

GIORDANO DANCE CHICAGO

(johr-DAH-no)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY

PLEASE APPLY BY APRIL 24, 2023

CreativeEvolutions.com/Giordano

“Giordano is, and always will be,
American jazz dance royalty
- *Chicago Tribune*

Who We Are

Chicago’s iconic dance company is celebrating 60 years of boundary expanding jazz dance! Giordano Dance Chicago (GDC)– America’s original jazz dance company – is an integral part of Chicago’s vibrant performing arts community. From our origins in Founder, Gus Giordano’s original school in Evanston, IL, to our current incarnation as a world-class dance company, GDC boasts over a half-century of worldwide performances (28 countries, 47 states, and more than 1,300 cities), and our imprint on the art form of jazz

dance is far-reaching and significant. For 38 years, GDC has been under the Artistic Leadership of Nan Giordano who is responsible for commissioning numerous ground breaking works, the mentoring of hundreds of young dancers and choreographers, and the development of the Nan Giordano Certification Program®(NGCP®). The Program, which offers multi-level instruction and certification in the proprietary Giordano Technique, has certified dance educators in 36 states and 8 countries, all integrating the Technique into their college, high school, and studio programs.



GIORDANO DANCE CHICAGO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH



Each Spring, GDC's *Jazz Dance/Science & Health Program* teaches elementary school anatomy and nutrition through a dance-centric program in the science classroom. In 2022, the program brought 250 classes to hundreds of students in four under-resourced elementary schools, third to fifth grade, all taught by GDC dancers.

Our Mission:

- Giordano Dance Chicago illuminates beauty and invigorates the world with deep connections.
- We create and present innovative jazz dance choreography, often redefining and expanding the very definition of jazz dance and bring this invaluable American artform to audiences and students of all ages and from all ethnic backgrounds. GDC is dedicated, also, to the preservation and promotion of the Giordano Technique. Whether on the stage or in the classroom, we strive to enrich lives through dance.
- The value that Giordano Dance Chicago brings to its local, national, and international communities is the universal and life-affirming experience of witnessing dance that is powerful, passionate, elegant, and celebratory.



*Nan Giordano,
Artistic Director*

Our Core Values

Legacy

GDC honors its history of presenting exuberant jazz dance, furthering the Giordano technique, embracing innovation to guide artistic expression, and acknowledging and celebrating the cultures and traditions that provide the foundation of this work.

Diversity & Inclusion

Art is meant to be seen, shared, and performed by all. We at GDC have made a commitment to be inclusive in all that we do through fostering the communities of dancers, students, audience members, donors, staff and board members who make up our family while continuously working to serve people of all backgrounds through our ongoing commitment to artistic excellence, inclusivity, and equity.

Community

GDC values the power of collaboration, respect, and integrity to promote performances, education, and partnerships across local, national, and international dance communities.

Innovation

GDC embraces change for growth. We operate the organization by thoughtfully and fearlessly incorporating bold, innovative, and occasionally disruptive approaches to programming and leadership processes. Our intention is to lead our field.

Diversity | Equity | Inclusion | Access

Giordano Dance Chicago recognizes that its commitment to DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, and ACCESS is ever fluid, without end, and critical to our longevity. Hence, we:

- honor the DIVERSITY of the art form of American jazz dance, champion its complicated history of cultural integration, and illuminate its evolution from African traditions to its present incarnation as complex, vibrant, and multi-veined.
- celebrate the DIVERSITY of humanity in our audiences, supporters, dancers, staff, and boards.
- endeavor to UNIFY different races, ethnicities, ages, genders, gender identities, physical abilities, and socio-economic statuses in all we do.
- nurture internal and external environments steeped in EQUITABLE treatment of and OPPORTUNITY for all people.
- infuse respect and empathy into a welcoming and safe environment where INCLUSION is manifested in our policies, practices, programs, and procedures.
- create opportunities for those with physical, financial, or other barriers and provide equal ACCESS to the beauty, power, and life-affirming experience that jazz dance embodies.

**Watch these videos to learn more about our history, artistic work,
and to get a sense of our company!**





What We Do

In 60 years as an artistic leader and innovator, Giordano Dance Chicago – one of the longest running jazz dance companies in the world - has contributed greatly to the health of Chicago's performing arts community.

Our contributions include: a vast repertoire of more than 180 original works; the mentoring of new and emerging choreographers; the commissioning of innumerable musical scores and production designers; the education of tens of thousands of under-resourced public school and community students; the creation of generations of professional dancers; and performances to millions of audience members worldwide.

Several major factors combine to be the engine behind all programs and which reflect the organization's mission and vision. First, the legacy of founder Gus

Giordano suffuses the organization, its mission and its daily activities and cannot be over-emphasized. Second, the leadership of Artistic Director Nan Giordano and Executive Director Michael McStraw has challenged and transformed the organization to continuously raise its standards, take artistic risks, and expand its influence worldwide. Third, GDC recruits, hires, and fosters dance artists who possess more than just superlative technique and experience, but who also convey passion, humanity, and elegance. Lastly, ours is always a passionate and visceral offering which connects profoundly with our audience.

Our mission provides for strong educational programs and services, including teaching the Giordano Technique in residencies in college and university dance programs, as well as the Nan Giordano Certification Program® which offers multi-level instruction and certification in the proprietary Giordano Technique. GDC's *Jazz Dance/Science & Health Program*, established in 2006, teaches elementary-school anatomy and nutrition curriculum through a dance-centric program in the science classroom over the course of 8 weeks.

**GIORDANO DANCE CHICAGO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH**



GDC purchased the Hermon Baptist Church in Lincoln Park/OldTown in January 2018 to serve as its new headquarters. Initial plans were paused due to the pandemic, but the new structure will house a dance school, multiple dance studios, offices, and an informal performance space. The State of Illinois recently appropriated \$3 million for GDC to support this transformational project.

The GDC team currently consists of eight staff members, varying interns and contractors, sixteen dancers (ten in the main company and six in Giordano II) company dancers, and nineteen board members. The Board is led by Kip Helverson of Smith's Men's Store, who is

completing his fourth year as Board President. Giordano's annual budget currently ranges between \$1.3 and \$1.5 million.

How this Search will Operate – Values, Communication, and Compensation

Overall Estimated Timeline:

- Application Period: **March 22, 2023 to April 24, 2023**
After the end of the application period, please reach out if you are still interested and we will let you know if there is still an opportunity for consideration.
- Initial Candidate Meetings & Semi-Finalist Interviews: **April 3, 2023 to May 15, 2023**
- Finalist Interviews On-Site in Chicago, IL: **June 5, 2023 to June 10, 2023**
- Employment Begins: **Summer 2023**

After an [initial submission of interest](#), selected candidates will be invited for a virtual Candidate Meeting with Kim Davis, Calida Jones and/or Doug Clayton from Creative Evolutions. Following the initial meetings, a group of candidates will be advanced to virtual Semi-Finalist interviews with an Industry Panel of experts in the dance and nonprofit leadership sectors. Semi-finalist candidates will all be compensated \$250 for their participation. Candidates who advance as Finalists will be invited to come to Chicago the first week of June to interview with the full team at Giordano Dance Chicago, and will be compensated an additional \$1,000 plus reimbursement of their reasonable travel, lodging, and food expenses for their trip.

This search process is rooted in values shared by Giordano Dance Chicago and Creative Evolutions, and will include the following elements:

- It is important to us that you are treated with respect and are appreciated for the value you create for Giordano Dance Chicago through your participation in this process. Candidates who do not advance will be notified promptly and given feedback on their materials or candidacy relative to the rest of the candidate pool.
- Throughout the process we commit to active communication with you, so you are never wondering what is happening or where things stand with your application or the hiring process.
- It is important that the full company, including the Artistic Director, staff, Board, dancers, and other key stakeholders, participate in the selection process. Final candidates will have the opportunity to come on site and meet all staff and Board before a hiring decision is made.

In addition, Creative Evolutions is engaging a paid Industry Panel of three peer dance and non-profit management specialists who will be collaborating with Creative Evolutions to design and conduct the Semi-Finalist Interviews as part of the process. These peers will recommend up to three candidates who advance to Finalist consideration, and will also commit to be available for up to three calls each for the selected Executive Director during their first year of employment at Giordano Dance Chicago. This ongoing support is intended to strengthen Giordano Dance Chicago as an organization and to provide strong collegial or mentorship support to the new Executive Director during the transition period. The outgoing Executive Director, Michael McStraw, will also be available to the new Executive Director for consultation during the transition period as needed.

What We Are Looking for in Our New Executive Director

Our next Executive Director will first and foremost be someone who can match the energy and enthusiasm for the rest of us at GDC and who sees their role as strategically and tactically elevating the company to the next level in Chicago and nationally. They will be inspired by the legacy of the last 60 years and excited by the possibilities for our future.

They may not currently live in Chicago, but they will have a clear ability to learn about new people and a new city and gain an appreciation of what makes Chicago distinct. On the other hand, our Executive Director will also have a clear national and international perspective that will be invaluable to us as we expand our touring work and national presence. Whether they have been working in dance their whole life or are new to the field, they will be motivated by being an active member of the dance community at all levels.

Human Expectations and Personal Values

Our Executive Director will be someone who believes deeply in collaboration and who understands all the aspects and benefits of leading a group of passionate and creative individuals in a collaborative way. They will appreciate that collaboration works best coming from a perspective of kindness, understanding, camaraderie, and empathy, and that the practical benefits of excellent collaboration include greater efficiency and focus in completing activities, ease in solving problems more quickly, reduced confusion, and overall greater individual and collective pride in what is accomplished.

Our Executive Director will be even tempered and positive in their outlook, unflappable and even joyful in a fast moving, fast changing environment. They will be inspired by the talent and big hearts of everyone at GDC, and will take true care in seeking authentic ways to connect to the rest of the team in a way that respects each person's role, history, passions, and abilities. They will understand fully that as a jazz dance company, our DNA is that each voice is its own and that each voice should be heard.

Their personal identity and self-confidence will be very strong, informed by their own history dealing hands-on with the realities of production and non-profit management. They will not have any hesitation to determine their own opinions and make their perspectives very clear, but they also will see their own worth as strengthened by being part of a tight knit group of dedicated partners.

The Executive Director will also viscerally appreciate that the dancers are the most visible part of Giordano Dance Chicago, and, with the artistic leadership, are the heart and the purpose of the company. Understanding how to support the artists so they can function at their highest levels, in ways both practical and human, is the bedrock of the Executive Director's values and heart. They will be appreciative and understanding of the full lives of the dancers, and how structures and decisions of the company impact not only the art, but also their health, financial stability, and quality of life.

Where Our Executive Director will be Exceptional

The next Executive Director at Giordano Dance Chicago will be a **truly exceptional non-profit team and resource manager**, who has a masterful ability to connect granular decision making and uses of time and money to big-picture strategies and trajectories for the company. More than anyone else at GDC, they will be an expert at setting thoughtful and specific prioritization of activities, based on an understanding of the ambitious artistic vision of the company, its growth trajectory, and very real limits on the day-to-day resources of money and staff time.

Partnership, delegation and empowerment of others will be the basis of the Executive Director's work. With the tight knit and experienced staff team, and an engaged and dedicated but volunteer Board of Directors, the Executive Director will center their work on a clear understanding of the capacity of every member of the team, as well as their perspectives, experience, and abilities. Then the Executive Director will guide each person on where to focus their efforts so that GDC works together in a way that moves the organization forward. For a smaller organization, avoiding duplication and time traps is essential and the Executive Director will direct resources and challenge habitual processes if necessary to create forward movement by helping everyone to work 'smarter not harder'.

What Our Executive Director Will Handle Directly

The Giordano Dance Chicago team brings many capabilities to the table, but there are specific tasks and responsibilities that our Executive Director will handle personally. In these areas, established expertise and the ability to self-motivate will allow our Executive Director to excel without significant support from others.

These include:

- **Financial management.** Chicago Transom Partners and other members of the staff handle the mechanics of accounting and financial processing, but the Executive Director maintains responsibility for the financial health and decision-making in the organization. This includes handling both long-term and short-term budget strategies. They also directly handle processes for the Board Finance Committee, audits, cash flow projections, payroll projections and approvals, fund management, and oversight on accounting coding to ensure clear financial pictures.
- **Communications.** Clear, comprehensive, and intentional sharing of information throughout the organization and with external stakeholders is a great strength. They are very responsive to everyone and appreciate the most effective ways to communicate with different people. They also can anticipate concerns or needs and know how to communicate proactively.
- **Fundraising.** Working closely with the Director of Development, Board, and Artistic Director, they need to prioritize personal long-term quality relationship building with donors and to support the structuring of internal development systems that can allow the development staff and board to be efficient and effective in their work. While taking the lead from the Director of Development, the Executive Director will spend a significant part of their time on fundraising,

and will be the primary contact for many major donors and institutional partners.

- **Centering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.** Giordano Dance Chicago is a current Institutional Collaborator of [Enrich Chicago](#), “an arts led movement to undo racism”, and the Executive Director will be one of the GDC representatives in that work. The Executive Director will provide leadership and an engaged, continually growing perspective on how to enhance equity in all decision making and how to create thoughtful, intentional, long-term plans to expand diversity of identity and viewpoints throughout the organization. They will appreciate the importance of how these priorities impact day-to-day decisions and also relate to the long term viability of the company. They will also have sensitivity to position-based, tenure-based, and identity-based power dynamics and will know how to lead in DEIA areas and how to step back and release some of the power and control associated with being the Executive Director.
- **Staff management.** The Executive Director and Artistic Director are together responsible for HR policies and responsibilities, capacity management, defining roles and responsibilities, bringing people into or out of the organization, and maintaining open and honest dialogue with all team members for continual refinements of focus and operational improvements.
- **Partnership with board leadership.** The Giordano Dance Chicago board is active and engaged. To be effective, they need the Executive Director’s recommendations for clear direction and goals for achievement that link board member efforts to successes for the organization and the artists. The Executive Director will also focus on real-time collaboration with appropriate board members as the primary dynamic, rather than simply ‘reporting out at meetings’.

What Our Executive Director Needs to Understand

Working with and alongside the rest of the team, there are important areas where we do not expect our Executive Director to be more knowledgeable and capable than other people in Giordano Dance Chicago, but where we do need them to have enough expertise to collaborate with us effectively.

These include:

- **Data management for a non-profit organization with fewer than ten staff.** While the Executive Director does not need to be doing data entry or managing data systems on their own, they need a clear understanding of how data systems work and can be leveraged efficiently to the company’s benefit. They will have a clear grasp of how to identify which data needs to be captured and utilized, which data needs to flow easily to different parts of the organizations, and which data may not be worth the time and energy to manage at this capacity level.
- **Awareness of the national dance field.** They will have (or will rapidly gain) a clear understanding of where Giordano’s particular artistic work fits into the national jazz dance and touring dance fields. The Artistic Director and touring staff lead GDC’s national engagement, but the Executive Director will connect national positioning and strategy to GDC’s operational and financial focus, and represent GDC in the national and local dance communities.

- **Legacy dynamics.** They will support the development of a specific strategy around how to enhance and leverage the dynamics of a longstanding and respected company in its 60th year, led continuously by the founding family's artistic vision, but which is on a growth trajectory looking towards an expanding future.
- **Physical building transition and capital campaigns.** The Board of Directors plans to engage a project manager to oversee the major building renovation, and a capital campaign counsel for the building capital campaign. The Executive Director will not have to manage these directly, but will be the primary person responsible for interfacing the daily activities of GDC with these major multi-year projects, including navigating donor and funder relationships around the capital campaign and shifts of short-term office needs during the renovation. Ultimately, once the building renovation is nearing completion, the Executive Director will be responsible to establish the staffing, procedural, and maintenance systems to activate, support, and care for the building in a sustainable way.
- **Legal and contractual oversight.** The Executive Director will be comfortable negotiating contracts with vendors or presenters if necessary and adjusting standard agreements for implementation by other members of the staff. While they do not need direct legal expertise, they will be confident in understanding potential legal issues or pitfalls for a non-profit cultural organization.

How We Will Support Our New Executive Director

We know that the arrival of a new leader at Giordano Dance Chicago means everyone will need to adapt to new ways of working and a different collaborative partnership. As we discover that together, it is important that our new Executive Director feels supported and engaged from all sides of the company.

To that end, Giordano Dance Chicago commits to providing:

- Annual salary begins at \$100,000, with an annual Board-approved performance bonus of \$10,000 based on mutually agreed commitments, and the potential for additional strategic bonuses linked to organizational revenue growth.
- Benefits include a 25% contribution to individual healthcare premiums and paid time off including standard holidays (plus the day before Thanksgiving), two weeks of discretionary paid vacation plus an additional 1-2 weeks of paid team vacation in late December.
- Office equipment and dedicated space within the current open floor plan office space shared with the entire staff team. The work schedule is flexible and may vary based on artistic events, fundraising meetings, and community responsibilities at times and locations in Chicago. Some travel outside of Chicago will be necessary as well and will be paid for by Giordano Dance Chicago.
- An onboarding and transition plan, developed by the team and ready to adapt to the needs of the Executive Director.
- Commitment to regular meetings with the Board President and Executive Committee. The Board is also appointing a Transition Committee specifically to support the period moving to a new leadership structure during 2023.
- Paid project support for both the Building Renovation project and counsel for the Building Capital Campaign, beyond the full time operational and development staff.
- Mentorship or Advisory support during the first year with Creative Evolutions and three industry peers (see the Search Process above).

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Giordano Dance Chicago is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take action to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment for any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

How to Express Your Interest

Email Giordano@CreativeEvolutions.com. This email comes to Kim Davis, Calida Jones and Doug Clayton, who will respond to you to confirm receipt and who will stay in communication with you consistently throughout the process. **You will not at any time go more than two weeks without an update on where you are in the search process.**



**Kim, Calida, and Doug
With Creative Evolutions**



With your email, please include:

- Your resume. The resume can be of any length and style, though we encourage you to adjust it as appropriate to help us see how your history and experience connect to the current circumstances, intentions, and hopes for Giordano Dance Chicago.
- Instead of providing a standard cover letter, please provide a written response of one to two pages that includes answers to the following questions:
 - Who are you and what is most exciting for us to know about you?
 - Why are you interested specifically in working with Giordano Dance Chicago at this particular moment in your career?
 - How have your experiences given you particular expertise in prioritizing short- and long-term activities in an ambitious mid-sized non-profit organization?
 - How would you balance your focus on direct support to the artists and art-making, relative to your focus on the infrastructure needs of a lean non-profit organization?
 - What makes you exceptional as a team leader and in your abilities to build foundations of trust and mutual support in fast-moving teams?
- If you wish, feel free to share how you self-identify so we can honor your preferences and perspectives in our communications with you!

If possible, please have any attachments be included in pdf format.

If you have any questions about the position or your submission, please feel free to e-mail and we will be happy to discuss with you at any time!

Giordano@CreativeEvolutions.com.

About Creative Evolutions

As the Executive Search support team for Giordano Dance Chicago, we believe that we can do better. We believe that it is our moral excitement to be responsive to one another as human beings, and to continually adapt to the humanity around us. We believe that the world is constantly changing around us, and we are most fulfilled and healthy when we are growing together to meet the moment.

Our purpose is more than to provide Executive Search or Management Consulting services. We are centered in building a stronger and more interconnected ecosystem, where individuals and organizations are linked together in mutually supportive ways and where the advances of one become the advances of all. All of our processes and recommendations come back to these concepts of ecosystem building, new adaptations that respond to the moment, and putting human beings first.

In Executive Search support, Creative Evolutions has pioneered new processes that include commitments to active communication, paying semi-finalist and finalist candidates for their time, engaging paid industry panels as part of the evaluation process, building onboarding and mentorship into hiring, and structuring executive positions around healthy organizational team dynamics.

www.CreativeEvolutions.com