



Search for the Chief Programming and Engagement Officer  
Pittsburgh Cultural Trust  
Pittsburgh, PA

## THE SEARCH

Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (PCT or the Trust), one of the nation's premier arts presenters and a major catalytic influence in the city of Pittsburgh, seeks a chief programming and engagement officer (CPEO). Founded in 1984, the Trust presents an array of quality performing and visual arts, provides comprehensive educational experiences, and stewards Pittsburgh's Cultural District as a national model of economic revitalization through the arts. Lauded as "the single greatest creative force in Pittsburgh," the Trust has worked to make the Steel City a place where the arts can flourish.

The Trust and the 14-block Cultural District it administers have successfully created a vibrant center for culture, art, food, and community in downtown Pittsburgh and provide a home for a broad range of performance groups and numerous resident companies. Approximately 2 million people visit the Cultural District each year to enjoy over 1,500 world-class performing arts events and visual arts exhibitions, generating an estimated economic impact of \$303 million. The Trust employs 130 full-time and between 400 and 500 part-time staff, and its FY2023 revenue totals \$62 million. The Trust also manages 1.2 million square feet of real estate and provides core support services to its multiple partner organizations in the District. The Trust represents a unique model of how public-private partnerships can reinvent a city with authenticity, innovation, and creativity.

Reporting to the president and chief executive officer, and in partnership with peers on the senior leadership team and staff, the CPEO will strategically and innovatively reimagine and strengthen programming at the Trust, leading the arts education, strategic partnerships, and community engagement teams. They will implement intentional programming and understand how to plan for and execute a successful season. The CPEO will also be data-driven as they think about future programming to meet financial and artistic goals and promote collegiality and collaboration across the teams they oversee. At this inflection point, they will take advantage of the Trust's exciting momentum as its profile continues to grow regionally and nationally, and champion the arts to broad and diverse communities with the goal of bringing more people to the Cultural District. In essence, the CPEO will be a creative, innovative, strategic,

and impactful leader who will contribute to the Trust's goal to "enrich the city of Pittsburgh's vibrancy, diversity, and prosperity."

Pittsburgh Cultural Trust has retained Isaacson, Miller, a leading national executive search firm, to assist with this recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications in the form of a CV and cover letter should be sent in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT THE TRUST**

### **History**

After several decades of deindustrialization and economic decline, Pittsburgh began to transform in the 1980s and '90s into a hub for healthcare, education, technology, and the arts. Much of this development, Pittsburgh's "third renaissance," can be traced to H.J. "Jack" Heinz II, CEO of the H.J. Heinz Company and co-founder of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Mr. Heinz envisioned a colossal transformation that would turn Pittsburgh into a thriving center of world-class art and entertainment. His vision was two-fold: the arts could catalyze economic, commercial, and residential development of downtown Pittsburgh while also enriching the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. When other U.S. cities abandoned their respective downtowns for strip malls and big box stores, Pittsburgh preserved its historical significance and became a national model of urban redevelopment through the arts, largely thanks to the leadership of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust.

### **The Trust Today**

Today, the Trust is a unique, complex, and multifaceted nonprofit that presents diverse artistic and educational programming, manages downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, and collaborates with and supports affiliated arts organizations in the community. The Trust is also one of downtown Pittsburgh's largest property owners. This was accomplished through its purchase and renovation of numerous historic theaters, construction of new performance venues, acquisition of smaller arts organizations needing support, development of urban parks and riverfront recreation spaces, and tactical purchases of numerous empty downtown storefronts to preserve them and ensure their future development.

### *Programming*

The Trust presents an array of arts programming, including dance, musical theater, live music of every genre, cinema, magic shows, comedy shows, and more; with over 500 performances scheduled in 2024, PCT expects over 330,000 people to attend. To complement its mainstage presentations, the Trust produces a number of [festivals](#) to celebrate the performing arts in its many forms, often in unique places and spaces, serving an additional 350,000 – 400,000 people annually. The Trust also celebrates the [visual arts](#) and operates four galleries showcasing a rotating schedule of contemporary art exhibitions by regional, national, and international artists and maintains an expansive program of outdoor public art

installations. In summary, PCT's programming impacts the millions of people who visit the Cultural District to expand their horizons each year. For more information about Trust's programming and calendar of events, please see [here](#).

### *Arts Education*

The Trust's [Arts Education](#) Department cultivates a vibrant arts community by increasing equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities that inspire creativity, foster personal growth, and promote cultural appreciation for learners of all ages and backgrounds. A sample of programs includes performances, residency programs, school workshops, pre-professional training, public programming, and more. The department also manages education programs in the Trust Arts Education Center located in downtown Pittsburgh. In 2023, over 1,400 teachers and about 23,000 students from more than 110 early childhood and Kindergarten-12 schools were engaged in PCT educational programs.

### *Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement*

PCT's Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement Department (SP&CE) was established in 2015. Prior to this time, the department's efforts were incorporated into the work of the former Education and Engagement Department of the Trust. The newly formed SP&CE department was created to provide more focus on partnership and engagement efforts and is responsible for developing relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships with community leaders, community organizations, the artistic community, and other key stakeholders. New program initiatives under "Trust in Community" were launched in 2024, which include community conversations where touring artists are invited to visit select community partners and organizations to discuss their shows and experiences and participate in a lively Q&A, and community classes where touring artists lead classes in their respective fields with community groups and organizations to further expand access to the arts. PCT also launched the Carnegie Hall-developed program "Lullaby Project," which aims to build community and family connections through the composition of original lullabies for newborns.

### *Pittsburgh Cultural District*

The Cultural District spans 14 square blocks in downtown Pittsburgh and is one of the country's largest land masses "curated" by a single nonprofit arts organization. Pittsburgh diverges from other cities that house cultural activity within a single performing arts center. Instead, the Cultural District features an array of world-class theaters, engaging art galleries, inspiring public parks and art installations, riverfront recreation spaces, renowned restaurants, and diverse retail stores. These spaces are home to live entertainment, contemporary music, modern dance, visual art, theater, classical music, opera, ballet, popular musical theater, film, and more. Some of this programming is presented by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust itself and some by other organizations that call the District home, including the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Symphony, and the August Wilson African American Cultural Center. The District is also home to the city's High School

for Creative and Performing Arts. For a list of the Trust's properties, venues, and programming divisions, please see [here](#).

### *Shared Services*

The Trust is a world leader in collaboration among arts organizations. Through its Shared Services department, the Trust increases efficiencies and decreases costs for Cultural District member organizations. Shared Services projects include bulk purchases of office essentials, pooled negotiation of healthcare benefits, District-wide program book production and sales, a shared arts marketing database, strategic joint marketing efforts, and finance and human resources support. Shared Services is housed within the Trust but is recognized as an association for Pennsylvania legal purposes. Its seven members are the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Symphony, August Wilson African American Cultural Center, and the Trust.

### *Tessitura*

The Trust holds the master license for [Tessitura](#), a shared customer relationship management and ticketing system. Tessitura is used by the seven organizations within Shared Services, as well as five other arts organizations in the area. The Pittsburgh installation of Tessitura generates \$125 million in transactions each year and is the world's largest multi-organization user of the platform.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS**

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Trust's FY2023 operating revenue totals \$62 million, its operating expenses total \$62 million, and its assets total \$220 million. Seventy-five percent of the Trust's operating revenue is earned, while 25 percent is derived from fundraising. The Trust manages 1.3 million square feet of real estate and is one of the largest property owners in downtown Pittsburgh.

The Trust employs 130 full-time and between 400 and 500 part-time [staff](#) and is supported by a committed group of over 500 volunteers. The Trust works with five unions representing the following groups: stagehands, operating engineers, ticket sellers, wardrobe, and wigs and makeup. Twenty-three of the Trust's staff are required by union contract.

PCT is led by a dynamic leadership team, and the chief programming and engagement officer will report to the president and CEO. The CPEO will oversee the programming (four FTEs), arts education (six FTEs, 30+ teaching artists), and strategic partnerships and engagement (two FTEs, one PTE) teams and will manage a budget of \$28 million and a total team of 13.

The Trust is governed by a 52-member board of trustees, of which 39 are term trustees. The board chairs of the Cultural District member organizations and the mayor, city council president, and county executive

are *ex officio* members. The board meets five times a year, while the executive committee of the board meets six times a year. The Trust is also supported by several advisory boards without fiduciary responsibility. For more information on the Trust's boards, please see [here](#).

## LEADERSHIP

In early 2023, distinguished arts and culture leader Kendra Whitlock Ingram assumed the presidency of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust from long-time leader J. Kevin McMahon, who had served as president of the organization for over 20 years. Prior to her arrival at the Trust, Ingram served as the executive director of the Newman Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Denver, vice president of programming and Education at the Omaha Performing Arts Center, and most recently as the president and CEO of Milwaukee's Marcus Performing Arts Center, a nonprofit arts presenter quite similar in mission to the Trust. Ingram, who is biracial and Black, is the first person of color to hold the president and CEO position at the Trust.

## RECENT STRATEGY

Ingram took the helm of an organization that, for nearly forty years, has played a central role in revitalizing Pittsburgh, improving the regional economy, and enhancing the city's quality of life. While the Trust has enjoyed decades of growth and prosperity, it has recently grappled with challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. When it was impossible to hold in-person performances, the Trust went through a period of financial difficulties and was forced to furlough staff, challenges that many arts organizations across the country faced. Fortunately, the Trust has made a tremendous recovery in the years since and has largely returned to its pre-pandemic strength. The Trust also recently completed a three-year comprehensive capital campaign that was successful in raising \$175 million.

The Trust was recently guided by its 2021-2023 strategic plan. Key priorities included attracting new audiences and regaining audiences lost during the pandemic; deepening visitor engagement; continuing to enhance the infrastructure, aesthetics, accessibility, and economic development of the Cultural District; presenting and supporting inclusive, approachable, and diverse programming; minimizing the number of dark nights in District venues; continuing to collaborate closely with resident companies, artists, arts organizations, government, tourist organizations, and businesses; maintaining financial sustainability despite a decrease in earned revenue; engaging and investing in board and staff; and promoting innovation and the values of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) across all aspects of the Trust. Under Ingram's leadership, the Trust will continue to build on these strategic goals. It will be particularly attentive to enhancing financial sustainability, continuing to recover from the pandemic, and creatively responding to generational shifts in audience interests.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CPEO**

The chief programming and engagement officer will be responsible for building on the Trust's success with programming and charting a path forward, overseeing and working collaboratively with the arts education and strategic partnerships and community engagement teams. Given this overarching charge, the primary opportunities and challenges for the next CPEO include the following:

### ***Reimagine and strengthen programming at the Trust***

Across the country, arts and presenting organizations are being called upon to build the future landscape of the performing and visual arts. PCT has a stellar reputation, and the next CPEO must build on the Trust's legacy while simultaneously invigorating the organization with strategic and forward-looking programming. To do this, the CPEO will stay abreast of artistic conversations as they evolve and adapt their vision to emergent practices and trends as relevant and appropriate and execute with distinction. While programming at the Trust has been successful, there is a need for debriefing and processing the overall portfolio to inform future steps. As such, the CPEO will be expected to lead the conversation on intentionally developing and presenting programs each year and connecting that to the overall work of the Trust. A successful vision will position the presenting, education, and engagement programs for increased audience engagement and financial growth, as well as increased regional and national acclaim. Most importantly, the CPEO will need to work collaboratively with various constituencies to develop broad support for this vision and then align resources – human, physical, and financial – to execute that vision.

### ***Program strategic, relevant, and successful seasons***

Over the years, PCT has become known for its compelling and diverse programming and has built a loyal audience that includes longtime subscribers and single-ticket buyers. While programs have continued to draw a robust audience, there are increasingly more options for audiences in the region. As such, the next CPEO must create a unique value proposition for PCT that both contributes to and augments existing regional offerings. The CPEO must also sustain and even enhance the quality and diversity of programming across all of PCT's venues. To do so, it is important for the CPEO to develop enduring relationships with artists, ensembles, organizations, and institutions around the world that are pioneering in their fields and whose work speaks and contributes to the Trust's conversations and priorities. They will need to be data-driven to tap into the wants of both new and existing audiences. It will also be essential to assess the optimal number of performances per season to balance the cadence of programming with the demands on staff capacity.

### ***Strengthen and expand ties to the community***

Throughout its history, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust has played a leading role in the community, serving as a vital voice for access to and appreciation of the performing and visual arts. The next CPEO will situate the organization, socially and culturally, at the center of activities throughout the Greater Pittsburgh

community. With opportunities to tie programming more closely with engagement and education, they will think about the people the Trust serves and encourage innovative outreach practices with an eye toward diversity, equity, and inclusion; essentially, the needs of the community should and will inform future programming. The CPEO must also quickly work to establish the relationships and credibility required to be recognized as a cultural leader in the community, as they will act as the connective tissue between the Trust and the greater Pittsburgh community, proactively reaching out and connecting visiting artists with education and engagement opportunities. Equally important, the CPEO will serve as a compelling spokesperson, advocating and announcing the impact of the PCT's work on a local, regional, national, and international stage.

***Ensure financial and operational sustainability***

The CPEO is expected to display the necessary business skills in working with agents, handling negotiations, projecting revenues, managing budgets, and overseeing the complex logistics that go into planning and staging a season. In concert with colleagues across the Trust, the next CPEO must continue to strengthen ticket sales, seek to align artistic goals and financial requirements, use data to inform future programming, and identify and pursue new sources of revenue.

***Foster a collaborative, performance-driven environment and invest in staff development***

The CPEO will position the Trust to attract and retain dedicated, skilled, and diverse staff at every level. They will invest in a broad range of supports for staff and implement a plan for staff career and leadership development and succession planning across the organization. A change-management leader, the CPEO will be intentional about building teams, improving organizational collaboration and community, dismantling silos, and fostering a results-oriented, accountable, and agile environment for all staff.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The next CPEO will bring many of the following qualifications, professional experiences, and personal attributes:

- Passion for and commitment to the arts and its role in enriching urban vibrancy and prosperity.
- A deep understanding of and experience with performing arts presenting and PAC organizations, arts programming, arts education and community initiatives, and the complexity of planning and executing successful seasons.
- Successful, senior level experience in the business of performing arts presenting, including agency relationships, contract negotiations, deal structures, performance marketing, and a working knowledge of technical theatre requirements.
- Demonstrated understanding of production presentation techniques and trends across multiple genres, venues, and indoor and outdoor locations.

- A sophisticated negotiator of contracts, including Broadway and commercial events, thoroughly familiar with commercial practices and deal points. Deep connections and relationships with the major agents and agencies in the commercial and non-profit presenting world.
- Proven experience with dismantling silos and promoting a collaborative environment.
- A decisive leader who can tie different areas together and confidently oversee their day-to-day decisions.
- Understands the balance of an artistic mission-based product and the importance of revenue-generating programming.
- Demonstrated success leading within a large, complex, decentralized organization; experience assessing processes and systems in place, and stewarding successful organizational change.
- Expertise in translating a vision and strategy into a practical plan, with concrete implementation methods and measures of anticipated outcomes.
- Ability to partner with an enterprising president and CEO, an experienced senior staff, and a deeply committed board and community.
- Record of success as a people-centered leader and manager who recognizes and relies on their staff's areas of expertise; believes that good ideas can come from anywhere and effectively motivates, engages, and inspires teams of people.
- Personal and professional commitment to and experience meaningfully advancing diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and cultural competence within an organization; understands and is aware of the current social, cultural, and political environment and the impact it may have on diverse communities.
- Highly developed analytical skills, with the ability to drive effective use of data and an understanding of fiscal planning, reporting, and budgeting.
- Experience with using both quantitative and qualitative metrics to measure programs, efforts, and initiatives to inform future programming.
- Excellent interpersonal and collaboration skills, including the ability to gather a wide variety of input from diverse constituencies and communicate difficult decisions in ways that contribute to a strong and united community.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.

## **COMPENSATION AND LOCATION**

Salary range: \$190,000 - \$220,000

Location: Residing within daily commutable distance of Pittsburgh is essential. Relocation support will be provided if necessary.

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

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



website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/pittsburgh-cultural-trust/chief-programming-and-engagement-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is an equal-opportunity employer. All applicants are considered for employment without attention to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, veteran, or disability status.*