

PHOENIX CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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Central Arts Alliance Announces Sandra Bassett as New Chief Executive Officer

Sandra Bassett will begin her position as CEO March 21, 2022

PHOENIX, AZ (March 17, 2022) - Central Arts Alliance (CAA) announced today the appointment of Sandra Bassett to serve as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer, effective March 21, 2022. Selected by the CAA Board of Directors, Bassett will bring an expansive knowledge of nonprofit and corporate leadership experience to the position, overseeing all Central Arts Alliance operations, programs, and events, including Phoenix Center for the Arts and Thunderbird Arts Center campuses, as well as the Arizona Art Mobile.

CAA Board Chair, Angela Rodela, shared, "We are thrilled to have Sandra Bassett join us as our next CEO. While we will miss Lauren Henschen and appreciate all that she has done over her tenure here, we know Sandra will be able to continue to lead and grow Phoenix Center for the Arts in providing arts and cultural experiences to improve, stimulate, and unite our community. Sandra is a business-savvy artist who cares deeply about our community, and Phoenix Center for the Arts is fortunate to have her on our team."

Bassett joins Central Arts Alliance following her tenure as President and CEO of West Valley Arts Council (WVAC), where she secured new sources of grant funding, created innovative DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) arts programming, and expanded existing programming to reach a broader audience. Under her leadership at WVAC, the organization obtained its highest individual grant award in over 30 years, benefiting their Creative Aging Program. Bassett also created and implemented "Imprint: Celebrating Cultural Diversity in the Arts," a Diversity Equity Inclusion visual and performing arts program for the West Valley, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sandra describes herself as a visionary and entrepreneurial arts and culture leader, and an active advocate for the arts and culture community. In response to her new appointment as CEO

of Central Arts Alliance, Sandra stated, "I am excited for this opportunity to be a part of the Phoenix Arts Center/Thunderbird Arts Center team, to work with an incredible staff, and a fully engaged and active Board of Directors, to continue bringing arts and cultural programming to Phoenix."

As CEO for Central Arts Alliance, Bassett will assist the Board of Directors in the creation of the Strategic Operating Plan, and will be responsible for its implementation, in line with the mission, vision, and core values of the organization to provide arts and culture opportunities for all through education, programming, and advocacy. The CEO also manages the day to day operations of Central Arts Alliance and all its branches, including Phoenix Center for the Arts, Thunderbird Arts Center, and the Arizona Art Mobile, and leads the organization in the production of its two major annual events, the Mayor's Arts Awards and Phoenix Festival of the Arts.

Bassett has consulted with Valley nonprofit and municipal organizations such as Chandler Self Help Foundation, Mesa Arts Center, Tempe Center for the Arts, and the Maricopa Public Library, creating and managing diversity programs, music productions, and video programming. Sandra comes to her new position with experience working in the for-profit sector, with corporations such as Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, Hostess Brands, and Mars, Inc.

Originally from Detroit, Sandra has made Phoenix her home for the past 12 years. Sandra is known as a dynamic, public motivational speaker and international vocalist who also performs throughout the Valley. Bassett serves on the boards of the Arizona Presenters Alliance, The American Federation for Musicians Local #586, and the Northwest Valley YMCA. She earned her M.B.A. in marketing from Walden University and a Bachelor's in business management from Kentucky State University (HBCU).

As Sandra looks forward to stepping into the CEO role at Central Arts Alliance, Sandra shared, "The arts touch so much of our lives in so many ways, aesthetically, educationally, and as an economic driver, all of which benefit the entire community. I am grateful to be a part of the arts and culture community."

About Central Arts Alliance

Central Arts Alliance (CAA) provides arts and culture opportunities for all through education, programming, and advocacy. CAA is governed by a Board of Directors and includes approximately 12 staff members, 100+ contractors/teaching artists, and serves over 3,000 students annually at two campus locations: Phoenix Center for the Arts in downtown Phoenix and Thunderbird Arts Center in north Phoenix, as well as throughout the state via the Arizona Art Mobile. CAA works to eliminate barriers to arts and cultural opportunities through accessible tuition pricing and reduced-fee programming to qualified individuals. We also strive to

strengthen the Phoenix arts and culture community, while providing a home to multiple community arts and culture organizations.

Info: www.phoenixcenterforthearts.org

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Media: Please call or email for additional images and interview requests.

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