



**Near West Theatre**  
**Development Director**  
Job Description & Background

Near West Theatre has launched a major stage of development as it meets the opportunities of inhabiting its own, newly constructed 25,000 square foot building in the Gordon Square Arts District (grand opening held 2/28/15). New sources of income must be secured to continue to support the theatre, including raising a cash reserve of \$150,000 to ensure operating strength and flexibility, increase earned income through small touring performances, partnerships and space rentals, growing the endowment and expanding the base of corporate, foundation, government and individual donors. Opportunities abound as a result of the Gordon Square Arts District capital campaign that garnered \$30 million (of which \$7.3 million was dedicated to Near West Theatre's project). Through this campaign, Near West Theatre has new investors who want to see the organization soar and succeed. Relationships with these new donors and those who have been part of the 38 year history need more cultivation and planning to ensure long-term engagement.

**ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Based on the Near West Side of Cleveland, Ohio, Near West Theatre has a unique identity as an intergenerational theatre where people of all ages work side by side, onstage and off. It prides itself on providing innovative, socially relevant musicals with casts of 35 to 65 people while maintaining affordable ticket prices so as to encourage audiences from all backgrounds.

Through its intensive community-building process, Near West Theatre nurtures long-lasting relationships that carry on beyond the walls of the theater. This process involves participants in developing the capacity to express themselves freely, to take risks within a group, to identify feelings and observations, and to make connections between their own life experiences and emotions and those of the piece being produced.

Near West Theatre champions inclusion defined as “fostering an open and affirming environment; maintaining affordability; acknowledging disabilities and special needs; honoring differences in race, culture, economic background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, age, skill, mental health, physical ability, experience, education, and size.” Participants of economic means are in relationship with those who are struggling to make ends meet. This intersection of difference is the heart of Near West Theatre.

Near West Theatre is professionally directed and designed. The technical elements of the production are then turned over to volunteers, many of them teens and young adults who receive training to work on backstage crews. It involves entire families and members of the community in the implementation of support activities with each production (concessions/gift shop sales, box office, and ushering). All actors at Near West Theatre are volunteers.

**MISSION:** Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through transformational theatre arts experiences.

**VALUES:** Love, inclusion, integrity, creativity, activism, and continuity.

**HISTORY:** Near West Theatre was founded in 1978 as a summer youth theatre program in response to vandalism, violence and substance abuse by teenagers and to provide adults with a way to see young people as contributing members of the community. In 1983, it expanded its programming to include adults.

For 36 years, Near West Theatre rented the un-air-conditioned, inaccessible third floor ballroom of St Patrick's Club Building on the Near West Theatre side of Cleveland. In February, 2015, Near West Theatre completed the construction of a \$7.3 million, debt-free, 25,000 square foot theater and community center in the Gordon Square Arts District. Using a highly energy efficient design that incorporates elements of the European *Passivhaus* method and a full solar roof, Near West Theatre opened its new home to the community on February 28, 2015. In its new home, Near West Theatre has been able to increase its impact in the community, expand its programs previously limited by its rental space, and diversify its programming and services.

Near West Theatre offers year-round programs that provide children, teens, and adults with opportunities to perform, to develop peer and mentoring relationships, and to explore and develop skills. Programs are designed to involve the greatest number of participants which is why the vehicle of musical theater is most often used. Near West Theatre has grown to become home to many who seek a safe place in which to grow, learn and be responsible participants in their community.

**GORDON SQUARE ARTS DISTRICT:** Since 2002, the economic and social impact of this growing arts district – and of the cooperation among three non-profits which came together to form the district – has been felt in Cleveland's Detroit Shoreway neighborhood and beyond. Near West Theatre remains an active partner in the implementation of Gordon Square Arts District's Master Plan, created in 2014.

**BUDGET AND STAFF:** Near West Theatre has an annual operating budget of approximately \$950,000 (28% earned and 72% contributed) and completed its 38th season this past July, 2016. The theater has 8 full time and 3 part-time staff members. Near West Theatre contracts with more than 50 professional designers/artists/musicians annually and its casts and crews are all volunteers.

**Key Responsibilities:**

The Development Director is a member of the business team that supports and carries out Near West Theatre's mission and expands on its 38 years of operational strength. The Development Director works with the Executive Director and Board of Trustees to build the organization's capacity in all areas of fund development to solidify fiscal strength.

### Key Responsibilities Include:

#### **Fundraising Management:**

- In collaboration with the Executive Director, develop and carry out a three-year development plan. Receive the endorsement of the Development Committee of the Board for annual fundraising plans and proposed targets
- Raise operating revenue (\$950K+) and cash reserve through new and established campaigns
- Draft and otherwise create two annual appeal campaigns for individual fundraising each year
- Author development and fundraising materials such as grant requests and corporate proposals ranging from \$1K-\$250K
- Develop and implement a monthly donor program
- Ensure accurate and timely reports to all funding sources
- Oversee NWT's Greater Cleveland Community Shares campaign: oversee points, ensure employee participation, attend meetings, serve as NWT staff contact for shares, etc.
- Research/identify new fundraising prospects
- Assist in creating the yearly operational income budget
- Develop a yearly fundraising calendar to track fundraising efforts, deadlines, and reporting responsibilities
- Serve as chief liaison to contracted Special Events Coordinator
- Other duties as assigned

#### **Donor Cultivation and Donor Recognition:**

- Work with the Executive Director, Board President and Development Committee to network externally to promote and steward key donors including foundations, corporations, community organizations and individuals. Cultivate donors and their growth/placement in the continuum of giving
- Produce all donor acknowledgment letters, and develop other opportunities to recognize donors
- Plan and implement an annual donor reception/ annual meeting
- Create and maintain development and acknowledgment policies and procedures

#### **Major Gift and Planned Gift Management:**

- Create and implement a major donor program, working to cultivate and solicit gifts from high-level donors
- Create and implement a Planned Gift program

#### **Board Governance:**

- Partner with Development Committee to design and implement long-term fund-raising that identifies planned giving/legacy gift prospects
- Serve as staff liaison to the Board and to the Development Committee
- Assist Executive Director and Board President in communicating with the Board of Trustees by creating and managing board materials and staff support for meetings
- Assist Governance Committee, as appropriate

**Advocacy:**

- Become knowledgeable on current political issues related to organization's mission
- Create and/ or maintain relationships with local, state and federal political figures, in partnership with the Executive Director
- Maintain contact with legislators during/ after budget time or other major projects, thanking them for their efforts or asking for support

**Management Responsibilities:**

None at this time.

**Reporting Relationships:**

Position reports to the General Manager and Executive Director.

**Key Capabilities:**

- 5+ years' experience in major individual, corporate, foundation and government fundraising, including grant writing,
- Excellence in writing and effective communication skills, Proven experience in partnering with and organizing a diverse, creative group of people to successfully accomplish specific goals within a limited period of time,
- Demonstrated skills in the following environments: Windows, Word, Excel (mail merges, etc.), constituent/non-profit tracking database systems (Filemaker), email and internet,
- Flexibility in schedule to work evenings or weekends if project at hand necessitates,
- Detail-oriented professional who can plan and implement complex tasks while managing every-day business tasks such as filing, organizing, etc.,
- Capable of regularly meeting deadlines in a fast-paced, multi-project environment.
- Excellent listening skills required
- Eagerness to share information and ideas with colleagues to achieve excellent results,
- Sense of humor and adaptability to maintain a congenial working environment,
- High motivated to work alone or in collaboration with others.
- Able to delegate to and collaborate with other staff members and volunteers as needed to ensure successful completion of projects.

**COMPENSATION:** Near West Theatre offers a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. This is a full-time, exempt level position.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Masters or a B.A., with a minimum of five years' experience in the field. A prior knowledge of theatre or non-profit management is preferred, but is not a requirement.

**PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:** Must be able to work in an open office environment. Requires the ability to sit and be stationary for prolonged periods of time, normal or corrected vision and manual dexterity sufficient to perform work on a personal computer and other office equipment such as a copy machine and computer printer.

If interested, please send cover letter, resume, references, and salary requirements to: Near West Theatre, ATTN: Human Resources Department 6702 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44102. Email: [hr@nearwesttheatre.org](mailto:hr@nearwesttheatre.org)

Position will remain open until filled. No phone calls, please. Near West Theatre is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment where a variety of backgrounds, cultures, orientations, ideas, and talents can flourish.