



An invitation to apply for the position of  
**Chief Financial Officer**  
**Chautauqua, New York (hybrid or remote possible)**

**The Search**

As Chautauqua Institution (Chautauqua) approaches its sesquicentennial in 2024 and undertakes an exciting and transformational new strategic plan, the organization seeks a strategic and experienced financial leader to serve as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO). As a member of the President's Executive Team, reporting to the Executive Vice President, the CFO will oversee a budget of \$45 million and a team of three and serve as a key architect of strategic financial planning and management in the furtherance of Chautauqua's mission, vision, and financial health.

A truly unique and dynamic institution, Chautauqua is a not-for-profit global convener of dialogue on the most significant issues of the day through engagement across four pillars - the arts, education, religion, and recreation. Chautauqua Institution is located on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in Southwestern New York State and comes alive each summer with a unique mix of visual and performing arts, lectures, interfaith worship/programs, and recreational activities. In 2019 the Institution passed a strategic plan, [150 Forward](#), that endeavors to expand its reach to year-round programming and to harness its brand for continuous impact. In 2020, as a major step forward in that effort, the Institution launched engaging online programming with lectures and performances year-round, offering participants the opportunity to engage in community and learning both on- and off-season.

The CFO will play a critical role as a member of the President's Executive Team, advising Chautauqua leadership and leading initiatives that will ensure the Chautauqua community's long-term financial sustainability at a moment of exciting organizational transformation. The successful CFO will have significant experience as a senior leader in a finance and accounting environment, with preference given to candidates who have led all financial planning and analysis functions, including annual operating budget, capital budget, strategic financial planning, and resource allocation/controls processes. In addition to excellent financial planning and analysis skills, the CFO must be a strong relationship builder and possess the ability to communicate effectively with all levels and across all divisions in the organization. The successful candidate will have an appreciation of the mission-driven aspect of a nonprofit organization, experience in planning and implementing the financial transformation of an institution, possess a unique

combination of analytical ability, effective speaking and writing skills, and a genuine interest in the life of the mind and maximizing human potential.

Chautauqua has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the identification and selection of this new leader. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

### **Role of the Chief Financial Officer**

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) oversees and leads the teams and functions of accounting, finance, and financial services. The CFO serves as a key architect of financial planning strategy, a convener of ideas, and a trusted business partner providing proactive business insights, process and systems improvements, and sound financial guidance to the President, EVP, and extended leadership team.

The CFO is responsible for short- and long-term financial planning across the Institution, and its wholly-owned for-profit subsidiary, the Chautauqua Hotel Company. This includes the annual operating budget and planning process, forecasting, strategic multi-year financial planning, and variance analysis. They will collaborate cross-functionally to compile and monitor the budget and financial plans, pioneer technology solutions and processes to develop financial analysis forecasts, model reports to inform annual decision-making, and delivery on organizational strategy. The CFO will serve as a member of executive management and provide considered advisement to management for evaluating strategic and economic implications of new and existing business opportunities and initiatives. Additionally, the CFO will present financials and other vital information to the Board of Trustees and associated Committees; staff the Budget & Finance and Audit Committees of the Board of Trustees, and attend and support all other committees and work groups, as required or needed. In particular, the CFO will provide executive leadership over accounting and financial reporting; strategic financial planning and analysis; treasury, investments, and credit; audit and risk, and management.

In 2023 Chautauqua will transition to a new Enterprise Resource System (ERP), and the CFO will have the opportunity to leverage their experience to capably manage financial budgeting and planning functions. Working with the team, they will ensure the structures supporting strategic decision-making are effective and efficient, the proper training is in place to make the budget process transparent and accessible to all in the organization, stakeholders are invested in the process, and the Institution achieves its goals. The CFO will help craft a robust system leveraged to both provide basic financial information and satisfy the needs of the Institution.

The Chief Financial Officer will be empowered and expected to address the following **Key Opportunities and Challenges**:

### ***Build Upon the Institution's Strategic Financial Planning and Analysis Functions***

The CFO will be responsible for leading and managing the annual budget process for the Institution, aligning financial policies and systems to support Chautauqua's strategy, mission, and vision in the short- and long-term, and developing resource allocation tools and processes that support strategic priorities. The CFO will also:

- Ensure long-term financial planning and annual operating plans work in concert and are embedded in the organization's operations.
- Lead and manage a budgeting system that is aligned with strategy and resource planning cycles; and that is user-friendly, flexible, and supportive of the needs of budget managers while creating strong stewardship, financial planning, and accountability.
- Maximize the new ERP, develop robust systems and collaborative processes for financial forecasting, and support forecasting needs with appropriate tools, training, and communications.
- Identify areas of opportunity to ensure the efficient and optimal use of Chautauqua's resources, providing strategic support to the Board in key resource use and allocation policies.
- Ensure technically sound financial analysis for support of financial decision-making throughout the Institution.
- Ensure appropriate Trustee engagement in the development and approval of the annual budget.
- Ensure that business development opportunities are fully supported by robust financial systems.
- Guide implementation of relevant cost metrics and provide overall support to initiatives in managing efficient and competitive operating cost structures.

### ***Skillfully Lead the Institution's Accounting and Financial Reporting Functions***

The CFO will ensure that Chautauqua's financial reporting systems and processes are effective and robust in providing timely, accurate, and actionable financial reporting to assist staff, executives, and the Board in managing their financial duties. Additionally, the CFO will:

- Manage and further develop accounting systems, policies, processes, and procedures that ensure strong financial and internal control, flexible support to programs, and strong stewardship of resources, including optimal recovery of costs from donors.
- Ensure adequate planning for the medium- and long-term effectiveness of financial systems, utilizing department-specific financial models, key performance indicators (KPI), and dashboards to provide business leaders and managers with regular insight into their operations and financial decisions.
- Prepare and manage the monthly financial forecast, including Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities, and Statement of Cash flows, review financial results, and provide clear analysis and proactive communication of the organization's financial performance to the executive team and pertinent committees of the Board.

- Provide authoritative counsel on proper accounting principles and practices, structure financial systems to be compliant with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), donor regulations, local and federal government requirements, and the expectations and needs of other critical stakeholders.

### ***Expertly Lead the Institution's Treasury, Investments, and Credit Functions***

The CFO will develop and implement investment policies that support high performance and appropriate risk management, providing strong support to the Audit and Budget & Finance Committees of the Board. The CFO will ensure that banking policies and systems provide appropriate liquidity, cost efficiency, service quality, risk management, and internal control. The CFO will also:

- Build upon existing policies and systems that optimize the management of working capital.
- Utilize technology in banking and payment systems to increase reliability, productivity, and control.
- Ensure the receipt of high-quality and cost-effective services in all relationships with financial institutions.

### ***Maintain Excellent Audit and Risk Management on Behalf of the Institution***

The CFO will identify, analyze, and mitigate uncertainty or risk in Institution systems, services, or processes. The CFO will coordinate and apply resources in a cost-effective manner to minimize, monitor, and control the likelihood or impact of unfortunate events; or to maximize the realization of opportunities. Additionally, the CFO will:

- Manage, further develop, and implement a framework that supports the accomplishment of the institution's strategy, coordinates risk identification and management on an organization-wide basis, and ensures robust ownership and management of strategic risks.
- Manage and further develop policies, tools, and processes that support a strong culture of internal control across the organization.
- Coordinate the processes to support consistent oversight and management of risk and to enhance policies and tools for risk management.
- Oversee regular risk assessments and provide appropriate reporting to the Audit Committee of the Board.
- Ensure the timely implementation of all audit recommendations and closure of audit findings.

### ***Qualifications and Characteristics***

The CFO should have at least seven years of experience as a senior leader in a finance and accounting environment with preference given to candidates who have led all financial planning and analysis functions, including annual operating budget, capital budget, strategic financial planning, and resource allocation/controls processes. Experience with change management and ERP implementation is beneficial.

A bachelor's degree in Finance, Accounting, or a related field, and the ability to apply learning to key principles of finance is required; a Master of Business Administration and Certified Public Accountant credentialing are preferred.

An outstanding leader of people with a successful record of building, motivating, and leading high-performing teams and organizations in the process of transformational change, the CFO should be comfortable in a setting where creativity and leveraging resources are essential and where they can shine as a terrific operational and administrative representative of Chautauqua with effective speaking and writing skills. In addition to excellent financial planning and analysis skills, the CFO must be a strong relationship builder and possess the ability to communicate effectively with all levels in the organization. The successful candidate will possess a unique combination of analytical ability along with a genuine interest in maximizing human potential.

The CFO must be proficient in spreadsheet, word processing, and presentation software applications. Experience using Oracle NetSuite Software in Financial Operations is also preferred.

### ***Skills and Abilities***

- **Business and financial acumen** for budgeting and financial planning/analysis.
- **Technical savvy** in the administration of financial management and accounting software solutions.
- **Systems thinking** to understand reporting and data relationships within multiple software systems.
- **Logic and reasoning** to order data to apply rules, combine data points, arrange data, and find patterns to extract relevant information and apply that information to strategies for successful operations.
- **Problem-solving capabilities** to identify financial problems, use critical thinking, logic, reasoning, and relevant information to evaluate options, and develop appropriate, effective solutions.
- **Relationship-building expertise** to provide cross-functional leadership and support across interworking teams at Chautauqua Institution and Chautauqua Hotel Company.
- **Consultative and collaborative** approach to process, procedure, and problem-resolution in teams.
- **Project management capabilities** and skills to navigate multiple projects, full cycle, simultaneously.

- **Self-starter who will be a strategic partner** focused on work that builds a foundation of process and procedure, accomplishes routine responsibilities, plans for the future, and meets goals.
- **Political savvy** to tactfully navigate complex circumstances, make recommendations, and resolve problems with an independent judgment that is consistent with the culture, ethics, best practice, policy, procedure, industry regulation, and federal and state law.
- **A life-long learner** who is eager to maintain professional and technical knowledge and use this learning to mentor a team through educational workshops, reviewing publications, establishing networks, participating in relevant professional organizations, and attending conferences.
- **Personal integrity and ethics** when dealing with highly confidential and sensitive financial information.

### ***Location and Compensation***

This is a permanent, full-time position with a starting salary range of \$150,000-\$180,000. This position will be based ideally in Chautauqua Institution's home office in Southwestern New York State or its Washington, DC office. However, Chautauqua is open to discussions around a remote or hybrid working arrangement.

### ***Inquiries, Applications, and Nominations***

Confidential inquiries, referrals, and applications may be directed electronically and in confidence to Jacqueline Mildner, Partner, and Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate, at:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/chautauqua-institution/chief-financial-officer>

*Chautauqua Institution is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and actively works to enhance its diversity.*

Select key information follows in the appendix. You are also encouraged to learn more about [Chautauqua Institution](#) online and view the [150 Forward Strategic Plan](#).

## APPENDIX

### **Chautauqua Institution**

In a time of universal longing for better and deeper civil discourse in America, the mission of Chautauqua Institution to *explore the best in human values and the enrichment of life* could not be more important or urgent. Chautauqua aspires to create an informed, engaged and renewed public that fosters and actively contributes to a more civil society, nationally and within the various communities represented by its stakeholders and partners. The Institution's unique approach to engagement seeks to expand each person's capacity for understanding themselves and who they are in relation to the world. As a convener, Chautauqua brings together individuals and communities—both in person and online—to build bridges and encourage dialogue that is essential to moving our national conversation forward.

Founded in 1874 in Western New York, Chautauqua is many things: a vibrant, multigenerational community, and a powerful sense of place; a platform, on and off its grounds, for leading speakers and artists and for intellectual and spiritual inquiry; and a special place for recreation, reflection, relaxation, family and fun. The Institution offers a time-tested model for lifelong learning, blending the arts, education, religion and recreation. It is a place and a movement that fulfills a yearning for social and intellectual connection and civil discourse. Chautauqua fuses these elements into a community unlike any other. Every summer assembly season, families, friends and those who journey in various other configurations gather to partake in a vast menu of opportunities to form a Chautauqua vacation experience tailored to each person's particular interests. First-class performances, thought-provoking educational programs, inspiring interfaith and faith-based experiences and unique community-wide events invite visitors to engage on their own or with family and friends. The stunningly beautiful, nature-rich lakeside setting is amplified through historic and contemporary art and architecture, modern recreational amenities and an eclectic array of quiet places to relax. First-time and lifelong visitors alike re-enter the world outside of Chautauqua uniquely renewed and inspired. There is little wonder that this remarkable institution has stood the test of time since 1874, and that its four pillars resonate to the current day.

Throughout its history, Chautauqua has also transcended its geographic boundaries and its seasonal focus. Whether through the founding of its Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) —one of the first expressions of correspondence education in the United States and one of the few avenues open to women to acquire a liberal education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century —or special convenings that offered a multi-year expression of citizen-to-citizen engagement, Chautauqua has asked the important questions and has found a unique expression through which to seek answers.

The Institution prioritizes making Chautauqua a more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible experience for all. IDEA work is a cross-cutting imperative of the 10-year strategic plan approved by Chautauqua's Board of Trustees in May 2019. The [plan](#) emphasizes the importance of IDEA

work in calling it and other imperatives “important organizational capabilities needed to achieve Chautauqua’s mission.”

At this time in the Institution’s history, there is intense need to create pathways to civil discourse in our nation through community dialogue. This need beckons Chautauqua to pursue renewed expressions of its mission using its unparalleled ability to convene, build bridges, establish communities and encourage deeper intergenerational dialogue around some of America’s most pressing issues. Were Chautauqua a summer resort, a religious retreat or a commercial venture, its contribution to the quality of public discourse might matter less. But Chautauqua is so much more, and it always has been. Accordingly, it is not enough for the Institution to attend to issues in isolation. Chautauqua has an opportunity—perhaps even an obligation—to leverage the power of its speaking, preaching and artistic platforms to extend conversations beyond the summer assembly season and its grounds. The Institution’s legacy empowers and compels it to reach new audiences and to model and co-create successful and impactful pathways to civil dialogue for individuals and society.

Work has already begun to transform Chautauqua’s iconic platforms into springboards for ideas leading toward solutions. Today, beyond the idyllic setting of the Institution, Chautauqua creates opportunities to participate online and outside of the summer assembly season, with dynamic online engagement platforms and pre- and post-assembly programming on and off the grounds. The 2019 strategic plan calls for advancing these capabilities to extend dialogue to diverse local, regional and national communities. No matter if they are gatherings in neighborhoods, town halls, houses of worship, public institutions or national stages, Chautauqua will leverage its convening power to engage individuals in robust conversation that informs, enlightens and promotes active citizenship. Harnessing the power of strategic partnerships, the Institution will expand its expertise, invite diverse perspectives and engage broader audiences in conversation. Known for its quintessential community setting that has inspired so many for nearly 150 years, Chautauqua also has an opportunity to use its grounds outside of the summer assembly season to convene individuals and organizations seeking inspiration, solutions and resolutions. A new Washington, D.C. office opened in 2018 to allow the Institution to play an ongoing role in the cultural conversations of the nation and to allow for more expansive opportunities for talent recruitment and retention.

Chautauqua’s nine-week summer assembly season is built upon weekly themes that most programming, including performances, lectures, classes and sermons, revolves around. Themes for the upcoming [2023 season](#): On Friendship; Games: A Celebration of Our Most Human Pastime; Can the Center Hold? – A Question for Our Moment; The State of Believing; Infrastructure: Building and Maintaining the Physical, Social and Civic Underpinnings of Society; A Life of Literature; The National Parks: How American’s ‘Best Idea’ is Meeting 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Challenges; Freedom of Expression, Imagination, and the Resilience of Democracy; and The Global South: Expanding the Scope of Geopolitical Understanding.



In 2020, the organization launched CHQ Assembly, a digital collective that allows for year-round engagement. Beginning in September 2020, the Institution began convening regular conversations with existing and new programs and is beta testing signature programs including a 10-day residency on the grounds and broadcasting on CHQ Assembly with noted jazz icon Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Septet. This is the beginning of more year-round programs of national and international consequence.

### ***Staff Capacity and Finances***

Chautauqua experiences varying staff numbers throughout the year, with approximately 140 full-time, year-round staff. During the nine-week summer assembly, staff numbers typically grow to around 1,200. The executive team is comprised of eleven, including the President and ten other executives: Executive Vice President; Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer; Senior Vice President and Chief Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Officer; The Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education; Vice President of Performing and Visual Arts; Vice President of Religion; Senior Vice President and Chief Brand Officer; Senior Vice President of Community Relations and General Counsel; Vice President of Campus Planning and Operations; Senior Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer; and Vice President of Advancement & Campaign Director.

The Institution's 2022 operating budget was almost \$45 million.

### ***Leadership and Governance***

**Chautauqua Institution's Board of Trustees** is the principal governing body of the Institution. The Board consists of 24 members, four of whom are elected by the Chautauqua Corporation (all property owners are members of the Corporation) and the balance of whom are nominated and elected by the Board itself. The Board is organized into seven committees. Three committees — Budget & Finance, Marketing & Brand Strategy, and the Architectural Review Board — address annual operating issues, and four committees — Executive, Audit, Human Resources & Compensation and Nominating & Governance — provide oversight for core administrative areas of responsibility. In addition, there exists a Development Council that consists of, among others, four trustees and a like number of Chautauqua Foundation directors. The Chautauqua Foundation is an entity separate from the Institution with its own board that oversees the Institution's endowment. The Development Council is the principal point of interface between the Institution and the Foundation to address considerations surrounding the philanthropic resources necessary to carry out the Institution's long-term strategic plans.

**President Michael E. Hill** became the 18th President of Chautauqua in 2017 and immediately set about ushering in a fresh, expanded vision for the Institution as it approaches its sesquicentennial in 2024. President Hill's tenure has emphasized building the Institution's brand and thought leadership with a focus on expanding civil dialogue in the nation, an evolution to year-round programming and engagement beyond Chautauqua's physical grounds. During his tenure,

President Hill has overseen the approval and implementation of a new strategic plan; the successful completion of the \$42 million Chautauqua Amphitheater project; the appointments of a new generation of Institution leaders in key strategic areas; the launch of CHQ Assembly and an expansion of the Institution's engagement efforts within the Chautauqua community, with its regional neighbors and partners, and with national partners.

**Total Rewards for Our Talent:**

Chautauqua Institution's competitive compensation and a benefits suite that includes health insurance with [Blue Cross Blue Shield](#), flexible spend (or health savings) account options, dental and vision insurance, complimentary life insurance, wellness incentives, and fitness options, an employee assistance program, and supplemental life insurance and long-term disability options. The Institution supports planning for retirement through a discretionary employer pension contribution, which has recently been (10%) of gross compensation following a designated service period.

**Discovering Your Chautauqua Experience:**

There are countless ways that our talent will engage with our mission, vision, and diverse communities, and you are invited to immerse yourself in our programming as a gateway to this experience. Employees will receive a traditional Chautauqua gate pass, free of cost, which provides access to many of our programs at the Amphitheater. In addition to a traditional gate pass, employees and their families will receive full access to our current and historical programs online at [CHQ Assembly](#).

**Our Commitment to IDEA:**

Chautauqua Institution values Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility ([IDEA](#)) as a priority in our strategic plan, 150 Forward. One of our five core values is "The dignity and contributions of all people." We are committed to creating conditions in which everyone feels that they can engage as full and valued participants in the Chautauqua experience. The Institution is an equal-opportunity employer committed to equitable and inclusive hiring practices and applicants will not be discriminated against based on any status protected under federal, state, or local law. We especially welcome applications from those who can demonstrate experience, engagement, and professional expertise in IDEA.