



Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art  
Kansas City, Missouri

## THE SEARCH

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (the Museum) seeks a strategic, mission-driven, and collaborative financial leader to serve as its next Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The Museum, a central part of the cultural fabric of Kansas City, is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest art museums and is best known for its Asian art, photography, European and American paintings, modern sculpture, and Native American and Egyptian galleries. The Museum serves the community by providing access to its renowned collection of nearly 50,000 works of art free of charge and truly living its mission and values through a robust slate of programming and experiences.

Reporting to the Director & Chief Executive Officer, the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer will join the Museum at a transformational time for proactive, strategic leadership. The Museum is on strong financial footing, with a total operating budget of approximately \$42 million and a \$400 million endowment. The CFO will have the opportunity to help steward the Museum as it embarks on its next capital campaign and [expansion of their facilities](#) by 60,000 square feet for even greater activation. As a key member of a highly creative and passionate leadership team, the CFO will guide leadership, staff, and board members on financial strategy and help advance the Museum's overall strategic and capital planning through the thoughtful stewardship of the endowment and other funds. They will oversee all the core functions of nonprofit finance and financial planning including financial operations, planning, forecasting, audit management, investment oversight, debt management and leadership of a finance team. This is an incredible opportunity to help steward the finances of an institution that works tirelessly to encourage inclusivity and belonging, connect and welcome all communities to art, and create ambassadors for a better society, both within the thriving cultural hub of Kansas City and beyond.

The Museum welcomes applications from exceptional finance leaders who understand the museum's mission, and community impact and bring experience in similarly oriented organizations. The Museum has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries,

nominations, and applications with cover letters should be submitted in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART

### History

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art arose from the aspirations of two individuals, William Rockhill Nelson and Mary McAfee Atkins. William Rockhill Nelson, founder of The Kansas City Star and a real estate developer, was convinced that for a city to be truly civilized, art and culture were necessities. When he died in 1915, at the direction of his will the bulk of his estate was used to establish the William Rockhill Nelson Trust for the purchase of works of art. Mary McAfee Atkins, a retired school teacher and real estate investor, was inspired by the art she encountered on trips to Europe. When she died in 1911, she provided the city with approximately one-third of her estate to purchase land for a public art museum. The two estates were combined to build an art museum for the people of Kansas City.

The museum opened to the public Dec. 11, 1933, with lines that stretched to the street. The east wing was named the Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, and the remainder of the building was called the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art. In 1982, in preparation for the museum's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary the following year, the institution became known as The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The Nelson-Atkins has offered free admission to all people for nearly 25 years. Trustees agreed to formally make admission free as part of the Strategic Plan adopted in 1998, and that is considered a core part of the Museum's mission today. With intention and planning, the Museum has deepened its commitment to inclusion. That means collecting works of art with an expanded inclusivity, stronger partnerships with community organizations, and listening to community members, partly through soliciting memories and impressions about the Museum. Housing The Spencer Art Reference Library, a major art research library, and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum also stands as a key educational resource for the region.

You can read more about the Museum and its impressive collection, representing the depths and complexities of the human experience, [here](#).

### Mission and Values

Rooted in the belief that art has the ability to uplift, surprise, challenge, connect, and transform, the Museum gives expression not only to distant cultures and times, but also immediate voices and issues, and provides avenues for exploring the world, past and present, and for informing our shared future. The Museum is guided by [three core strategies](#):

**Welcoming All People:** The Museum welcomes all people and offers many different paths for its community members to experience art. Doing so requires that onsite and virtual experiences are open, accessible, and easy to navigate. By offering fresh ways for guests to enjoy and interact with art, they will be inspired to return to the Museum and virtual sites again and again with a renewed sense of curiosity.

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**Learning from the Community:** The Museum seeks to learn from the diverse communities that make up their audiences, staff, and trustees, from the immediate neighborhoods surrounding them to the global art world. Located in the geographical heart of Kansas City, the Museum reciprocally invests in the city's arts and cultural communities, fostering collaborations and artistic vibrancy. Through intentional listening and learning from the greater Kansas City community, the museum can become more welcoming, more meaningful, and more relevant to all.

**Ensuring the Museum's Future:** The Museum is committed to building an informed and invested group of staff, volunteers, and trustees who are dedicated to the Museum's future through shared values and open, direct, and respectful communication. The Museum's future is deeply intertwined with that of Kansas City and will succeed only when the surrounding communities thrive through mutual investment, strengthening existing partnerships, and building new ones.

### **Current and Future Context**

Now nearly nine decades have passed since the museum opened to the public. Because of the care and support of many people through the years, the Nelson-Atkins is home to nearly 50,000 works of art, with a campus that includes the original Nelson-Atkins Building, the Bloch Building expansion that opened in 2007, and the stunning Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park.

Recognizing the vital role the Museum plays in the community and in the arts world, the Museum's board decided to embark on a bold campus transformation and capital campaign to more fully serve all Kansas Citians by expanding their facilities. The expansion, funded solely through private philanthropy, will provide more spaces to welcome larger crowds, new galleries to showcase immersive art and the Museum's globally recognized collections, and even greater opportunities attending programs and making connections on the Museum's beautiful campus. Welcoming entrances, intuitive pathways, and drop-in art making spaces will prioritize ease, openness, and accessibility. With these changes, patrons will not just interact with the arts as viewers, but as participants as well. To ensure the transformation is impactful to museumgoers for generations to come, the redesigned museum spaces will be sustainable and built to adapt and grow as the needs and interests of the community change. Beyond energy-efficient spaces and smart design, this project signals a bright future for the Museum — one that offers free general admission to creativity, joy, and cultural connections into perpetuity.

You can read more about the expansion, its scope, and the Museum's roadmap for change [here](#).

### **Leadership and Governance**

#### **Julián Zugazagoitia | Director & Chief Executive Officer**

In 2010, Dr. Julián Zugazagoitia became the 5<sup>th</sup> Director & Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Zugazagoitia has been a prominent figure in the art world for decades and is known for his high-energy leadership, art connoisseurship and community spirit. Born and raised in Mexico City, educated at the Sorbonne and the École du Louvre in France, Zugazagoitia has worked at institutions like UNESCO, The

Getty Conservation Institute, The Guggenheim Museum and Museo del Barrio in the Americas, Europe, and Africa. Zugazagoitia has served as Chair of the Warhol Foundation, as President and Board Member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, and was recently elevated to Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres Medal by the French Ministry of Culture and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2025.

Following the 2020 pandemic, Zugazagoitia's stewardship allowed the Nelson-Atkins to become one of the few US museums, reported by The Art Newspaper, to quickly welcome visitors back, achieving 77% of the 2019 visitor number in a matter of months. The museum has since attracted an even more diverse audience, enjoyed solidly growing attendance, and maintained a strong focus on the core of its strategic plan.

Zugazagoitia also launched a major initiative to collaborate with local artists and showcase and celebrate creativity and diversity, all while pursuing many successful collaborations with other nonprofits, corporations, and fellow art museums. He has overseen critically acclaimed exhibitions with international partners such as Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky with Musée du quai Branly, Paris and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and Alberto Giacometti: Toward the Ultimate Figure with the Foundation Giacometti in Paris, which had a national tour.

### **The Board of Trustees**

The Museum is overseen by the Nelson Gallery Foundation [Board of Trustees](#), who are responsible for the overall governance of the organization, the advancement of its mission, and its deep connection to the cultural fabric of Kansas City. The Board currently comprises 28 corporate and civic leaders within the city, and includes five executive officers, a Chair, two Vice Chairs, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Many members of the Board provide in-depth financial expertise from their various sectors.

### **Finances**

Given that the Museum does not charge admission, they are dependent on other funding sources such as a strong endowment, fundraising and philanthropy, and other earned revenue sources. For FY24 – 25, Museum operations were in excess of \$39 million, 27.9% from fundraising and grants, 10% from membership dues, 17.9% from earned revenues, 3.7% from miscellaneous income sources and 40.5% from endowment support. The museum had net assets approaching \$600m with endowment funds valued at roughly \$400m and has successfully achieved a balanced budget for over 15 years running.

You can find the Museum's most recent audited financial statement [here](#).

## **ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

The Vice President and Chief Financial Officer is a key member of the Museum's [leadership team](#) and serves as The CFO serves as a strategic partner to the CEO and leadership team, overseeing all financial operations and ensuring long-term fiscal health and sustainability. They lead a team of five, including a

Director of Operations Accounting, a Director of Investment Accounting, an AP Specialist, an AR Specialist, and a Division Coordinator, and are responsible for overseeing all fiscal and fiduciary responsibilities of the Museum, including financial strategy, thoughtful stewardship of assets, operational excellence, clean audits, and long-term institutional sustainability. The CFO is a proactive leader, steering organizational development and ensuring the overall financial health of the Museum by outlining fiscal priorities, framing financial decisions within the scope of the Museum's mission, implementing sound business strategies and operational procedures, and managing change. The CFO will create multi-year financial plans and will be open minded around possible new sources of revenue. With a highly consultative approach, the CFO serves on the Museum's Strategic Leadership Group, works in close collaboration with the Executive Vice President and Vice President of Development, and serves as a liaison to the Finance, Audit, and Investment Board committees. The CFO is a highly strategic leader, supporting the Museum's and Director/CEO's future operational and creative visions while balancing market volatility.

In this role, the CFO will focus on several key priorities to support the Museum's continued growth and long-term sustainability:

- Spearheading the annual budgeting process in collaboration with the CEO and Strategic Leadership Group
- Lead financial strategy and planning for the Museum's capital expansion and campaign execution
- Strengthen long-range financial modeling to support strategic decision-making and institutional sustainability
- Partner closely with Development, Earned Revenue, and senior leadership to refine and advance sustainable revenue strategies
- Assess and enhance financial systems, processes, and reporting capabilities to support scale and efficiency
- Evaluate endowment performance and spending strategy in alignment with long-term financial goals and market conditions
- Build strong relationships with the Board and key committees, ensuring clear, transparent financial communication and governance
- Oversee all short and long-term debt management, including bond issuance as part of the capital campaign

Other essential functions of the CFO include:

- **Fiscal Health & Sustainability:** Responsible for providing transparent financial information, planning, advice, and direction that underpins the realization of ambitious institutional and departmental plans. Helps determine how best to leverage space and services for additional revenue.
- **Financial Leadership:** Provides counsel for decisions affecting museum finances, organizational structure, management and reputation. Ensures that all financial aspects of the Museum are in alignment with overall objectives and reflect the museum's core values, including bond and debt management.

- **Economic Modeling:** Working with the Director/CEO, develops, maintains, and revises an organizational business model which will inform decisions on the maintenance and expansion of the museum's operations and mission, including capital campaigns.
- **Financial Planning & Analysis:** Institutes rigorous, best-in-class processes in financial planning and analysis, cost management process improvement, metrics and policy changes to ensure the museum stays current in strategic and financial matters.
- **Staff Management & Development:** Responsible for hiring, performance management, coaching, succession planning, and general management of department staff ensuring direct reports have the tools, resources, and support to be successful in their roles. Ensures the finance team has clarity and communication around current and future strategy and is deeply connected to the Museum's mission. Provides opportunities for development (training) and holds each accountable for their performance.
- **Division Management:** Establishes departmental policies and procedures and maintains the division's high-productivity standard. Continually evaluates systems and technology for improvements and proposes solutions that deliver excellent outcomes. Develops and measures department's activity with real-time data and identifies priorities for growth and efficiencies while delivering a balanced budget.
- **Financial Operations Management:** Oversees all accounts, ledgers, and reporting systems, ensuring compliance with appropriate GAAP regulatory requirements and maintains internal control safeguards and coordinates all audit activities. Manages cash flow and forecasting.
- **Budget Strategy & Oversight:** As a partner to the Director/CEO and divisional leaders, assesses organizational performance against both the annual budget and the Museum's long-term strategy. Oversees budgeting and the implementation of budgets to monitor progress and present financial metrics both internally and externally. Presents the annual budget to the Board.
- **Audit:** Oversees the annual audit process and the production of the audited financial statements. Communicate with and report to the BOT and relevant subcommittees regarding the annual audit, federal and state tax forms and quarterly financial updates ensuring information is shared in a way that is appropriate for the audience. In partnership with the board, regularly review and evaluate proposals from auditing firms.
- **Board Committee Strategy:** Engages the board finance, audit, and investment committees around issues, trends, and changes in the operating model(s) and operational delivery. Assists in establishing yearly objectives and meeting agendas, and selecting and engaging outside consultants (auditors, investment advisors).
- **Endowment:** Monitors performance and stewardship of the museum's endowment in partnership with Cambridge Associates, keeping with the policies and investment guidelines established by the investment committee.
- **Stewardship of Assets:** Ensures secure custody of the Museum's financial assets, including cash, short-term investments, and long-term investments. Works with the Museum's professional investment managers and investment committee to ensure that long-term investments are

maintained consistently with the policies of the Board of Trustees, and monitors compliance with endowment management and spending policies.

- **Management of Liabilities:** Oversees the maintenance of long-term tax-exempt debt and related correspondence and reporting. Provides current projections of funds available to secure debt repayment. Oversees the generation of analysis supporting decisions for changes in the make-up of debt or expansion of the debt portfolio.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

### Required Experience

- Senior financial leadership experience in complex organizations
- Experience in financial planning and budgeting
- Experience with endowments or investment assets
- Experience working with non-profit boards
- Experience leading teams

### Preferred Experience

- Nonprofit or cultural institution experience
- Capital projects or campaign experience
- Fund accounting familiarity
- CPA or MBA

### Leadership Profile

- Strategic and enterprise mindset
- Collaborative and relationship-oriented
- Strong communicator of financial concepts
- Effective team leader
- High integrity and judgment
- Adaptable and change-oriented
- Strong analytical capability
- Commitment to mission and inclusion

## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The compensation for this role is expected to be \$220,000–\$250,000. Salary information is a general guideline only. The Museum considers factors such as (but not limited to) scope and responsibilities of the position, candidate’s work experience, education/training, key skills, internal peer equity, as well as market and business considerations when extending an offer.

The position is located in Kansas City, Missouri. The demands on the role necessitate a commitment to being a consistent physical presence at the Museum and may require occasional work night, weekends, and holidays.

A metropolitan city with a population of about two million people, Kansas City is an intersection of arts, culture, innovation, and imagination. The city's ideal location in the heart of the country makes it a thriving national hub for arts and culture and has the distinction of being one of the top ten cities with the most green space per capita. The city is composed of several neighborhoods, including the River Market District in the north, the 18th and Vine District in the east, and the Country Club Plaza in the south. Celebrated cultural traditions include Kansas City jazz; theater, as a center of the Vaudevillian Orpheum circuit in the 1920s; the Chiefs, Royals, Sporting KC, and KC Current professional sports franchises; and famous cuisine based on Kansas City-style barbeque, Kansas City strip steak and craft breweries. The Huffington Post ranked Kansas City as the most exciting "it" city in the United States, and it is often described as one of America's most "livable" cities, thanks to its parks, fountains, attractive neighborhoods, and affordable cost of living. Some of the major companies headquartered in the Kansas City region include AMC, American Century, Burns & McDonnell, Garmin International, H&R Block, Hallmark Cards, Russell Stover, and T-Mobile. Kansas City is a center of ambition, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking, where civic leaders like to explain life is focused on "Less pretense, more passion. Less ego, more effort. Less imitation, more innovation."

## 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 [linked here](#).

Lindsay Gold, Partner  
Sarah James, Partner and Arts and Culture Practice Lead  
Angelo Alexander, Senior Associate  
Julia Hochner, Managing Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

### *Commitment to Inclusion*

*The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for all. The Museum seeks to build a team that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves and encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.*

### *Equal Opportunity Employer*

*The Museum is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status.*

*For individuals with disabilities who would like to request an accommodation, please contact Angelo Alexander at [aalexander@imsearch.com](mailto:aalexander@imsearch.com)*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only.*

*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by the Museum would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*