



Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Executive Director

Organization

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre and School of Theatre Arts (GRCT) is one of the oldest and largest community theatres in the nation. Located in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, it is nationally recognized for its broad education and performance offerings. Using the power of theatre arts, GRCT aims to inspire creativity and personal growth, illuminate our common humanity, and ignite connections across the community. As a community theatre, GRCT understands the importance of individuals being engaged in its vision, which is demonstrated by its robust volunteer programs, ticket sales, and donor base.

Founded in the Roaring Twenties, the then “Civic Players” began by producing four plays annually in the St. Cecilia Auditorium in downtown Grand Rapids. In 1935, the organization officially changed its name to Grand Rapids Civic Theatre and soon had over 1,600 season ticket holders and drew audiences of over 4,000 to each of six shows annually. During the 1960s, GRCT experienced unprecedented growth and emerged as one of the country’s strongest community theatres. By the end of the decade, in a cooperative venture with the Grand Rapids Public Schools, GRCT began offering theatre classes to young people. The extensive campus utilizes and maintains four historic buildings that have been integrated to form one interconnected campus.

Today, GRCT is one of the leading community theatres in the country, producing nine mainstage productions each year with the help of over 800 talented volunteers who do everything from singing, dancing, and acting, to building sets, sewing, ushering, and much more. The current season will close with *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. GRCT offers a wide array of productions that invite diverse audiences to experience the thrill, excitement, and storytelling of live theatre. The 2024-25 season includes *The Rocky Horror Show*, *A Year With Frog & Toad*, *Cats*, *The 39 Steps*, *Disney’s Camp Rock*, *The Color Purple*, *Ten For All Playwrighting Festival* and *Waitress*.

The award-winning Grand Rapids Civic Theatre School of Theatre Arts has grown to become one of the largest and most respected community theatre education programs in the country, annually serving over 1,600 students of all ages with enrollment continuing to increase each term. With classes in acting, musical theatre, and production enhanced by dance classes and a wide variety of electives, it provides superlative training in all aspects of theatre skills. In addition to fall, winter, and spring term classes, the School of Theatre Arts offers an annual Performance Block program for students in grades 2-12 where they can participate in a rehearsal process reminiscent of those on the mainstage, work with theatre professionals from the community, and perform on the Meijer Majestic Stage. Weekly summer camps, a variety of workshops, and community-building events enhance the educational programming each year in addition to the ten-month pre-professional training program, Young Artist Studio. The School of Theatre Art’s educational outreach continues to expand throughout the community including the City Wide Drama Club which will host its inaugural production in the 2024/25 season.

GRCT has a 19-member Board of directors led by Holly Sullivan, and Bruce Tinker currently serves as Executive Director overseeing 18 full-time staff members, 3 part-time staff members, 60+ part-time teaching artists, and 700+ volunteers. The 2023/24 operating budget projects a total revenue of \$2.6 million with \$778,000 from contributions and grants, \$1.6 million from program services, and \$124,000 from investments and other income with a \$161,000 planned draw from the endowment.

Community

Grand Rapids is the second-largest city in Michigan and is located on the Grand River, about 30 miles from Lake Michigan. It is the economic and cultural hub of West Michigan, as well as one of the fastest-growing cities in the Midwest. Grand Rapids is the county seat of Kent County and is home to over 600,000 people and includes a diverse population that is approximately 81% White, 10% Black/African American, 11% Hispanic or Latino, 3% Asian, and 3% mixed race. It was ranked the #1 Best Place to Raise a Family in 2021 by *Rocket Homes*, #2 on the *Livability* list of Top 10 Remote-Ready Cities in the U.S., and #7 in the *U.S. News & World Report’s* Most Affordable Places to Live in the U.S. for 2022. One of the most significant advantages of living in Grand Rapids is the wealth of economic opportunities available, including a thriving job market and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. There is a

supportive ecosystem for startups and small businesses including various incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces that foster innovation and collaboration. Business and community leaders have set in motion an unprecedented level of growth and investment, cementing its place as a world-class center for advanced manufacturing, life science and medical devices, food processing, and technology. More than 130 international companies are located in the region, including the global headquarters of industry leaders like Amway, Steelcase, Herman Miller, Haworth, BISSELL, Meijer, and Wolverine Worldwide.

The city is home to excellent educational institutions, including prestigious universities such as Grand Valley State University, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids Community College, and Calvin University, known for their academic excellence and diverse programs. Ferris State University has a growing campus downtown, including the Applied Technology Center and the Kendall College of Art and Design. These institutions attract students from all over the world, creating a vibrant and intellectually stimulating environment. K–12 public education is provided by the Grand Rapids Public Schools, as well as several charter schools.

Grand Rapids offers big city amenities with a thriving arts and culture scene, amazing restaurants and breweries, and plenty of outdoor recreation options. The city draws tourists from around the United States and beyond to its world-class art and culture attractions, venues and activities, such as DeVos Place Convention Center, Van Andel Arena, John Ball Zoological Garden, Grand Rapids Art, Public, and Children’s Museums, and the 125-acre Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, which is home to works of art from Auguste Rodin, Edgar Degas, Ai Weiwei, and Alexander Calder. Every fall, downtown welcomes more than 1,500 artists and 400,000 visitors to ArtPrize, the world’s richest, most radically open art competition. Select ArtPrize pieces remain on permanent streetside display alongside dozens of other significant artworks at the Grand Rapids Art Museum. There are a myriad of performing arts offerings as well, including the Grand Rapids Ballet, Grand Rapids Symphony, and Opera Grand Rapids, and the culinary arts are also prominent in the community. The metro area is home to a noteworthy craft beer scene with 40+ breweries, and the Beer City Ale Trail leads to dozens of breweries offering tours and tastings. In addition to a diverse and growing restaurant scene, the city is home to Downtown Market, an innovative collective of artisan food merchants and restaurants that are open seven days a week as well as a year-round purveyor of fresh ingredients.

In Grand Rapids, outdoor recreation offerings are never far away. There are 75+ parks, hundreds of miles of biking and hiking trails, dozens of challenging golf courses, and great fishing in the Grand River, all within five minutes of downtown. *Just* 30 minutes from the city are the beaches and resort towns of Lake Michigan, named one of the world’s top 25 shorelines. Sports are also a favorite Michigander pastime and Grand Rapids is home to several professional and semi-professional sports teams including the West Michigan Whitecaps, the Class High A affiliate of the Detroit Tigers, the Grand Rapids Griffins, an American Hockey League affiliate to the Detroit Red Wings and the professional indoor volleyball team Grand Rapids Rise, one of the seven charter members of the Pro Volleyball Federation. Each year the Amway River Bank Run and the Grand Rapids Marathon are held downtown. Special Olympics Michigan launched a campaign in 2021 to build a publicly funded \$20 million facility called the Unified Sports and Inclusion Center which is destined to be the largest Special Olympics facility in the world.

Sources: rightplace.org; experiencegr.com; rockethomes.com/; data.census.gov; livability.com

Position Summary

The Executive Director will lead one of Michigan’s most vibrant cultural institutions ensuring programmatic and operational integrity, sustainability, and excellence. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will be responsible for the administration and management of all business operations, finance, fundraising, education, marketing, IT, facilities, and community engagement. The Executive Director will create an organizational culture of teamwork, accountability, safety, and trust characterized by proactive decision-making, open communication, and strategic fiscal management. They will guide programs and services, facilitate organizational excellence, and ensure that GRCT is a pillar of inclusion, access, artistic expression, and education for the region. This dynamic leader will enthusiastically represent the organization as an ambassador to multiple constituencies, advancing partnerships and deepening the engagement with Grand Rapids’ diverse communities. The Executive Director will value the organization’s past and bring new initiatives that build on the theatre’s success, leading the organization to success in new and bold ways.

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic Vision and Leadership

- Serve as a committed, visionary, and accessible leader for GRCT with a true connection to the organization's community of artists, audiences, and donors and ensure that all artistic and financial decisions are mission-aligned.
- Champion the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access to support an artistic and organizational culture that respects different perspectives and nurtures an environment of empowerment at all levels.
- Identify potential risks and opportunities within the organization and the community to protect business interests and promote the mission.
- Actively lead efforts supporting the School of Theatre Arts and work with staff leadership to broaden programming, grow resources, and serve and welcome a diverse student community.
- Function as the key liaison for the Executive, Finance and Facilities Committees.
- Embrace and support additional strategic vision and leadership responsibilities as needed.

Financial Oversight and Operations

- Serve as primary fiscal management representative to the Board and communicate consistently in full transparency with staff and Board members to inspire organizational growth across all business areas.
- Demonstrate solid fiscal acumen, including managing the annual operating budget process, overseeing organizational budgets, controlling expenditures, creating forecasting models, and developing financial analysis.
- Assume primary responsibility for all non-program-related contracts, legal and financial matters, and vendor relations.
- Lead and guide operations to ensure employees and business practices comply with regulatory and legal requirements, ensuring the facility is maintained in the safest, most creatively conducive environment possible.
- Oversee human resources functions including the hiring of key roles, and implementing new policies, systems, and procedures that are in alignment with the organization's mission and values.
- Embrace and support additional financial oversight and operations responsibilities as needed.

Fundraising and Earned Revenue Enhancement

- Secure new and renewed sources of contributed income in partnership with the development team by cultivating and deepening relationships with key individual donors, foundations, and corporate funders.
- Leverage Board members' skills and networks to strengthen Board-driven fundraising in support of the organization.
- Oversee marketing and communication strategies to expand and diversify audiences, subscribers, and donors.
- Embrace and support additional fundraising and earned revenue enhancement responsibilities as needed.

Administrative and Organizational Leadership

- Maintain and expand an efficient and effective organizational structure for fundraising, programming, organizational management, fiduciary excellence, and project leadership.
- Act as a spokesperson throughout the region, develop relationships, and engage with a wide variety of constituents, including business owners; schools and colleges; elected city, county, and state officials; and the media to enhance the organization's brand and reputation.
- Diversify, and manage the Board of Directors by ensuring that current Board members are best engaged according to their skills, interests, and the needs of the organization.
- Embrace and support additional administrative and organizational leadership responsibilities as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The Executive Director will be a strategic and visionary leader who values frequent interaction and collaboration with others and has the ability to provide both levity and practical perspectives. This results-oriented individual will be emotionally intelligent and approachable with advanced cultural competencies that lead to a harmonious professional environment. Decisive and business-minded with a sense of adventure and passion for the arts, the Executive Director will be an intense champion of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. A tactician and coalition-builder, this individual will have the ability to work in an intense environment, prioritizing tasks and responding to the needs of others with critical thinking, tenacity, and resiliency. The Executive Director will be receptive to new ideas, opportunities, and innovation while effectively leveraging organizational, human, financial, and technological resources. The Executive Director will have the ability to organize and motivate other people to accomplish goals, create a sense of order and direction, and gain active participation among a variety of stakeholders fostering a culture of trust and accountability.

Other key competencies include:

- **Leadership and Diplomacy** – The capacity to organize, inspire, and influence people to believe in a vision, creating a sense of common purpose while effectively and tactfully handling difficult or sensitive issues.
- **Futuristic Thinking** – The foresight to envision expanded artistic possibilities, championing cutting-edge ideas and concepts and creating an environment where creative thinking is the norm, not the exception.
- **Interpersonal Skills** – The ability to effectively communicate and build rapport with all kinds of people.
- **Decision Making and Personal Accountability** - The dexterity to analyze and diagnose all aspects of a situation, make consistently sound and timely decisions, and be held accountable for personal actions.

Qualifications

Proven success in the areas of financial management, fundraising, operations, and leadership of complex and dynamic organizations is essential. Comprehensive earned revenue building skills, as well as experience navigating change and inspiring a high-achieving team of creative professionals, is needed. A deep dedication to community building and connections to both people and place is expected. A profound and demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access is required. Exceptional writing abilities and verbal presentation skills are deeply valued. Experience in the education field focused on curriculum planning and creative thinking for expanding capacity is highly desired. A passion for the arts and knowledge of the industry are preferred. A broad range of life experience is welcome.

Compensation and Benefits

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre offers a competitive compensation package with a salary range expected between \$85,000 and \$90,000. Benefits include health, dental, vision, and life insurance, short and long-term disability; optional Flexible Spending benefit, 401(k) retirement plan; generous paid leave policies (vacation, personal, sick, and holiday); and professional development support.

Applications and Inquiries

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

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Grand Rapids Civic Theatre is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of the GRCT not to discriminate against any person because of race, religion, color, sex, age, military status or application, national origin, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, transgender status, height, weight, marital status, or any other basis protected by state, federal or otherwise applicable law. GRCT 's policy of nondiscrimination covers all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, selection, placement, training, compensation, promotion, discipline transfer, layoff, recall, termination, wages, and fringe benefits.