



A Rest Centered Reset: Women of Color in the Arts Transitions

We are excited to share a significant milestone in the journey of [Women of Color in the Arts \(WOCA\)](#), which is set to embark on its 15th anniversary of service in 2025, and is currently in a season of evolution and transition.

As WOCA embraces the practice of rest as a grounding tenet of our organizational [values](#), it is with heartfelt pleasure that we announce our Founding Director and Co-Founder Kaisha S. Johnson stepping down to pass on the torch to new leadership and enter into an extended period of rest and renewal. To that end, WOCA is launching the executive search for a new Executive Director (ED) to help reset the organization with renewed intention as we prepare for an advanced season of growth. With the philanthropic support of the Mellon Foundation and Pilot House Philanthropy, this transition marks a momentous occasion for WOCA as we transition from a fiscally sponsored LLC to an independent 501c3 and work to solidify the organization's infrastructure and capacity through the further development of our processes and through the expansion of our administrative team. This transition equally represents an invaluable new chapter in our mission of advancing racial equity in the arts and culture sectors. Further, this transition supports our undying commitment to help amplify the voices and visibility of women of color*, in the arts, and, in the world.

Over the years, under the steadfast leadership of Kaisha S. Johnson, WOCA has developed a national network and established a singular organization that has worked to interrogate and disrupt inequitable systems in our field, moved the conversation of racial equity towards real and sustainable practices, provided leadership development and mentorship opportunities to emerging, mid-career, and established arts administrators, and fostered a community of care that has created space for women of color to feel supported, seen, and rested.

We extend our supreme gratitude to Kaisha for her tireless dedication and commitment to supporting and advocating for our community while doing the heavy lift of advancing a racially equitable and socially just field – some of that work which has manifested in universal practices adopted throughout our sector. After 15 years of organizing and community-building work exclusively in the name of Women of Color in the Arts, Kaisha will take a well-deserved sabbatical in the form of one year. During this time, as we create space for the new Executive Director and their thought leadership, some of WOCA’s flagship programs will move into a period of hiatus in order for the new ED to have intentional time with our members – working to better assess our community’s needs and further cultivate existing relationships and new partnerships.

In the name of cultivating existing relationships and supporting our community of exceptional leaders, we have partnered with WOCA member Ashley Walden and Unlock Creative: Coaching & Management Solutions LLC to support this Executive Search. Unlock Creative is a certified, Black women-owned and operated firm dedicated to growing, nurturing, and sustaining Black creative leadership. Together, we will conduct an inclusive search of WOCA member leaders and national candidates who are committed to women of color and who embody the values that have undergirded and guided the vision of WOCA since its inception.

In order to support a smooth and humane transition, there will be some overlap between Kaisha’s and the incoming Executive Director’s tenures. Rest assured, even during the transition, the voices of WOCA members will continue to be integral to the development of the organization. Supporting this process is our esteemed Advisory Council comprised of some of WOCA’s founding members and most steadfast supporters:

Sage Crump
Kellee Edusei
Courtney Harge
Stephanie Hughley
Suzan Jenkins
María Lopez de León
Shaunda Erikka McDill
Alexis Ortiz
Jeri Rayon
Shayna Schlosberg
Baraka Sele
Shay Wafer

We would also be remiss if we did not name our existing administrative team which includes Alisha Patterson, Program Director, and Charley Harris-Hill, Administrative Associate, who are providing generous support during this organizational transition.

** WOCA uses the term “women” to encompass all those that self-identify as women or with womanhood including non-binary, transgender, and cisgender women. Our intention is to uplift and address the very specific ways in which this particular group of people, and their multiple identities, are impacted by various forms of oppression, notably sexism and racism. WOCA uses the term “women of color” as an organizing tool, acknowledging the expression is a political designation, not a biological one, and borne out of a solidarity movement originating from the labor of Black women.*



Executive Director Job Description

Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA) is seeking its newest Executive Director (ED), one who leads with vision and purpose and whose approach to leadership is collaborative, intergenerational, and [liberatory](#). This new ED will work directly with the WOCA staff and advisory board in visioning for the future of the almost 15-year-old organization and will be tasked with shepherding the grassroots organization into the future by leaning on the wealth and resources of its vast, national community. The Executive Director will work directly with the Founding Director/Co-Founder, Kaisha S. Johnson, in the implementation of both the vision and values of the organization, as well as, the transference of institutional knowledge, helping to record, archive, and secure a lasting legacy for the organization.

The ideal candidate for Executive Director is a creative and critical thinker who has a [decolonized approach to nonprofit work](#), an acute understanding of community, experience working in dynamic environments that demand a high level of flexibility and problem-solving skills, and a clear alignment with WOCA’s [mission and vision](#). Prior background working in a nonprofit arts or cultural organization, particularly within a grassroots setting, is especially valued.

** WOCA uses the term “women” to encompass all those that self-identify as women or with womanhood including non-binary, transgender, and cisgender women. Our intention is to uplift and address the very specific ways in which this particular group of people, and their multiple identities, are impacted by various forms of oppression, notably sexism and racism. WOCA uses the term “women of color” as an organizing tool, acknowledging the expression is a political designation, not a biological one, and borne out of a solidarity movement originating from the labor of Black women.*

POSITION TITLE: Executive Director

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Full-time, W-2 status, permanent, exempt, 32 Hours per week +

DESIRED START DATE: January 5 - February 5, 2024

COMPENSATION: \$90,000 - \$100,000 per year / negotiable per benefits package

SUPERVISES: Director of Operations, Program Director, Administrative Associate, Development Associate, Accountant, seasonal administrative volunteers, and other staff as needed

ABOUT WOCA: Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA) is a national, grassroots service organization driven and grounded by our values and dedicated to creating transformational change in the arts and culture sector. We do this by championing racial equity as a basic tenet of eliminating systemic disparities in the field and by providing a platform to help amplify the voice and visibility of women of color*, leaders who are disproportionately affected by inequitable structures and practices in the sector. WOCA aims to cultivate a just and inclusive field with the intent of creating equitable systems for all to prosper inside and outside of the arts.

BENEFITS: Paid holidays, paid time off including vacation + wellness and sick time, a generous healthcare package, and a quarterly work-from-home stipend

LOCATION & OFFICE: Fully remote office.

SCHEDULE: A typical work week is Monday through Friday. For our team members, WOCA values setting boundaries between professional and personal time, and late nights and weekends are deliberately avoided except when required for special events, community meetings, and/or travel. A weekly work schedule is always adjusted to ensure boundaries around a 32-hour work week. There is a potential of 30% or more time dedicated to travel for meetings, conferences, and convenings with a minimum of four (4) travel commitments per year.

HOW TO APPLY: Submit your application to Unlock Creative at [the link](#) below and include a resume, cover letter, and 1 - 2 work samples that demonstrate your professional experience and/or highlight some of your accomplishments related to the position. In the cover letter, please be sure to articulate why this role resonates with you (i.e., is in alignment with your current goals and trajectory) and outline your core skills as they support the mission of the work of WOCA.

In the cover letter, you are also encouraged to respond to the following questions:

How do you interpret liberatory leadership? What does community look like to you, including your own? Why are you passionate about leading a member-driven organization? How do you feel about taking the reins of a founder-led organization and creating your own vision to move the organization into its next phase of development?

SEARCH MANAGEMENT: Unlock Creative: Coaching & Management Solutions LLC is conducting this search. If you have any questions, please email Ashley Walden at search@unlockcreative.org. Label the email “WOCA Search Questions.” All applications and expressed interest in this position will remain confidential. Again, please direct all questions regarding the process and application to search@unlockcreative.org.

ABOUT WOCA STAFF CULTURE

Based on the lived experiences of our co-founders and founding members, WOCA was established to help create more visibility and support for leaders who have been systematically marginalized and historically under-represented in the arts sector and to create opportunities where women of color hold shared power at decision making tables. WOCA operates through the lens of women of color in order to best articulate the needs of *all* people in a racially just world. We recognize that when women of color with their intersectional identities thrive, the world thrives. We like to think of our work as liberatory – but recognize that oppression shows up in many ways, even in communities and organizations of color. Yet, we work to create an environment that is inclusive and intentional. As a membership-driven network, we encourage all our community members to openly express their views on how we can be our best selves. As an organization, we value transparency and the collaborative work involved with creating a culture of community inside and outside of the workplace.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

WOCA is fully committed to Equal Opportunity Employment and to attracting, retaining, developing, and promoting employees without regard to their race, gender identity, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, genetic disposition, physical or mental disability, citizenship status, veteran status, or any other characteristic prohibited by federal, state, or local law. We strive to provide a work environment free from discrimination and harassment, and where employees are treated with respect and dignity. We intend that all qualified applicants be given equal opportunity and that selection decisions be based on job-related factors. We offer reasonable accommodation during the employment process for individuals with disabilities. If you need assistance in the application or hiring process to accommodate a disability, you may request an accommodation at any time.

We encourage a myriad of applicants to apply to the position including those that are self-taught and independently educated and those from marginalized and under-resourced communities. We openly embrace single parents and/or independent caregivers understanding the unique skill set this particular group of people possess from having to navigate real-life experiences and challenges that have made them especially adept and nimble at problem-solving.

TRANSITION SUPPORT

In order to support a smooth and human-centered transition, there will be an overlap between the Founding Director’s time and the incoming Executive Director. The candidate will also have

twelve (12) months of coaching support and professional development to help set and achieve outlined milestones created in collaboration with both staff and the Advisory Council.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Executive Director (ED) will be responsible for leading WOCA into its next chapter by growing the organization's capacity and completing the transition of WOCA from a fiscally sponsored LLC to a full-IRS-recognized non-profit. The incoming Executive Director will work with the Founding Director to understand the historical policies and practices of the organization, as well as the immediate and future goals of WOCA. The ED will work to develop a strategic plan that positions the organization for growth, identifies new and expands existing revenue-generating and fundraising sources, and maintains the visibility of the organization through active engagement in the arts/culture sector and through media and press. The incoming Executive Director will importantly interface with and develop relationships with the vast national (and international) community of WOCA members and their affiliated networks.

The ED will execute the business and staff management on behalf of the Advisory Council and incoming Board of Directors. In this capacity, the primary responsibilities include:

- high-level, day-to-day strategic oversight and decision-making
- staff management and delegation of team responsibilities
- nurturing community relationships
- annual budget planning
- monthly, quarterly, and yearly financial strategizing and management
- fundraising

A priority responsibility of the Executive Director will be to stay deeply rooted in the mission and values of the organization while realizing our vision in collaboration with our community members and key partners. It should be noted that historically, WOCA has been led by Co-Founder Kaisha S. Johnson, with the support of both salaried and/or contracted staff and generous volunteers.

PURPOSE OF POSITION

The Executive Director (ED) is a key leadership role and will collaborate with the Advisory Council, community members, and key stakeholders in helping to realize WOCA's mission. The ED will guide the development of the vision and strategy for the organization's long-term growth and sustainability. The Executive Director is charged with positioning WOCA to render the organization's mission through effective practices that are financially supported yet rooted in anti-capitalist values and [solidarity economies](#). The ED is responsible for the overall business, administrative, and operational management of the company. This includes overseeing

fundraising, budgeting, financial management, HR, information systems, institutional marketing, and Advisory Council relations. The ED is an at-will employee.

Lastly, the Executive Director role requires someone with a passion for the arts and that has a clear understanding of the unique power of the arts as a tool for social change.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The essential functions of this job require effective communication and administration, as well as the ability to be responsive to ever-evolving environments. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Responsibilities include:

Executive Leadership

- design, implement, update, maintain, and execute WOCA's Strategic Plan with an emphasis on fundraising, finance, organizational structure, and operations
- fundraising strategy, planning, execution, and activities of all fundraising programs
- manage development contractors or staff
- oversee annual giving campaigns with Development contractors or staff
- direct and lead institutional fundraising with foundations, corporations, and government entities
- oversee communications with donors and supporters when it relates to fundraising or institutional advancement, ensuring mission-aligned practices are being used in stewarding our patrons
- oversee staff management of the CRM database and ensure that best practices are being used in recording and analyzing data

Financial Management and Operations

- manage the creation of the organization's annual operating and capital budgets
- manage financial reporting systems and operations to ensure that all directors and managers have the information needed to manage individual budgets
- Responsible for all external financial reporting of the organization

External Relations

- represent WOCA in communications with external agencies that have the power to govern or influence financial or administrative demands within the organization
- attend meetings, conferences and convenings, special events, and artistic performances to remain informed on industry practices, build and nurture professional relationships, and advance the work of the organization

People Management

- recruit, train, coach, and manage all non-production staff and consultants

- ensure that WOCA's employment policies and reporting comply with all applicable rules and regulations
- ensure that WOCA's employment policies and employee handbook are current and complete and support the organization's staffing goals and needs
- foster a culture of teamwork, generous collaboration, clear communication, effective delegation, and mutual support

EXPERIENCE & EXPERTISE

The ideal candidate will:

- have an inherent commitment to and a clear understanding of the political and socio-economic power of women of color
- hold a personal belief in WOCA's mission, goals, and objectives and be passionate about raising funds for the awareness and support of our work
- have a comprehension of the history and contributions of indigenous people and the enslaved African in the United States, specifically, and in the world generally
- possess a basic understanding of systems of oppression and how they impact women of color
- have established relationships across the arts and culture sector
- carry an understanding of the non-profit arts ecosystem with some familiarity with the performing arts field in general
- have demonstrated the ability to generate earned income and philanthropic support and a passion for organizational development
- be comfortable leading and working independently, and be willing to ask for help

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum of 5-7 years of experience in an arts or cultural organization of similar scope

- significant experience interacting with community members and key stakeholders
- exceptional ability to communicate orally and on the written page
- strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills
- ability to facilitate and hold space for small and large groups to aid in community building
- ability to understand the interests and intentions of current and potential funders
- willingness to re-imagine business models and create new, people- forward processes and protocols that decentralize capitalism yet produce financial stability through liberatory practices

Bonus Qualifications

- experience generating unique streams of revenue and philanthropic support
- multi-lingual and ability to communicate across membership

Don't check off every box in the requirements listed above? Please apply anyway! Studies have shown that marginalized communities - such as women, LGBTQ+, and people of color - are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. WOCA is dedicated to building an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible workplace that fosters a sense of belonging – so if you're excited about this role but your past experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to still consider submitting an application. You may be just the right candidate for this role!