

# VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS OPPORTUNITY GUIDE





# JOB DESCRIPTION

## VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS

**Title:** Vice President of Programs

**Reports to:** President and Chief Executive Officer

**Supervises:** Director of Programs, Campus Directors, Eight Program Chairs (Part-time), Faculty, Shared Administrative Assistant.

**Works closely with:** VP's of Marketing, Operations, and Fundraising, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, Director of Operations - Nichols Hall, Campus Directors.

**Schedule and location:** In Person. While the main administrative offices are located in Evanston, the Vice President of Programs is expected to maintain a visible presence across campuses and throughout the broader community. Evening and weekend work is required as needed to support programs, events, and institutional priorities. Schedule flexibility may be considered periodically but does not replace core availability expectations.

**Pay Status:** Salaried, Full-time, Exempt

**Salary Range:** \$105-115

**Benefits and PTO:** MIC offers a benefits package that includes generous paid time off, a health insurance plan with employer contribution, retirement benefits with employer match, paid holidays, and additional paid time during the winter holiday season.

**Desired start date:** September 2026.

**Application Deadline:** July 24. Early applications are highly encouraged.

**Website:** [musicinst.org](http://musicinst.org)



## MISSION & VALUES

**Our Mission:** Founded in 1931, the Music Institute of Chicago fosters lifelong engagement with music for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Through exceptional teaching, outstanding performance opportunities and community programming, MIC harnesses the power of music to educate and motivate while providing broad access to high-quality music education.

**Our Vision:** The Music Institute of Chicago (MIC) envisions a society where music education and live performances are available to everyone, regardless of age, background, or ability to pay.

Music is a fundamental human activity and MIC aspires to be an indispensable resource to our community for music and music education, and an advocate for the important role of music in our lives. MIC believes that music is an essential element of a strong, well-educated, and compassionate community; music bolsters the brain, strengthens community bonds, and nourishes the human spirit; and music and quality music education should be accessible to everyone.

**Our Values:** Excellence. Access. Innovation.





## ABOUT MIC

The Music Institute of Chicago is one of the nation's largest and most respected community music schools, renowned for its world-class faculty, personalized approach to teaching, and commitment to musical excellence. Governed by an 18-member Board of Trustees and supported by a dedicated team of 25+ administrative staff and approximately 130 faculty members, MIC annually serves more than 1,500 students from age seven months to 91 years from 133 Illinois communities and four states across six campuses. Committed to broad access to high-quality music education, MIC provides scholarship and financial aid opportunities to help ensure students can participate regardless of financial means. The organization operates with an annual budget of approximately \$7.5 million, including roughly \$2.3 million in contributed revenue, and benefits from a strong financial foundation that includes an endowment of approximately \$6.8 million. The Music Institute also welcomes more than 15,000 visitors annually for performances, masterclasses, and special events at Nichols Concert Hall.

MIC's programs fall into the following four areas:

- **Core Programs** - Private instruction, group classes and ensembles for students of all ages and abilities.
- **The Academy** - A nationally recognized conservatory program for highly gifted pre-college string players and pianists. The Academy provides intensive training, mentorship, and individualized guidance to approximately 30 students annually, preparing them for professional careers in music.
- **Nichols Concert Hall** - A premier performance venue and cultural gathering place in downtown Evanston presenting outstanding artists and ensembles.
- **Community Partnerships** - Existing and emerging partnerships with regional music, cultural, and educational institutions.

Through its combination of educational excellence, artistic rigor, and commitment to community impact, MIC has established itself as a leading force in music education both within the Chicago region and nationally.

# THE OPPORTUNITY

## VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS

With the arrival of new President & CEO Shalisa Kline Ugaz in July 2025, MIC has embarked on a period of thoughtful evolution focused on strengthening the organization's financial foundation, raising its profile across the Chicago region, and expanding its impact within the communities it serves. To help realize this vision, the role of Vice President of Programs (“VP”) has been newly created. Reporting directly to and partnering closely with the President & CEO, the VP will provide strategic leadership for educational programming, enrollment, retention, faculty engagement, and student and family experience, ensuring these areas work together in support of MIC's mission and long-term sustainability. The VP will oversee a budget of approximately \$4.5 million.

The VP will have the opportunity to build upon what makes MIC special while helping position the organization for its next phase of growth and impact. Working closely with faculty and staff, they will help create a more unified MIC experience across campuses, deepen engagement with students, families, and mission-aligned community partners, and ensure that MIC continues to be recognized as a leader in innovative, accessible, and transformative music education.





## AREAS OF FOCUS

While the role encompasses a broad portfolio of responsibilities, stakeholders identified the following five priorities as the areas of greatest opportunity and focus for the VP during their first several years in the role.

### **1. Programmatic Excellence, Innovation & Continuum Development**

The VP will be responsible for ensuring that MIC's programming remains both deeply rooted in its tradition of educational excellence and responsive to the evolving needs of current and future students. Building on the organization's existing strengths, the VP will assess the current program portfolio and develop a clear vision for future program growth and innovation.

Particular attention will be given to strengthening and expanding the program continuum across all ages, interests, and skill levels, ensuring that students encounter meaningful entry points, progression pathways, and opportunities for long-term engagement. Stakeholders also identified opportunities to explore new and innovative programming, including technology, music production, composition, contemporary music, expanded ensemble experiences, and programming that attracts and serves broader audiences while remaining aligned with MIC's mission and standards of excellence.

### **2. Faculty Leadership, Engagement & Sustainability**

The VP will play a critical role in cultivating a faculty culture characterized by trust, transparency, engagement, and excellence. This includes serving as a visible and accessible leader who actively listens to faculty, advocates for their success, and helps strengthen the connection between faculty and administration.

The VP will oversee faculty recruitment, retention, evaluation, professional development, and succession planning, ensuring that MIC continues to attract, retain, and develop exceptional educators while cultivating the next generation of faculty contributors. Additionally, they will work to strengthen and align MIC's program leadership structure, empowering program staff and chairs to contribute effectively to institutional goals while fostering clear communication, collaboration, and accountability across program areas.



## AREAS OF FOCUS CONT.

### **3. Enrollment, Retention & Student Success**

The VP will lead a comprehensive approach to enrollment and retention that extends beyond recruitment to encompass the entire student and family experience. Working closely with the Director of Programs, Campus Directors, and the Enrollment Administrator, the VP will evaluate current enrollment and retention strategies, identify barriers to participation, strengthen student pathways, and create systems that support long-term engagement.

### **4. Organizational Alignment, Systems & Data-Informed Decision Making**

The VP will have the opportunity to strengthen alignment and operations across campuses, programs, and departments while ensuring that decisions are informed by meaningful data and clear organizational priorities.

Stakeholders identified opportunities to improve communication, clarify roles and responsibilities, strengthen cross-departmental collaboration, and modernize systems that support enrollment, program management, evaluation, and reporting. They will also foster a culture in which data, assessment, and feedback inform planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.

### **5. Institutional Visibility, Partnerships & Community Engagement**

MIC has an opportunity to further strengthen its visibility, relevance, and impact throughout the communities it serves. The VP will help cultivate relationships with schools, community organizations, arts partners, and other stakeholders to expand access to music education and create new pathways into MIC's programs.



## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

MIC is seeking an inspiring and collaborative leader who brings both "poetry and plumbing" to their work—the ability to articulate a compelling vision for the future while building the systems, relationships, and accountability necessary to achieve it. The successful candidate will be a skilled communicator, listener, and relationship builder who genuinely enjoys working with people and earns trust through transparency, compassion, collegiality, and follow-through. Equally comfortable leading change and partnering in support of a broader institutional vision, the VP will be an energetic and highly organized leader who understands the transformative power of music education and is passionate about helping students, faculty, programs, and communities thrive.



## REQUIRED SKILLS & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

The following experience and capabilities reflect the leadership required to advance MIC's strategic priorities and align directly with the Areas of Focus outlined above:

- **Strategic Educational Leadership** - A minimum of 3-5 years of senior leadership experience within a music education or similar educational environment. Experience within a community music school is strongly preferred.
- **Program Development, Strategy & Innovation** - Demonstrated success developing, growing, and evaluating educational programs that advance organizational goals, respond to community needs, and support long-term sustainability.
- **Enrollment & Retention** - Proven experience improving enrollment, retention, and the overall student and family experience through data-informed strategy and relationship-centered practices.
- **Faculty & Team Leadership** - Experience recruiting, leading, mentoring, developing, evaluating, and retaining faculty and program leadership within a complex educational environment.
- **Organizational Leadership & Operational Effectiveness** - Experience managing significant budgets, leading cross-functional teams, and developing systems and processes that improve organizational and program effectiveness. Candidates should be comfortable balancing strategic leadership with operational execution and have experience using data, assessment, and feedback to guide decision making.
- **Communication & Relationship Building** - Exceptional written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, families, community partners, and board members.
- **Music Performance and Education Expertise** - Professional experience as a performer, music educator, teaching artist, or pedagogue is required. Candidates should bring a deep understanding of music education, student development, faculty culture, and the transformative role music can play in individual and community life.



## PREFERRED SKILLS & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

- **Advanced Music Training** - An advanced degree in Music, Music Education, Arts Administration, or a related field is preferred.
- **Technology, Innovation & Emerging Trends** - Knowledge of emerging trends in music education, instructional technology, music production, contemporary music learning, and other innovations that support student engagement and organizational growth is highly desirable.
- **Enrollment Systems & Data Management** - Experience implementing or optimizing enrollment, CRM, student information, or data management systems is strongly preferred.
- **Community Engagement & Partnership Development** - Experience developing and sustaining partnerships with schools, community organizations, and other external stakeholders is highly desired.
- **Specialized Music Education Methodologies** - Familiarity with the Suzuki method and philosophy is a plus.



## HOW TO APPLY

MIC has engaged [LJN Advisory](#) to partner with them in hiring for this important role. Please email a cover letter and resume by July 24th to [LJN@lornajanenorris.com](mailto:LJN@lornajanenorris.com) with “**VP of Programs**” in the subject line.

Please attach your cover letter and resume as separate PDF files, and start each file name with your last name. **Cover letters should be responsive to MIC’s mission and to the Areas of Focus as laid out in the full position profile.** We will begin interviewing candidates right away and therefore encourage early application. Each application will be acknowledged and given careful attention.

### **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion**

The Music Institute of Chicago is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of our community. We value diversity of backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives, and we believe these differences strengthen our institution and enrich the educational experience for our students.

MIC is proud to be an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds and experiences to apply.



**LJN Advisory**

Coach. Consult. Search.