



Buffalo String Works Seeks Executive Director

About Buffalo String Works

Since its inception in September 2014, [Buffalo String Works](#) (BSW) has been a dynamic force in empowering personal and community leadership through the transformative power of accessible, youth-centered music education. Picture a journey that began with offering violin lessons to a humble group of 17 students, guided by a dedicated team of 4 teachers and 3 teaching assistants. Fast forward ten remarkable years, and BSW has blossomed into a musical haven, now providing lessons in violin, viola, cello, and bass to a thriving community of 160 students.

BSW goes beyond the conventional boundaries of music education. It recognizes and champions music as a universal language, elevating the voices of its students and parents. In doing so, BSW is not just a music school; it's a creative home for refugee, immigrant, and historically marginalized youth. The organization fervently believes in cultivating youth to become leaders and catalysts for social change.

BSW has carved out a permanent space on Niagara Street in Buffalo, serving as a vibrant hub for artistic expression. Beyond its home base, BSW has extended its impact to two school-based programs at the Primary Hall Charter School and NativityMiguel Middle School.

Steering its vision for the future, BSW is guided by a strategic plan anchored in four pillars. The organization is committed to:

- adapting and expanding its core neighborhood-based program into new communities;
- forging program partnerships that create musical access points for a diverse range of ages, abilities, and backgrounds;
- investing in the development of its staff, faculty, and board leadership in alignment with core values and culture; and
- fortifying and diversifying the financial model to sustain long-term growth.

Within the vibrant city of Buffalo, BSW boasts a permanent [staff of thirteen](#), including the pivotal Executive Director role, and a dynamic group of experienced teaching artists. Raised from a variety of funding sources, the organization operates with an annual budget of approximately \$1 million and is overseen by a 10-member Board of Directors comprised of community and business leaders, as well as musicians. You can learn more about BSW by accessing its annual report [here](#).

About the Transition

Since its founding, BSW was very well-led by its Executive Director and co-founder, [Yuki Numata Resnick](#), who stepped down in a planned transition in March 2023. BSW is currently being shepherded by Interim Executive Director, Maria Ta, who will remain in her position until a new, permanent Executive Director is hired.

Opportunity Going Forward

The Executive Director will have the opportunity to lead a thriving, empathetic, and highly interpersonal educational nonprofit committed to access, equity, inclusion, and belonging. In collaboration with a

dedicated, experienced, and cohesive staff and a cadre of the highest quality teaching artists, the Executive Director will expand BSW impact through program growth, partnership expansion, staff development, and organizational sustainability. High priorities for the Executive Director include:

- As the organization's first permanent, external successor to its founder-leader, ensuring that existing and strong relationships with donors and partners are transitioned, maintained, and grown.
- Serving as a primary professional fundraiser for BSW, working closely with the development team and the board to execute a comprehensive development plan that leverages prior successes to secure additional support from new and existing sources.
- Networking regularly with community leaders, funders, partners, and families to communicate BSW's value and impact on its students, families, and Buffalo's community of refugees and immigrants.
- Empowering a team of highly skilled, experienced, committed, and mission-driven professionals to maximize their input, encourage creative, organization-wide problem solving, and to distribute decision making downward in an organization where the founding leader historically owned decision making.
- Championing relentlessly BSW's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in its work culture, programming, partnerships, and overall support of its families and students.
- Aligning BSW's growth ambitions with realistic capacity and resource strategies while also embarking on strategic planning in the wake of the current plan's completion in 2024.
- Working collaboratively with the board of directors to create a supportive, mutually beneficial relationship that advances BSW's mission and vision.

Candidate Profile Desired

BSW knows that most candidates will not meet all the desired credentials, skills, and qualities listed below, so it encourages prospective candidates to think generously about how their experience and background can meet the desired profile.

Credentials:

- Three to five years of senior leadership, or equivalent experience, preferably at a youth facing nonprofit of comparable scale.
- Passion for and commitment to education, youth engagement, and community development.
- Culturally sensitive leader with a strong understanding and demonstrated commitment to DEIB.
- Prior teaching experience and/or training as a musician would be advantageous.

Skills and Qualities:

Experienced Fundraiser, Community Connector, and Compelling Communicator

- Adept at sustaining existing donors across all funding sources including foundations, individual donors, government funding, and corporate partners.
- Skilled at and motivated to strategically expand BSW's donor base in line with the organization's growth plans and priorities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills to speak passionately and persuasively about BSW's mission and its impact on students, families, and the community.
- Confident and excited to serve as the chief spokesperson for BSW to enhance its public presence, increase program recognition, and expand program participation and community engagement.
- Able to support the development of comprehensive marketing and communication strategies to promote BSW's programs and activities to grow awareness, participation, and financial support.

Entrepreneurial, Strategic, and Accountable Leader

- Entrepreneurial administrator with prior experience leading a growth-oriented organization of comparable size and scale.
- Committed to ensuring that strategic pillars and strategies are achieved, measured, and reported upon.
- Skilled at establishing, sustaining, and growing mutually supportive and collaborative arrangements with schools, community groups, and affiliated organizations.
- Able to hold self and others to significant accountability and to address performance issues in a direct, yet supportive, manner to ensure results.
- Able to manage the financial obligations and responsibilities associated with a diverse and complex nonprofit.
- Able to facilitate strategic planning with the confidence to offer informed opinions and proposals for strategic direction.

Empathetic and Compassionate Leader of People and Culture

- Experienced at hiring, onboarding, managing, and empowering a professional, diverse, and mission-driven staff and corps of artists.
- Able to create and sustain a cohesive, organization-wide culture that is equitable, inclusive, nimble, and responsive.
- Listen actively and graciously and thoughtfully consider diverse opinions to inform and make collaborative decisions.
- Demonstrate in words and actions an unwavering commitment to advancing a climate of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, modeling BSW's values and practices throughout the organization and with families, students, and partners.
- Skilled in human resource practices including performance management and professional development.
- Board developer who supports the recruitment, engagement, and participation of all members.

Compensation, Benefits, and Work Environment:

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a starting salary of \$80,000 to \$100,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. BSW offers a generous package of benefits and paid leave. A regular, on-site presence at the Buffalo location is required with some flexibility for at-home work.

Application Process and Additional Information

BSW is an equal employment opportunity employer. Employment decisions are based on merit and business needs, and not on race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by law.

Candidate must include a resume and a cover letter that describes how qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of BSW. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled with those received by February 28, 2024 receiving priority. Upload required documents to:

<https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant, John Tarvin. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to John at:

jtarkin@eostransitions.com.