



200 W Madison St, Fl 3
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 470-6325

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unitedstatesartists.org

July 2026

Program Director

Description

The Program Director is responsible for providing strategic leadership for United States Artists' programs, services, research initiatives, and artist infrastructure efforts. Reporting to the President and CEO, the Program Director will shape and advance USA's programmatic vision, ensuring that the organization's investments in artists contribute to a stronger, more connected, and more equitable cultural ecosystem.

The Program Director oversees USA's signature Fellowship program, along with artist support services, initiatives, convenings, research projects, and strategic partnerships that strengthen the conditions in which artists create, work, and thrive. This role is responsible for guiding the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs that deepen USA's impact while responding to the evolving needs of artists, cultural practitioners, and creative workers nationwide.

In addition to leading USA's core artist support programs, the Program Director will help advance the organization's vision for artist infrastructure by connecting direct artist support with broader efforts related to policy, research, capital access, technology, organizing, and field-building. Working closely with artists, staff, funders, and external partners, the Program Director will identify emerging opportunities, develop innovative programs and partnerships, and help strengthen the systems, networks, and resources that support artists and creative workers across the United States and its territories.

As a member of USA's leadership team, the Program Director will contribute to organizational strategy, foster cross-departmental



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collaboration, and help position USA as a national leader in strengthening artist support and infrastructure. This role requires a leader who can balance long-term vision with effective implementation, stewarding both established programs and new initiatives while cultivating relationships that advance USA's mission and impact.

The ideal candidate is a strategic thinker and experienced program leader who understands the complexities of the arts ecosystem and is passionate about building the infrastructure, resources, and networks that enable artists and cultural practitioners to thrive.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

Program Strategy & Development

- Lead the design, implementation, evaluation, and growth of USA's artist-centered programs, fellowships, initiatives, and partnerships.
- Oversee the administration and evolution of the USA Fellowship program and related artist support services.
- Provide strategic leadership for Artist Services, ensuring programs respond to the evolving professional, economic, and creative needs of artists and cultural practitioners.
- Collaborate with the President and CEO to advance USA's artist infrastructure agenda, including initiatives related to research, policy, organizing, capital access, and ecosystem development.
- Guide the development and implementation of strategic initiatives, including the National Arts Policy Alliance (NAPA), *Assembly* artist convening, Artists Capital Fund, and future infrastructure-focused programs.
- Identify and cultivate new partnerships, investments, and collaborations that expand resources and opportunities for artists and creative workers nationwide.



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Artist Infrastructure & Field Building

- Support research and learning initiatives that identify barriers, opportunities, and emerging trends affecting artists' economic security, professional sustainability, and creative practice.
- Help translate research findings into practical strategies, pilot programs, partnerships, and field-wide learning opportunities.
- Cultivate and maintain strategic partnerships across philanthropy, government, higher education, labor, technology, and the arts to expand artists' access to capital, professional services, workforce systems, policy and organizing efforts, and other critical resources.
- Collaborate with colleagues and partners to develop national and place-based initiatives that strengthen artist infrastructure and support artists and cultural practitioners.

Leadership & Collaboration

- Supervise program staff, consultants, contractors, and project teams, fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous learning.
- Manage program budgets, work plans, evaluation frameworks, reporting processes, and timelines to ensure effective implementation and continuous learning.
- Collaborate closely with Development and Communications to support fundraising initiatives, donor stewardship, grant reporting, storytelling, publications, and public engagement efforts.
- Serve as a member of USA's leadership team, contributing to organizational strategy, planning, and cross-departmental initiatives.
- Represent USA at conferences, convenings, public programs, media engagements, and meetings with artists, funders, policymakers, researchers, and strategic partners.



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- Cultivate strong internal and external relationships that advance USA's mission and strengthen the organization's role within the broader arts and culture ecosystem.

Ideal Characteristics

- Minimum 8–10 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in arts administration, philanthropy, cultural policy, nonprofit management, community development, or a related field.
- Demonstrated success leading complex programs and multidisciplinary teams.
- Deep commitment to artists, creative practice, and the role of culture in civic and community life.
- Knowledge of artist support systems and experience in one or more of the following areas: cultural policy, artist capitalization, research, social impact, organizing, or systems-change initiatives.
- Strong project management, budgeting, and organizational skills.
- Exceptional communication and relationship-building abilities.
- Experience working with boards, funders, researchers, policymakers, and community partners.
- Commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion.

Additional Skills

- Must be willing and able to travel for in-person events, meetings, and other work-related activities as needed (a valid driver's license is required).
- Familiarity and/or proficiency with Google Suite, Microsoft Office, Asana, Airtable, Dropbox, CMS systems and databases, and/or similar software and platforms.



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Other Characteristics

The successful candidate will be a strategic and collaborative leader who is energized by both big-picture vision and practical implementation. They will bring intellectual curiosity, sound judgment, and a deep commitment to artists and cultural practitioners, helping USA deepen and expand its impact in support of artists nationwide.

The Program Director will be an innovative thinker who can navigate complexity, identify emerging opportunities, and connect ideas, people, and resources across sectors. They will understand that supporting artists requires not only direct investment in creative practice, but also strengthening the broader systems and resources that shape artists' ability to thrive.

This individual will be skilled at building and sustaining relationships with artists, funders, policymakers, researchers, community leaders, and field partners. They will be comfortable working across disciplines and perspectives, fostering collaboration while advancing shared goals and long-term impact.

The successful candidate will be an effective manager and mentor who inspires high performance, cultivates accountability, and supports professional growth within a small, ambitious, and mission-driven organization. They will be able to balance multiple priorities, adapt to changing circumstances, and make thoughtful decisions in a dynamic environment.

As a member of USA's leadership team, the Program Director will contribute to organizational strategy and culture while serving as a trusted representative of the organization. They will communicate with clarity and credibility, champion artists and creative workers, and help position USA as a national leader in advancing artist support and infrastructure.



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About United States Artists

United States Artists (USA) plays a pivotal role in the nation's cultural ecosystem, advancing the well-being of artists through unrestricted funding and tailored professional services, amplifying artists' work, and improving conditions that support their essential roles in society.

United States Artists was founded in response to a 2003 Urban Institute study, which revealed that 96% of Americans valued art in their lives, while only 27% valued artists. Motivated by the study and in response to the NEA's severe budget cuts, four inspiring leaders of the Ford, Rockefeller, Rasmuson, and Prudential Foundations spearheaded the launch of an organization to illuminate the value of artists to American society and address their economic challenges.

Since our founding in 2005, we have awarded more than 1,000 artists and cultural practitioners with more than \$50 million of direct support, including the signature United States Artists Fellowship program and Initiatives partnerships. USA's nomination-based programs support artists and cultural practitioners across the United States and its territories with \$50,000 to \$100,000 unrestricted awards. Recipients are honored in all disciplines including Architecture & Design, Craft, Dance, Film, Media, Music, Theater & Performance, Traditional Arts, Visual Art, and Writing. In addition to unrestricted funding, each Fellow receives access to tailored services including financial planning, career consulting, and legal advice, among others.

In 2020, United States Artists began Initiatives, a program area that offers experience, capacity, and methodologies to donors and philanthropies who seek to support artists in specific, focused ways and require research, project design, and management to meet their goals of providing new resources for artists. Currently, USA partners with leading philanthropies to offer the Joyce Awards, Knight Arts + Tech Fellowship, Maxwell | Hanrahan Awards



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in Craft, The Rainin Arts Fellowship, Seed and Bloom: Detroit, and the Wagner Arts Fellowship.

Additionally, informed by an 18-month discovery phase that began in 2024, USA is working with field partners to implement programs that lay the foundation for a new integrated system of artist infrastructure support. This will involve two key programs: the Artists Capital Fund that aims to expand artists' access to non-extractive capital so that they can level irregular income flows, avoid predatory debt, and make investments in their creative work and communities; and the National Arts Policy Alliance (NAPA), focused on advancing policy work that supports creative and cultural workers building collective power through local organizing, national coordination, and cross-sector alliances. For more information about USA, please visit unitedstatesartists.org.

Compensation, Benefits and Location

This is a full-time leadership position, with a 4-day work week that includes 5-day work weeks for special events and quarterly board meetings. The starting salary range is \$110,000 to \$120,000 annually. The full compensation package includes medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage, with benefits eligibility after a 90-day introductory period. Additional benefits include: 120 vacation hours (12 days); 80 sick hours (8 days); flexible work scheduling; paid holidays; up to two week office closure annually in December; a 403b contribution, plus an additional match; professional development coverage; and telecommunications reimbursement.

United States Artists is headquartered in Chicago, IL. This is a hybrid position that works with a team that is largely remote, with current team members based in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, and other locations across the country. Due to the nature of this role, the individual can be located anywhere in the U.S., but needs to be able to start work by 9:00 AM Eastern Standard Time.



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Application information

Interested and qualified candidates should send a cover letter and resume to jobs@unitedstatesartists.org. In the subject line of your emailed application, please write "USA Program Director." This position will remain open until filled.

Equal Opportunity Employer

United States Artists is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination as an Equal Opportunity Employer. USA's policy is to maintain and promote nondiscrimination regarding race, color, creed, national origin or ancestry, marital status, gender, physical or mental disability unrelated to ability, sexual orientation, religion, political philosophy, unfavorable discharge from military service or age in all phases of employment practices and facilities in accordance with all applicable laws. The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job.