



*a sanctuary for the development of new musicals*

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**Position Profile**  
**Rhinebeck Writers Retreat**  
**Executive Director**

**OPPORTUNITY**

Rhinebeck Writers Retreat seeks an Executive Director to continue and expand support for musical theater writers developing new work. Under the leadership of our Founding Executive Director, Kathy Evans, RWR has contributed to the creation of new musicals by providing writers with the space and freedom to develop their work away from everyday pressures. After fourteen years in the role, Kathy has decided to turn Rhinebeck Writers Retreat over to a successor and will pursue personal projects. Kathy will remain with RWR for a transition period of several months, working with the new Executive Director through summer 2025. While a full-time commitment is required at certain times of the year, the Executive Director could take on other projects. RWR is open to reimagining various scenarios and welcomes dialogue about the role with promising candidates.

Rhinebeck Writers Retreat is in strong shape artistically and financially. A new Executive Director will provide creative leadership in two areas:

- Selecting and nurturing musical theater writing teams in our residencies and Triple R program. This includes the application and selection process, mentorship and advising for the selected teams, and maintenance of relationships with alumni writers as they continue to work on their RWR musicals or develop other work.
- Finding and cultivating new sources of support for RWR that will enable the organization to remain financially viable. Building on our excellent relationships with writers and our reputation for a high-quality developmental experience, the Executive Director will increase awareness of our work, strengthen relationships with existing donors and identify and cultivate new individual and institutional donors.

## **MISSION AND VALUES**

### **Mission**

The mission of Rhinebeck Writers Retreat is to provide a sanctuary for musical theatre writers to develop their musicals in the heart of the Hudson Valley, and to promote awareness for the creation of this uniquely American art form.

### **Values**

Rhinebeck Writers Retreat offers an environment which supports and encourages the creative development of new musical theater. We commit to being an inclusive community in all areas of our work, including the continued exploration and evolution of the musical theatre form. We believe that the inclusion of diverse people, ideas and stories enriches our insights and understanding of one another through the unique expressive possibilities of the musical theatre idiom.

## **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

In 2011, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat was created by Founding Executive Director Kathy Evans. She saw a need to give musical theatre writers the opportunity to gather in a bucolic setting in the Hudson Valley, live together in a home for one week, and focus solely on writing their musicals. A Board of Directors and a “Sounding Board” of artistic advisors were formed and the organization received 501(c)3 status in 2012. Since that first year, there have been 8 or 9 week-long residencies each summer, hosting 220 writers developing 120 musicals. With the closing of many theatre writing residencies across the country, the organization has become a crucial incubator for new musicals.

In 2015, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat created Triple R – 2 Readings and a Residency. Every spring, one alum musical is selected to enable accelerated development for that writing team, via a cold table read in NYC, a residency, and a 29-hour AEA reading in NYC.

The organization runs with a small, dedicated staff, all of whom work remotely. In addition to the Executive Director, there are 3 part-time year-round employees, and several seasonal employees for both the Triple R in the spring and the many residencies in the summer. Total annual revenues are now \$200,000.

From day one, the Board of Directors has believed that writers should have no financial burden to participate. All the writers’ costs are covered, including their home (which RWR rents for the residencies), food, train and air travel, and pianos. Plus, each writer receives a stipend. Rhinebeck Writers Retreat can do this thanks to generous contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government grants. Contributed income makes up almost all the annual revenues for the organization. For many years, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat has received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, The ASCAP Foundation, and The Noël Coward Foundation, among dozens of other supporters.

Many musicals championed by Rhinebeck Writers Retreat have gone on to developmental and world premiere productions at theaters across the country, including

La Jolla Playhouse, The Philadelphia Theater Company, Baltimore Center Stage, Playwrights Horizons, and The Public Theater. The writer/performers of *Operation Mincemeat* had a week-long residency in 2019. Their RWR show won the Olivier award for Best New Musical in 2024 and will debut on Broadway in February 2025 at the Golden Theatre.

## **OUR STRATEGIC VISION**

In 2023, the Board of Directors undertook a strategic planning process, informed by feedback from our various constituencies, to set a course toward achieving our strategic vision – to be the premier residency for the development of new musicals. In this 5-year plan, three key goals were identified:

- Empower writers with the agency and freedom to develop their new musicals
- Increase organizational capacity consistent with our evolution and growth
- Build a healthy financial model that supports high-quality programs and organizational stability.

Tactical steps to achieve each goal were defined as part of the planning process, with timelines for completion.

We anticipated the transition from a Founding Executive Director to a new leader within the five years covered by the strategic plan and welcome the ideas, energy and creativity that new leadership can bring. Our new Executive Director will provide artistic leadership for RWR’s renowned summer residency and Triple R programs, with an eye for promising new musicals. Priorities for the Executive Director include evolving RWR as an ongoing resource for musical theater writers, continuing Board development, strengthening relationships with current donors, and identifying and building awareness among potential individual and institutional donors.

In today's financial landscape, to sustain the top-notch programs RWR offers and to maintain all RWR staff positions, funding must significantly increase by 2026.

## **POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

RWR’s Executive Director shares RWR’s values and vision as an artistic leader in the musical theatre community, with excellent fundraising and administrative skills, to develop and implement all RWR programs. A comprehensive knowledge of and passion for RWR’s mission, values, programs, and financial well-being are essential.

This is a flexible leadership position, and the Executive Director may take on other projects consistent with meeting the responsibilities of the RWR role, as outlined below. RWR’s ED must spend three full months (June through August) within a reasonable distance of Rhinebeck, NY, and be in New York City to produce the gala and Triple R.

RWR is open to reimagining various scenarios and welcomes dialogue about the role with promising candidates.

The ideal candidate will have 10 or more years of producing, artistic, literary, or other similar experience relevant to the responsibilities below, along with the vision and commitment of a leader who is ready to serve musical theatre artists. Understanding the artists' goals for their musicals, encouraging them in their creative process and fostering a nurturing environment for writers in residency are critical to the success of the RWR programs.

Candidates should excel at written and verbal communication, with excellent project management skills, familiarity with artistic development processes, experience with fundraising and negotiating, and relationships with key players and organizations in the community of new musical theatre development. Candidates should have a strong work ethic and genuine commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. Familiarity with the Hudson Valley region is a plus.

The primary responsibilities will include:

### **Artistic Programming and Producing**

- **Oversee and facilitate the selection process for 9 week-long summer residencies for musical theatre writing teams.**
  - Assemble a diverse pool of readers, with at least 50% of readers from historically marginalized communities.
  - Ensure the application process continues to meet industry standards for diversity, inclusion, equity, and access.
  - Make the final selection of 9 writing teams and create a waiting list of 1-2 additional teams. Gather marketing materials from the teams, and finalize their travel plans. Send out a press release with all finalized information.
  - Provide direction for Program Assistant throughout the process.
  
- **Oversee and manage the summer residency program for musical theatre writing teams.**
  - Research, negotiate, and reserve suitable artist housing (in or near Rhinebeck, NY) for use by the residency writers. Prepare artist housing.
  - Negotiate contracts with selected artists, on behalf of RWR.
  - Hire necessary summer staff – weekly housekeeping, intern, and social media consultant.
  - Select and book “Meet the Writers” public event venues, and promote the events.
  - Assign a Peer Advisor from RWR’s Sounding Board to each residency.
  - Approve, track, and initiate reimbursements for “writer’s choice” grants.
  - Oversee donor updates (videos, anecdotes, photos, etc).

- Live full-time within a reasonable distance of artist housing during the 9 summer residency weeks, for standard check-ins with the writers and to be on call for any unexpected needs.
- Send surveys to writers to gather feedback.
- Oversee and produce one annual “Triple R”: a table read + residency + 29-hour reading.
  - Invite alumni teams to apply. Review applications, facilitate discussions with the Board and select finalists.
  - Negotiate contracts with selected artists, on behalf of RWR.
  - Hire General Manager and Casting consultant.
  - Research, negotiate, and reserve suitable artist housing for use by the Triple R writers. Prepare artist housing.
  - Determine writers’ creative needs and help them assemble their team, within the budget.
  - Attend rehearsals and be on call for any unexpected needs.
- Maintain a robust network of relationships within the field of new musical theatre.

### **Board Management, Fundraising, and Budgeting**

- Assist Board Chair with preparation for Board Meetings. Be familiar with governance issues, RWR bylaws, and Board rotation.
- Develop a roster of potential Board members and pursue with the Governance Committee.
- Prepare budget and budget forecasts. Manage the budget with good expense control.
- Code expenses and revenues properly and submit to bookkeeper.
- Manage part-time year-round staff (Program Assistant, Development Assistant, and Bookkeeper) and seasonal staff.
- Apply for NEA, NYSCA, ASCAP Foundation, Noël Coward Foundation, and other grants.
- Maintain relationships and excellent communication with major donors. Actively identify and cultivate individual donors. Strategically assign lead supporting donors for summer residencies.
- Secure corporate supporters.
- Produce annual RWR gala.
  - Research and book venue.
  - Collaborate with Gala Committee.
  - Curate and cast the evening of songs, with writers.
  - Hire General Manager.
  - Send invitations.
  - Promote via press releases, social media, and e-news.
- Skilled in writing, budgeting, management, and balancing priorities.

## COMPENSATION AND START DATE

The salary range for the Executive Director position is \$75,000 to \$85,000. The successful applicant must spend three full months (June through August) within a reasonable distance of Rhinebeck, NY. For the rest of the year, much of the work can be done remotely, with presence in NYC required in preparation for our gala and to manage the Triple R program. The Executive Director may take on other projects provided the work of RWR is given appropriate priority. RWR is open to reimagining various scenarios and welcomes dialogue about the role with promising candidates.

The selected applicant is expected to start on or around June 1, 2025, and will work with the outgoing Executive Director during a transition period of several months.

Rhinebeck Writers Retreat provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender expression and gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry or national origin, age or disability.

## HOW TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following items for consideration by February 16, 2025:

- A current resumé
- Cover letter (no more than 1 page)
- Three professional references (Name, Title, Organization, email)

Submissions should be made via email to **searchcommittee@rhinebeckwriters.org** with a subject line of “*Candidate Name* ED Application.” All documents should have the candidate’s name as part of the file name and should be PDF attachments.