

**SEARCH FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**American Music Therapy Association**  
Search conducted by Shira Lotzar, Purposeful Hire, Inc.

**SUMMARY**

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) is seeking a culturally attentive and responsive, resilient change leader able to engage a multi-faceted member base toward systemic transformation through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. Serving a highly motivated community of music therapists, the next CEO will foster a culture of collaboration and transparent decision-making while leading structural change through dynamic economic conditions.

**ABOUT THE MUSIC THERAPY PROFESSION**

**What is Music Therapy?**

Music therapy is defined by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) as the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals for people of all ages and ability levels within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. A music therapist is an individual who has completed the education and clinical training requirements established by the AMTA and who holds current board certification from The Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT). A meaningful example of music therapy “in action” can be seen in this [video of Congresswoman Gabby Gifford's rehabilitation](#).

**Who are Music Therapists?**

Music therapists are clinicians and musicians who are passionate advocates of patient care, social justice and the advancement of their profession. As a persona, they exhibit a unique blend of compassion and zeal, empathy and activism. This makes them fierce champions of change both for their patients and AMTA. Expressive, highly analytical, creative and strongly convicted in their diverse beliefs, music therapists are societal change agents at heart.

**Professional Identity Challenges**

An evolving profession with a variety of academic orientations, and serving populations at every life stage, there is vigorous discussion around how best to position music therapists to employers, legislators and allied professions. Fundamental to this discussion is the advancement of their professional identity, clinical practice and credibility with allied professions. Moreover, a general lack of understanding by employers and the general public around the value of music therapy has resulted in the continual need to justify their professional relevance, often leading to relatively low clinical wages and competition from “labor substitutes,” which can affect their ability to remain in the profession and afford long-term AMTA membership.

## Academic Training and Continuing Education

There has been historical deliberation around academic standards for music therapists. Most music therapy programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and approved by AMTA; however, there is wide divergence in the curriculum, internship and graduation requirements. This has led to varying levels of knowledge, practice and quality of care which has culminated in the recent formation of [The 21st Century Commission](#) to explore current and future education and the clinical training of music therapists.

## Credentialing

All music therapists must pass their national board certification exam to earn their [MT-BC](#) (Music Therapist-Board Certified) credential through the Certification Board for Music Therapists ([CBMT](#)). Additionally, they must obtain 100 hours of continuing education (CMTEs) over a 5-year period. In 2019, AMTA began offering up to 20 [CMTEs](#) per year through podcasts, conferences and journal articles. CMTEs can also be obtained through other organizations, which can impact the perceived member value of this offering. There are currently 8713 MT-BCs in the US.

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## ABOUT AMTA

### Organizational Overview

The mission of AMTA is to advance public awareness of the benefits of music therapy and increase access to quality music therapy services in a rapidly changing world. Predecessors, unified in 1998, included the National Association for Music Therapy founded in 1950 and the American Association for Music Therapy founded in 1971. AMTA is committed to the advancement of education, training, professional standards, credentials, and research in support of the music therapy profession.

AMTA currently serves ~3000 members (~2000 MT-BCs, ~800 students and 125 others) covering seven US regions. AMTA's [2019 Workforce Analysis Report](#) highlights member demographics and employment-related statistics.

AMTA represents a diverse membership consisting of clinicians, faculty, business owners, researchers and students. At least 20% of members identify from minoritized or marginalized communities, which has led to a recent emphasis on the need for increased diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI.)

AMTA offers an array of education, networking, and advocacy opportunities through an annual conference, academic journals, research, government relations, social media and volunteer activities; and serves as a continuing education and community building hub. Through stakeholder interviews conducted during this search process, its diverse member base expressed the desire for deeper listening and more segmented offerings to address their unique professional challenges.

### Clarifying Strategic Focus

AMTA faces two overarching stakeholder segments: members (i.e. clinicians, faculty, business owners, researchers and students) and the general public (i.e. patients and families, allied health professions, government / academic bodies, K-12 student pipeline, non-music therapists, and employers). As a result, AMTA members have different perceptions regarding the core value proposition of the organization, which requires the clarification of its strategic focus, and likely re-prioritization of resources and initiatives.

## **Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

AMTA serves a growing population of members from minoritized communities, which recently have self-organized into a range of affinity groups based on their personal identities. These highly engaged cohorts have expressed a strong contention that AMTA and the music therapy profession could benefit from a more intentional focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within the realms of academic standards, workforce development, clinical practice, governance, member communication, programming, professional networking, continuing education, and organizational decision-making. The current AMTA leadership is seeking thoughtful and intentional opportunities to employ a DEI-lens that will foster systemic changes across the organization.

## **Enhancing Member Value**

During stakeholder interviews with diverse groups of clinicians, faculty, business owners, researchers and students, areas of perceived member value include conference discounts, networking, journal access, CMTEs, career services, research and volunteer opportunities.

Each cohort also highlighted ways in which AMTA could boost member retention and engagement including re-examining dues levels; increased focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); enhancing website usability, streamlining governance; and developing robust member feedback channels.

Professionally-speaking, members also would like AMTA to focus on enhancing public awareness of the field, celebrating the many creative approaches to clinical practice, mentoring opportunities, increased employment and higher wages, continued advocacy for state recognition, increased credibility with allied health professionals, academic standardization, insurance reimbursement, support for clinical and business practices, and increasing access for music therapy.

## **Streamlining Governance**

A highly process-driven, yet highly relational organization, AMTA operates with a [shared governance structure](#) including a 16-member national board (nine voting and seven non-voting); an Assembly of Delegates representing each region; seven autonomous regional chapter boards; and 15 standing committees. This highly complex structure offers wide member representation yet could benefit significantly from more efficient and transparent communication channels to facilitate intentional, collaborative decision-making between governance bodies and members.

## **Continuing Advocacy Efforts**

AMTA has partnered with CBMT to co-lead a robust [State Advocacy program](#) including a State Recognition Operational Plan, a joint national initiative to achieve official state recognition of the music therapy profession and the MT-BC credential required for competent practice. Desired outcomes include improving consumer access to music therapy services and establishing a state-based public protection program to ensure that “music therapy” is provided by individuals who meet established training qualifications.

Inclusion within state health and education regulations can also have a positive impact on employment opportunities funding options, while meeting requirements of treatment facilities and accrediting organizations.

This initiative is co-led by AMTA’s government relations staff and 47 highly engaged, volunteer state task forces representing diverse member cohorts, as well as a [coalition of allied partners](#).

Their efforts have resulted in the MT-BC credential being required in multiple states for licensure, state certification or state registries.

## **Bolstering Revenue Generation**

AMTA's [\\$1.8M budget](#) is comprised of dues, non-dues revenue and fundraising sources, with a large portion derived from conference registration. As COVID-19 may significantly impact conference and other revenue streams, there is a need for fresh thinking around creative, value-driven revenue. Due to COVID-19, AMTA has moved their 2020 National Conference to a virtual platform. Non-dues and fundraising efforts should be focused on [external partnerships and donors](#), rather than from members, who have expressed concern over their amount of total investment in AMTA, CBMT credentialing, and continuing education.

## **Enhancing Member Communication & Engagement**

AMTA members are highly engaged, with diverse, strongly held convictions about ways to advance music therapy, and AMTA organizationally. To enrich their dialogues and bridge the perceived gap between members and leaders, they desire more streamlined, two-way communication channels. These channels ideally will foster a culture of collaboration and transparent decision-making between all stakeholders. Time and resources permitting, new communication initiatives could include a website overhaul, an online community platform, focus groups, town hall meetings, enhanced social media, and regular engagement surveys.

## **Engaging Staff**

Based in Silver Spring, MD, AMTA's 11 [national staff](#) - many long-tenured – is a highly interdependent team, deeply committed to the success of their members. Several are music therapists and serve as subject matter experts. AMTA desires a collaborative, encouraging, “seek first to understand” leader who will build on staff abilities and develop their expertise to facilitate a more efficient, effective and forward-thinking operational structure.

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## **THE CEO ROLE**

- Partner with governing bodies to clarify AMTA's strategic focus and determine the best allocation of resources and service its dual-facing mission towards members and the general public.
- Advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices in the areas of academic standards, governance, member communication, programming, professional networking, and organizational decision-making.
- Streamline governance structures and diversify communication channels to facilitate more collaborative and transparent decision-making between governance bodies and members.
- Bolster member recruitment, retention and engagement by segmenting and enhancing member value to address the unique needs of diverse member cohorts.
- Partner with the Government Relations team to ensure continued advancement of advocacy efforts, particularly toward fulfillment of State Recognition Operational Plan.
- Represent AMTA externally to federal and state agencies, coalition partners, allied associations and health organizations.
- Expand non-dues revenue generation and fundraising sources to external partners and donors to alleviate the current burden placed on members.
- Enhance member communication channels to foster more robust, streamlined engagement among volunteers, members and staff.
- Foster external relationships with individuals and organizations to promote the mission of AMTA.
- Continuously improve operations to facilitate effective utilization of resources and technology, while sustaining a culture of empowerment and team cohesion.

## IDEAL QUALIFICATIONS

While a diverse slate of candidates will be considered, priority consideration will be given to candidates with the following demonstrable experience and background:

- ***Significant experience as an association executive with demonstrated success engaging a diverse membership and leading systemic transformation through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.***
- Experience leading board and volunteers through governance transformation within a collaborative and inclusive framework.
- Success bolstering membership recruitment, retention and engagement through segmented member value.
- Capability as a public spokesperson and organizational ‘ambassador’ championing the value of credibility of a less-recognized profession.
- Success driving entrepreneurial non-dues revenue and fundraising campaigns from external partners and donors.
- Experience fostering two-way engagement channels between volunteers, staff and members by leveraging communication technology.
- Background in financial forecasting, operational efficiency, staff development, technology transformation, and resource allocation.

## PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

AMTA’s ideal CEO will self-ascribe as a unique blend of empathetic and entrepreneurial, and will exhibit the following behavioral qualities:

- DEI-focused / culturally attentive and responsive
- Change leader / visionary
- Action-oriented / proactive
- Humble / continuous learner
- Insightful / thoughtful influencer
- Courageous / resilient
- Deep listener / compassionate
- Consensus builder / collaborator
- Comfortable with conflict
- Bridge builder / active listener
- Positive / possibility-focused

## COMPENSATION

Target base compensation for this role is \$185,000 plus competitive benefits.

*All employment decisions are made on a non-discriminatory basis, and without regard to sex, race, color, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, citizenship, national origin, or any other status protected by applicable law. **Candidates representing minoritized or marginalized communities are strongly encouraged to apply.***

## FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

Interested candidates should include the following in their submission:

- A thoughtfully crafted cover letter (more than one page is acceptable) highlighting:
  - Interest in serving AMTA's member population
  - Background in, and perspective on, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)
  - Most relevant accomplishments related to this role
  - Personal attributes that would align with AMTA's desired culture
  
- A customized resume clearly highlighting the desired experience outlined in the "Ideal Qualifications" section

*NOTE: After resume submission, candidates who are selected for initial vetting by search consultant, **will be asked to complete a detailed questionnaire** elaborating on the above areas, prior to the initial screening interview.*

## SUBMISSION PROCESS & SEARCH TIMELINE

Please submit your cover letter and resume to Shira Lotzar, Purposeful Hire Inc. at [shira@purposefulhire.com](mailto:shira@purposefulhire.com) by July 6, 2020. Candidates will be interviewed virtually, then a narrowed slate will be presented to the Search Committee by mid-July. Interviews with the Search Committee, followed by the Board of Directors, is anticipated to occur in late July / early August with a final hire by mid-end of August.