CAVE CANEM FOUNDATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cave Canem Foundation, Inc. seeks an Executive Director who will build on the organization’s successful 20+-year history and, in partnership with the Board of Directors and staff, expand the organization with a vision towards the organization’s 25th anniversary in 2021 to further cultivate the artistic and professional growth of African American poets.

ABOUT CAVE CANEM

Cave Canem is the premier institution for supporting the many voices of Black poetry: the home of the nation’s largest collection of Black writers. Formed in 1996 as a response to the lack of support and resources for poets of African descent, Cave Canem has become the national leader within the poetry community moving toward greater racial diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in the field.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Annual Budget**: $631K
- **Signature programs**: Flagship annual writing retreat; public community writing workshops; cross-cultural talks and readings by acclaimed poets and scholars; book prizes that publish new voices
- **Fellowship community**: 450+
- **Reach**: Annual audience of 3,500+; 325+ books by Cave Canem fellows in print

IMPACT

Cave Canem’s programs and publications enlarge the American artistic canon; democratize archives; and expand for students, aspiring poets, and readers the notion of what’s possible and valuable in a poem. A 2018 NEA study found that poetry readership has doubled in the past five years, with people of color now reading poetry at the highest rates. The American Academy of Poets has listed Cave Canem as one of the primary drivers of this increased engagement.

ON THE HORIZON

Cave Canem is entering a pivotal moment in its history and future as we prepare to celebrate our 25th Anniversary in 2021. Our primary goal is to sustain and expand our structure and programming, while continuing to make the poetic landscape more accessible for those who are turning to it most.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the leadership experience and drive necessary to guide Cave Canem through healthy strategic growth. Serving as the face of the organization to stakeholders, partners, donors, and funders, the candidate will possess the following qualities, skills, and characteristics:

**STRATEGIC & NIMBLE OPERATOR**
- Track record of success in organizational management, with ability to leverage human, financial, and technological resources for maximum impact
- Experience building and maintaining systems, structures, and practices for optimal operational effectiveness
- Ability to lead and drive results through staff, manage a national board and budget, and liaise with peer and funding entities
- Acumen to develop and achieve sustainable operational and financial strategies that can support operations and innovative programmatic initiatives

**COMMUNITY BUILDER & ENERGIZER**
- A natural bridge-builder and unifier who galvanizes an international community of Cave Canem fellows, faculty, and donors and engages them as life-long stakeholders who maintain strong ties to the organization
- Strong facilitator, communicator, and collaborator who fosters connection and treats people as Cave Canem’s most important resource

**ADVOCATE FOR BLACK POETRY**
- A personal investment in cultivating the craft of poets of African descent
- Commitment to centering the needs of people of color in the act of actively eradicating racism and other forms of oppression in the arts and culture field

**EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE**
- Bachelor’s degree
- Experience in arts administration
- 5+ years of senior-level nonprofit experience preferred, with progressive management or oversight of an organization’s fiscal and development budgets
- Experience managing teams of at least 2 full-time / exempt employees. Experience leading or serving on a senior leadership team and interacting with a board of directors preferred
- Proven track record securing various types of institutional funding and executing development strategies (grant writing, friend-raising, individual giving, and major gifts)
The Executive Director’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

**General Operations and Management**
- Ensure effective functioning of day-to-day operations (front office in Brooklyn, NY) and related administrative activities
- Be responsible for the recruitment, employment, and release of all staff, providing regular personnel updates to the Board of Directors
- Supervise and evaluate staff; support staff’s efforts and develop and enrich their professional skills
- Ensure regular review of marketing and programming efforts in order to expand Cave Canem Foundation, Inc.’s visibility
- Promote and attend Cave Canem Foundation, Inc. programs and events in collaboration with staff
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and New York City laws and regulations for governance and operations, including those governing bylaws and human resources / labor practices

**Fundraising & Development**
- Successfully procure private foundation grants and charitable gifts; effectively fundraise and solicit gift upgrades from a broad range of donors and supporters. Experience with endowment fundraising and planned giving preferred
- Work collaboratively with the board’s fundraising committee to support each board member’s individual fundraising efforts; help plan and execute campaigns and special fundraising events in coordination with the Cave Canem board
- Partner with the board in helping propel fundraising strategies that yield significant increases in private support, particularly in conjunction with Cave Canem’s 25th anniversary

**Community Building**
- Identify unique opportunities to engage Cave Canem fellows as life-long stakeholders of the organization in ways that inspire a sense of proximity and connection to the organization despite the geographic spread of fellows nationally and internationally
- Cultivate, maintain, and augment relationships across the Cave Canem community, inspiring a sense of shared purpose, identity, and commitment to Cave Canem’s mission
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

Financial Management
• Assume overall responsibility and accountability for maintaining sound fiscal policy and practices, including timely and proactive budget preparation and management, adherence to regulatory and audit controls, and sufficient and effective reporting, both internal and external. Manage cash flows and financial data for budgeting decisions.
• Ensure that staff and programming keep within the allocated financial resources.
• Work collaboratively and provide timely reports to the board finance committee.
• Evaluate fundraising efforts to date; consider feasibility of new revenue streams, including earned income, sponsorship, and foundation support.

External Relations and Communications
• Stay current with the literary field, specifically African American poetry and poetics.
• Partner with the Board of Directors, Artistic Directors and staff to clarify and define Cave Canem Foundation, Inc.’s public image, brand, visibility, and reputation as a leader in the literary field.
• Support the efforts of the Board of Directors and its committees.
• Oversee the organization’s brand and web and social media communications.
• Engage as an active member of regional and national literary consortia such as LitTap, LitNet and The Poetry Coalition, and collaborate with Cave Canem Foundation, Inc.’s numerous literary partners.
ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Location: Brooklyn, NY
Reports to: Board of Directors
Team: Four full-time staff (including ED) + varying levels of part-time support throughout the year
Salary range: $80,000 - $90,000
Start Date: February – March 2020

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should email their resume and cover letter to cavecanemsearch@supportcenteronline.org by December 15, 2019. Both seasoned and rising senior leaders are encouraged to apply.

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.