

# The Center for Arts & Ideas @ The Henry J. Kaiser Building *Executive Director*

***The Board seeks a proven arts and venue manager, friend-raiser and fundraiser to:***

- ***Manage the Center for Arts & Ideas and the historic Henry J. Kaiser Building, its grounds, people, partners, vendors, branding, marketing, infrastructure and operations;***
- ***Maximize earned and contributed revenue so that all annual costs are fully funded and there is an annual set aside for an endowment to underwrite periodic building and infrastructure upgrades and depreciation.***
- ***Within 7 years, complete a \$50m capital and endowment campaign to transfer ownership of the fully rebuilt and upgraded Center's 99 year lease with the City of Oakland from Orton Development, Inc. to Arts for Oakland.***

***Energizing Oakland as a center of artistic and entrepreneurial thinking and economic activity, the Center for Arts & Ideas will develop the completely rebuilt Henry J. Kaiser Building as a modern hub for the arts, creative businesses and civil society leadership.***

## **MISSION**

The Center for Arts & Ideas stands at the dynamic cultural heart of the City of Oakland. In addition to presenting performances, conventions and events of various types at the Henry J. Kaiser Building, the Center will rent space to nonprofits, businesses and private individuals, and ensure that the facility serves as a welcoming and inclusive venue for the region's other flagship arts organizations.

The Center is currently involved in various discussions with arts organizations to be resident or presenting companies, including Oakland Symphony, Oakland Ballet, Oakland Conservatory, Blue Bear Music School, Cal Shakes, among others; and the HJK Building will be used by event management and arts presenting businesses for concerts, conventions and other activities. Equity and embrace of diverse voices is a driving force in Oakland, and the Center will also ensure that smaller social justice-oriented arts organizations have access to the HJK Building, its services and facilities.

Positioned to be artistically adventurous and deeply committed to culturally connecting with the region's many different communities and constituencies through its programming, the Center for Arts & Ideas will welcome creative, diverse, internationally connected and culturally sophisticated audiences of all ages, backgrounds and tastes.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Beaux Arts style Henry J. Kaiser Building housing the Center is owned by the City of Oakland, and was originally completed and unveiled in 1915 as the Oakland Civic Auditorium. Each of the seven entrance bays on the north side of the building features beautiful bas-relief sculptures created by A. Stirling Calder, father of noted mobile sculptor, Alexander Calder. In 1985 the building was renamed the "Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center", but by 2006 was shuttered due to high operating costs and a significant backlog of deferred maintenance. On the National Register of Historic Places, the building stands as the East Bay's largest enclosed space and its most historically significant building dedicated to the performing arts.

Seeking a solution to redeveloping and upgrading the building that would preserve its character, enable the facility to be financially self-supporting, and also serve a public mission, the City of



Oakland entered into an Adaptive Reuse Project Agreement and signed a 99-year lease with Orton Development Inc (ODI). The Adaptive Reuse Project Agreement called for [ODI](#) to raise the funds necessary to bring the building, including the Calvin Simmons Theater, back to life and to be responsible for tenants, rents and ongoing operations management and expense. Funding for this private endeavor was developed and architectural firm [Heller Manus](#) was engaged, construction began in 2020, parts of the building will open in 2023, and all construction will be completed in 2024. There are significant upgrades to the facility, including costly structural seismic and infrastructure improvements not required by contract terms. ODI considers itself to be a civically minded, double-bottom-line business with a strong commitment to quality construction and community service.

The facility includes:

- **Arena** - a 25,000 sq. ft wood floor arena surrounded by a 3,500-seat balcony;
- **Calvin Simmons Theatre** - a state-of-the-art 1,500-seat proscenium theater;
- **Lakeview Room** - a bar with a speakeasy ambience that can host 150 guests;
- **Ballroom** - a 300-person hospitality space with a small stage and balcony;
- **Gold Room** - a 300-person party, rehearsal or performance space;
- **Lower Level** – including 3-lounge areas and 40 Wenger soundproof rehearsal studios;
- **Outdoor Areas** – parking for 200 vehicles that also functions as a 5,000-person outdoor venue.

ODI plans to transfer ownership of the building's 99-year lease to an independent nonprofit set up to manage a cash-flow-positive building capable of funding ongoing operations. A capital and endowment campaign will reimburse ODI's investment in the project.

*Delivered through private and philanthropic investment, the result is a **fully redeveloped arts, business and community hub for the City of Oakland** that will be sustained financially into the future through earned income streams.*

### **BASIC FUNCTION**

The Executive Director will immediately assume full management responsibility for the Henry J. Kaiser Building, its people, vendor relationships, contracts, maintenance, branding, marketing, infrastructure, tech and operations. The 7-year objective is to also complete a \$50m capital campaign to transfer the 99-year lease to the Center for Arts & Ideas.

**The Center for Arts & Ideas** should be viewed as a civically oriented nonprofit business whose leadership team requires:

- Financial planning, controls and revenue optimization skills;
- Fundraising experience for capital, endowment and annual campaigns;
- Tight, practical, results-oriented, disciplined management;
- An abiding commitment to advancing Oakland's artists, arts organizations and civil society through a financially sustainable arts platform.

Paramount will be an ability to say "no" or "not yet" to other leaders, vendors and partners who may have strong views on how the building will be used, along with a problem-solver's ability to collaborate with such leaders to advance their agendas if it can be done in a financially self-sustainable way that safeguard's the Center's and the Building's future viability. The Center's overarching objective will be to serve the diverse interests of Oakland's creative business and arts community, while ensuring that the building operates sustainably and is preserved as a community asset.

***Strong finances, artistic excellence and community service must go hand-in-hand.***

## **PRIORITIES**

The Henry J. Kaiser Building is currently at an advanced stage of construction and the Center that manages the HJK Building is in the process of shaping its organizing principles, board, staff, procedures and programs. The immediate priorities of the Center's Executive Director will be:

- Evaluate the state of play pertaining to construction and management of the HJK Building, including the layout of the facility; the workflows and tech installed or planned to manage various parts of the building, the theater, arena and back office infrastructure; the needs of the various resident companies, arts partners and tenants; understand the various vendors and other partners engaged by the Center to supply services to tenants, users and audiences; and the requirements posed by the performance and events schedule for the first 24 months of the Center's operations;
- Enact appropriate policies, procedures and protocols to ensure the smooth operations of each area of the HJK Building and of the Center's back office finance, fundraising and revenue management operations;
- Recruit a fundraising governance board that includes people with knowledge and networks among Oakland's arts funders, creative economy businesses, arts organizations and artists, and community representatives, with an emphasis on business skills, community connection and give/get fundraising capacity;
- Managing day-to-day Center staff and operations to provide a superior and safe audience experience, in the process facilitating the work of resident arts companies, performers, nonprofit and business tenants, and of other users of the HJK Building.
- Over the next 12 months transfer responsibility from ODI so that the nonprofit Center for Arts and Ideas assumes responsibility for all operating oversight and coordination of all work at the HJK Building that currently flows through ODI.
- Develop collaborative relationships with HJK Building users and potential users, including diverse arts, education and other nonprofits, business users, convention & event companies, music and entertainment companies, civic organizations and City of Oakland representatives.

## **IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

Candidates should have the following type of experience and qualifications:

- Significant hands-on experience with a sizable multi-venue performing arts or convention center, hotel, casino, festival, fairgrounds, or other such revenue-producing physical facility; oversight of theater operations, engineering, production and customer service would be advantageous; experience opening a new or renovated performing arts venue would be helpful;
- Strong financial management and controls, with a demonstrated attention to detail and the ability to forecast expenses and revenues and adjust operations to function within constraints;
- Ability to analyze and prioritize programmatic requirements and activities, identify potential problems and initiate corrective measures so as to maximize house operations, audience attendance, and financially efficient response to diverse needs; an ability to anticipate and deal effectively with the wide variety of problems and issues typically arising in the operation of a performing arts venue;

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- Experience shaping fundraising campaigns for projects of significant scale that includes annual, capital, and endowment elements, and experience recruiting a fundraising governance board that is actively engaged in achieving give/get targets; holds team and self-accountable for reaching or exceeding targets; experience directly soliciting significant gifts from individuals, businesses, foundations, corporations, and the public sector; broad-based knowledge of various development activities including: direct, online and mail solicitations, social media, proposal and grant development, planned giving, event management; using data to manage and enhance donor cultivation and drive fundraising priorities; experience with a performing or visual arts organization is an advantage;
- A skilled negotiator and deal-maker that is able to develop positive alliances with organizations, producers, clients and community members; adept at writing proposals, solicitation letters, donor correspondence, and other materials; a good listener and strategist, comfortable receiving input from many sources, and able to analyze and formulate disparate information into a sound, well-organized plan;
- Demonstrated management skills in motivating, directing and managing staff and consultants, and in coordinating and supporting the activities of others; a demonstrable history and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; a readiness to ensure that the Center for Arts & Ideas embodies an anti-racist operating culture;
- Extroverted and fearless; derives energy from connecting with individuals, aligning the case for support, creating opportunities for engagement and building enthusiasm for the Center for Arts & Ideas and various uses for the Henry J. Kaiser Building; outstanding speaking, writing, and editing skills, with demonstrated success in bringing regular, positive media attention to an organization;
- Demonstrated success in managing multiple projects with shifting priorities and competing deadlines, with the flexibility and sensitivity to work with diverse personalities; emotionally mature with a very good sense of perspective and humor.

To apply, nominate others, or for further information, please contact:

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