



## Executive Director, City of Asylum

### About Us:

City of Asylum creates a thriving community for writers, readers, and neighbors. We provide sanctuary to endangered literary writers, so that the writers can continue to write and their voices are not silenced. And we offer a broad range of free literary, arts, and humanities programs in a community setting to build social equity through cultural exchange. We anchor neighborhood economic development by transforming blighted properties into homes for our programs.

The cumulative effect of attendance on audience--hearing multiple stories and being able to ask and hear questions from others--is what we believe creates the empathy that is a precondition for change and reduces inequality, whether rooted in race, class, gender, ability, or ethnicity. We measure outcomes to support this social concern.

Our annual operating budget is currently \$1.1 million and is projected to grow to \$1.45 million in 2021. We have 10 full-time employees, 6 part-time employees, and 80 volunteers. Approximately 40% of our income is contributed, with the balance foundation and government grants. We also operate commercial subsidiaries.

We have re-developed over \$12.5 million of property, beginning with 6 row houses used as residences for our programs and culminating in January 2017 with redevelopment of the long-abandoned Masonic Building--a \$10.7 mixed use project that the Urban Redevelopment Authority called the "most deeply fundamental" project in Pittsburgh to its goals. It includes 8 rental units (2 affordable) and Alphabet City, our home.

Alphabet City has spaces for performances and workshops, our offices, a bookstore (with 10,000 new books and used books) and a destination quality restaurant (est. revenues \$1.5 million in 2018). The project won the 2016 Urban Land Institute's Award for Excellence, Best Community Place.

We do important work locally, nationally, and globally. Founded in the fall of 2004, we have now had visiting artists from over 70 countries. Our international peers now deem us "the model for what a City of Asylum can be...expanding the idea of what is possible." And our neighbors credit us with breaking down barriers of race, gender, and class in our community.

We have been awarded significant grants for our creative placemaking from several national foundations, ArtPlace America, and the NEA and for social entrepreneurship.

### Key programs

- Our core program is our Writer Sanctuary Program. It provides writers (and their families) exiled under threat of persecution with long term assistance, including a rent-free house.
- We present over 150 free programs per year in Alphabet City: Readings, jazz, films, and our annual Jazz Poetry Month.

Web sites: [cityofasylum.org](http://cityofasylum.org) / [alphabetcity.org](http://alphabetcity.org)



**To apply:** Please send resume and cover letter explaining why you feel you will be successful in the position to [ED@cityofasylumpittsburgh.org](mailto:ED@cityofasylumpittsburgh.org)

*We are committed to diversity and support of artists.  
Applications and inquiries will be treated confidentially.*

## **Job Description, Executive Director**

The Executive Director of City of Asylum will be taking over from the co-founders, who have directed the organization since 2004. This transition has been long-planned, as the next step to follow the successful development of our new \$10.7 million Alphabet City facility and the expansion of our programming.

We seek a leader who is committed to defending, celebrating, and building a community valuing creative free expression, who can address the day-to-day challenges with entrepreneurial energy and imagination.

External leadership in relationship-building with funders, media, donors, writers and artists, and programming partners is a key role of our Executive Director. The range of our activities is unusually diverse for an organization of our size, so the capacity to identify areas of personal strength and to delegate effectively is important.

**The Executive Director is primarily responsible for the following:**

### **Leadership, Vision, and Management**

- Assures City of Asylum imaginatively achieves our mission and maintains our values, which are rooted in the idea of hospitality.
- Creatively evolves our organization.
- Leads and manages staff: Direct reports include managers for external relations, marketing, finance, and programs.
- Assures that City of Asylum refreshes and achieves its strategic plan and its business/capitalization plan.
- Seeks opportunities for collaboration in programming.
- Maintains and supports a high-performing and passionate Board of Directors.
- Provides leadership in developing organizational, programmatic, and financial plans with the Board of Directors and carries out plans and policies authorized by the Board.
- Is willing to change and is opportunistic.



### Revenue Generation and Community Relations

- Builds ongoing relationships with philanthropic foundations, individual donors and corporate sponsors, community and cultural organizations, and political leaders.
- Conceptualizes and edits grant proposals.
- Is imaginative in using our assets to grow earned income.
- Is our primary media contact and represents us to the public.

### Programming

- Continues to grow our residency and presenting programs so that they are best-in-class and in the aggregate serve as national and international models.
- Assures that our audiences are representative of the entire community and that our programs increase empathy and understanding.
- Uses technology to integrate global partners into our programs, to remove barriers of distance, language, and cost.

### Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- A successful track record of success in key responsibilities.
- Working style that is transparent, encouraging, and collaborative.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills; a persuasive and passionate communicator with strong public speaking ability.
- Commitment to and passion for mission.
- Pluses: multi-lingual, international experience or experience in minority communities, creative network.

### Compensation

This position offers a competitive compensation and a traditional benefits package found with other nonprofit organizations of similar size, scope, and scale. Option of a rent-free house.

### How to Apply

Please send resume and cover letter explaining why you feel you will be successful in the position to [ED@cityofasylumpittsburgh.org](mailto:ED@cityofasylumpittsburgh.org) .

### Non-discrimination Policy

City of Asylum Pittsburgh is committed to results-oriented management aimed at achieving equal employment opportunity and shall apply good faith efforts to seek out, employ, train, and promote women and minority group members.