



Job Description

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Organization Summary

The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company's (USTC) mission is to mentor, educate, and enrich youth in under-resourced communities through the creation of collaborative, original theatre. Our mission powers our vision of a world where all youth are given the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

Founded in the wake of the 1992 LA Uprising, USTC has grown from a small, volunteer-led youth intervention program into an award-winning leader in the fields of arts education, youth development, mentorship, and community building. After nearly three decades of service within disinvested and underrepresented communities, the focus of our work remains to ensure the equitable enrichment and development of Los Angeles County under-resourced youth. Our free, theatre-arts programs go beyond the reach of typical arts education workshops to offer personalized mentorship and a safe space for self-expression, empowering those we work with to identify and leverage their innate talents and overcome inequitable circumstances.

USTC is pursuing transformative action steps to center our communities in all aspects of our work and bring Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) to the forefront of our operations and programs. For more information visit: theunusualsuspects.org.

Job Summary

The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company (USTC) seeks a strategic, entrepreneurial Assistant Director of Community Partnerships to lead a high-impact portfolio of public partnerships that fuel program implementation, expansion, and community resource sharing across Los Angeles County.

Reporting to the Director of Programs, this role is central to USTC's regional growth strategy. The Assistant Director will steward high-level relationships with school districts, public agencies, and community stakeholders to sustain and scale USTC's programming — with a particular emphasis on partnerships with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD).

In addition to external engagement, this position will play a key role in the development and evolution of USTC's licensed programming model, helping to codify, adapt, and scale our model across districts. The Assistant Director also leads USTC's public advocacy efforts and serves as an official representative within coalitions such as the Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN), amplifying our role as a trusted collaborator in education and justice reform spaces.

This position requires a seasoned leader with firsthand experience navigating LAUSD and adjacent district systems — either as a former district partner, employee, or contractor — and a strong network of established relationships.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Partnerships & Pipeline Development

- Design and implement a multi-year partnership strategy focused on program implementation, expansion, and resource sharing across school districts, county agencies, and community-based organizations.
- Lead the continued development and deployment of USTC's licensed program model, adapting its components in collaboration with partners and internal stakeholders
- Cultivate a robust pipeline of qualified prospects through proactive outreach, research, and stakeholder engagement
- Serve as the primary relationship manager for district and agency leads, including LAUSD personnel, probation department officials, and community-based intermediaries
- Develop customized proposals and presentations that align USTC offerings with partner priorities and funding sources
- Represent USTC at convenings, coalitions, and conferences across education, youth development, and justice fields

Contracts, Compliance & Public Sector Navigation

- Oversee the execution of MOUs, scopes of work, and policy-aligned documentation in collaboration with internal teams and external partners
- Collaborate with Program Manager to ensure seamless program implementation and evaluation that meets funder, district, and/or agency expectations
- Track district and agency policy changes, particularly within LAUSD, and proactively adjust models to remain compliant and competitive
- Support contract renewals and reporting obligations, working closely with the Director of Programs and Development team

Cross-Departmental Leadership & Organizational Strategy

- Represent USTC in key public coalitions, working groups, and advocacy alliances, including AHJN, to advance systemic equity and position the organization as a policy-aligned thought leader
- Coordinate with internal teams to ensure accurate tracking of partnership deliverables, milestones, and impact
- Contribute to annual program planning by identifying growth opportunities and community needs
- Contribute to strategic annual budget creation
- Prepare briefing materials for senior leadership, board members, and external stakeholders
- Perform other duties as assigned

Qualifications

Required

- Minimum 10+ years of experience in external affairs, partnerships, institutional advancement, or public agency relations
- Proven track record of cultivating, securing, and sustaining cross-sector partnerships

- Direct experience working within or in formal collaboration with LAUSD or comparable school districts, including a working understanding of internal processes, relationships, and funding structures
- Deep familiarity with LAUSD and Los Angeles County funding streams, policies, and procurement processes
- Exceptional relationship-building and communication skills, with an ability to influence stakeholders across sectors
- Highly organized, independent, and skilled in navigating complex systems
- Proficient in Google Workspace, Microsoft Office, and Zoom

Preferred

- Experience with MOUs, RFPs, compliance documentation, and contract lifecycle management
- Knowledge of LAUSD Prop 28, CAP, and VAPA funding, regulations, and processes
- Experience scaling licensed programming models to districts including LAUSD/PUSD
- Background in education, youth development, arts, or nonprofit sectors
- Knowledge of the Greater Los Angeles education ecosystem
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) strongly preferred

Work Environment & Physical Requirements

- Must be flexible to work in a fast-paced, non-profit environment.
- This position works from the USTC administrative office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, with the option to work remotely on Mondays and Fridays.
- USTC uses consensus as its default decision-making process; all team members are expected to participate and contribute to this culture in a meaningful, critical, and collaborative way.
- Position is expected to work a standard 40 hours per week. Candidates must be open to working a flexible schedule, including occasional weekends evenings.

Applicants for Employment

- All applicants offered employment with The Unusual Suspects will be subject to a Live Scan background check.

Salary & Schedule

- Salary range: \$85,000 - \$90,000 annually, non-exempt.
- Over 6 weeks of Paid Time Off (PTO), including:
 - 3 weeks (15 days) of accrued personal PTO.
 - 2 additional weeks of collective PTO, 5 days in summer and 5 days in winter.
 - 2 personal days of PTO.
 - 4 weeks of collective remote work, 2 weeks in summer and 2 weeks in winter.
 - 11 national holidays of PTO.
 - Accrued sick PTO as designated by the State of California.
- Health benefits offered; medical, dental, and vision.
- CalSavers, a Roth IRA Program.
- Cell phone, internet, and mileage reimbursement.
- Annual stipend for professional development.
- Flexible, supportive culture with a strong commitment to people over product.

How to Apply

In place of a traditional cover letter, we're asking candidates to submit a short video (2–4 minutes max total). We're not looking for a polished presentation (A phone camera is fine!) — we're much more interested in how you think.

Take a moment to introduce yourself and then respond to the questions below in a way that helps us understand how you approach decisions, work through challenges, or balance competing priorities:

1. What's a common misconception people have about building partnerships — and how do you approach it differently?
2. Tell us about a time when you had to shift your strategy midstream. What caused the pivot in strategy, what actions did you take, and what was the outcome?

Please send your recorded response and resume to: jobs@theunusualsuspects.org with the subject line; the position title and your name. E.g., “Assistant Director of Community Partnerships” - John Smith.” No calls, please.