Executive Director

Minnesota Fringe · Job Description

Position at a glance

Reports to	Board of Directors
Supervises	Year-round staff plus seasonal staff and contractors
Status	Full-time, exempt
Location	Minneapolis, MN, in-person & hybrid
Salary	$75,000-$90,000 plus benefits
Target start	February 2027, or earlier depending on candidate

About Minnesota Fringe

Minnesota Fringe (MN Fringe) connects adventurous artists with adventurous audiences by creating open, supportive forums for free and diverse artistic expression. As the producer of the largest performing arts festival in the Midwest, MN Fringe fills tens of thousands of seats each summer with work by more than 1,000 artists across hundreds of performances and presents year-round programming that helps artists take bold risks and develop new ideas. A small year-round staff grows to nearly 100 seasonal hires at festival time, supported by more than 300 volunteers and a community of Fringe with Benefits members.

The role

The Executive Director is Fringe's chief executive. They set MN Fringe’s vision and direction, safeguard its financial health, drive the fundraising that makes the festival possible, and lead a skilled staff that runs festival operations day to day, while keeping the Board of Directors informed through its governance and oversight role. This is a leadership role rather than a production role: staff manage artist services, programming logistics, and technical production, and the Executive Director gives them the resources, structure, and support to succeed.

Key responsibilities

Percentages are approximate and will shift with the festival calendar.

1. Financial stewardship and compliance (about 25%)

- Build the annual budget around planned programming and maintain a cash forecast that keeps expenses within policy thresholds.
- Complete or supervise monthly and quarterly reconciliations, with notes explaining changes and budget-to-actual variances; deliver them to the Finance Committee at least one week before each board meeting.
- Enforce internal controls and manage fiscal sponsor relationships according to agreements and policy.
- Oversee preparation and timely filing of the Form 990 and all tax reporting, review it with the Finance Committee, and keep Fringe compliant with 501(c)(3) and liability requirements.
- Manage payroll and employment relationships, including correct W-2 and 1099 classification.

2. Fundraising and revenue (about 25%)

- Set and carry out Fringe's fundraising strategy across individual giving, institutional giving, events, and sponsorships.
- Lead grant strategy with support from the Board, staff ,and/or contracted staff.
- Steward relationships with individual donors, foundations, and sponsors, and grow overall giving capacity.
- Manage the Five Fifths fundraiser and other fundraising events.
- Ensure gifts are accurately tracked, acknowledged, and reported.
- Work with the Community Liaison to maintain goodwill with local businesses in festival zones.

3. Board partnership and strategy (about 15%)

- Set meeting agendas with the Board President and report on activities, finances, and urgent issues.
- Work with committee chairs to set goals, priorities, and timelines.
- Lead long-term strategic planning with the Board and communicate plans to staff and funders.
- Plan for leadership succession with the Board.

4. Staff leadership (about 20%)

- Design the organizational structure; hire, supervise, evaluate, and set compensation for direct reports.
- Delegate effectively, support professional development, and build a culture of trust and accountability.
- Hold regular staff meetings focused on Fringe Festival goals.
- Maintain clear staff policies and procedures.
- Hire and coordinate seasonal contractors, including accessibility services, photographers, and videographers.

5. Festival and community oversight (about 15%)

- Select and book venues; negotiate rental rates, schedules, and contracts; and share confirmed venues with the insurer, staff, and Board.
- Support the Artist Liaison in programming venues and performance schedules and champion a diverse mix of artists.
- Develop marketing/communications strategy and oversee implementation, ensuring brand clarity and consistency across all stakeholder communications and platforms, including website, newsletters, and social media.
- Serve as Fringe's primary spokesperson; develop and distribute press releases and announcements.
- Oversee audience, artist, and volunteer evaluation surveys.

Qualifications

Required

- Five or more years of leadership experience in a nonprofit, arts, festival, or theater organization, including budget management and staff supervision.
- A successful fundraising and grant writing track record, with specific examples and amounts you can share.
- Strong financial skills, including ownership of financial statements and reconciliations, budgeting, cash forecasting, and internal controls.
- HR and payroll experience, including employee development and an understanding of W-2 and 1099 requirements.
- Experience overseeing the preparation and review of the Form 990.
- Experience working with a board of directors, and clear, confident communication with staff, funders, artists, and the press.

Preferred

- A degree in business, arts administration, nonprofit management, or a related field, or equivalent experience
- Familiarity with the Twin Cities arts community

The ideal candidate may also have strengths in

Digital management and recordkeeping. In the near term, the Executive Director may help with:

- Working with the Data Steward to build the ticketing system
- Processing and reconciling ticketing data
- Website updates and maintenance
- Overseeing the organization's CRM

Compensation and benefits

Salary range of $75,000-$90,000 depending on experience, plus benefits: health insurance & dental (currently 70% employer paid), paid time off and professional development. The Executive Director is

encouraged to pursue training and professional development as budget and schedule allow, and is evaluated annually by the Board.

How to apply

Send a resume and a cover letter describing your interest in Minnesota Fringe and your fundraising and financial leadership experience to Board@FringeFestival.org with your Name and “Executive Director” in the subject line by Monday, November 30, 2026. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. First round interviews will be on Zoom. A writing sample and references will be requested along with final in-person interviews.

Research shows some people hesitate to apply unless they meet every qualification. If this role excites you and your experience doesn't match every point, we encourage you to apply.

Equal opportunity

Minnesota Fringe is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome applicants of all backgrounds and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status. We are committed to building a team that reflects the diverse artists and audiences we serve. If you need an accommodation during the application process, contact Board@FringeFestival.org.