

Vice President, Programming Search

Arts Commons is seeking a creative, motivated, and energetic individual to serve as its next Vice President, Programming.

The Vice President, Programming will join Arts Commons at a time of unprecedented growth and excitement for the organization, as they prepare to break ground on the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project, the single largest cultural infrastructure project in Canada. Reporting directly to the President and Chief Executive Officer, and a member of the Leadership Team, the Vice President, Programming will work with a dedicated and passionate team to bring the best of the arts to all Calgarians, to foster a culture committed to creating once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and to find innovative ways of connecting with ever diversifying and growing audiences.

This appointment offers Arts Commons a rare opportunity to reimagine how they engage with the new artists and audiences, what voices are amplified, and what stories are told—on the Arts Commons stages, throughout the city’s public spaces, in classrooms and schools, and digitally. Arts Commons’ programmatic vision for the future must include, elevate, and complement the work of the resident companies housed within it (Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, Theatre Calgary, and One Yellow Rabbit), while at the same time finding a balance that brings international artistic visions to Calgary and showcases local Calgary talent in world-class venues.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for a programming professional who can bring together their vision, experience, and passion for the arts to Calgary, and someone who will find personal fulfillment in being part of the future of one of the most dynamic performing arts centres in Canada.



“A thriving creative sector is essential to making Calgary a more resilient city. Arts Commons is one of the main pillar projects that will give our city a much-needed boost — it will catalyze growth, diversify our economic drivers, and draw even more people to the downtown core.” - Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek

The Organization

Canada's third largest arts centre, Arts Commons occupies a full city block in the heart of Calgary's Cultural District in the downtown core. It is home to the 1,797-seat Jack Singer Concert Hall and five theatres, including the 750-seat Max Bell Theatre, the 412-seat Martha Cohen Theatre, the 190-seat Big Secret Theatre, the 185-seat flexible Engineered Air Theatre, and the 50-seat black box Motel Theatre, as well as additional event and education spaces. Arts Commons also houses costume and set construction shops, administrative offices, meeting rooms, a café, and a centralized box office.

Arts Commons hosts more than 1,800 performances each year, including live theatre, concerts, dance productions, readings, public forums, art exhibits, and more, all open to the public. In addition to Arts Commons Presents, the programming arm of Arts Commons, other programmers include resident companies Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary, all of which create, perform, and present a wide range of award-winning and highly acclaimed theatrical events and concerts. While similar sized facilities host about 414 events each year, pre-pandemic, Arts Commons hosted 844 in its six major venues, as well as activities in more unconventional spaces throughout the building—a level of activity it hopes to exceed with its growth in the years ahead.

Arts Commons has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians and visitors since its founding in 1985. It typically serves more than 400,000 patrons at ticketed events and more than 150,000 people annually at free events and gatherings. The existing facility has been enormously successful, consistently working far beyond industry standards.

In response to its success and increasing demand, the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project was created in collaboration with the City of Calgary and the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) to create a civic arts centre that is more accessible, vibrant, and an integral community resource. Executed in two phases, ACT will both expand capacity in an adjoining new building and renew the existing facility, bringing it up to today's standards.

The ACT project has been identified as a pivotal project for the downtown's post-pandemic revitalization. To date, the project has garnered \$270 million in investments, and will be breaking ground in the next 18 months.

ACT's expansion of Arts Commons will add versatile, purpose-built venues to meet growing market demands, and community aspirations. It will also add more than 40 percent in seating capacity. ACT's modernization of Arts Commons will revitalize the existing 560,000 square-foot complex and elevate the public's experience through upgraded amenities and technology. In total, ACT will generate almost 1,000 permanent jobs and will have an annual economic impact of more than \$95 million. It will also accommodate the varied needs of a world-class city, aligning with Calgary and Alberta's long-term strategic objective to build a culturally vibrant, economically diverse community.

Arts Commons is governed by a 20-member board of directors, led by Board Chair David Smith. Currently, there are approximately 67 full-time and 150 part-time employees, led by President and CEO, Alex Sarian, who joined Arts Commons in May of 2020. In the 2022-23 season, Arts Commons has an operating budget of \$13.5 million.

The Community

The City of Calgary has an energy that exhilarates, invigorates, and motivates. It is a place of big skies and big ideas. Calgary is an economic force and a catalyst for today's trailblazers. Its intense, urban vitality unleashes the bold, can-do spirit of its entrepreneurs, innovators, artists, and athletes. Calgarians are risk-takers and visionaries whose vibrancy and competitive spirit drive commerce, culture, and sport. Calgary's lifestyle is active, with western values and a global perspective. This diverse city embraces change and change-makers and supports and sustains its communities and its people. With opportunities to start a new life or new adventure, Calgary welcomes everyone to be part of the community.

The major urban centre for the entire southern half of the province of Alberta, Calgary is surrounded by an area of profound beauty with an unspoiled, resource-rich natural environment. Ranked among the world's cleanest, healthiest, and safest cities in numerous international studies, Calgary is a global leader for overall quality of life. With a low population density, high quality of life, and abundant housing, Calgary is the ideal place to call home.

Calgary offers all the energy of a large metropolitan city with the warm and welcoming spirit of a connected community. In 2022, Calgary was ranked the most livable city in North America and the 3rd most livable city in the world by the *Economist Intelligence Unit*. A city with diverse communities and endless opportunities, Calgary is a city that will surprise you. Calgarians enjoy more days of sunshine than any other major Canadian city - 333 days per year in fact and is home to more than 1.4 million people with a median age of Calgarians of only 37.2 years. Calgary is the third most diverse major city in Canada with more than 120 languages spoken in the city, and Calgarians are community-minded: Albertans hold the 2nd highest national volunteer rate at 55 per cent. The face of Calgary is changing. Walk through any neighbourhood and you will meet people who have moved here from all over the world.

Sources: Edited from: lifeincalgary.ca; calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com



Vice President, Programming Roles and Responsibilities

Reporting to the President & CEO, the Vice President, Programming will lead Arts Commons boldly in the exploration of new experiences, genres, disciplines, and art forms, and—more importantly—be committed to reaching new audiences in unconventional ways, including exceptional educational and community partnerships, and artist development programs. In addition to building on Arts Commons' celebrated programming arm, Arts Commons Presents (with series such as BD&P World Stage, PCL Blues, National Geographic Live, ArtsXpeditions, and others), the next Vice President, Programming will also be responsible for all visual and media arts galleries throughout Arts Commons, successful arts education programs (including the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning), and artist professional development initiatives (such as the TD Incubator and the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program). As a leader in creating new experiences, the ideal candidate will push new boundaries, incite unexpected artistic collaborations, and embrace the impact of the arts in different settings.

The Vice President, Programming will have the following key accountabilities:

Executive Management

- Serves as a member of the Arts Commons leadership team.
- Participates in key decisions pertaining to strategic initiatives, operating model, and operational execution.
- Always acts in the best interests of Arts Commons.

Programming

- Develops and executes the implementation of a bold and inclusive programmatic strategy that is anchored in a deep understanding of global trends and local audiences, with an unflappable appreciation of the business model required to support it.
- Serves as Arts Commons' primary artistic and engagement ambassador to the world and as an advocate for the value of the arts sector locally, national, and globally.
- Drives creative collaborations within the Programming department (Presenting, Education, and Public Programs), and across the Arts Commons campus in partnership with our resident companies, with community partners, and beyond.
- Works closely with the Brand & Audience Development department to explore new experiential formats and distribution channels for artistic content.
- Explores, nurtures, and curates influential art forms that have not traditionally been associated with Arts Commons or the downtown Calgary arts scene.
- Collaborates with government agencies, civic partners, and other organizations to make Arts Commons and Downtown Calgary a destination where all Calgarians and visitors feel they are welcome and belong.

Team Leadership

- Engages, motivates, retains, builds, and mentors a high-performing programming team.
- Demonstrates a commitment to strong staff engagement, equity, and inclusivity through a track record of leading a performance-based culture that motivates employees to achieve excellence and that promotes accountability.
- Develops and mentors individual team members to ensure that they develop as professionals while at the same time having significant positive impact on Arts Commons.

Financial Accountability

- Proactively works with other members of the Arts Commons leadership team to ensure that the programming department operates effectively and efficiently.
- Demonstrates a commitment to financial acumen through staff engagement, motivating employees to achieve excellence while ensuring accountability.
- Develops and mentors individual team members to ensure they understand the financial realities of individual decisions that affect a multi-million-dollar arts organization.

Traits and Characteristics

Proactive, dynamic, independent, self-motivated, and people-oriented, the Vice President, Programming will have exceptional leadership, social, and verbal communication skills, and value frequent interaction and collaboration with others. The Vice President, Programming will be an experienced and entrepreneurial professional with proven leadership and supervisory skills with the vision to actively inform and pursue the goals of Arts Commons with creativity and determination. The Vice President, Programming will possess a rigorous attention to detail, logistics, and financial acuity, and will have a high degree of personal accountability - with a commitment to exceeding expectations. This individual will balance tasks and projects with a sense of urgency and be a self-sufficient and self-managed professional with a highly organized approach. The Vice President, Programming will have the ability to achieve organizational objectives with a wide group of stakeholders and will bring an affinity for Arts Commons' mission, vision, and values with a passion to positively impact the organization's long-term success.

Other key traits and characteristics of the role include:

Vision: You believe in the transformative power of the arts to shape our society and redefine Calgary.

Creative and Bold: Curating experiences that explore the issues of our day in responsible and engaging ways. Your innovation is rooted in bringing people together around a shared commitment to radical joy in a way that inspires others to think differently and brings new opportunities to Arts Commons.

Inspiring: Your leadership style is energetic and empathetic, and you know how to bring incredible people along with you on a new journey. Whether speaking with colleagues or external partners, you can articulate a clear vision of how everyone can play an important role in Arts Commons' mission.

Values: You are aligned with our organizational values and are experienced in fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace. You demonstrate a commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, and the ability to serve as an exemplar for Arts Commons' values with internal and external stakeholders.

Collaborative: You recognize that the best results come from teamwork, and you are adept at working closely with all parts of a growing organization, regardless of department or role.

Passionate: You live and breathe the arts, and you are on a mission to impact the way in which the arts are presented and experienced in Calgary, Canada, and around the world. You want to come to work and feel inspired by those around you every day.

Inclusive: Your commitment to diversity advances our ability to foster civic dialogue through the arts without compromising on our commitment to high-quality experiences. You embrace an expansive and inclusive view of artistic expression and engagement.

Qualifications and Experience

A bachelor's degree or higher education level in venue, attractions, theatre, or arts management is an asset. Qualified candidates will have at least seven years of progressive experience at a leadership level with increasing responsibility at a performing arts, event, attraction, or convention centre. Candidates must possess expertise in and willingness to mentor and develop staff members to create a high performing team.

Compensation

Recognized as one of Alberta's top employers, Arts Commons offers a very competitive salary of \$120,000 - \$150,000, commensurate with experience. Benefits for full-time employees includes extended health and dental benefits, other insured benefits; short and long-term disability benefits; RRSP matching; parking; six weeks of flexible vacation time; flex days; and the quality of life that Calgary and Alberta have to offer.

Application Instructions

The Arts Commons Vice President, Programming search is led by Martin Bragg and Nicola Dawes of Martin Bragg & Associates. To apply in confidence please email your letter of interest and resume in Word or PDF format to **Martin Bragg & Associates** at artscommons@mbassociates.ca. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply and will receive an acknowledgement of their application. No phone calls please.

The review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA). Arts Commons and Martin Bragg & Associates are committed to an open and transparent hiring process and encourage applications from a diversity of communities. As part of Arts Commons' commitment to IDEA, we work to remove barriers in collaboration with a broad range of voices. Removing these barriers begins with the hiring process. To that end, we are committed to recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting qualified people of all backgrounds, and providing accessible employment practices. Requests for accommodation can be made at any stage of the recruitment process, and applicants are asked to make their accommodation needs known.

It is the unique contributions of all our people at Arts Commons that drive our success. We are committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination for everyone, and we will continue to work to ensure that our teams reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Arts Commons acknowledges that we are gathered on Treaty 7 territory, the original home of the Blackfoot Confederacy, comprised of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kanai First Nations; the Stoney Nakoda, comprised of the Chiniki, Wesley, and Bearspaw First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. This territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. The confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers acted as a traditional gathering space for these Treaty 7 nations. As Arts Commons is located on this traditional territory, we join in this spirit of gathering and with respect for these First Nations.