



POSITION PROFILE

Organization: **Common Ground Washington**
www.commongroundwa.org

Position Title: **Executive Director**

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Location: Seattle, WA

Reports To: Board of Directors

Direct Reports: Three Managing Housing Developers, Technical Assistance Manager, Financial Manager, and Communications and Fundraising Coordinator.

Organization Description & History:

Common Ground is a nonprofit consulting organization with the mission to preserve and create housing for low income and special needs populations in Washington State. Since 1980, Common Ground has helped other nonprofits, housing authorities, and local governments to create over 4400 units of low-income housing. Rather than owning or managing housing directly, Common Ground provides a full range of housing development services, capacity building assistance, asset management services, and public advocacy for non-profit and housing authority clients. Common Ground also provides housing planning and program design for local and state governments.

Common Ground has a staff of 26, with offices in Seattle and Spokane, and has an annual operating budget of approximately \$2.75 million. The majority of the organization's revenue comes from consulting contracts. A small percentage is from grants and private fundraising. Common Ground is viewed as an excellent place to work and has successfully recruited and retained a group of very experienced and committed professionals. The organization is a statewide leader in the preservation and creation of publically subsidized affordable housing. Common Ground's reputation is particularly strong in the areas of

assembling complex financing, developing housing with supporting services, developing mixed use projects, and advocating for public policies and resources. The Common Ground staff has strong working relationships with key state and local funders and play leadership roles in local and state policy and advocacy groups.

**Position Purpose
& Responsibilities:**

The Executive Director leads and manages Common Ground. S/he is the chief operations officer and professional advisor to the Board of Directors. S/he is responsible for the overall administration of the organization in accordance with the goals and policies approved by the Board of Directors. S/he is responsible for assuring the overall financial health of the organization and for making strategic adjustments in response to changing economic conditions. The Executive Director represents the organization in a broad variety of public and private venues and coalitions related to affordable housing. S/he plays a particularly critical role in state level affordable housing policy and resource discussions and actions.

Specific responsibilities include:

Leadership:

- Leads and facilitates Common Ground's mission and vision.
- Foresees and adjusts Common Ground's direction for changes in the environment and keeps the organization informed of significant issues and opportunities.
- Provides leadership at the local and state levels on non-profit, low-income housing development finance issues.
- Coordinates Common Ground's work with that of other similar, concerned organizations.
- Provides leadership and direction to staff and volunteers.
- Establishes and maintains high standards of performance.
- Demonstrates a commitment to ethical practices and standards.

Management:

- Provides general management of Common Ground's resources.
- Ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability to the Board and funding sources.
- Oversees negotiation of contracts and ensures adherence to applicable contract requirements, rules and regulations.
- Assures that key operational problems are identified in a timely manner and resolved appropriately.
- Consistently and fairly executes policies, plans and objectives established by the Board.
- Develops and maintains programs and services which effectively meet mission goals and objectives.
- Ensures the quality of technical assistance and consulting

services to agency's development clients and makes adjustments as appropriate. Makes periodic reports to The Board on the quality of services delivered and client satisfaction with services.

- Oversees and directs the human resources functions of the organization.
 - Creates a staff organizational structure appropriate to achieve Board-adopted goals, objectives and programs.
 - Selects and then effectively directs, delegates to, and evaluates key management staff, and oversees the hiring, promotion and termination of staff and volunteers.
 - Ensures that all staff receives appropriate orientation, training and support, regular evaluation to carry out their responsibilities.
 - Attentively and sensitively monitors staff morale and teamwork, recommending and implementing adjustments to policy, structure or procedures to ensure a positive and productive working environment.
 - Oversees the overall administration of salaries and benefits to staff and contracted employees, including the development of salary ranges and benefit programs and the determination of compensation for all employees within such salary ranges.

Finance:

- Formulates, in conjunction with the Board, annual proposed and revised budgets and administers organization programs in accordance with budgetary provisions.
- Directs the planning and implementation of strategies to raise funds or adjust strategic resources as needed to meet Common Ground's budget, capital acquisition and reserve requirements. The Executive Director and the Board of Directors are actively engaged in fundraising activities.
- Assures that financial policies, procedures, and systems are in place to manage funds and make regular reports to the Treasurer and the full Board of Directors.

Board Relations and Support:

- Attends all Board meetings and staffs the Executive Committee.
- Assures that there is appropriate staff support for all committees.
- Assures appropriate orientation and ongoing training for Board members.

Planning and Policy Formulation:

- Oversees the creation of a Strategic Plan to be developed

with and adopted by the Board of Directors every five years. The plan will have specific goals, annual objectives, and performance indicators that will be used by the management team for decision making and by the Board of Directors to monitor performance over the five year period.

- Ensures that Common Ground's annual objectives are met, reporting to the Board on implementation plans and performance indicators, and when obstacles or opportunities require that annual objectives be modified.

Advocacy:

- Recommends an annual advocacy agenda for Board adoption.
- Advocates, along with other Common Ground staff and Board members for the external understanding, resources, procedures and policies necessary for Common Ground to meet its objectives. This will include direct work with national representatives, the state legislature as well as individual jurisdictions.
- Keeps board and staff informed of legislative climate and issues "calls to action" for participation when necessary.
- Provide support for funded advocacy projects. Current projects include advocacy training for non-profit board members.

Community Relations:

- Represents and promotes the work and activities of Common Ground to potential clients, community groups, public officials, the media and the general public.
- Ensures that marketing and outreach plans are developed and implemented to secure the clients, community support and funding resources necessary to carry out Common Ground's mission, goals and objectives.
- Builds partnerships and advances the goals of coalitions that are critical to advancing Common Grounds mission.

Search Criteria:

Required:

- 8+ years of experience in housing or fields directly related to housing
- 8 years of senior management experience in the public, private or non-profit sectors
- Strong leadership skills, excellent communication skills, demonstrated ability to effectively manage and motivate professional staff
- A genuine 'servant-leader' who displays equal aptitude as an executive as they do in the 'hands on' roles sometimes required of them
- Bachelor's Degree
- Good sense of humor, a must!

- Proven experience in maintaining key relationships with external stakeholders.
- Ability to develop new business and market CG effectively
- Passion for subsidized housing and the role it plays in our communities.
- Entrepreneurial aptitude; ability and/or track record as an innovator.
- Understanding of the statewide nature of the organization and ability to support remote office and staff outside of the Seattle area.

Desired:

- Technical knowledge of housing development and a strong reputation in the Washington State affordable housing industry both rural and urban in both the east side and west side of the state.
- Connections and relationships with local agencies, funders and policymakers
- Knowledge of and experience with the challenges and responsibilities associated with the ownership of affordable housing, including asset management and portfolio issues.

Initial Expectations:

First six months:

- Build trust and relationship with staff, Board and external partners.
- Place an emphasis on maintaining the financial health of the organization.
- Work towards maintaining the public networks and reputation.
- Create opportunities/contracts to satisfy the position's billable hours.

Potential Early Challenges:

- Understand the housing industry and development realities sufficiently to address how work flows in relation to budget.
- Maintain the strong capacity and health of the organization in the current state and federal funding climate for subsidized housing.
- Recognize the need for and lead changes in an organizational structure that may be required due to decreased funding, increased competition and protracted project timelines.
- Manage diversification or other strategic initiatives to address permanent funding contraction if it occurs.

Compensation Package:

A competitive salary and benefit package commensurate with similar positions in the non-profit community.

