



Executive Artistic Director  
Artists Association of Nantucket  
Nantucket, Massachusetts

## THE SEARCH

For eighty years, the [Artists Association of Nantucket](#) (AAN) has been the island's indispensable creative institution—the place where a fledgling postwar art colony became a cultural powerhouse, where Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder once spoke, where the Whitney and the Metropolitan Museum once lent their finest works, and where today more than 250 member artists exhibit, teach, and create.

Now AAN stands at one of the most exciting inflection points in its history. A major [gallery renovation](#) on Federal Street is underway, a capital campaign is building momentum, and the Board is poised to invest in the next era of programming, exhibitions, collection stewardship, and community impact. The organization needs a leader equal to the moment.

The Artists Association of Nantucket seeks a visionary, entrepreneurial, and emotionally intelligent leader to serve as its next Executive Artistic Director (EAD), the chief executive responsible for advancing AAN's artistic mission, ensuring financial sustainability, and overseeing daily operations. Reporting to a deeply engaged Board of Directors, the EAD will partner with staff, artists, donors, and community constituents to write the next chapter of an organization whose influence extends well beyond its island home.

The ideal candidate will bring a compelling blend of artistic sensibility and organizational acumen—a leader equally comfortable championing emerging artists and managing a complex budget, equally at ease cultivating major donors and curating gallery exhibitions. Above all, the next EAD will be someone who understands that the arts are not a luxury but a vital force that defines community, sparks economic vitality, and preserves cultural heritage for future generations.

The Artists Association of Nantucket has retained Jack Gorman of Isaacson Miller, a global executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## NANTUCKET: A SINGULAR SETTING

Thirty miles off the coast of Cape Cod, Nantucket is a place of uncommon beauty and deep cultural heritage. Its cobblestone streets, historic architecture, and dramatic seascapes have drawn artists for more than a century—from the waterfront painters of the 1920s art colony to today's thriving creative community. Designated as a National Historic Landmark, the island is home to a prosperous, civically engaged, and philanthropically generous year-round and seasonal population.

For the right leader, this is not merely a professional opportunity but an invitation to live and work in one of America's most iconic cultural landscapes—an island where the arts are woven into the fabric of daily life and where an organization like AAN is not just valued but essential.

## THE ARTISTS ASSOCIATION OF NANTUCKET

Founded in 1945 by a devoted circle of artists and patrons determined to keep Nantucket's art colony alive after the island's sole gallery closed, AAN has grown into a dynamic nonprofit cultural organization that is the beating heart of the visual arts on Nantucket. What began as a single gallery in a converted whaling-era warehouse on Straight Wharf has evolved into a multi-venue, year-round institution serving artists and audiences of every generation.

In its earliest years, AAN set remarkably high standards—hosting loan exhibitions from the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and welcoming guest speakers of the caliber of Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder. That founding ambition endures today in an organization that operates a downtown gallery, a gallery within a purpose-built Visual Arts Center, and a nationally recognized permanent collection.

### Institutional Highlights

- **Permanent Collection.** AAN's museum-quality collection numbers nearly 1,700 works documenting a century of Nantucket's art colony—from the waterfront painters of the 1920s to artists of today. It is an irreplaceable cultural asset and a living archive of island creativity.
- **Gallery Program.** The newly renovated Cecelia Joyce & Seward Johnson Gallery at 8 Federal Street presents a year-round calendar of member exhibitions, featured-artist shows, demonstrations, lectures, auctions, and community events. AAN artists are also featured in numerous storefronts and businesses.
- **Visual Arts Center.** Completed in 2015 at 24 Amelia Drive, the Center houses the Champion Gallery, classrooms, studio spaces, and administrative offices—a hub for creative education and artistic production.
- **Education & Youth Programs.** AAN delivers year-round classes and workshops for children and adults across media, including painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, and mixed media. A

robust summer youth camp program serves artists ages 4 to 14, and an Artist-in-Residence program brings visiting professionals to enrich the community.

- **Artist Membership.** With nearly 250 artist members, AAN represents the breadth and depth of Nantucket’s creative community—from emerging talent to master artists—and provides exhibition opportunities, professional development, and collegial connection.

AAN occupies a unique position within Nantucket’s cultural ecosystem. It is the only gallery on the island that exclusively showcases work by island residents, and it plays a critical role in the broader Nantucket Cultural District. The organization is well supported by a dedicated donor base, a capable staff led by a seasoned Development Director, and a Board committed to the institution’s long-term vitality.

### Finance and Budget

AAN operates with a diversified and resilient financial model combining earned revenue, philanthropy, event-driven fundraising, and local and state grants. The organization’s operating budget is approximately \$2.5 million annually, reflecting meaningful growth from its 2024 performance of \$1.75 million in operating revenue, which generated a surplus of \$214,000.

Revenue is notably balanced across several core streams:

Revenue Source	Approximate Share
Special events & fundraising	~40%
Art sales	25–30%
Contributions & grants	~15%
Education programs	10–15%
Membership & other income	5–10%

On the expense side, AAN maintains disciplined cost management aligned with programmatic priorities. Personnel costs represent approximately 45 percent of expenses, followed by art commissions (15–20 percent), special events (15 percent), facilities and occupancy (5 percent), and other program and operating costs.

AAN maintains a strong balance sheet with total net assets of approximately \$5.7 million, including \$915,000 in cash and equivalents and \$1.57 million in investments—reflecting strong liquidity, minimal liabilities, and meaningful reserves for long-term sustainability.

Strategic financial opportunities for the next Executive Artistic Director include expanding major gifts and institutional philanthropy, reducing reliance on event-driven revenue, strengthening data-driven gallery sales strategies, growing education-program revenue, and aligning fundraising more directly with mission priorities and capital investments.

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## EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Executive Artistic Director is the organization's senior leader, responsible for the full spectrum of institutional management. The role balances artistic stewardship with business management, fundraising leadership with community engagement, and strategic vision with operational discipline. Principal areas of responsibility include:

### **Organizational Leadership & Strategy**

- Lead the development and execution of AAN's strategic plan, translating mission and vision into actionable goals and measurable outcomes.
- Identify growth opportunities, strategic partnerships, and new revenue streams.
- Serve as primary steward of organizational culture and values; ensure legal, ethical, and policy compliance.

### **Artistic Vision & Program Oversight**

- Set and advance AAN's artistic direction across exhibitions, education, and community programming.
- Ensure programs align with mission, audience needs, and community impact; evaluate and strengthen quality and accessibility.
- Oversee stewardship of the Permanent Collection—actively assessing, acquiring, and exhibiting works to preserve and grow this irreplaceable cultural asset.

### **Advancement**

- In partnership with an accomplished director of development, serve as the organization's principal relationship-builder and fundraiser with major donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors, bringing the passion, energy, and social intelligence necessary to secure major gifts.

### **Financial Management**

- Develop and manage the annual operating budget; oversee financial planning, forecasting, and reporting.
- Ensure strong fiscal controls, transparency, and compliance; balance earned and contributed revenue.

### **Board Relations & Governance**

- Serve as primary liaison to the Board of Directors, support board recruitment, engagement, and governance.
- Provide regular performance, financial, and strategic updates.

### **Staff & Operations Management**

- Foster a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and results.
- Recruit, supervise, and develop senior staff, resulting in a collaborative, high-performing workplace.
- Ensure the staffing plan provides year-round stability and increased capacity during high season.
- Oversee operations across marketing, production, development, and administration; establish systems and best practices.
- Evolve adult and youth programming, including artist talks, panel workshops, and the faculty-in-residence program.

### **Marketing Communications & Community Engagement**

- Serve as the public face and spokesperson for AAN, representing the organization at key events and in the media.
- Build relationships with community partners, schools, and civic leaders; strengthen brand visibility and audience reach.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The Board of Directors seeks a dynamic, resourceful, and perceptive leader whose career reflects a deep commitment to the visual arts and to the power of arts organizations to transform communities.

The strongest candidates will combine artistic credibility with genuine business acumen, creative passion, and operational rigor. While no single candidate will possess every attribute listed below, the strongest contenders will demonstrate a compelling combination of the following:

### **Professional Experience**

- Five to ten years of progressively responsible leadership in arts, nonprofit, or cultural organizations; experience in the visual arts is ideal.
- A demonstrated record of fundraising success encompassing major gifts, institutional grants, and corporate sponsorships, with the sophistication to navigate a competitive philanthropic environment.
- Experience developing and managing operating budgets, with comfort in financial forecasting, reporting, and resource allocation.
- A track record of recruiting, developing, and retaining high-performing teams, with sensitivity to the staffing challenges inherent in an island community.
- Experience overseeing or contributing to a capital project or building renovation.

## Leadership Qualities & Abilities

- Artistic credibility and curatorial instinct. A leader whose judgment and taste earn the respect of artists, collectors, and cultural peers—someone who can thoughtfully steward a permanent collection of nearly 1,700 works, shape an exhibition calendar, and champion emerging voices. A knowledgeable, passionate advocate who genuinely supports and develops artists.
- Fundraising acumen and donor gravitas. Comfort and confidence engaging high-net-worth individuals, foundation officers, and corporate partners. The ability to make a compelling case for support and to cultivate lasting philanthropic relationships, along with the social and political intelligence required to secure major gifts in a competitive philanthropic landscape.
- Strategic thinking with operational discipline. The capacity to see around corners and anticipate opportunity, paired with a “general contractor” mentality—the rigor to keep a major renovation on schedule and on budget while simultaneously advancing the capital campaign and day-to-day programming.
- Community builder and ambassador. A natural connector who thrives on relationships—with artists, board members, civic leaders, educators, and patrons—and who can serve as an eloquent, passionate public face for AAN. A proficient public speaker capable of addressing a wide range of audiences.
- Collaborative and resilient team leader. A manager who empowers staff, trusts expertise, and fosters a workplace culture of transparency, mutual respect, and shared purpose. Constituents stressed the importance of emotional intelligence and resilience after a period of organizational transition.
- Entrepreneurial spirit. Willingness to innovate, test new models, and pursue creative revenue strategies while honoring AAN’s legacy and mission.
- Pragmatic and adaptive mindset to address the ebb and flow of a year-round community with dramatic seasonal changes in population and tourism.

## COMPENSATION

The Artists Association of Nantucket offers a competitive compensation package commensurate with experience, including a generous benefits package with health insurance and paid vacation.

The annual all-in compensation range for this position is \$175,000-\$200,000. Except for roles with a set rate of pay, the wage/salary of the finalist selected for this role will be set based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to departmental budgets, qualifications, experience, education, licenses, specialty, and training. The stated hiring rate/range represents the Artists Association of Nantucket’s good faith and reasonable estimate of the rate/range of possible compensation at the time of posting.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

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

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/artists-association-nantucket/executive-artistic-director>

Jack Gorman, Partner  
Elizabeth Neustaedter, Principal  
Lisa Clayton, Managing Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*AAN is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Artists Association of Nantucket. 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 Artists Association of Nantucket would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*