



Executive Director
GrubStreet
Boston, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

GrubStreet, the nation's largest creative writing center, seeks a new Executive Director (ED) to lead the next chapter of this beloved literary organization that brings people from all backgrounds together over a shared love of writing and a belief in the power of stories to shape our culture. This is a remarkable opportunity to lead one of the nation's preeminent independent creative writing centers during a vibrant period of accomplishment and opportunity for further growth.

The new Executive Director will join GrubStreet at a time of robust student enrollment, with a strong senior leadership team and dedicated philanthropic supporters. Each year, GrubStreet educates over 5,000 students from across the United States and 44 countries. With operations anchored in its new Center for Creative Writing, which opened in 2021 in Boston's Seaport neighborhood, GrubStreet boasts a literary stage, a podcast studio, classrooms and community space, and an exceptional educational model delivered across multiple modes of learning, including online, in-person, hybrid, and asynchronous formats. In partnership with other groups, GrubStreet's Center for Creative Writing hosts a poetry nonprofit, an independent bookstore, and a café.

GrubStreet remains steadfast in its mission to remove barriers – social, financial, and cultural – to the writing world and provide rigorous artistic guidance in a supportive community. GrubStreet works to ensure writers of all backgrounds have what they need to develop their voices and share their stories. Signature programs include MFA-level year-long incubators, multi-week workshops for all experience and skill levels, publishing-focused networking gatherings, a dynamic scholarship and fellowship program, and summer fellowships and camps for teen writers. The community is multicultural and multigenerational.

ABOUT GRUBSTREET

GrubStreet's Founder, Eve Bridburg, started GrubStreet in 1997, beginning with offering local writing workshops that generated continued demand for their welcoming approach to working with aspiring writers of all levels. Under Eve's leadership, GrubStreet has grown into the global writing community that it is today. In 2024, GrubStreet's energetic and inspiring instructors hosted 434 classes in a variety of genres, reaching 4,383 students who joined in person in Boston and virtually from across the United States

and 44 countries around the globe. GrubStreet's Center for Creative Writing in Boston welcomed 28,892 community members and visitors in person. Teen and adult writers in the GrubStreet community were awarded 765 scholarships and fellowships totalling over \$260,000 in tuition support. Additionally, over 2,000 writers were served through 89 fully funded programs. Over the past two years, the GrubStreet community counted a staggering 644 publications, including 40 literary awards, and 90 book publications.

GrubStreet's core values of accessibility, community, and literary excellence guide the organization's day-to-day practices and strategic decisions. With the relocation to the Seaport and the opening of the Center for Creative Writing, all during the pandemic-era shift in modes of learning and cultural participation, GrubStreet has successfully come through a period of significant change and growth. In their annual [Cultural Equity Report](#) update, a committee of GrubStreet staff and board members reflects on the status of the organizations's cultural equity commitments, conducts a self-assessment, and shares the thinking behind key decisions that the organization makes. The last strategic plan was created in 2021 and the organization is poised to develop a new strategic plan under the leadership of the next Executive Director.

People

GrubStreet's ED will report to a dedicated and experienced Board of Directors and will partner with a talented and engaged team of employees to remove barriers to the writing world and provide rigorous artistic guidance in a supportive community. GrubStreet has a twelve-member [board](#) and a [staff](#) of approximately 20 employees, many of them accomplished writers themselves, who manage the organization's day to day strategy, programs, fundraising, and operations. The leadership team reports to the ED and includes the Artistic Director, Managing Director, and the Directors of Programs, Marketing & Communications, and Development & Engagement. The organization contracts with over 100 adjunct instructors, who all participate in customized GrubStreet training to deliver a consistent educational experience to students.

Facilities

After outgrowing its headquarters in Boston's Theater District, GrubStreet spent several years seeking a new location that was accessible by public transportation and also was financially feasible for the nonprofit. In 2018, GrubStreet was chosen through a City of Boston initiative that would provide reduced rent and a 35 year lease to a nonprofit in the Seaport through Chapter 91, which aims to increase access to the waterfront for all residents of the city. With this decision, GrubStreet needed to raise \$8 million for construction and startup costs, which they were able to do through a wide range of gifts from over 300 donors, including individuals, foundations, and the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund. In 2019, the lease was signed and GrubStreet then worked with [Merge Architects](#) to design the 13,000 square foot Center for Creative Writing, which includes publicly accessible storefront space with a bookstore, café and stage, as well as member writing space, classrooms, and offices. The majority of construction was finished in spring 2021. While demand for virtual courses has continued to grow, GrubStreet resumed in-person offerings in the fall of 2021 and these have also continued to grow since.

Finances and Fundraising

GrubStreet's annual operating budget is more than \$4 million. The organization relies on a mix of revenue sources, with approximately 40% of its earned revenue generated through tuition. Approximately 50% of revenue comes from contributions from grants and individual donors. The remaining 10% of revenue is generated through a mix of consulting work, memberships, and investments. As GrubStreet looks to sustain its renowned programming and grow in new ways, it is critical that the next leader ensure the financial resources exist to support talented staff and artists, high-quality education, and accessible programming. With the increased demand for online courses, there is potential to assess and reenvision the tuition revenue model. With regard to fundraising, the next ED must have the enthusiasm and entrepreneurial drive to oversee the process of identifying, securing, and sustaining individual donors, grants, and sponsorships. Over the years, GrubStreet has cultivated strong relationships with individuals and organizations who have been longtime and loyal supporters, ensuring institutional stability. Moving forward, the organization has an opportunity to continue building out its long-term audience of potential donors and supporters.

ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROLE

The next Executive Director will work with GrubStreet's seasoned senior leadership team and committed board to develop and implement a strategic vision for the organization's future. The successful candidate will be a highly accomplished, mission-based, and innovative leader with deep fundraising experience. GrubStreet has an unparalleled track record of student accomplishment. The Executive Director will lead efforts to foster continued artistic excellence and meet the needs of students of diverse backgrounds. The Executive Director will serve as the chief advocate for equity and inclusion for all of GrubStreet's programs and activities. This position will lead collaboratively with GrubStreet's creative and hard-working team, bringing strategic acumen and an entrepreneurial, creative spirit along with excellent people and communication skills.

The Executive Director will be responsible for ensuring GrubStreet's long-term sustainability. The position will work with the operations, finance and marketing teams to generate synergies and opportunities from existing and future strategic partners in the Center for Creative Writing. The Executive Director will work closely with the programs team to maximize GrubStreet's impact across its in-person and online platforms. GrubStreet has been at the forefront of online writing learning, transforming in a few short years from primarily in-person classes in Boston to teaching students from across the nation and worldwide. The new Executive Director will be the primary driver in developing GrubStreet's national strategic direction and philanthropic strategy.

GrubStreet enjoys a national reputation and is also directly tied to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of its home in Boston. GrubStreet's next ED will embrace being a visible and accessible leader; they will be present in the office and at the Center for Creative Writing and will also prioritize donor meetings, partnership building, and networking at literary and cultural events locally and nationally. This person will

be comfortable and experienced in navigating these various communities and nurturing these relationships with authenticity, serving as a compelling narrator and chief spokesperson for the organization.

This position reports to the Board of Directors and will oversee all departments including programs, development, marketing, operations, finance and artistic direction.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. **Strategic Leadership and Vision:** Provide strategic and visionary leadership and direction to GrubStreet, ensuring that all programs and initiatives are integrated and effective in advancing the overall mission, culture, values and goals of GrubStreet
2. **Fundraising:** Create the conditions for fundraising success (vision, materials, pitch, call-time, training, technology, etc.) and actively partner with development team and board to set and hit fundraising targets.
3. **Board Development:** Help build, sustain, and strengthen all board functions, including meetings, policy compliance, and committee work. The executive director will work to build alignment while also maintaining role clarity and recruiting new board members.
4. **Financial Oversight and Management:** Develop the annual budget and oversee fiscal management and strategic planning to ensure effective and efficient use of resources and financial sustainability.
5. **Program Management:** Create and maintain an atmosphere that promotes creative excellence while enhancing access for all writers. Ensure programs are evaluated and that the team is innovating and improving program delivery as needed. Work with the board, staff, and other stakeholders to ensure that the mixture of programs and activities is achieving the organization's mission.
6. **Staff Leadership and Management:** Lead senior management team and ensure inclusive, equitable staff culture across the organization. Ensure that DEIB is embedded in culture, policy and practice.
7. **Community Relations, Advocacy, and Communication:** Develop effective working relationships within the community (both within the literary arts community and elsewhere) to ensure that the literary arts are represented within the broader arts, civic and philanthropic communities. Communicate impact and planning and solicit feedback from staff, instructors, students and other stakeholders. Serve as the chief spokesperson for the GrubStreet in the community, locally as well as nationally, and build strong relationships with government and other city leaders. Work to raise national profile.
8. **Operations, Policy and Technology:** Ensure the organization operates efficiently and ethically and has needed technology. Ensure that all policies and procedures that govern GrubStreet are up to date, ethical, reflect best and wise practices, and are shared and understood by the board, staff and community.

Qualifications

Minimum

- Ten years of substantial and progressive leadership in the arts, education or non-profit arena with demonstrated ability to collaborate with team, board and community.
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion including experience fostering a multicultural environment.
- Proven and significant fundraising record.
- Experience in financial management including budgetary responsibility, strategic planning, and supervision and evaluation of personnel.
- A record of dynamic, inspirational, collaborative, proactive, visionary and ethical leadership.
- Excellent intercultural, communication, management, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Preferred

- A thorough understanding of the complexities of non-profit management.
- Successful experience specifically managing arts organizations.
- Ability to apply a data-driven approach to allocate resources efficiently.
- Demonstrated success in developing and implementing strong partnerships.
- Innovative application of current and emerging technologies in online learning and community-building.
- Proven ability to develop strategic plans that enhance revenue generation to GrubStreet.
- Experience and connections in the nonprofit arts field and/or literary arts field.

Research shows that people often only apply to jobs if they meet 100 percent of the qualifications. As no candidate ever meets 100 percent of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

COMPENSATION & LOCATION

The anticipated salary for this position is \$150,000 and will be competitive and commensurate with experience. GrubStreet's offices operate on a hybrid schedule with three days in the office each week. The Executive Director is expected to have a regular presence at the GrubStreet Center for Creative Writing in Boston, ensuring visibility and accessibility with both staff and the community. Periodic travel for conferences, literary events and network building is expected.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS & INQUIRIES

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the search process is completed. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications with resumes and letters of interest should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search. Electronic submission is strongly encouraged.

Katie Rockman, Nella Young, and Maria Connor
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/grubstreet-inc/executive-director>

GrubStreet's policy is to assure equal employment opportunity to all qualified employees and applicants by prohibiting discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran or military status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This practice applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment including hiring, transfer, compensation, layoffs, promotions, training, benefits, termination and retirement.