

THE AFRICA CENTER

Search for the Chief Executive Officer, The Africa Center Harlem, New York

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Africa Center seeks an inspirational, trailblazing, and operational executive leader to serve as its next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to drive its mission of transforming the world's understanding of Africa, its Diaspora, and the impact of the people of African descent on the world. The CEO will work in close partnership with the Board of Directors and a lean, dedicated staff to secure and steward external resources, execute the strategic plan, build out a site and up an organization, take new actions to renew profitability and connect African communities in the United States with the continent. This new leader will have expertise in driving institutional strategy and repositioning an organization, and they must be able to inspire and coalesce diverse stakeholders toward common goals. The next CEO must be a successful fundraiser able to navigate the complexities of New York City and bring a proven ability to raise and diversify philanthropic sources and funding streams. The next CEO must also be a strong fiscal, operational, and personnel manager who can build sustainable structures that ensure the future success and longevity of the Center. As a highly visible and accessible leader with gravitas, an entrepreneurial spirit, and compassion, the CEO will craft and amplify a compelling narrative that builds community around a place of gathering to celebrate African innovation across business, culture, and policy. The Africa Center is located in Aliko Dangote Hall at One Museum Mile on Fifth Avenue in Harlem, New York.

Since 2018, The Africa Center has focused on five thematic areas – diaspora, media and representation, cultural expression, climate, and technology – while growing a local and international audience as it builds its flagship Fifth Avenue headquarters in phases. These themes capture elements of the currently dynamic world and areas where the continent could greatly impact and benefit. Today, The Africa Center (TAC or the Center) serves as the hub for the exchange of ideas around culture, business, and policy related to the continent. The Center advances thought and action around Africa's global influence and impact on collective and shared futures in collaboration and engagement with individuals and institutions with shared values.

The Africa Center works to transform the understanding of the world's oldest continent, which also boasts its youngest population. Encompassing culture, policy, and business, the Center will operate locally and globally to transform the perception and impact of the continent by promoting partnership, collaboration, and dialogue between Africa and the United States and beyond. The Center will host visual, performing, and digital arts presentations; develop and disseminate innovative educational tools; convene focused, thoughtful peer-to-peer exchanges; and sponsor innovative policy research. The Center is both a home and a platform providing a community for people of African descent and those interested in Africa, in addition to a global stage showcasing African ingenuity and talent.

THE AFRICA CENTER TODAY

Serving as the hub for the exchange of ideas related to the continent, the Center inspires enthusiasm, advances thought, and empowers action around Africa's global impact on our collective futures.

Founded in 1984, The Africa Center, formerly known as the Center for African Art and then the Museum for African Art, is dedicated to raising awareness and appreciation of African art, culture, policy, business, and more through exhibitions and education programs. Originally located in the Upper East Side, TAC's most recent physical presence on Fifth Avenue at the intersection of Harlem and the Museum Mile is a location that embodies the dynamism and diversity of Africa and its Diaspora in the heart of New York City. Caples Jefferson Architects (CJA) was engaged in 2016 to design the facility, responding to the Center's ethos as an experimental, inclusive institution fostering exchange locally and globally.

The Africa Center's work is premised on the idea that this emerging market of one billion people is inescapably relevant to building a prosperous and secure future for the world. Africa encompasses a huge land mass but a small population in relation to its size, and it possesses great natural resources, only surpassed by its enormous human potential. These unique dynamics place Africa at the center of global discourse, and the Center will serve as the platform and hub for this discussion, focusing programs on three broad areas of engagement: culture, policy, and business.

Programs

Culture

The Africa Center at Aliko Dangote Hall is a home for exhibitions, performances, and presentations of visual, performing, and digital art from Africa. It is a space in which the continent speaks for itself, a platform for the most compelling contemporary art content from the continent. In its first six years of interdisciplinary programming, the Center presented a myriad of projects, spanning the fields of visual arts, literature, music, and performance, all with a focus on showcasing the volumes of talent from the diaspora and continent to a local New York City and global audience. The Center has garnered major recognition, including awards and critical accolades. Working in collaboration with innovative curators and partner institutions, the Center has grown as a hub for new and innovative representation of the global African experience. The Center also produces free children's and family arts programming during the Museum Mile Festival and other special occasions.

Policy

The Africa Center's policy initiatives focus on fostering a deeper understanding of the complex issues that define the continent and its diaspora to a broader public through dialogue and research. TAC's robust and dynamic signature public programs, like The Future Africa Forum staged annually during the United Nations General Assembly, have brought together heads of state, senior government officials, business leaders, cultural visionaries, academic luminaries, and other prominent figures in African and global civil society for dialogue around the direction of the continent and its diaspora. Furthermore, TAC has spearheaded numerous groundbreaking policy papers and research projects in areas such as the intersection of policy and culture, media and representation, and climate. Moving forward, the Center will focus its policy programming on the African Diaspora and its growing international impact.

Business

Through its programming, The Africa Center aspires to help the private sector in the United States understand and navigate the dynamic and distinct business and economic climates of African countries. TAC will give African entrepreneurs exposure to New York's private sector, help potential partners find each other, share best practices, and explore how private enterprise can help drive transformational developments on the continent. The Africa Center seeks a constant dialogue among these lines of effort to build a more holistic understanding of contemporary Africa and maximize the potential for inspiration and innovative new partnerships. Learn more: <https://www.theafricacenter.org/programs/>

Leadership

The Center's mission is guided by the Board of Trustees, including Board Co-Chairs Chelsea Clinton and Jendayi Frazer and Board President Halima Aliko Dangote. The CEO works collaboratively with the Board of Trustees to develop an overall policy for the organization and, importantly, to set and implement a strategic direction that is mission-aligned. The CEO assures the flow of information and support to the Board and coordinates with the Co-Chairs and Committee Chairs on internal and external issues affecting The Africa Center. The CEO works with the Board to attract and develop new Board members.

Financial Information

The Center's current annual operating budget is approximately \$2.5 million. The Africa Center owns its 70,000 square feet Fifth Avenue venue, Aliko Dangote Hall. It is planning the next phase of a major capital campaign of \$20 million to make more space available for public programming and partnerships.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION

The next Chief Executive Officer will have the opportunity to build on a strong legacy and advance the work of this dynamic institution by prioritizing the success and vitality of connections between the African continent and the diaspora. The CEO is responsible for building attendance and ensuring programmatic relevance, developing and monitoring the budget, and for long-term sustainability by leading fundraising and financial planning. In partnership with the Board, the CEO ensures the organization's financial health. Staffing is currently aligned across six (6) functional areas: Programs, Policy, Communications, Development, Finance and Operations, and Construction Management. Policy, the newest department, was introduced at the close of fiscal year 2022. The CEO has oversight of a staff of nine (six full-time and three part-time) and directly supervises the interim Chief of Staff, Associate Director of Exhibitions, Associate Director of Policy, Grants and Development Manager, Controller, Facilities Manager, and Executive Assistant. Driven by the CEO's institutional vision, the team executes strategies and systems to advance TAC's programs, operates a brick-and-mortar hub in a prime New York City location that bridges the African community in the U.S. to their heritage on the continent, builds institutional partnerships, and generates essential resources. Furthermore, in taking on the role, the CEO will:

Increase external financial resources by deepening and expanding relations: The CEO functions as a key frontline fundraiser and major gift solicitor for TAC, either independently or in conjunction with Board members. Ideally, the candidate will have knowledge and experience in the competitive fundraising market of New York City or another comparable in complexity. The CEO will ensure the Center operates

with a high degree of creativity, efficiency, ethics, and financial integrity and in compliance with all applicable federal and local government mandates. The CEO has oversight of TAC's fundraising goals, including its general operations, programmatic support, and capital campaign. Responsibilities include meeting development goals, maintaining relationships with existing donors and identifying new donors, leading a capital campaign through construction, overseeing the team leading these efforts, and increasing financial stability and sustainability by creating healthy cash flow and adequate reserves. Over the past six years, The Center has raised over \$40 million in funding from individuals, major corporations, prominent foundations, and city, state, and federal government.

Oversee development and execution of robust organizational programming: The CEO will inspire innovative programming to maintain the Center's growing momentum and impact through the phased expansion of The Africa Center's flagship Fifth Avenue home. The CEO will empower the programming team to market multidisciplinary programmatic content with cohesion to the Center's mission.

Ensure high integrity in mission alignment: All programming and statements emanating from the Center, in close collaboration with the Board, will grow a diaspora-focused, publicly engaged institution characterized by a compelling narrative, strong programming, and partnership opportunities that deepen understanding and expand community passionate about Africa's impact on the broader world.

Be an effective Board liaison: Work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees to set and implement a mission-driven strategic direction and develop policies for the organization and board governance. The CEO assures the flow of information and support to the Board and coordinates with the Co-Chairs and Committee Chairs on internal and external issues affecting The Africa Center. The CEO also works with the Board to attract and develop new Board members.

Serve as a chief representative of the Center: The ability to serve as a persuasive, charismatic, and powerful spokesperson and raise the visibility of the Center is key. The CEO furthers the organization's image and works to increase its public recognition and brand locally, statewide, and regionally for fundraising and branding purposes and to further the vision and mission. The candidate should be astute politically with strong interpersonal, diplomatic, motivational, and management skills commensurate with TAC's current partners.

Manage and develop a talented and effective staff: The CEO has ultimate responsibility for the leadership of a devoted staff and will possess strong management skills and experience with a multi-functional organization and a demonstrated collaborative and flexible work style. They will develop and execute a plan to sustainably build the staffing and institutional capacity. They will ensure the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the staff so that TAC operates as a cohesive, collaborative, integrated, and motivated entity.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Demonstrate a belief and passion for the mission of the Center and ability to propel it forward.
- An entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, and the ability to translate that energy into a compelling place, program, and funding opportunity.

- Smart financial and strategic decision-making evidenced in a successful track record as a fundraiser from individuals and institutions.
- Experience identifying new sources of funding from foundations, corporations, investors, and/or individual donors, and a successful track record of securing those resources through relationship-building and nurturing.
- Demonstrated leadership in the nonprofit and/or corporate sector with evidence of initiative and an administrative track record that can translate ideas into successful initiatives supported by informed organizational processes and responsive infrastructure.
- A proven ability to attract, recruit, retain, and develop a talented staff.
- Decisive, driven, compassionate, collaborative, nonhierarchical, and informed, with an ability to dream big, build incrementally, and execute intelligently.
- Possesses a credible connection to the Continent with relevant experience navigating in NYC.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and the flexibility to interact authentically and effectively across the spectrum from world leaders to young families with equal ease.
- A bachelor's degree is required; a graduate degree is strongly desired.
- Must be authorized to work in the United States.

WORK SCHEDULE/TRAVEL

TAC offers a hybrid working environment with three days on-site and two days remote each week. Domestic and international travel will be necessary. Travel includes visits to donors and prospects, world leaders, corporate headquarters, etc. Local travel includes meetings, dinners, and work-site visits at TAC, where the use of required safety equipment (e.g., hard hat) and adherence to safety regulations and procedures is mandatory (especially during project Capital Construction).

COMPENSATION

An attractive compensation package with a starting salary of **\$200,000** will be offered to the successful candidate.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The Africa Center has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications electronically and in confidence to:

Sarah James, Tiffany Weber, Iliana Gonzalez, and Siobhan Hanley
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/africa-center/chief-executive-officer>

The Africa Center provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics.