

WBGO  
President & CEO  
Newark, New Jersey

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## President & CEO

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Newark, New Jersey

## About WBGO

A global leader in jazz radio and an iconic institution in Newark, WBGO seeks to educate, entertain and inspire the public by providing access and opportunity to engage with the highest-quality curated jazz and blues programming. WBGO believes that jazz in all its forms represents America's cultural gift to the world and is committed to connecting the vibrancy of the past, present and future with the music to a global audience, creating a community of jazz lovers.

WBGO reaches a weekly audience of more than 400,000 in the New York/New Jersey metro area via 88.3FM. Its streaming and social media activities reach hundreds of thousands more worldwide. Through programs such as *Jazz Night in America*, produced in partnership with NPR and Jazz at Lincoln Center, and WBGO's position as a content provider to NPR, its reach extends to millions more across the country and world. From its home base of Newark, New Jersey—the birthplace of Sarah Vaughan and the longtime home of saxophonist James Moody—America's leading jazz radio station, WBGO, has long been an anchor institution in community engagement through its partnerships, concerts, education and news programming.

The award-winning WBGO provides the following content and programming for its robust audience:

- **On Air Programs** - WBGO celebrates jazz, blues and classic soul and R&B, as well as delivering local news and NPR News.
- **Digital Content** - WBGO digital content includes the weekly music discovery list *Take Five*, in depth essays on jazz in *Deep Dive*, vibrant interview series in *The Pulse*, plus video from *Jazz Night in America*.
- **Podcasts** - Weekly music discovery is always part of the program on *The Checkout*, hosted by Simon Rentner. *SportsJam* features in-depth interviews with top athletes, coaches, reporters, authors and fans of the sports world.
- **Community** - WBGO gives listeners the opportunity to engage with local leaders via the monthly programs *Ask Governor Murphy*, *Newark Today* and WBGO's partnership with Free Press, *News Voices*.

The brainchild of an urban think tank whose members came together in Newark in the 1970s to effect change after the rebellion of 1967, WBGO has a rich and storied history. Marshalling an extraordinary group of city activists, and with the help of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, they established the first public radio station in New Jersey in 1979 when the Newark Public School System board transferred its underutilized broadcast license to them. WBGO was born as an independent, listener-supported, nonprofit, public radio station that would champion jazz as an American art form and woven into the fabric of Newark's rich cultural history.

Today, WBGO's daily broadcast can be easily identified by the passionate, knowledgeable and idiosyncratic on-air announcers, frequent live performances and on-air interviews with today's hottest jazz and blues artists. The station's drive-time news reports and weekly magazine program, the WBGO Journal, are recognized for their reporting excellence every year.

WBGO's studios are located in the heart of downtown Newark, New Jersey. The WBGO broadcast signal reaches nearly 20 million people, north to Rockland and Westchester Counties, NY and parts of Connecticut; south to Ocean County, NJ; east to Nassau County, NY and west to Morris County, NJ. The signal can be heard in all five boroughs of New York City. In addition, WBGO can be heard on the four New Jersey stations of New Jersey Public Radio, from midnight to 5 a.m.

For more information on WBGO, please visit [wbgo.org](http://wbgo.org).

## The Opportunity

The next President & CEO of WBGO will provide transformational, strategic and innovative leadership to guide and grow the organization's impact on the community of Newark, Greater New York, and beyond. In partnership with the 12 member Board of Trustees, the President & CEO will develop and achieve WBGO's short and long-term vision. The President & CEO will be a key force in ensuring WBGO's strength and contributions through the coming years.

The President & CEO will be a highly visible face of the organization and will represent WBGO in the business, government and civic communities in Newark, as well as nationally in the media field. The President & CEO will lead WBGO's staff of 60 to ensure they are working effectively to support and advance the mission and oversee an annual budget of \$6M.

Key metrics for success of this role include:

- Sustaining and increasing WBGO's status as the leading local, national and global source for jazz programming;
- Collaborating with educational and cultural organizations and across its local community and the communities in the NJ, NY, CT regions and beyond to identify and illuminate key interests and concerns to drive deep and sustained impact;
- Attracting new and retaining existing audiences on current platforms, while helping to develop new and emerging new media opportunities of service;
- Promoting WBGO as a beacon of diversity, inclusion and equity and as an organization that embraces and honors similarities and differences;
- Growing and building a sustainable financial model and adapting to funding challenges in public media, identifying new revenue sources and strategies while leading efforts to modernize and expand office and broadcast facilities; and
- Creating a high-performing organization to provide a strong foundation for change and sustainability in a rapidly transforming media environment.

## Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal qualities, skills and characteristics:

### Passion for the Mission

The next President & CEO brings a sincere passion for WBGO's mission as well as an appreciation for its rich history and belief in its future. This leader understands how empowering, educating, entertaining and connecting the community through music, inspiring stories and lifelong learning can enhance a community and the lives of its citizens. This leader will have an understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing public media, particularly the digital revolution and evolving audience/customer focus. This leader is innovative with the goal of helping WBGO expand its brand and reach and deepen its impact. The President & CEO is a strong, collaborative leader with a dedication to the mission and the ability to build a sense of shared purpose throughout the organization. It is imperative that the President & CEO leads by example and always stays true to the values of WBGO. Moreover, the ideal candidate is an individual of unquestioned integrity, ethics and values; someone who can be trusted without reservation.

## Strategic & Visionary Leadership

The President & CEO is a strategic and visionary leader with a solid understanding of the strategies needed to advance the work of a mission-based organization, from funding to mission delivery. This leader will envision, clearly define and then project WBGO's value proposition to the community. The President & CEO will naturally inspire the staff, Board and the organization's constituents to see where WBGO could, and should, be going and push the organization forward in a collaborative manner to drive deep sustainable change. An innovative leader, the successful candidate will offer creative ideas to adapt and diversify WBGO's offerings and programs to address the changing needs of its followers, while continuing to honor WBGO's deep history. The leader will have the ability to forge strategic partnerships with other arts and humanities partners to promote the arts and culture in Newark which spur community vibrancy and intercultural dialogue. Additionally, the President & CEO will be an inclusive leader who can embody and stay true to the values of WBGO's community-focused culture and be committed to a congenial and collaborative environment. The successful candidate is a transformational, results-oriented leader who is experienced at articulating and implementing a plan for increased impact. The President & CEO has the drive and passion to remain at the forefront of the sector and continues to develop new and unique opportunities to serve the mission.

## A Skilled Leader & Manager

The President & CEO will have the ability to lead and manage a complex organization. This leader will bring experience building and leading diverse, high-performing teams of the highest degree of professionalism and guiding team members' growth and development. The President & CEO will have a demonstrable commitment to a diverse and inclusive team environment, one that is able to establish priorities, goals and timelines to achieve quantifiable and qualitative outcomes. This leader will understand and implement best nonprofit management practices and planning, including compelling communication messages and effective marketing strategies, management succession, and most importantly, ensuring that overall day-to-day operations are aligned with strategic goals. The successful candidate understands the importance of a robust partnership with the Board and will ensure fiduciary responsibility, sound financial management practices and accountability to the Board. The President & CEO will also possess the knowledge and ability to ensure that the Board is achieving its primary responsibilities of best practice governance and fundraising.

## A Passionate Ambassador

The President & CEO is a high-energy, charismatic leader who will serve as an 'Ambassador' for WBGO by increasing collaboration with the community and boosting the organization's impact in Newark and beyond. This leader is a confident public speaker and a natural salesperson who inherently enjoys the external side of the role, serving as a jazz champion, working to inspire enthusiastic engagement and broader and deeper interest in the organization. The successful candidate will represent WBGO in the regional business, government and civic arenas and is comfortable, credible and effective at conveying WBGO's mission and vision to a broad range of constituents. The President & CEO believes deeply in building and nurturing a robust network of relationships to foster collaboration and partnerships to advance WBGO's mission. This leader enjoys fundraising and can enthusiastically convey the importance of an institution's work to existing and potential new funding sources including members, major donors, affiliates, foundations and government agencies. The President & CEO is entrepreneurial when thinking about how to best engage the next generation by utilizing technology. This leader will be a dynamic, diplomatic and effective communicator who will have or earn respect from the community as well as industry peers. The President & CEO will be credible and comfortable in front of multiple audiences, starting with authentic engagement with the Newark community musicians. The President & CEO will be a strong verbal and written communicator capable of leveraging multiple media platforms to advance the organization's mission and articulate its value proposition to a wide range of constituents.

## Champion for and Advocate of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The President & CEO will come to WBGO with expertise and proven results in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and a rich understanding of strategies that support cultural evolution on these issues. This leader will fully embrace and celebrate the richly diverse metropolitan areas WBGO serves. This leader will help WBGO develop tools to promote diversity, inclusion and engagement both internally and externally. This leader will have a thoughtful, empathic approach to DEI and will be known as an active listener and responsive leader throughout the organization and the broader community. The President & CEO will have the ability to motivate others to action in support of a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. This leader will be energized by the prospect of leading efforts to develop awareness, comfort and confidence to address equity.

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## Contact

Diversified Search/Koya Leadership Partners has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Cheryl Stevens, Denielle Pemberton-Heard, Alison Ranney and Andrew Wheeler are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express your interest in this role please email [wbgo@koyapartners.com](mailto:wbgo@koyapartners.com). All nominations, inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

For more information about The Diversified Search Group, click [here](#).

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### **WBGO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement:**

*At WBGO, we believe that diversity, inclusion and equity are integral to our success.*

*In order to have a healthy, successful workplace and provide our listening public with an experience that is of the highest-quality, our team members must be free to express their individuality. The WBGO environment must not only be free of all forms of discrimination but also celebrate the broadest possible spectrum of viewpoints, perspectives and backgrounds.*

*We celebrate both our similarities and our differences. We support organizations that share our commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity. At WBGO, our diversity is broad-based and stems from varying ethnicities, races, genders, sexual orientations, languages, nationalities and religions. All of these factors aid us as we strive for a workplace where team members can thrive as professionals as they provide an invaluable service to the community and to our listeners.*

*We consistently look inward at any barriers to the retention of women, those with racial and ethnically diverse backgrounds and members of LGBTQ groups. In conjunction with this process, we are participating in training and engaging in honest discourse regarding these issues. WBGO has a strong commitment to diversity in order to operate a superior organization that strives to be reflective of the communities in which we live and work.*