



BRIDGES

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**Chief Executive Officer
BRIDGES USA**

Memphis, TN

"BRIDGES unites and inspires diverse young people to become confident and courageous leaders committed to community transformation."

The Opportunity

BRIDGES USA is a youth empowerment organization that facilitates dynamic social and community change. Equipping thousands of young people with leadership skills, BRIDGES USA centers and amplifies youth voices while building pathways to civic engagement. It is a place of deep connections, personal growth, enduring influence, friendships, and intergenerational partnerships that form across social, economic, and racial divides.

BRIDGES USA is an equitable force for innovation and change in Memphis. It is a relevant and evolving organization that is not only improving the local community but also shaping the national dialogue and understanding of youth power. Wherever you go in Memphis, you'll meet a Bridge Builder, alumni of BRIDGES USA are making a difference at home and throughout the country.

BRIDGES USA seeks a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to further its mission and activate its proposed Strategic Plan: *Vision Next 2027*. The CEO will be a uniquely qualified leader of youth who will carry the organization into its future of wider reach and deeper impact.

The Organization

Founded in 1922, BRIDGES USA began as an outreach mission of the Episcopal Church to young women in Memphis. Broadening its focus to engage youth, it was known as Youth Service of Memphis, then with federal investment in 1970, it became Youth Service USA, expanding its reach to over half a million youth through summer programming on regional military bases. In 1988, the Bridge Builder summer program was launched to help high school students make friendships across racial lines and neighborhoods and its

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name, officially changed to BRIDGES USA in 1996 and has been synonymous with leadership and impact in the four decades since.

Staying true to its roots to uplift and change the trajectory of youth, the organization has continued to evolve and meet the needs of young people in the region, currently serving students from 53 zip codes. Building on its expansive impact, BRIDGES USA has also become a prominent voice and force in public matters, policy, and activism.

With one of the highest child poverty rates in the nation, Memphis needs BRIDGES. The organization has served as both a beacon of hope and an intentional disrupter of the status quo since its founding. A center for access, inclusivity, and personal and community transformation, BRIDGES has been bridging divides to bring young Memphians together to transform the city.

BRIDGES USA's next CEO will inherit an organization with revenues over \$3m and a healthy financial position established through the support of generous individual donors, foundations, corporations, and strong revenue streams. In 2015, BRIDGES USA established an endowment to support its continued impact and growth. The organization raises approximately \$1.2m in annual donations and was recently recognized with a \$1m grant from Mackenzie Scott.

BRIDGES USA's work is organized in three areas: Bridge Builders, the Youth Action Center, and Team BRIDGES.

Bridge Builders, is its longstanding flagship program where thousands of area students are engaged annually. Participants represent a wide range of cultures, races, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds that reflect the demographics of the city and region. Thousands of alumni in the region attribute their success today to the leadership skills and connections they formed as Bridge Builders.

With three levels, [CONNECT](#), [COLLABORATE](#), and [CHANGE](#), Bridge Builders engages 6th-12th graders with highly developed activities and curriculum that help students develop strong communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills to be effective and active citizens. This experiential learning is highly interactive, incorporating courageous conversations about complex issues and adventure elements such as a 35-foot climbing wall and high ropes course on site.

Youth Action Center (YAC) focuses on three endeavors: leadership activation for students, partnerships with local organizations to increase youth contributions in decision-making, and national training for nonprofits focused on youth.

Through the YAC's leadership activation, area youth build confidence and skills in conflict resolution in addition to problem-solving and effective communication to accelerate and amplify their impact.

Before the YAC was established and now through YAC's [InterCORE](#) (Intergenerational Collaborative Organizing for Racial Equity), BRIDGES has established impactful partnerships with Memphis area entities that bring youth and adults together to build youth-adult equity. Together they develop authentic and equitable actions to address issues in education, healthcare, social services, and justice systems.

The third area of work for the Youth Action Center extends beyond Memphis to national youth movements. The YAC teaches other organizations how to build authentic youth leadership and empowerment. The YAC's partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation supports the [Intergenerational Engagement Learning Collaborative's](#) national community strategies team, their grantees, and national consultants. YAC's frontline and exemplary work of centering youth voices is shared with others through tool kits, coaching, and peer learning.



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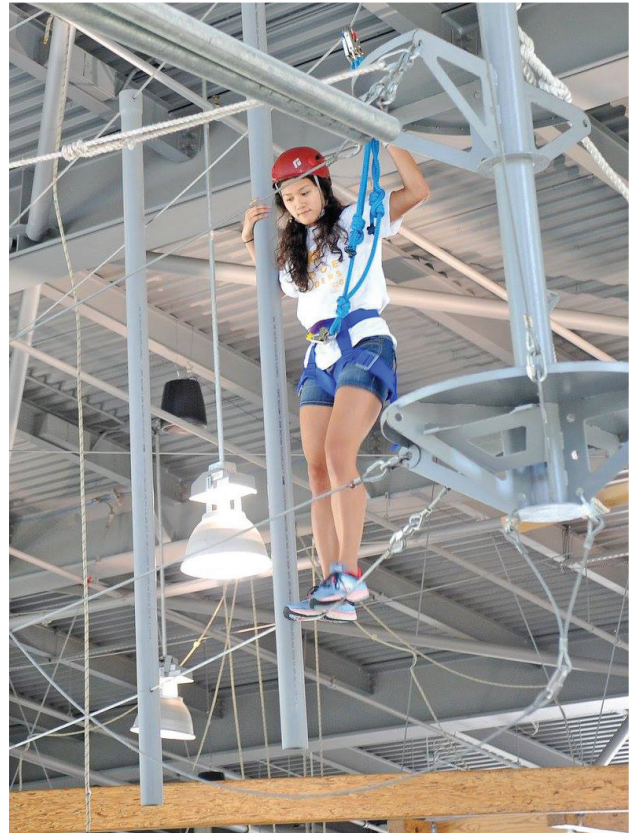
Team BRIDGES is the third aspect of BRIDGES USA programming and brings corporate and civic leaders of the region to BRIDGES. Serving as the mid-south's premier team-building entity, Team BRIDGES customizes training and curriculum for a wide variety of organizations both online and on-site.

The Mandate

BRIDGES USA's next CEO is a values-driven leader who centers youth in all decision-making. Their work and career reflect a deep commitment and passion for youth development and BRIDGES USA's mission. They will:

- 1. Provide vision and leadership.** The CEO will bring vision, inspire confidence, and build on the success of BRIDGES' many programs while finding means to accelerate BRIDGES' impact and capacity. They are a leader who sees around the next corner and readies BRIDGES to be at the forefront.
- 2. Scale the organization in a sustainable fashion.** The new leader will move with the team and stakeholders to expand the reach of BRIDGES programs by improving both programmatic accessibility and value to the youth of the wider region, meeting the needs of thousands more of Memphis' youth.
- 3. Drive innovation and impact.** The CEO will support and foster BRIDGES learning culture and create an entrepreneurial environment with clear organizational objectives, accountability for the team, and strategic management of resources. Bringing strong financial acumen, they will build upon a highly collaborative culture and ensure the organization hits growth and performance targets.

- 4. Build awareness, and investment** through effective and meaningful relationships with internal and external stakeholders, the CEO will be a highly visible leader who drives the proposed *Vision Next 2027*'s thoughtful and ambitious goals. Through clear storytelling, the CEO will compel others to join the mission. They will support and embody BRIDGES USA's role as a pillar of the Memphis community and continue its trajectory of being the "go-to" nonprofit and ultimate hub for youth empowerment. Bringing a history of success in cultivating and securing grants and financial support, the CEO will be key to the organization's financial growth.
- 5. Inspire, lead, and motivate a high-performing team.** The CEO will leverage the passion and expertise of dedicated employees (many Bridge Builder alumni and/or parents) to drive excellence and growth. They will believe in and enhance the team's learning and empowered culture. Being both a catalyst for great ideas and a broker of tensions, the CEO will unify all programs and team members around their common purpose and mission.
- 6. Collaborate with youth.** The CEO will lead *with* youth and ensure that youth voices are at the table for ideating, planning and enacting all of BRIDGES USA's short- and long-term goals.
- 7. Reinforce, uphold and build BRIDGES USA's journey and commitment** to racial justice, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. With deep experience and learning, the CEO will strengthen this essential tenant of BRIDGES USA's work and culture with intentionality, respect, and inclusive leadership.



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The Candidate

The ideal candidate brings skill and experience in leading a multi-dimensional, growth-oriented organization. Their career will manifest a commitment to youth and the mission and impact of BRIDGES USA. The ideal candidate has:

- Passion for youth leadership and a drive to lift and center their voices in everything BRIDGES USA does.
- High emotional intelligence and curiosity. A bias for action with a disciplined approach to discern what is essential and what is a distraction.
- A hands-on style with the ability to motivate a team of high performers in a low-ego, humble and collaborative manner. Both compassionate and strong, they are willing to leverage the expertise of the staff.
- A creative, entrepreneurial, and facilitative leadership that brings clarity and consensus, and deftly leads dialogue into action, translating ideas into solutions.
- A transparent and highly communicative personality. An open leader who gives and receives feedback and thrives in an input-driven culture.
- A deep appreciation and comfort with complexity and an instinct for problem-solving. A risk taker who is willing to explore new ideas strategically and employ change management practices to build trust and encourage action among all stakeholders.
- A lifetime of experience with civic engagement and social justice through professional pursuits and/or volunteer service. The CEO has a track record of true competence in building bridges across divides in their communities.

- Facility in governance, a board-savvy leader who works with and grows the board in tandem with organizational needs and priorities.
- Ideally, a connection to or understanding of Memphis and the region.
- A minimum of ten years of professional experience with at least five in a leadership role at an organization of similar size and complexity.
- A bachelor's degree is preferred, an MBA or related advanced degree would be an asset.

The Relationships

The Chief Executive Officer reports to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors
And manages a staff of 30 through six direct reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Administrative Officer • Vice President of Strategic Partnerships • Vice President of Programs • Vice President of Development and Communications
While stewarding other important relationships, such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program partners & collaborators • Current and potential funders • Leaders from across corporate, academic, governmental, educational, health, nonprofit and philanthropic communities • National experts in youth leadership



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The Location

BRIDGES is headquartered in Memphis, TN in an iconic building that is a short distance from the Mississippi River Bridge that connects Tennessee with Arkansas. The [Jim Boyd BRIDGES CENTER](#) opened in 2004 in the Uptown Memphis community where the organization started over 100 years ago.

Memphis is a thriving, livable, and affordable metropolis of about one million residents. Barbecue, [Beale Street Blues](#), [Civil Rights Landmarks](#), Graceland, the Mississippi River and the Memphis Grizzlies are absolute hallmarks of Memphis, but that is just the beginning. It is home to monumental institutions such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and FedEx. The cost of living in Memphis is 21% lower than the national average. Memphis is also, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy, the most giving city in America. Its spirit of generosity is unmatched.

Among the 50 largest regions in the U.S., Memphis is #1 in the number of nonprofit organizations per 10,000 population. Being in the business of helping others, means that Memphis is the place for you. The magic of Memphis is its intersections—of people, identities, and ideas all coming together to create something exceptional. Learn more about [Memphis](#).



BRIDGES believes youth are the “not next- but now” solution to many of our city’s problems.

For potential consideration or to recommend a prospect, please email BRIDGESUSA@BoardWalkConsulting.com or call

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404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).
