

## Overview

# Asian Arts Initiative, Executive Director

## *Connecting Cultural Expression and Social Change*

### OPPORTUNITY

Asian Arts Initiative (AAI) isn't just an arts organization—it is a powerhouse for creativity, community, and cultural transformation. Nationally recognized and rooted in Philly's dynamic arts scene, AAI is where storytelling meets social change. From electrifying performances to thought-provoking exhibitions and groundbreaking artist residencies, AAI creates spaces where intercultural artists' voices shine and cross-cultural connections thrive.

Now, AAI is looking for a visionary Executive Director (ED) to take the helm, amplify its impact, and lead the organization into an exciting new chapter of artistic and social justice innovation. This is more than a leadership role—it's an opportunity to shape the future of a beloved, community-driven arts hub.

### ORGANIZATION

#### Who AAI Is

Founded in 1993 to address racial tensions and uplift underrepresented voices, AAI continues to build bridges between diverse communities through the arts. At the heart of its mission are six core values: **the inherent creativity of all people**, encouraging individuals to use art as a tool for personal and public storytelling; **open-mindedness**, fostering cross-cultural exploration and breaking down rigid boundaries; and **community-mindedness**, ensuring that AAI's work is deeply rooted in the voices and social contexts of the people it serves. AAI is also driven by a belief in **art as a means of social change**, using creative expression to challenge present realities and imagine new possibilities. It is committed to **equity and access to power**, striving to rebalance structural disparities and uplift underrepresented voices. Finally, AAI prioritizes **Asian American leadership**, nurturing emerging leaders within the organization while welcoming allies from all backgrounds.

Its vibrant, multi-use arts space in Philadelphia's Chinatown North serves as a creative incubator—home to galleries, a black box theater, event spaces, and artist studios—where these values come to life. Whether through high-energy youth workshops, socially engaged artist residencies, or dynamic exhibitions, AAI is a place where culture, activism, and storytelling collide to shape a more just and inclusive future.

#### What AAI Does

AAI is a sanctuary for artists, a home for community groups, and a catalyst for conversation. On any given visit you can catch a visual arts exhibition, music concert, literary discussion, film screening, or genre-defying performance art. Our long-running youth programs empower the next generation through mentorship, creative exploration, and leadership training. We work in our community to present innovative public art, hold block parties and community fairs, and work closely with politicians and organizations to advance place-keeping initiatives that build community through the power of art. Together we build the creative future we all deserve—one that's just, inclusive, and brimming with possibility.

#### Why AAI?

AAI is more than an arts organization—it's a movement. Under the leadership of Anne Ishii (2018–2024) and now Interim Director Dave Kyu, AAI has grown into a innovative, welcoming, and financially solid institution with a current annual budget of over \$2M and significant cash reserves. AAI's tight-knit, passionate team of 19 thrives in a culture that values humanity, equity, and creative risk-taking. This is your chance to be part of something bold. Whether you're an artist, an activist, or a leader ready to create momentum, AAI is the place to turn vision into action.

## Responsibilities

### THE ROLE

The next Executive Director of AAI will be a bold, strategic, community-driven leader ready to take the helm of a powerhouse organization. They will be a game-changer who will amplify impact, elevate influence, and drive innovation. This is more than just a leadership role, it is a chance to shape the next era of a highly visible, well established and deeply respected cultural force. The new ED will build on AAI's legacy while igniting fresh energy, forging new connections, and propelling the organization into its most dynamic chapter yet.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The ED of AAI will amplify organizational impact and ensure long-term sustainability by focusing on key leadership responsibilities:

**Fundraising and Network Development:** Navigate a changing landscape to identify, secure, and steward diverse and sustainable relationships and funding sources.

**Relationship Building and Partnership Development:** With a strong understanding of cultural competencies and intersectional issues, build authentic relationships with staff, board, tenants, regional community partners, state and local legislators, and national peers.

**Team Leadership and Culture Building:** Strengthen a supportive workplace culture that values respect, collaboration, and innovation with structures that will ensure accountability, equity and efficiency.

**Asset and Financial Strategy:** Capitalize on AAI's substantial assets by strategically managing and developing the building, developing a diverse revenue model, and exploring new income strategies.

**Strategic Visioning:** Holistically assess AAI to determine its opportunities for growth and impact; align AAI's programmatic portfolio, mission, and artistic direction with a bold and visionary future.

**Stewardship:** Serve as the charismatic public face of AAI, who embodies AAI's values and ensures AAI's legacy and presence is felt, heard, and respected.

**Board Collaboration and Development:** In partnership with the board, evaluate, develop, and refine the optimal roles, responsibilities, to ensure the structure and strategy align with AAI's trajectory.

## Qualifications

AAI understands that candidates rarely meet 100% of the qualifications. We strongly encourage candidates, both locally and from outside the region, in particular people from underrepresented backgrounds, to apply if they meet many of the qualifications.

### **Nonprofit Leadership and Management**

A minimum of five years' experience in a leadership or senior management position within a nonprofit organization and expertise in overseeing operations, staff, and resources will play a critical role in driving AAI's mission forward.

### **Fundraising**

Demonstrated success in communicating a captivating vision and building sustaining relationships with large national foundation, individual and corporate donors; able to translate a passion for the intersections of the AAPI community and Greater Philly into fundraising successes.

### **Strategic Planning**

A knack for collaborative, data-driven decision making; able to develop a clear, forward-looking vision aligned with programs, operations, and partnerships.

### **Team Leadership and Development**

Natural ability to motivate and inspire; adept at leading a diverse team comparable to AAI's size with sensitivity and cultural competency; dedication to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and participatory work environment; able to promote accountability and bolster a culture that values human-centered principles.

### **Community Engagement**

Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills; proven experience building strong relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders; strong knowledge of or genuine curiosity about the AAPI and nonprofit Philadelphia community.

### **Mission Driven and Values Aligned**

Highly aligned values as evidenced by professional or volunteer work that advances racial equity, amplifies marginalized voices, builds community, promotes inclusivity; commitment to understanding contemporary art, experimental practices, and the broader AAPI arts and cultural landscape.

### **Lived Experience**

Individuals with lived experience as part of a marginalized group served by AAI are strongly encouraged to apply; experience as an artist or working with or in an arts organization is highly desired.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

Interested candidates can submit materials via the link at the top right of this page.

This search is being conducted in partnership with TSNE. All submissions receive an acknowledgment and are confidential within the search committee and TSNE. Electronic submissions sent through the above link are preferred.

Candidates should include a resume or profile summary that displays their skills and experiences, as well as a cover letter describing their interest and how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of AAI. Candidates are strongly encouraged to apply early; the position will remain open, and applications accepted until the right candidate is identified. The AAI Search Committee will review

applications and candidates who are selected to move forward in the hiring process will be notified.

Questions may be directed to TSNE Search Consultant, [Mimi Brunelle](#).

Based in Philadelphia, PA, the Executive Director position is a full-time exempt position with flex work time out of the office (in the field/from home). A regional presence to Philadelphia, and a willingness to work a flexible schedule, including occasional evenings and weekends, is required. The salary for this position is \$115,000 annually, paid biweekly at \$4,423.07. Asian Arts Initiative offers an extremely competitive benefits package including:

- Health and dental with dependent coverage
- Life, disability AD&D
- Retirement match at 5% of salary
- Student loan repayment match at non-taxable limit
- Annual COLA
- Allowances for meetings, events, travel, professional development, caregiving
- Unlimited PTO
- Up to 12-week sabbatical after 5 years

*ASIAN ARTS INITIATIVE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER*

Apply Here: <https://www.click2apply.net/wgaz6oCDYjWPOuJWaHqZlj>

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