



Search for the Executive Director of Peabody Extended Learning
Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute
Baltimore, MD

THE SEARCH

The Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute seeks an entrepreneurial, innovative, and strategic leader with a record of building programs, systems, and partnerships and a passion for performing arts to serve as the inaugural Executive Director of Peabody Extended Learning. Peabody Extended Learning is an emerging expansion of the Peabody Institute's non-degree programs and academic community partnerships, currently anchored in the Peabody Preparatory, Maryland's premier community school for the performing arts.

The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University is one of the nation's oldest and most distinguished conservatories, founded in 1857 as the country's first academy of music. Today, as an academic division of Johns Hopkins University, the Conservatory combines world-class undergraduate and graduate degree programs in music and dance with a commitment to innovation through programs in performance, composition, music technology, and interdisciplinary arts. Peabody has a rich legacy of producing influential artists and composers while advancing research and education in the performing arts. The Peabody Preparatory, founded in 1894, extends this mission to the broader community, offering music and dance instruction for students of all ages and abilities. Its programs range from private lessons and youth ensembles to adult learning opportunities, professional development, and wellness-focused initiatives. The Preparatory also champions access and equity through programs like Tuned In, which provides Baltimore City students with comprehensive musical training and support. With multiple campuses and online options, the Preparatory fosters lifelong engagement with the arts and serves as a vital cultural resource for the region.

With the Institute having embarked on its *Building on the Breakthrough Strategic Plan*, the Executive Director of Peabody Extended Learning will lead a bold expansion of programs and reimagine how Peabody engages learners of all ages. With a forthcoming brand launch, Peabody Extended Learning intends to showcase a dynamic portfolio of offerings for students, community and professional artists, and the broader public, encompassing all current activities of the Peabody Preparatory and becoming the

umbrella for all non-credit educational programs for the Institute. This leader will bring a passion for education, strong business acumen, and the ability to identify strategic markets, guide informed investments, grow revenue, and scale both in-person and online programming to significantly expand reach and impact. Positioned at the forefront of a new model for arts education that blends community engagement, opportunities for students of all ages, digital innovation, and accessible programming, the Executive Director will have the rare opportunity to shape the direction of this new entity. Creativity and vision are essential, as this role will be building a transformative platform that redefines what a world-class performing arts institution can offer beyond its traditional boundaries.

Isaacson, Miller, a global executive search firm, has been retained to support this important search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT PEABODY INSTITUTE

Founded in 1857 through a visionary gift of \$1.4 million from philanthropist George Peabody, the Institute officially opened in 1866 as America's first music conservatory, complete with an art gallery, lecture series, and public library—ushering in a new era of cultural enrichment for Baltimore. Early expansions included the Peabody Preparatory in the 1890s and the formation of the Bachelor of Music joint degree with Johns Hopkins in 1916. Over its long and distinguished history, Peabody has produced groundbreaking work in musical research (such as auditory psychology studies in the 1920s), nurtured talent (including faculty like Nadia Boulanger and Aldo Parisot), and launched pioneering programs—most notably the nation's first electronic music studio in a conservatory back in 1969.

Though originally independent, Peabody formally became part of Johns Hopkins University in 1977. It has continually evolved with a dual identity: a premier conservatory for advanced undergraduate and graduate musicians, alongside a Preparatory School offering public classes for students of all ages and abilities. In recent years, the Conservatory has emphasized cross-disciplinary education through its [Breakthrough Curriculum](#) and integration with the health and technology sectors. Notably, it launched new programs such as [Dance](#) and [Music for New Media](#), established its [LAUNCHPad](#) career development initiative, and established an emerging [Center for Performing Arts & Health](#).

Peabody has an enduring legacy of shaping leaders across performance, composition, and classical, jazz, and contemporary music. Notable alumni include Dontae Winslow, Jonathan Leshnoff, Amy Beth Kirsten, Paola Prestini, Matthew Burtner, Manuel Barrueco, André Watts, Michael Hersch, and Gemma New. Alumni accomplishments—spanning Grammy, Guggenheim, and MacArthur honors—demonstrate the Institute's ongoing influence in the global arts landscape.

The [Building on the Breakthrough](#) strategic plan (2025–29) continues the growth from the two previous strategic plans, on a trajectory that was launched in 2015. Peabody has achieved significant milestones

over the last 10 years: Conservatory enrollment has surged by over 40% (from 570 to approximately 800 students), accompanied by an 87% increase in net tuition revenue. The Institute now offers full-need, no-loan financial aid for undergraduates and fully-funded tuition for DMA students. The percentage of underrepresented faculty and students in the Conservatory has increased from 5% of faculty to 14% and from 10% of students to 20%. Other major successes include strengthening the Institute's financial sustainability through the elimination of long-standing structural deficits while launching a transformational \$165 million capital campaign to expand and enhance its historic Mount Vernon campus, and making a historic investment in 2025 to purchase 34 new Steinway and Yamaha pianos for the Institute's practice rooms.

ABOUT PEABODY PREPARATORY + PEABODY EXTENDED LEARNING

Founded in 1894 by May Garrettson Evans, the Preparatory has provided the resources and opportunities necessary for the full development of its music and dance students, while also serving the national arts community as a trendsetter in quality arts education. Currently serving approximately 2,500 students, admission to the Preparatory is open to anyone desiring to learn music or dance, from two months old to adulthood. In FY24, the Preparatory earned \$5.5M in revenue with another \$1.2M in contributed revenue. Enrollment has increased steadily over the past three years, with a 12% increase in fiscal year 2024. The Preparatory Dance program alone has seen an increase from 71 adult students to 400 in two years. Private lessons are available for individual instruction, as well as group instruction through programs such as the Pre-Professional Dance Program, the Young People's String Program, and Music Certificate Programs. The renowned faculty influence the national arena through their own performances, speaking engagements, teacher training, masterclass direction, and competition adjudication. The certificate and outreach programs have garnered national recognition and are being replicated by schools across the country.

The Peabody Preparatory offers performing arts training at campuses and partner locations in Baltimore City and County, Annapolis, Howard County, and online, serving communities across central Maryland and beyond. In addition, there are six in-school locations for the [Tuned In](#) program, a free, year-round program, founded in 2007, that provides Baltimore City public school students from grades pre-K to 12 with programs for holistic musical development.

Peabody's strong reputation has attracted the interest of international visitors and prompted students from around the world to seek their arts education at Peabody. Students win acclaim in local, national, and international competitions, with many going on to study at the world's most prestigious institutions. Illustrious alumni of the Preparatory include composer Philip Glass, choreographer Martha Clarke, pop singer Tori Amos, jazz pianist Cyrus Chestnut, composer Camara Kambon, and violinist Hilary Hahn.

In Spring 2025, a new strategic plan introducing Peabody Extended Learning was finalized, signaling the Institute's commitment to deepening the reach and impact of Peabody's Preparatory programs and the Institute's other non-degree offerings. Peabody Extended Learning will encompass four key

components—core PreK-12 education through Peabody Preparatory, adult learning (Peabody Plus), professional development for working artists (Peabody Pro), and programs integrating health and wellness with the arts (Peabody Prescribe). The new entity will also serve as the Institute’s incubator for future pilots, collaborations with Conservatory programs, and innovations in community arts engagement and non-credit programs.

[Peabody Plus](#) offers adult learners – whether beginners, returning musicians, or lifelong enthusiasts – a diverse array of private lessons and group classes in music and dance. These classes are available across multiple campuses and online, catering to a wide range of skill levels and interests. Moving forward, among other directions, the Executive Director will explore the option to expand opportunities for adult learners, senior activities, and week-long adult programs, such as [Piano Week](#).

[Peabody Pro](#) is a professional development series tailored for practicing artists, educators, and arts administrators. These self-paced, online courses (often developed in collaboration with the Peabody LAUNCHPad Career Services office) cover essential skills such as budgeting, project planning, and grant writing, supporting professionals in expanding their careers and enhancing their artistic impact. In addition, Peabody Pro also includes opportunities for professionals seeking to expand their experience in performing arts and health with an in-person week-long intensive, [The Power of Music in Healthcare](#), and an online program, [Playing Well](#), leveraging Johns Hopkins’ expertise focused on injury prevention and healthy performance habits for musicians. In the future, Pro looks to explore micro-credentialing and professional development training opportunities for school systems, state departments of education, national membership organizations, and professional networks.

[Peabody Prescribe](#) encompasses offerings in arts and health, in collaboration with the Center for Performing Arts & Health, which are designed to promote wellness through music and dance. The Executive Director will collaborate with the future Center for Performing Arts & Health to explore additional, more community-based offerings which harness the arts to reduce isolation, improve physical and mental well-being, and integrate performance science into everyday life—making the health benefits of the arts accessible to all.

For more information about Peabody Preparatory, please visit <https://peabody.jhu.edu/preparatory/>

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director of Peabody Extended Learning will provide visionary leadership and strategic direction for Peabody Preparatory and all new lines of business and curricular expansions under the Peabody Extended Learning enterprise. This executive role will drive the transformation of non-credit arts education at Peabody, ensuring innovative, inclusive, and financially sustainable programming for learners of all ages. The Executive Director will report directly to the Assistant Dean of Performance Activities and Preparatory Education with a dotted-line reporting structure to the Senior Associate Dean

for Institute Affairs. The Executive Director will serve as a member of the Institute's Senior Management Group. Direct reports include: Director of the Preparatory, Preparatory Faculty Chairs with the Assistant Director serving as the Executive Director's designee for the Chairs, and the Senior Administrative Coordinator. The Executive Director will also participate in the formation and implementation of university policy around non-credit and non-degree education for Johns Hopkins University.

The Executive Director will manage the approximately five-million-dollar annual operating budget for Peabody Extended Learning with an eye for identifying operational budgetary efficiencies as well as maximizing revenues and realizing a positive net position annually. The Executive Director will manage, through their delegates, a faculty of 140 and a staff of eight with additional staff support provided from the Institute's development, marketing, and finance departments.

Specific opportunities and challenges for the Executive Director include:

Set an innovative and ambitious vision for Peabody Extended Learning

The Executive Director will establish a bold and forward-thinking vision for Peabody Extended Learning, positioning it as a dynamic hub for lifelong learning and artistic engagement. This role involves leading the launch and growth of Peabody Extended Learning by developing new educational programs and business lines that reflect emerging trends and community needs. Working closely with Peabody colleagues, the leader will guide rebranding initiatives to ensure a seamless transition and strong market presence.

Oversight of the Peabody Preparatory will remain a critical responsibility, ensuring continued excellence in PreK-12 music and dance education while driving curricular innovation and expansion. The leader will help shape, execute, and implement the recently developed comprehensive strategic plan for non-credit education, aligning these efforts with institutional goals for growth, inclusivity, and community engagement. In collaboration with the Senior Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing, the leader will co-lead rebranding and market research initiatives to establish and grow Peabody Extended Learning's identity and reach.

Finally, fostering a culture of innovation, excellence, and access across all programs and locations will be essential. Through these efforts, the leader will ensure that Peabody Extended Learning becomes a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable platform for artistic education and enrichment.

Explore opportunities to further expand programmatic offerings

The Executive Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the institution's academic and artistic portfolio by identifying, evaluating, and launching innovative programmatic offerings. Potential areas of growth include music technology and American Roots programs, as well as other emerging fields that align with evolving industry trends and student interests. Expanding non-credit, continuing education, and professional development opportunities for artists, educators, and lifelong learners will be essential to broadening the institution's reach and impact. The Executive Director will oversee the development and implementation of summer and special programs designed to drive additional enrollments and diversify

revenue streams. Maximizing revenue potential through enrollment growth, program optimization, and expansion into new geographic and demographic markets will be a key priority.

The Executive Director will identify and pursue strategic partnerships, as well as explore innovative business models for both in-person and online education, championing robust online and hybrid course offerings to ensure high-quality digital learning experiences for all participants, supported by clear procedures and benchmarks for evaluating effectiveness, learner engagement, and outcomes. These efforts will align with institutional goals and respond to emerging market trends, positioning the institution as a forward-thinking hub for creative and professional learning. Data-driven insights will inform continuous improvement and innovation in online education.

Inspire and invest in a high-performing staff and faculty

The next leader will cultivate a dynamic and diverse team of faculty and staff committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and student success. This includes leading recruitment, retention, and onboarding initiatives that attract top talent and foster an inclusive, collaborative environment. By investing in professional development and creating pathways for growth, the leader will ensure that faculty and staff are empowered to thrive and contribute meaningfully to Peabody's mission.

Oversight of curriculum development will be a critical responsibility, including the codification of learning outcomes and the implementation of robust assessment processes across departments. The leader will establish clear procedures and benchmarks for evaluating program effectiveness, learner engagement, and outcomes, leveraging data-driven insights to inform continuous improvement. Through these efforts, Peabody Extended Learning will maintain the highest standards of artistic excellence and innovation and academic rigor, while positioning its programs to meet the evolving needs of students and the broader community.

As Peabody Extended Learning moves from concept to concrete structure, the Executive Director will serve as a culture translator and change leader, guiding faculty through a period of growth and transformation. While the Preparatory community already enjoys a high degree of respect internally and externally, this expansion will require an Executive Director who engenders trust and transparency—with strong energy and openness to new ideas—and ensures thoughtful alignment and clear communication. The leader must inspire confidence, listen attentively, build consensus, and motivate faculty to embrace new opportunities, ensuring that innovation strengthens rather than disrupts the collaborative culture that defines the Preparatory.

Lead financial stewardship and resource optimization

The Executive Director will ensure the financial health and sustainability of Peabody Extended Learning through strategic planning and resource management. This includes developing and managing annual budgets that align with institutional priorities and support long-term growth. The leader will bring strong business acumen to decisions that balance fiscal responsibility with innovation, ensuring that financial strategies advance Peabody's mission and vision.

A key responsibility will be analyzing performance metrics for current and potential satellite campuses and partner locations to inform decisions on expansion or restructuring. By leveraging data-driven insights, the Executive Director will optimize resource allocation and identify opportunities for growth while maintaining operational efficiency. Through these efforts, Peabody Extended Learning will remain financially resilient and positioned for success in a dynamic educational landscape.

Build and prioritize fundraising efforts

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with Development staff to design and execute a comprehensive, multi-year engagement and fundraising strategy. This plan will encompass annual giving, major gifts, and stewardship initiatives that strengthen Peabody Extended Learning's financial foundation and support its long-term growth and development.

Serving as a visible and persuasive ambassador for Peabody Extended Learning, the leader will work with development staff to cultivate relationships with donors, alumni, partners, and the broader community. Through strategic outreach and authentic engagement, the leader will inspire philanthropic investment in Peabody's mission, ensuring that resources are in place to sustain innovation and expand access to world-class arts education.

Foster inclusive learning communities and build and enhance partnerships in the Maryland and Washington, DC region, and beyond

The Executive Director will establish Peabody Extended Learning's role as a vital community resource by strengthening and cultivating partnerships with public and private schools, community organizations, and health institutions. These collaborations will expand access to arts education and wellness programming, ensuring that the offerings reach diverse audiences and meet the evolving needs of the region.

Championing diversity, equity, and inclusion will be central to this work. The leader will advance initiatives that integrate inclusive practices into curriculum and repertoire, provide faculty training, and offer robust support for students and families. By fostering an environment where all participants feel welcomed and valued, Peabody Extended Learning will deepen its impact and broaden its reach.

Finally, enhancing parent and community involvement through education, engagement, and volunteer opportunities will strengthen the connection to the communities Peabody Extended Learning serves. These efforts will create meaningful pathways for collaboration and shared investment in the arts, positioning Peabody Extended Learning as a leader in cultural engagement across Maryland, DC, Virginia, nationally, and beyond.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The minimum educational qualifications include an advanced degree in arts administration, music education, or a related field (doctorate preferred). While no one person will embody all of the following, the successful Executive Director will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experiences, and personal qualities:

- 10 years of relevant professional experience
- Significant leadership experience in music education, arts administration, or a comparable educational setting.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial mindset with a track record of launching new programs or business lines.
- Proven success in conceptualizing, launching, and sustaining online or hybrid educational programs, including experience with instructional design, technology platforms, and digital pedagogy.
- Strong business acumen, including experience with budgeting, revenue generation, and performance analysis.
- Experience and ability leading organizational change, fostering stakeholder buy-in, and managing a large and diverse team through transition.
- Commitment to creating arts education opportunities that are accessible and welcoming for all.
- Ability to interact and collaborate successfully with a diverse faculty and staff across all organizational levels and to engender trust and confidence across stakeholder groups, including leadership, alumni, students and parents, donors, and colleagues at Peabody and Johns Hopkins University.
- Exceptional communication, collaboration, and relationship-building skills.
- Experience with PreK-12 and adult/continuing education programming.
- Knowledge of current trends in music technology, arts and wellbeing, and non-traditional music curricula.
- Knowledge of fundraising, marketing, and community engagement.

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply for jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. The minimum to maximum salary range for this position is \$111,800 to \$195,900, yet the targeted salary range is \$140,000 to \$160,000, commensurate with experience. Johns Hopkins University offers a comprehensive benefits program and PTO package. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/johns-hopkins-university-peabody-institute-extended-learning/executive-director>

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