convenient access to the College Park Washington Metro station (Green Line).

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) of AWP will serve as the chief executive officer, responsible for supervising all aspects of the organization’s operations, finances, publications, membership, conference, and strategic partnerships. Reporting to the board of trustees, the ED will be charged with the strategic leadership of the organization, including clear goals of excellence, operational stability, membership service, and growth. Serving as AWP’s chief spokesperson, the ED will maintain excellent relationships with its members and partners to promote the organization’s impact and engagement with writers, teachers, and students of creative writing, allied organizations, funders, and other constituencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic Visionary Leadership and Governance

- Partner with the board, staff, and AWP community to refine and articulate a vision for how the organization can best serve the writing community and then effectively translate from vision to strategy to plan to execution, including the institution's strategic plan, to meet annual goals and priorities.
- Serve as a passionate, credible, and articulate advocate for AWP, its programs, and the value and importance of the literary arts in a wide range of regional and national settings.
- Lead AWP activities with commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion while demonstrating intercultural awareness.
- Identify, cultivate, and assist in the recruitment of board members whose skills, experience, financial connections, and diversity meet the organization's needs.
- Demonstrate a collaborative leadership style with an authentic connection to the organization's members, staff, board, and community.

Membership Engagement and Resource Development

- Develop and oversee strategies to increase AWP membership and to maintain and deepen engagement with existing members and partners.
- Refine and develop programs and benefits that enhance the value of AWP membership.
- 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.
- In partnership with the board and the Director of Development, identify, build, and maintain strong relationships with key community partners to diversify and expand the organization's individual, foundation, and corporate donor base.
- Ensure the success of the annual conference and programs in meeting established financial and organizational goals.

Organizational Management

- Lead the day-to-day operations of AWP to ensure that members, both individual and institutional, have an exceptional experience every time they interact with the organization.
- Ensure that organizational policies, systems, controls, and procedures are in alignment with AWP's mission and values and are regularly reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Recruit, support, and mentor the highest quality staff and contractors to support AWP's short- and long-term goals.
- Develop an annual budget and regularly monitor and report to the board on financial performance, participation, and other metrics.
- Oversee all internal corporate matters, including legal issues and lease negotiations.
- Provide concise, relevant, and timely information to the board so it can fulfill its policy- and decision-making responsibilities.

Traits and Characteristics

The next ED will be a seasoned and collaborative leader who values service to and engagement with the organization's many diverse stakeholders. A systematic, nuanced, and versatile thinker with integrity and a passion to lead and grow AWP, this individual will be able to connect with a wide range of people and strategic partners, build relationships, and constructively address conflict. The successful candidate will have the ability to innovate and recognize opportunities to advance and grow in new ways.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership and Personal Accountability** – Ability to organize and motivate other people with a sense of purpose and direction while being accountable for personal and professional actions.
- **Interpersonal Skills** – Commitment to building rapport while effectively communicating with all kinds of people.
- **Stakeholder Orientation** – Dedication to the satisfaction of members, the board, staff, and other constituencies, anticipating, meeting, and exceeding their needs and expectations.

Qualifications

Qualified applicants must have a bachelor's degree (advanced degree in a mission-related field preferred) plus a minimum of seven to 10 years of increasing responsibility in a senior management role within a literary, arts, education, member-based, museum, or similar nonprofit or governmental organization. Nonprofit arts management experience is strongly preferred as well as an interest in and understanding of contemporary literature. Candidates must also demonstrate strong communication skills and proven effectiveness in collaborating with boards of directors and in managing personnel, budgets, development, grant writing, and grant management. The successful candidate will have a track record of demonstrated success in working with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as in hiring, retaining, and promoting a fully diverse team of employees.

Compensation and Benefits

AWP provides competitive compensation and a standard benefits package, including health insurance, retirement plan, paid time off, holidays, and periodic travel, as well as the quality of life offered by our nation's capital region.

Applications and Inquiries

Please submit a letter and resume with a summary of accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred) to:

Ms. Rebekah Lambert
Senior Vice President



818 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 236
Portland, OR 97204-2405
Tel (888) 234.4236 Ext. 207
Email AWP@ArtsConsulting.com

AWP is dedicated to the creation and nurturing of a workplace environment in which everyone feels valued as a dignified member of the community of writers, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information.