

Program Director

BlackStar Projects

ORGANIZATION

BlackStar is a filmmaker-centric and POC-led organization that brings an intersectional analysis of race, gender and power into the work while providing high quality opportunities for artists and critics, and a thoughtfully curated experience for audiences. Founded to focus on the work of Black filmmakers (of the African diaspora), we are now dedicated to solidarity across artists and communities of color, including Black, Asian, Latinx, Arab, Native, and Indigenous while still centering anti-Black racism as core to our racial justice analysis.

BlackStar is focused on the following issues:

- POC Authorship and not individual representation
- Aesthetic quality over celebrity
- Supporting a POC artists community, not just producing an event
- Curating a high quality and accessible program

BlackStar's core programs include:

- BlackStar Film Festival
- Curatorial Projects
- Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab
- *Seen*, journal of film and visual culture
- William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar

THE ROLE

The Program Director (PD) will use their unique knowledge, networks, and enthusiasm for filmmaking, visual culture, artist development, and audience building to create opportunities for the celebration and amplification of Black, Brown and Indigenous artists and the additional inquiry into the spheres of history, aesthetics, and craft. Working in partnership with the organization's year-round team and project-specific contractors, the PD drives and manages the day-to-day operations required for the successful execution of a group of BlackStar's programs, including the William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar, the Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab, and *Seen*, our journal of film and visual culture.

The role calls for a thoughtful creative individual with the following skills and/or experiences: film production, project and people management, and editorial processes, solid business acumen, and strong socioemotional intelligence. The right fit would be a high-level thinker, possessing great attention to detail and fantastic planning skills. An ability to work comfortably and effectively in a fast-paced environment, while overseeing the execution of multiple projects simultaneously is crucial. Candidates should possess a track

record of creating effective timelines, meeting deadlines, adhering to budgets, working well with artists, navigating conflict, and the ability to work independently and with a team.

The PD will be a principal public voice on behalf of BlackStar, providing vision for its programs. The PD leads a team consisting of year-round staff and project-specific contractors, collaborates with artists and consultants, engages with audiences and funders, and works collaboratively across BlackStar's departments. This position is full-time and, along with the Festival Director, has shared supervision of five direct reports including three program managers and two program associates. The Program Director reports to BlackStar's Chief Executive & Artistic Officer (CEAO).

This ideal candidate will bring a strong passion for artist development and uplifting the work of Black, Brown and Indigenous communities. Candidates should have interests in BlackStar's three key areas – filmmaking, visual arts, and media arts – as well as a demonstrated commitment to intersectional feminism and social justice.

JOB DESCRIPTION

As a member of the Programs team, the Program Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations involved with producing BlackStar programs while upholding the vision, mission, and scope of these programs and ensuring that they are executed in a manner aligned with the organization's values.

For the Seminar, the PD does this by overseeing the production of an experience where artists working at the intersection of cinema and visual arts are supported, inspired, and edified, and that thereby strengthens the field. The PD is responsible for fulfilling the creative vision of the Lab through the oversight of the program, working with staff as well as artists with a varying range of experience and knowledge throughout the full film production cycle — from pre-production to distribution. For *Seen*, the PD acts as Managing Editor, overseeing the editorial and production processes to ensure it is comprehensive, rigorous, and timely.

We are currently operating with a hybrid model of work, with two (2) business days a week required in BlackStar's office in Philadelphia. Employees based outside of Philadelphia are required to be in the office twice a month. All employees are expected to be available for meetings and on email during East Coast business hours (10am–6pm ET). With regard to COVID-19, in-person activities are done above CDC and state level guidelines.

As with all presenting arts organizations, this position will require some weekend and evening work hours on occasion.

The primary responsibilities of the Program Director consist of the following:

General responsibilities:

- Establishes and manages annual budgets in collaboration with BlackStar's leadership team and Senior Director, Development & Operations (SDDO)
- Provides the protocol and project management flow, including workable timelines
- Drives, maintains, and assists all staff in meeting deadlines

- Serves as direct supervisor of Program Managers (PM), Program Associates (PA), and interns (varies by project)
- Provides appropriate, timely information about program activities and deliverables to BlackStar's leadership team
- Works with PMs to develop program-related public events
- Presents updates to the staff, as needed and/or requested
- Represents BlackStar and builds upon its network in a professional capacity at the local, regional, and national level
- Uses and continually develops leadership skills
- Attends staff and Programs team meetings, and other organizational convenings
- Attends conferences and trainings, as required, to maintain proficiency and to grow in capacity

Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab

- Oversees and manages recruitment, application, review, selection, and notification process for Lab Fellowship and Lab Shadow Program, with final approval determined by CEO
- Stays current on trends in the field and industry, researching films and filmmakers
- Ideates with CEO and PM on iterations of and improvements to the Lab
- Acts as primary point of contact for Supervising Producers, contractors, vendors, and artists
- Anticipates production, operational, and people problems, seeking to minimize the need for escalation
- Creates and maintains relationships with Philadelphia filmmaking stakeholders and communities
- Ensures that essential databases exist for filmmakers, partners, and other networks
- Works with Festival Director to schedule Lab film screenings and special events at BlackStar Film Festival
- Works with the People & Culture Director to ensure all program participants adhere to BlackStar's Code of Conduct and policies

Seminar

- Oversees the generation of the full seminar program through joint research and ideation with PMs, PAs, CEO, advisory committee, and partner institution
- Works with lead Program Manager to identify rotating Seminar Advisory Committee, curators, and lead facilitator
- Approves final seminar program and staffing
- Collaborates with team and SDDO to ensure smooth operations and run of show
- Oversees the vetting of speakers and presenters

Seen

- Creates content strategies and oversees their implementation
- Selects guest and section editors, liaises with editorial advisory board members, and participates in selecting other staff for the journal
- Oversees work of editorial staff, including guest editor and BlackStar staff working on the journal
- Chairs and oversees the work of the advisory board, facilitating editorial meetings
- Prepares data for bi-monthly reports to BlackStar's board of directors

- Ensures that themes, articles, reviews, essays, and other content published are consistent with the editorial mission, caliber, and scope, in collaboration with the CEO and project-related advisors
- Collaborates with BlackStar's Creative Director (CD) and guest editor on the visual direction of each issue
- Provides timely, constructive feedback to guest editor
- Reviews and approves the full issue's content when finalized
- Works in collaboration with the editorial advisory board, and BlackStar staff to set short- and long-term goals and objectives for the journal that advance the field
- Works with Program Manager to develop journal-related public events
- Ensures that the journal follows ethical policies, being prepared to proactively deal with errors and allegations of misbehavior
- Collaborates with guest editor on generating story ideas for contributors and supports the PA with contributor outreach, where necessary
- Oversees photography, design and artwork to be used in the publication, in consultation with CD
- Ensures that permissions, work-for-hire agreements, copyright transfer agreements, disclosures of any conflicts of interest, patent permissions, and any other documentation necessary for the publication of each contribution are secured
- Composes letter to be included in each journal
- Integrates multimedia content that will increase interest and readership of the journal, in collaboration with Communications team
- Identifies indexes in which the journal should be included and passes information on to BlackStar staff
- Supervises stockist program and actively seeks new stockists
- Works with Marketing & Engagement Director to identify potential advertisers

Marketing & Communications

- Works with BlackStar's Communications team to devise annual marketing plans, including public launch events, promotional and outreach strategies and initiatives intended to grow and drive engagement of audiences
- Consults with Communications team on development of visual identity, social media assets, and other designed marketing materials
- Acts as a representative for the journal, lab, and the seminar externally, networking actively at industry events, speaking with press, and enthusiastically raising the profile of all programs

Administration & Fundraising

- Prepares quarterly updates for funders and information for annual report according to an agreed upon schedule
- With Business Director, negotiates venue and vendor contracts
- Identifies sponsorship and revenue-generating opportunities for each program
- Reports to, meets with, and seeks advice from the BlackStar leadership team and/or editorial advisory board on important issues, as necessary or requested
- Contributes to recruiting and hiring processes, as needed

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

For this role, BlackStar seeks an experienced professional who will serve as a leader on the Programs team. BlackStar has a tradition of being comfortable with ambiguity; it experiments and innovates and then follows up with reflection. Therefore, the Program Director must be astute enough to ask the right questions to keep BlackStar adaptive.

While no single candidate will embody every quality, a successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- Informed passion for BlackStar's mission, vision, and values; a demonstrated commitment to working for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrated experience in film production, production management and journalism
- Experience mentoring artists
- Excellent strategic and intellectual abilities and analytic skill coupled with sound judgment, pragmatism and a roll-up-one's-sleeves attitude
- A willingness to innovate and learn from mistakes made along the way
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills; a communication style that is direct
- Proficiency with Basecamp, Slack, and Microsoft Office Suite; additional skills in Premiere/Final Cut Pro, Final Draft/CeltX, or Movie Magic/Showtime or similar software would be wonderful
- Impeccable integrity, honesty, and a reputation for a balanced, non-ideological approach
- A willingness to challenge conventional thinking coupled with the ability to collaborate effectively, listen well, and bridge philosophies
- An understanding of filmmaking and the history of the participation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in the field
- An eye for creative, strategic opportunities tied to a commitment to accountability and results
- Experience working comfortably and effectively with well-known and highly visible individuals across a broad spectrum of industries, possessing the ability to work efficiently and exercise discretion

COMPENSATION

The salary for this position is \$100,000. BlackStar's benefits package includes but is not limited to 100% medical, dental, and vision coverage (for employee and dependents); retirement matching; paid time off and public holidays; annual wellness fund; professional development fund; and reimbursements for home office utilities.

TIMEFRAME

The deadline for applications is January 2, 2024. We seek to have a Program Director in place by early March.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted via this [application form](#).

Short responses to one (1) of the following prompts from each list below—for a total of two (2) responses are required. Your answer should be a single paragraph of no more than 250 words for each.

List 1

- What is one of your favorite films that has screened at BlackStar Film Festival and why?
- If your family or good friends were to choose three words to describe you, what would they be and why?
- What has had a strong influence on your political perspective and why?

List 2

- What are three things that you find essential for simultaneously driving the successful execution of multiple highly curated programs?
- Share a professional success you've experienced that correlates to a success you can imagine creating at BlackStar.
- As a manager, what is your approach towards balancing performance expectations and individual employee needs?

Applications that fail to provide short responses or follow instructions will not be considered.

BlackStar Projects is committed to the principles of equal opportunity employment at every level without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity characteristics or expression, age, non-job-related disability, or political affiliation.