

ArtSmart Appoints Ahmad Mayes as Executive Director

Seasoned arts leader brings 20-year track record of transformational impact in music education, community engagement, and cultural equity

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ArtSmart, the nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of youth in under-resourced communities across the United States through music mentorship, is proud to announce [the appointment of Ahmad Mayes as its next Executive Director](#), effective July 17, 2025.



Ahmad Mayes is ArtSmart's next Executive Director, effective July 17

Mayes brings two decades of experience in the nonprofit music industry, with a proven record of leadership, strategic vision, and commitment to arts education and cultural equity. His appointment comes at a pivotal time as ArtSmart continues to expand its national impact, having provided nearly 55,000 free, one-to-one music lessons in eight cities across the United States since its inception.

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Ahmad Mayes

“I am extremely proud to join ArtSmart in empowering students of all backgrounds to express themselves creatively and develop holistically, and I'm excited to help expand our impact in communities across the country,” said Mayes. “This work is about more than music—it's about opening doors, building confidence, and making sure every young person feels seen, heard, and supported. It is a dream come true to help lead this effort.”

Mayes most recently served as Executive Director of the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach, where he led the

organization through a period of bold growth—doubling audiences and revenue, expanding

community reach, and launching strategic partnerships spanning Florida to New York. Under his leadership, the organization reached record levels of contributed income and audience engagement while deepening its investment in education and community programming.

Prior to his time in Palm Beach, Mayes spent over a decade with the Cincinnati and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras, where he designed nationally recognized programs in music education, youth development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. In Cincinnati, he grew the orchestra's education and community engagement department to reach over 100,000 people annually and helped launch several major national initiatives to diversify the classical music field—including the largest graduate fellowship program for musicians of color in the United States.

His broader work includes collaborations with the Smithsonian Institution, Sphinx Organization, the League of American Orchestras, and an extensive network of schools, foundations, and community partners. A founding member of Equity Arc, Mayes is a frequent contributor to field-wide conversations on inclusion, access, and social impact in the arts. He has served on national committees, been a grant panelist for institutions such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Mellon Foundation, and presented at leading convenings including SphinxConnect, ICSOM, and the League of American Orchestras' annual conference.

Mayes holds degrees in Music Education and Arts Administration from Florida State University and is an alumnus of the League of American Orchestras' Emerging Leaders Program. His work continues to be guided by the belief that the future of the arts depends on institutions that reflect, support, and elevate the communities they serve.

"Ahmad's deep understanding of the nonprofit landscape, his transformational leadership experience, and his unwavering passion for the power of music make him the ideal leader for ArtSmart as we enter our next chapter," said Michael Fabiano and John Viscardi, Co-Founders of ArtSmart, in a joint statement. "We are confident that under his guidance, ArtSmart will continue to grow its impact nationwide while maintaining our commitment to excellence in music mentorship."

In his new role, Mayes will focus on strengthening ArtSmart's mission-driven vision for the next five years, enhancing fundraising capacity, and deepening partnerships across the country. His leadership will further professionalize operations and ensure continued excellence in ArtSmart's programs, which currently serve middle and high school students in under-resourced communities across the United States.

Upon Mayes' arrival, Co-Founder Michael Fabiano will step down as ArtSmart's first executive director, remaining on the Board of Directors as one of ArtSmart's lead advocates. This leadership transition represents the culmination of careful planning by the ArtSmart Board of Directors over the past two years. ArtSmart is deeply grateful for Fabiano's years of service as Executive Director and for his unending commitment to ArtSmart's mission. ArtSmart's board, staff, and community look forward to welcoming Ahmad and working together

to shape the future of music mentorship in America.

[ArtSmart is a 501\(c\)3 nonprofit](#) dedicated to transforming the lives of youth in under-resourced communities across the US through tuition-free music lessons and mentorship, by paid professional artists. Learn more at www.artsmart.org.

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