

CAVE CANEM

Director of Programs Job Description

Position Title: Director of Programs

Location: Hybrid, minimum of 3 days in New York, NY

Status: Full-time, Overtime Exempt

Salary: \$100,000 per year plus health benefits and generous paid time off

Reports to: Executive Director

Direct Reports: Programs Coordinator

Cave Canem is a nonprofit organization committed to cultivating the artistic and professional growth of Black poets. Founded by artists for artists, Cave Canem fosters community across the diaspora to enrich the field by facilitating a nurturing space in which to learn, experiment, create, and present. Cave Canem develops audiences for Black voices that have worked and are working in the craft of poetry.

Over the years, Cave Canem has grown from a gathering of 26 to become an influential movement with a renowned faculty, a high-achieving global fellowship of 500 poets, and a workshop community of over 1,000. Core programs include community-based workshops; cross-cultural talks and readings by acclaimed poets and scholars; book prizes publishing new voices; and our flagship annual writing retreat for today's most promising poets of African descent.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The Director of Programs reports to the Executive Director and holds full ownership of Cave Canem's programmatic function, from curatorial vision through execution. This role sets the artistic direction for all programming, manages the logistical fulfillment of that vision, and leads the Programs Coordinator in delivering CC's public-facing events. The Director of Programs serves as the key institutional facilitator for Cave Canem Fellows and Faculty and acts as a spokesperson for the organization's artistic purpose, including at fundraising events and donor engagements as requested by executive leadership. The Director of Programs partners closely with the Operations Director and Communications Manager to ensure programming is resourced, staffed, and promoted effectively.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Curatorial and Artistic Direction

- Own the curatorial vision for Cave Canem, including selecting faculty and guest poets for the Cave Canem Retreat and regional workshops, participants for public programs, and the judges and readers for the organization's poetry prizes.
- Develop and present an annual curatorial plan for the Executive Director's approval, and set the curatorial direction for the Programs Coordinator so programming reflects that plan.
- Oversee the artistic direction and execution of the Cave Canem Retreat and all programming, from concept through delivery.

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- Make the final selection of Fellows in consultation with the President, or most senior poet, of the Board of Directors.
- Stay current with the literary field, specifically African diaspora poetry and poetics.

Programs Oversight

- Manage and execute CC's public-facing events throughout the year in person, hybrid, and virtual formats, including the annual retreat, workshops, readings, panels, and special events.
- Serve as the logistical lead on communication with internal and external stakeholders for the production of CC events from inception to completion.
- Train, manage, and mentor the Programs Coordinator, and manage contract and freelance staff during load-ins, technical rehearsals, events, and strikes.
- Develop and implement production policies that ensure safe working conditions and high organizational and artistic standards.
- Manage the continued development of departmental process documentation, including event itineraries, meeting agendas, program information, and department manuals.
- Initiate internal evaluations and post-event reviews to inform future programming.

Fellows and Faculty Engagement

- Act as the key institutional facilitator for Cave Canem Fellows and Faculty, maintaining ongoing relationships and advising executive leadership on education, career advancement, and community-building opportunities.
- Serve as Program Director for the Fellows & Faculty Fund, acting as lead decision-maker for grant applications across the fund and discretionary funding.

Partnerships and Cross-Functional Coordination

- Cultivate and initiate strategic institutional and creative partnerships, and represent Cave Canem's artistic purpose in public and social appearances.
- Partner with the Operations Director on annual program planning, staffing, budgeting, and cross-functional coordination.
- Work with the Executive Director to build and manage event-specific and annual program budgets, and manage adherence to the approved department budget.
- Provide timely and accurate programmatic information to the Communications Manager to support publicity and fundraising efforts.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree.
- Five or more years of senior-level professional experience, ideally at a nonprofit literary or arts organization, with both curatorial and program development and execution responsibilities.
- Demonstrated expertise in poetry and the literary field, alongside hands-on arts administration experience.

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- Author of at least one published poetry manuscript or evidence of substantial poetry publication history.
- Experience creating and managing project budgets, production schedules, and timelines.
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, and keen attention to detail.
- Strong analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of standard event practices, equipment, and software in sound, projection, video, and virtual media.
- Demonstrated ability to manage and prioritize a complex workload and to collaborate effectively across a wide range of staff, clients, community members, guest artists, and other professionals.
- Knowledge of cultural presenters and the nonprofit arts sector is preferred.
- Passion for literary arts, culture, and serving communities of color
- Availability to work nights and weekends at Cave Canem-produced events and travel as needed.

To apply for the Director of Programs position, please complete the online application form at <https://tinyurl.com/fm8xy995>. You will be asked to provide your resume, a cover letter highlighting your relevant experience, a link to your publication history or a brief list of published works, and the names and contact information for two professional references.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. While we may not be able to respond to all applicants, we anticipate beginning the first round of interviews in September 2026.

Cave Canem Foundation, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Cave Canem Foundation, Inc. is committed to building a culturally diverse community, and strongly encourages applications from female-identified candidates and candidates of color.