



Position Profile: Director of External Affairs & Communications

May 19, 2026

About ARTSmemphis

Since 1963, ARTSmemphis has served as the central backbone of Memphis' arts ecosystem—raising funds collectively, distributing grants strategically, and connecting artists, arts organizations, donors, businesses, community partners and civic leaders around a shared commitment to culture and creativity as a public good.

ARTSmemphis is the Mid-South's primary arts funder, having distributed more than \$100 million since its founding. 90 artists and nonprofit organizations (primarily arts focused in Shelby County) receive annual grant funding totaling \$3.4M, paired with other services to support a thriving arts community.

ARTSmemphis supports the arts to strengthen the community and envisions a thriving, sustainable Memphis arts community where all people have access to participate, artists flourish, organizations flourish, and the city's cultural identity drives pride and connection. As one of the oldest, largest and most respected United Arts Funds in the nation, ARTSmemphis has a \$4.7M annual budget and a \$28M endowment. ARTSmemphis provides stability and coordination in an evolving arts landscape, ensuring that resources are deployed where they are most impactful and that the arts remain accessible, representative, and deeply embedded in the life of the community.

About the Position

ARTSmemphis is pleased to add this new leadership role at a pivotal moment in the organization's 63-year history. The Director of External Affairs & Communications will spearhead the Awareness and Education pillar of the new strategic plan, with oversight of communications and emphasis on partnerships, public positioning, and community engagement to drive revenue and arts participation. This position will be key to shaping ARTSmemphis' evolving role in the community and in the field.

This position will ensure civic leaders, donors, and community members truly understand and appreciate the role of ARTSmemphis, the value of the arts, the function the arts play in uplifting communities, and their fundamental importance to a healthy, vibrant city. |

The Director of External Affairs & Communications reports to the President & CEO and is part of the leadership team, working closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director of Development. The position serves as the primary point of contact for outsourced creative communications consulting firm that

develops and executes communications, marketing & PR strategy. Additionally, this position will lead the Awareness & Education committee.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Serve as a key leader of ARTSmemphis, with a visible presence in the Memphis community
- Understand and clearly articulate ARTSmemphis' mission, history, programs, values, and policies to stakeholders
- Own the evolution of and annual workplan for the Awareness & Education pillar
 - Translate strategic priorities into clear goals, timelines, and deliverables
 - Track outcomes and report progress to staff and Board
- Own the ARTSmemphis narrative, ensuring the voice is unified and inspiring across all channels
- Pursue national visibility opportunities including conferences and earned media

Partnerships & Civic Engagement

- Build partnerships with sports teams, civic groups, tourism partners, corporate entities, and other institutions to amplify ARTSmemphis' message
- Create external opportunities for ARTSmemphis to participate in civic discourse around arts, community health, talent retention, tourism, and economic vitality
- Coordinate tours, experience packages, and engagement opportunities for civic leaders, donors, and corporate partners
- Lead ARTSweek planning and external-facing activation and promotion in alignment with the strategic plan timeline
- Offer communications infrastructure opportunities for grantee partners to strengthen sector-wide visibility
- Own ARTSmemphis.org calendar strategy
 - Lead efforts to improve event calendar as a community resource
 - Increase usage, evaluate platform options, and implement enhancements
 - Ensure calendar efforts integrate with development and marketing initiatives (including longer-term possibilities such as app integration)
 - Ensure calendar is intuitive for users and readily adoptable by grantee partners and community members to maximize community participation

Communications, Brand Visibility, Public Awareness

- Strengthen ARTSmemphis' institutional voice and consistency across communications
- Build and document an annual communications plan
- Lead development of content that highlights impact stories and the value of the arts (neighborhoods, youth, economy, civic pride); ensure storytelling is both emotionally compelling and data-informed
- Partner across the organization to synthesize grantee partner content, organizational highlights and research sector priorities into inspiring, accessible stories that resonate with donors, partners and the public

- Own external communications including presentations, donor and prospect communications, website, social, e-mail for grantee partners and the organization along with developing texting platform
- Work alongside creative consulting firm to
 - Develop messaging, collateral, and engagement strategies that convert awareness into deeper participation
 - Grow ARTSmemphis' presence across social channels and distribution platforms
 - Coordinate proactive PR, media relationships, spokesperson prep

Required:

- **Experience & Expertise:** 6+ years of experience in external affairs, communications, marketing, public relations, or a related field, with a proven track record of executing strategies that drive awareness, engagement, and public support. Bachelor's degree in related field. Proficiency in Microsoft 365 tools including Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Experience using digital communications and creative content platforms.
- **Communication & Stakeholder Engagement:** Exceptional written, verbal, and public-speaking skills, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders including community members, donors, and board leadership. Skilled at translating complex topics into clear, compelling messaging.
- **Community & Mission Alignment:** Deep commitment to arts, culture, and the Memphis community, with a strong belief in equity, access, and community development. Experience in philanthropy, civic leadership, or nonprofit organizations, and familiarity with the local and regional arts ecosystem. Serves as a credible, visible, and inspiring public spokesperson.
- **Leadership & Collaboration:** Strategic, entrepreneurial leader who is goal-oriented, adaptable, and proactive. A natural connector who can work both independently and collaboratively, leading initiatives from concept through completion with a positive, solutions-driven mindset.
- **Project & Operational Management:** Strong project management skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities, deadlines, and stakeholders. Experience overseeing vendors (e.g., PR, design, digital) and working across digital platforms and analytics. Comfortable in a small, high-performing team environment—organized, reliable, and willing to contribute wherever needed.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Collaborative, low-ego approach with strong judgment in tone, messaging, and relationship management. Demonstrated ability to engage volunteers, civic leaders, and community partners effectively.

Compensation & Benefits

- Salary range starts at \$80,000 and is negotiable based on experience
- 401(k) and 401(k) company match up to 4%
- Insurance (ARTSmemphis covers 75% of health and dental), vision available, and life insurance covered.
- Paid time off (20 days)
- Paid sick time (7 per year plus one additional per year worked)
- 16 Paid holidays

- Parental leave
- Professional development opportunities + arts experiences

Work hours: While typical work hours are in person 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday, employee must be willing to handle flexible hours including occasional nights and weekends.

Note: This position description is not intended, and should not be construed to be, an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, skills, efforts or working conditions associated with the job. It is intended, however, to be an accurate summary of those principal job elements. This position may be required to perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

TO APPLY: Email resume and letter of interest careers@artsmemphis.org.

ARTSmemphis strives to build and sustain a diverse, inclusive, and equitable working and learning environment for all staff. ARTSmemphis provides equal opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, pregnancy, veteran status, military obligations, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by law.