



Chief Human Resources Officer
New England Conservatory
Boston, MA

THE SEARCH

[New England Conservatory](#) (NEC), a premier incubator for musical excellence, seeks a visionary and strategic Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).

From the very beginning, NEC has looked forward with optimism and imagination to create opportunities and meaning in service of its mission and vision. Now, at a time of radical innovation, NEC is positioned to be the country's most forward-looking conservatory with seasoned and mission-driven talent to advance music's impact on humanity. Reporting to President Andrea Kalyn and working alongside colleagues as a member of the Executive Council, the CHRO will establish and execute a holistic human capital vision to complement the Conservatory's new strategic framework focused on the student experience, social and cultural relevance, technology, and financial sustainability. As an enterprise-wide thinker and engaged voice, the CHRO will join a community reinvigorated to boldly and purposefully create NEC anew. The successful leader will foster deep relationships that build trust and position the human resources office as a proactive partner. Without exception, the CHRO will be a humble team leader with broad knowledge and experience in employee and labor relations, compensation design and strategy, and performance and organizational development.

Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, is assisting the New England Conservatory in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

New England Conservatory educates and trains musicians of all ages from around the world, drawing on the talent and deep reservoir of experience of a distinguished faculty. Understanding that music is one of the transcendent expressions of human civilization, NEC aspires to ensure it has a central place in contemporary society. At NEC, the study of music builds human capacity, elevates the soul, and prepares students for lives that enhance the public good.

The College

Today, NEC enrolls approximately 750 graduate, undergraduate students from 46 states and 39 countries across a variety of disciplines, including: brass; chamber music; collaborative piano; composition; conducting; contemporary improvisation; jazz studies; music history and musicology; music theory; percussion; piano; strings; voice and opera; and woodwinds. Degree offerings include the Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts. NEC also offers the Undergraduate Diploma, Graduate Diploma, and the prestigious and highly selective Artist Diploma.

The Preparatory School

The New England Conservatory Preparatory School (NEC Prep) offers open-enrollment educational opportunities for pre-college students across New England. It currently serves more than 1500 students in the region, including those enrolled in NEC through a partnership with Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Prep musicians attend individual lessons and classes, and participate in chamber music and large ensembles, including orchestras, choruses, and wind ensembles. It is one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation.

Summer Programs

Summer programs at NEC include a wide range of classes, festivals, lessons, and intensives for children, teens, college students, and adults. The flagship program is the Summer Orchestra Institute, a two-week ensemble program for intermediate and advanced-level string, wind, brass, harp, and percussion between the ages of 13 to 18. The experience emphasizes intensive musical preparation, while also working to develop students' communication and leadership skills through their musical collaborations, learning the joy of music making while developing lasting friendships. Students have the option of choosing to be day students or residential students. Other programs exist in partnership with other organizations and include both in-person and online instruction.

Faculty and Staff

NEC's faculty is best in class across a wide array of musical disciplines. The Conservatory is home to over 500 faculty artists who are pre-eminent in their fields, 31 of whom are members of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra, and numerous others who are distinguished composers, soloists, performers, and scholars in their own right. NEC also boasts 11 current or former faculty and/or alumni who are MacArthur Fellows.

Across various non-faculty roles, the Conservatory employs over 165 part-time and full-time staff and manages a robust student employment program. The employee commitment to excellence and student achievement is the foundational thread of NEC's esteemed legacy.

Facilities

Located in Boston on the Avenue of the Arts in the Fenway Cultural District, the NEC campus consists of four buildings that stretch along St. Botolph Street and Huntington Avenue. The campus is bounded by Symphony Hall, the Northeastern University campus, the YMCA, and commercial and residential buildings.

The Blumenthal Family Library is home to one of the major music collections in the United States, including more than 150,000 volumes of scores, sound and video recordings, and books about music, as well as subscriptions to all of the major music journals and electronic music databases. In addition, the library archives and special collections boast a rich treasure of manuscripts, first editions, personal papers, and recorded performances of many of the great composers and musicians who have taught and performed at NEC over the past 150 years.

NEC's premier performance venue, the historic and acoustically superb Jordan Hall, is one of the world's most admired concert halls. It provides an intimate and versatile setting for a wide variety of performances and recording sessions featuring NEC students and faculty, with seating for over 1,000. On weekends, the hall is used by some of Boston's top professional arts organizations, including the Celebrity Series, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and the Boston Early Music Festival. In addition to Jordan Hall, NEC has seven other performance spaces on campus, including three acoustically superb, state-of-the-art performance spaces in the newly constructed Student Life and Performance Center (SLPC). This variety of performance venues enables NEC to host more than 1,000 performances each year.

Finances and Philanthropy

To sustain the enterprise and its annual operating costs of \$51 million, NEC—like many other conservatories—relies heavily on tuition. In fiscal year 2024, the Conservatory drew roughly 67 percent of its revenue from tuition and room-and-board (\$33.4 million) and 14 percent from the endowment (\$7.1 million). As of June 2024, the Conservatory's endowment totaled \$164.5 million.

In fiscal year 2024, Institutional Advancement raised \$30 million in private philanthropy; in the same year, unrestricted giving resulted in \$4 million to the NEC Fund. In fiscal year 2025, the team is on track to surpass its major giving goal of \$20 million, in addition to meeting an unrestricted giving goal of \$4.15 million.

Leadership

Andrea Kalyn, PhD **17th President of NEC**

New England Conservatory's 17th and first female president, Andrea Kalyn began her tenure in 2019. Kalyn's deep commitment to musical excellence, her strong relationship with faculty, and her profound sense of responsibility for music education are hallmarks of her leadership. She is fundamentally committed to advancing the place of music in the world and to strengthening connections among composers, performers, and audiences.

A musicologist and pianist, Kalyn holds a PhD from the Eastman School of Music, where her research centered on 20th-century American music. She serves on the Board of Trustees of WGBH and the ProArts Consortium, for which she previously served as chair.

Role of Chief Human Resources Officer

For more than 150 years, NEC has been at the center of Boston's rich cultural history, gaining a reputation as an international destination for rising musical talent. A resilient institution with a strong sense of purpose, the Conservatory has evolved to meet the moment. Today, in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education and the arts, the complex and expensive operating model calls for radical changes to curriculum, programs, and staffing models. To match the pace of change, NEC commissioned an external assessment of the human resources function, highlighting the need for a seasoned human resources executive to lead the strategic HR transformation that will help propel the institution and its people forward.

The CHRO will partner with colleagues on the Executive Council, which includes: the Executive Vice President; the Vice President and Chief Information Officer; the Vice President and Chief of Staff; and the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. They will lead the human resources office with four budgeted roles. As is, the team is comprised of a part-time interim director of human resources, a student employment coordinator, and an HR manager.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Strategic Leadership and Vision | Building upon the groundwork currently underway and complementing the strategic framework, the CHRO must articulate a persuasive and forward-looking human capital vision that galvanizes a dedicated cadre of faculty, staff, and students. The NEC community has experienced significant periods of change in an effort to deliver an exceptional student experience. In partnership with senior leaders, the CHRO will increase NEC's ability to recruit, develop, and retain strong faculty and staff. Through developing a cohesive and long-term vision for HR, the new CHRO will contribute to sustaining and advancing the institution for future generations.

Staff Leadership and Management | At their best, human resource offices serve a vital role in building an inclusive culture, strengthening faculty and staff morale, and creating opportunities for professional growth and development. The CHRO will inherit a small, dedicated team of human resource professionals and ensure they are well-supported and provided with meaningful mentoring and learning opportunities. As a culture-keeper, the CHRO will provide strong managerial leadership, building a team with a deep customer-service orientation and the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

In close partnership with the College and Expanded Education leadership, the CHRO will develop and strengthen policies, procedures, and benefits applicable to the NEC faculty. It is important that the CHRO be a supportive resource throughout the full cycle of their time at NEC, showing an authentic interest and understanding of the varying needs of this professional group.

Systems, Accuracy, Accessibility + Operational Excellence | To best meet NEC's current and future needs, the CHRO must be an exceptional strategic leader with the clarity to prioritize and delegate initiatives, programs, and technology transformations and the ability to execute on them. A champion of evidence-based decision-making, the CHRO will conduct a systematic review of the human resource function and its use of technology to ensure efficient workflows, transparent communication, and data collection and deployment. The CHRO will need to clarify roles and responsibilities and ensure systems are connected to move the human resource office towards its goal of becoming strategic and proactive. The CHRO will strike the balance between leading the strategic work of human resources and managing the operational functions of the HR office.

Culture + Employee Engagement | The CHRO will leverage the NEC community's commitment to the institution's mission, exhibit the same or greater commitment to the mission and vision, and enlist others in the shared endeavor of building nimble systems and operations that can scale over time. Practices and policies, whether related to benefits, compliance, or performance management, must reflect NEC's unwavering commitment to community and belonging with a sensible balance of empathy and practicality that inspires trust across all levels of the Conservatory.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

New England Conservatory seeks an experienced human resources leader who is a strategic thinker, creative risk-taker, persuasive communicator, decisive manager, and excellent relationship builder. Candidates may come from a nonprofit or the public sector, preferably with experience spanning sectors. At a minimum, the Chief Human Resources Officer should have worked in a similarly sized organization with an understanding of how nonprofits operate and a grasp of the complexity of higher education and the arts.

An ideal candidate will bring many of the following professional experiences and personal characteristics:

- Strong leadership skills demonstrated by the ability to influence, persuade, and inspire individuals and organizations to act based on an ambitious vision and strategic objectives, and to adapt to the resultant changes.
- Understanding of what needs to be done and ensures successful execution.
- An entrepreneurial orientation and a willingness to seize organizational development opportunities.
- Experience in building and implementing a robust employee relations strategy and structure within a complex environment and ensuring that all related matters are communicated, documented, and managed appropriately.
- Evidence of fostering workplace conditions and quality management that supports employee satisfaction and enhanced work-life balance.
- Demonstrated commitment to fostering and advancing NEC's values of community and belonging
- Excellent listening, verbal, and written communication skills; a willingness to convey complex information and concepts in accessible terms, unparalleled personal integrity, discretion, and tact.
- An accessible, supportive colleague who leads with empathy, flexibility, and resilience.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The hiring salary range for this role is \$240,000 to \$255,000. The President reserves the final determination of the selected candidate's actual pay, considering their experience and qualifications for the role. The Chief Human Resources Officer is a full-time role based in Boston, Massachusetts. NEC employs a hybrid workforce. The CHRO is expected to be a visible leader on campus and be available to work on-site.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/new-england-conservatory/chief-human-resources-officer>

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner (she/her)
Berlinda Mojica, Senior Associate (she/her)
Cortnee Bollard, Senior Search Coordinator (they/them)
Isaacson, Miller

NEC is an Equal Opportunity Employer that recruits and hires qualified candidates without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, or veteran status.