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EXECUTIVE  
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**LEADERSHIP TRANSITION  
EXECUTIVE SEARCH  
BOARD ADVISORY SERVICES**

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***RECRUITMENT PROFILE***  
*for*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**NEWFEST**

LGBTQ+ Film and Media | New York



**New York, NY**



**KEVIN CHASE**  
executive search group

## RECRUITMENT PROFILE

Title: **Executive Director**

Organization: **NewFest ([NewFest.org](https://newfest.org/))**

Reports to: **Board of Directors**

Location: **New York, NY (required)**

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### ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Based in New York City, NewFest is a vibrant, community-centered nonprofit and one of the world's leading LGBTQ+ film and media arts organizations. Among its programmatic offerings, NewFest produces the largest queer film festival in the country and is the largest convener of LGBTQ+ audiences in New York City. Its mission is to champion LGBTQ+ stories and storytellers through film and media, creating an inclusive and joyful space where community gathers, industry connects, and creative expression thrives.

Founded in 1988 in direct response to the AIDS crisis, NewFest was born from a grassroots effort to create space for queer stories at a time when LGBTQ+ lives were being stigmatized, marginalized, and erased. Since then, the organization has grown into a vital cultural hub, recognized for its bold curation, year-round programming, and deeply relational approach to audiences and artists.

As it approaches its 40th anniversary, NewFest stands at moment of both opportunity and responsibility. Rising political hostility toward LGBTQ+ communities, shifts in arts funding, and rapid changes across the film and media landscape present real challenges. At the same time, NewFest's impact has never been more deeply felt. Audiences, artists, and industry partners alike recognize the organization as a home for queer expression and a place where meaningful connections are forged across generations, identities, and experiences. In a time of profound cultural and political change, the need for bold queer storytelling and community gathering has perhaps never been more urgent.

NewFest has grown quickly from a small, grassroots organization into a year-round team of 16 full- and part-time staff, supplemented by as many as 50 seasonal team members who come together each fall to present the 13-day New York LGBTQ+ Film Festival. NewFest's 18-person Board of Directors reflects a cross section of NYC's LGBTQ+, nonprofit, media & entertainment, and philanthropic communities. NewFest has an annual operating budget of ~\$2.2 million – with contributed income now accounting for more than 60% of total revenue – roughly half of which comes from a strong base of corporate sponsors and partners. Expanding philanthropic support among individual donors, foundations, and other grant-making entities is a key strategic priority for NewFest's next phase of development.

### OPPORTUNITY

The next Executive Director of NewFest will lead a vital New York City and LGBTQ+ cultural institution at a time of significant momentum and opportunity. Larger, more visible, and more connected than at any point in its history – and with a 40th anniversary approaching in 2028 – NewFest is uniquely positioned to celebrate its remarkable legacy while elevating its profile, deepening relationships with supporters and partners, and building a foundation for continued growth and impact. The Executive Director will inspire and lead a passionate community of staff, volunteers, filmmakers, storytellers, partners, and audiences in service of a mission shaped by both historic purpose and present-day urgency. Against a backdrop of LGBTQ+ rights and visibility facing renewed opposition, NewFest stands as a resilient cultural force—amplifying queer voices, fostering connection, and strengthening solidarity across generations and across LGBTQ+ communities.

*(For more information on NewFest see <https://newfest.org/>)*

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Festivals

- **The New York LGBTQ+ Film Festival**, NewFest’s largest event, held annually in October – in-person for 11 days; streaming for 13 days
- **NewFest Pride** held annually in early June to coincide with the beginning of Pride month
- **Queering the Canon**, a five-day retrospective, held annually in April at Brooklyn Academy of Music

### Artist Development Programs

- **New Voices Filmmaker Grants**, a partnership with Netflix that supports emerging directors telling LGBTQ+ stories
- **Sound and Scene**, a partnership with Concord Originals centered around QTBIPOC filmmakers and the transformative power of music in storytelling
- **Black Filmmakers Initiative**, a program supporting Black LGBTQ+ filmmakers with cash prizes, submission fee waivers, and travel subsidies
- **Industry and Filmmaker Day**, held as part of the annual fall Festival

### Screenings:

Film Screening programs include:

- **Youth Series**, in-school and virtual screenings and talkbacks for high school students in partnership with the NYC Department of Education
- **NewFest Presents** an ongoing series featuring LGBTQ+ themed documentaries and narrative films and conversations with filmmakers – often accompanied by social events
- Summer **Outdoor Film** screenings with partners like Rooftop Film and NYC Pride

For a full list of NewFest festivals and programs, see: [newfest.org/programs/](http://newfest.org/programs/)

## LOCATION

New York City. While NewFest staff operate in a hybrid (on-site/remote) working environment, the Executive Director should reside in the greater NYC area or be willing to relocate there.

## REPORTING

Reports to the Board of Directors (via the co-Chairs). Responsible for leading a team of 16 year-round and additional seasonal staff with the following Direct Reports: Director of Programming, Sr. Festivals Producer, Director of Staff & Administration, Sr. Marketing & Communications Manager, and Director of Development, when hired. *[NOTE: A search for Director of Development was launched in early 2026. That search has been temporarily paused but is slated to resume once the new E.D. is in place.]*

## THE POSITION

The Executive Director serves as NewFest’s chief executive and is responsible for providing strategic, operational, financial, and administrative leadership in support of its mission and long-term sustainability. Working collaboratively with Board and staff, the Executive Director will steward the organization’s overall vision and direction, as informed by its recently completed Strategic Plan. They will have ultimate responsibility for fundraising, financial management, team leadership, and external relations, and for ensuring the success of programs and events.

The Executive Director will function as an ambassador for NewFest’s festivals and programs, cultivating relationships with artists, audiences, donors, sponsors, and community partners to elevate the organization’s public profile and advocate for the people and communities NewFest represents. They will lead NewFest with particular focus on the following strategic priorities:

- **Diversifying revenue streams** in order to ensure NewFest’s ability to realize its programmatic ambitions and ensure long-term sustainability
- **Evolving internal systems**, staff structure and roles, and Board composition to set the organization up for long-term success
- **Growing and diversifying audiences**, including continuing to build a consistent year-round presence and broadening geographic reach within and beyond New York City
- Honoring and leveraging a nearly four-decade legacy, and **continuing to position NewFest as an influential voice** in queer cultural production and in the broader film community

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

*[NOTE: It is understood that no single candidate will have equal expertise across all areas of responsibility. Successful candidates will demonstrate a compelling combination of many of them, and the self-awareness and professional maturity to leverage existing or new resources where they lack personal depth.]*

### **1. Organizational Leadership & Strategy**

- Lead, motivate, and inspire a team of committed and passionate professionals to advance NewFest’s mission, vision, and strategic goals;
- In collaboration with the Board of Directors, lead continued implementation of the recently completed Strategic Plan, engaging staff, Board, and partners in its successful execution;
- Work with the Director of Staff & Administration to strengthen organizational structures, systems, policies, and processes in pursuit of operational excellence and future growth;
- Continually assess programs, events, partnerships, and brand positioning to ensure alignment with NewFest’s mission, values, and evolving priorities.

### **2. Fundraising & Revenue Generation**

- Work with Board and staff leadership to create and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy – including identifying necessary infrastructure and investments – to meet all revenue and strategic goals and to broaden NewFest’s base of financial support;
- Lead fundraising efforts with a clear vision for diversifying revenue; in particular, growing individual and institutional giving programs to balance NewFest’s historical strength with corporate partners;
- Personally cultivate and steward relationships with funders, sponsors, and partners to ensure immediate and long-term financial sustainability;
- Partner with the Director of Development (when hired) to strengthen fundraising capacity across revenue categories with particular emphasis on building a robust annual and major gift program.



### **3. People and Team Management**

- With the Director of Staff & Administration, assess and recommend changes to organization structure, reporting lines, roles & responsibilities, and staffing models – as necessary and within budget parameters – with an eye toward maximizing capacity and impact;
- Provide direction, thought partnership, and professional development to the heads of Development, Staff & Administration, Programming, Production/Events, and Marketing/Communications to advance strategic and operational priorities;
- Foster an environment that promotes professional growth and success while maintaining accountability and clarity in roles;
- Help to create and maintain a diverse, collaborative, respectful, and inclusive organizational culture.

### **4. Finance & Administrative Management**

- Provide transparent fiscal stewardship of NewFest, ensuring appropriate resource utilization and a positive financial position;
- Work with the Director of Staff & Administration and the Board Finance Committee to develop, approve, and manage annual revenue and expense budgets;
- Collaborate with the Executive Committee and Treasurer to ensure NewFest operates within budget, maintaining financial integrity and sustainability;
- Support the Director of Staff & Administration in evolving and improving NewFest’s operations, systems, and workflows across departments.

### 5. Programs and Events Leadership

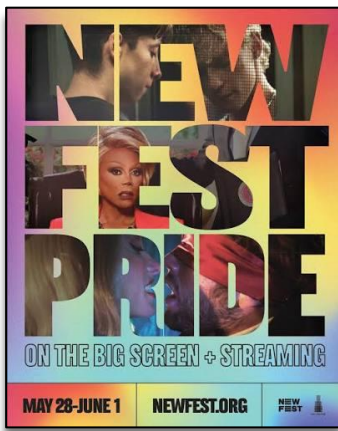
- In partnership with Board and staff, shape and execute strategies to grow and diversify audiences, expand NewFest’s visibility, and support the continued evolution and impact of its festivals and programs;
- Collaborate with and support the Programming and Production teams to ensure success of NewFest’s festivals, events, and year-round programs;
- Work across the organization and with partners to ensure that programs and events are mission-aligned, financially sustainable, and reflective of NewFest’s commitment to LGBTQ+ storytelling and community.

### 6. External Affairs, Marketing & Messaging

- As a primary voice and face of NewFest, publicly advocate for the organization’s mission and the artists and communities it represents;
- Build and sustain strategic relationships with key industry players (studios, streamers, distributors, etc.), LGBTQ+ Movement organizations, community partners, and other stakeholders to strengthen NewFest’s reputation, visibility, and reach;
- Lead efforts to tell a cohesive story of NewFest, its programs, and impact, and to refine brand and messaging across platforms.

### 7. Board Relations

- Report regularly and transparently to the Board on operational, financial, and programmatic progress and challenges;
- Support the development of a strong, diverse, and engaged Board by identifying and recommending candidates whose backgrounds represent the full diversity of NYC’s LGBTQ+ community;
- Interface between the Board and staff to maintain a communicative, supportive relationship.



#### **CANDIDATE PROFILE:**

The next Executive Director of NewFest will be an accomplished and dynamic leader with a passion for NewFest’s mission and a deep appreciation for the power of film and storytelling to foster visibility, connection, and social change. Successful candidates will bring deep skills and expertise in fundraising, team building, and organizational development, and the ability to guide the organization through its next phase of growth, operational maturity, and impact. They will understand and appreciate NewFest’s history and unique place in the LGBTQ+ film and media ecosystem while also creating a shared vision of what NewFest can become. NewFest seeks a compelling ambassador and relationship builder, capable of inspiring support and cultivating trust among staff, Board, funders, filmmakers, and community partners.

We can envision this person coming from a range of professional backgrounds – including from executive leadership of another New York City LGBTQ+ or nonprofit arts organization, from a large-scale film, music, art or other festival background, or from an executive-level fundraising position of similar scope and scale – so long as they have the full suite of skills and experience to lead and sustain a high-performing nonprofit organization. Regardless of professional background, this person should bring a collaborative, inclusive, and transparent leadership style that engages staff, Board, and external stakeholders alike in the work of NewFest.

#### **Desired Skills and Experience (Should Have):**

***\*\*Don't check every single box? That's okay — plenty of great candidates don't. Research shows that some potential candidates apply only when they feel they meet all the selection criteria. If you have many of these skills, are passionate about NewFest’s mission, and are ready to learn and grow quickly, we want to hear from you!\*\****

**Desired Skills and Experience (Should Have):**(continued)

- **EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:** Minimum of 10 years of professional experience, including senior management or executive leadership roles (Executive Director/CEO/President, Vice President, Deputy Director, Chief Development Officer, or similar), preferably within a mission-driven nonprofit environment
- **FUNDRAISING & REVENUE GENERATION:** Demonstrated success building and leading comprehensive fundraising programs across revenue streams – individual/annual fund, major donor, corporate, foundation, special event, and in-kind – with particular emphasis on diversifying revenue sources and cultivating long-term relationships
- **TEAM & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Proven ability to build, mentor, and develop high-performing teams while strengthening systems and structures, and implementing strategies needed to guide organizations through growth and increasing complexity
- **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:** Experience with budgeting, financial oversight, and resource allocation in organizations of comparable (or larger) size and complexity, and with similar funding sources
- **COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS:** Exceptional written, verbal, and presentation skills, with the ability to serve as a compelling ambassador and inspire support among diverse audiences and stakeholders
- **PROJECT & EVENT MANAGEMENT:** Experience overseeing complex projects and/or large-scale events, including responsibility for budgets, logistics, operations, and mission alignment
- **LGBTQ+ CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Seasoned, intersectional understanding of LGBTQ+ and allied social, cultural, political, and equality issues and history of involvement – personally or professionally – in these movements

**Supplemental Skills and Experience (Nice to Have):**

- Previous leadership experience in a film, media, arts, or other cultural organization
- Experience leading or managing a film, music, theater, or similar festival
- Knowledge of – and, ideally, connections to – the film/media/entertainment ecosystem in which NewFest operates
- Existing relationships, networks, or connections to funders of LGBTQ+, arts and/or cultural organizations, movements, and events
- Education and/or professional experience in branding, marketing, and/or strategic communications
- Existing relationships with LGBTQ+ serving organizations and leaders in New York City



**Desired Personal Qualities and Characteristics:**

- Demonstrated passion for NewFest’s mission and belief in the power of LGBTQ+ storytelling to foster visibility, connection, and social change
- Strong interpersonal skills and high levels of self-awareness and professional maturity
- Charismatic and engaging, with the ability to inspire others and serve as an authentic ambassador for NewFest
- Collaborative, transparent, and low-ego
- Values listening, builds trust, and empowers others to do their best work
- Calm, resilient, and composed under pressure, with the ability to approach challenges with professionalism and good judgment
- Authentic, accessible, and community-oriented, with a deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and an ability to connect with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

NewFest is offering a comprehensive compensation package for this position including total compensation in the \$180,000 to \$200,000 range with generous benefits. Benefits include 100% employee-sponsored health, dental, and vision coverage, life and short- and long-term disability insurance, 25 days of paid vacation, unlimited sick and safe leave, paid holidays, access to an EAP, health and flexible spending account options.

### **TO APPLY**

To apply, please submit a complete resume with full employment history and a cover letter detailing your interest in the position – and the professional and/or lived experience you believe make you a uniquely qualified candidate for this role – to [search@kevinchase.com](mailto:search@kevinchase.com), or apply directly via our [Jobs Portal](#). Along with these materials, applicants will be asked to respond to a questionnaire related to the key selection criteria for this position.

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of NewFest. NewFest is an equal opportunity employer that champions a diverse workforce. KCESG and NewFest do not discriminate on any basis, including sex, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, ancestry, military status, marital status, physical ability, race, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law. We encourage applications from people of all sexual orientations, gender identity and expression, race and ethnicity, age, national origin, and physical abilities.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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All inquiries or referrals will be held in strict confidence.

*Please note that all education, dates of employment, and other information provided will be verified prior to an offer of employment.*

