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EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE



ORGANIZATION

Dakota Woodlands

POSITION

Executive Director

APPLICATION DEADLINE

September 10, 2024

COMPENSATION

\$120,000 - \$140,000

BRIEF

Ballinger | Leafblad is pleased to conduct the search for an Executive Director at Dakota Woodlands in Eagan, Minnesota

CONTACT

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Dakota Woodlands is the only shelter in Dakota County serving families experiencing homelessness. The shelter also has dedicated Client Case Advocates providing person-centered care and supportive services to clients at Dakota Woodlands.

Dakota Woodlands:

- assists families in removing barriers preventing them from moving on to permanent affordable housing and other needed services that will help sustain independence once leaving the Shelter.
- provides families with transportation, arranging for meetings and appointments, arranging for medical and social services, reminding clients to take medications that are self-administered, and providing social opportunities.
- offers specialized trainings to build confidence in life skills, helping families experiencing homelessness maintain stability and independence.
- provides support and stays connected with families transitioning out of homelessness and moving to their new homes.

Families are welcome to stay at the Shelter as long as needed. Client Case Advocates work in unison with families, helping them to reach their goals of having a safe home to move into, economic stability, health care, and family well-being.

Learn more at <https://www.dakotawoodlands.org/>



HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness infiltrates nearly all communities, ages and family structures. Among developed countries, the United States has the highest number of women and children experiencing homelessness. In America, over 549,000 people are homeless and 43.1 million live below the poverty level. 1 in 5 of these are children.

Homelessness is more than physical discomfort, it can cause fear for personal safety, stigmatization and isolation, and a sense of hopelessness. Children without secure and stable housing are at increased risk for lower educational attainment, jeopardized physical and mental health, and decreased social development. Childhood trauma is the leading factor for adult homelessness.

Families experiencing homelessness are doing so primarily due to lack of income and affordable housing. One-third of homeless adults in Minnesota are working full time. Certain populations are more apt to be homeless such as those with criminal records, credit complications, drug or alcohol difficulties, and chronic health issues, including mental health challenges. Often, an initial problem will compound into other issues that eventually lead to homelessness.



HISTORY

In November 1981, the organization (then called Mary's Place) was founded by Jan Lindsay, wife of a 3M executive and was located in St. Paul. Originally serving only single pregnant women, the Shelter was licensed in 1993 to add residential care for single women and families experiencing homelessness. In 1995, Mary's Shelter relocated to Eagan and refocused its mission on shelter plus programming for families experiencing homelessness. The Eagan location completed a renovation in 2000 and the name was changed to Dakota Woodlands. Ms. Lindsay went on to open a number of nonprofits around the country serving individuals experiencing homelessness.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Staff describe the culture at Dakota Woodlands as positive and stable, with a strong focus on serving clients. The team feels safe and supported at work, and they value a transparent line of communication. They appreciate the organization's emphasis on respect and dignity extended to both staff and clients. While sometimes difficult to serve families experiencing homelessness, the staff collectively celebrate successes alongside clients and create and maintain lasting relationships with these families and individuals.

MISSION

Empowering displaced families on their journey to independence.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Dakota Woodlands can assist 22 families at one time with housing and training that includes life skills, financial literacy, and personal wellness. The award-winning program at Dakota Woodlands is known for its homey atmosphere, personal attention, and successful “one shelter stay” for its residents. After leaving the shelter, more than 92 percent of the residents who participate in the full program succeed in staying stably housed.

Dakota Woodlands is part of a specialized care team that partners with Dakota County, connecting clients to needed services, resources and finding permanent housing.

SHELTER

Families are offered their own private secure bedrooms and have access to shared community living space. The shared space includes washer and dryer facility, TV lounges, dining room, workout room, computer lab, childcare and game room.



NUTRITIOUS MEALS

Residents are offered daily nutritional meals prepared by professional cooks including continental breakfast, hot lunch, dinner, and snacks.



EDUCATION AND ACTIVITIES

Dakota Woodlands offers an educational program teaching life skills to help maintain permanent housing. The program encourages well-being and a healthy lifestyle and includes learning activities for the entire family.

As a client journeys through the program, credits are earned and may be exchanged for household items for their new home. After a client meets all requirements of the curriculum, they will graduate, receiving beneficial rewards and a program diploma for their accomplishment. Clients may also take the opportunity to enroll in elective classes outside of the core offerings and take part in fun activities for the whole family. Dakota Woodlands is dedicated to supporting families and provides childcare to make it easier for clients to participate and to fulfill the social and educational part of the program.

Following graduation from the educational program, Dakota Woodland offers a special work program for clients to learn job skills earning a possible work reference for future employment and earning credit(s) for the in-house store.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, cont.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AT THE SHELTER

Encouragement and person-centered care are at the forefront of Dakota Woodlands supportive services.

Dakota Woodlands also provides:

- Financial literacy
- Personalized employment development
- Sustainable housing
- Parenting skills
- Computer proficiency
- Personal wellness



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AFTER LEAVING THE SHELTER

When a family leaves the shelter, every attempt is made to keep in touch. Families are introduced to community connections that will continue to assist them in their recovery and including them in family activities such as picnics, community arts, and school functions. Former clients are also assisted with emergency needs such as diapers, formula, small loans and other time-sensitive items that could set them back into experiencing homelessness.



VOLUNTEERS

Dakota Woodlands relies on the incredible work of generous volunteers. Over 400 committed volunteers assist the organization each year, providing services such as maintenance, child care, holiday decorations, reception desk staffing, donation pick-ups and client events.

SUMMARY

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director shares the organization's passion for serving others and is responsible for the successful leadership and management of the organization. With the Board, the Executive Director sets and implements the strategic plan and oversees all staff, programs, policies, budget (\$1.2 million) and external relationships for Dakota Woodlands.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Participate with the Board of Directors in developing a vision and strategic plan to guide the organization. Maintain frequent, open and transparent communications with the Board.
- Identify, assess, and inform the Board of Directors of internal and external issues affecting the organization.
- Act as a professional advisor to the Board of Directors on all aspects of the organization's activities.
- In addition to the Chair of the Board, act as a spokesperson for the organization.
- Conduct official correspondence on behalf of the Board as appropriate and jointly with the Board when appropriate.
- Represent the organization at community activities to enhance the organization's community profile.

Operational Planning and Management

- Develop an operational plan incorporating goals and objectives that work towards the strategic direction of the organization. Track and communicate organizational progress against goals.
- Ensure the operation of the organization meets the expectations of its clients, Board and funders.
- Oversee the efficient and effective day-to-day operation of the organization.
- Provide leadership to the volunteer management activities, including recruitment and recognition of volunteers.
- Ensure that reporting and licensing requirements are achieved.

Program Planning and Management

- Oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of the organization's programs and services.
- Ensure the programs and services offered by the organization contribute to the organization's mission and reflect the priorities of the Board.
- Monitor the day-to-day delivery of the programs and services of the organization to maintain or improve quality.
- Oversee the planning, implementation, execution and evaluation of special projects. Support professional growth opportunities for staff and managers and fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Human Resources Planning and Management

- Provide positive leadership to the organization and a cohesive, supportive culture that encourages employee engagement.
- Be a visionary leader, assuring that all staff have an understanding and connection to the mission, vision and values of the organization.
- Determine staffing requirements for organizational management and program delivery.

- Oversee the implementation of the human resources policies, procedures and practices including the development of job descriptions for all staff.
- Recruit, attract, develop and retain staff with the right mix of skills and characteristics to further the mission.
- Ensure all staff receive orientation and appropriate ongoing training.
- Implement a performance management process for all staff which includes providing feedback to staff on an on-going basis and conducting an annual performance review.
- Coach and mentor staff as part of ongoing development planning.
- Oversee and modify, as needed, the structure of the organization.

Fundraising/Community Relations/Advocacy

- Lead the organization's fundraising activities including donor relations, grant writing, corporate and philanthropic support. Be an active ambassador of the organization's mission in philanthropic settings.
- Research funding sources, oversee the development of fundraising plans and write funding proposals to increase the funds of the organization.
- Communicate with stakeholders to keep them informed of the work of the organization and to identify changes in the community served by the organization.
- Establish good working relationships and collaborative arrangements with community groups, funders, politicians, and other organizations to help achieve the goals of the organization.

Risk Management

- Identify and evaluate the risks to the organization's people (clients, staff, management, volunteers), property, finances, goodwill, and image and implement measures to control risks.
- Ensure the Board of Directors and the organization carries appropriate and adequate insurance coverage.
- Ensure the Board and staff understand the terms, conditions and limitations of the insurance coverage.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Progressive management experience in a nonprofit or related organization.
- Background of successful human resources management, including hiring/selection, coaching and developing staff.
- Experience building and maintaining a positive organizational culture.
- Experience with financial accounting and budgeting.
- Background in fundraising, including grant writing, individual and corporate donor relations, philanthropic support and events.
- Ability to create a vibrant brand and social media presence to broaden the organization's reach.
- Connections and relationships in the nonprofit sector, including with partner and collaborating organizations, and related service providers.
- Knowledge of current community challenges and opportunities relating to the mission of the organization.
- Bachelor's degree or comparable educational background in a related field.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Strategic: Determine strategies to move the organization forward, set goals, create and implement actions plans, and evaluate the process and results.

Relationship Focused: Create and maintain excellent working relationships with such staff, board, clients, partners, community leaders, donors and others.

Leadership: Provide a vision and positively influence others to achieve results in the best interest of the organization.

Client Focused: Anticipate, understand, and respond to the needs of internal and external clients to meet or exceed their expectations within the organizational parameters.

Problem Solving: Assess problem situations to identify causes, gather and process relevant information, generate possible solutions, and make recommendations and/or resolve the problem.

Team Development: Work cooperatively and effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems, and make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness.

Decision Making: Assess situations to determine the importance, urgency and risks, and make clear decisions which are timely and in the best interests of the organization.

Adaptability: Demonstrate a willingness to be flexible and versatile in a changing work environment while maintaining effectiveness and efficiency.

Ethical: Understand ethical behavior and business practices, ensuring that own behavior and the behavior of others is consistent with these standards and aligns with the values of the organization.

Innovation: Develop new and unique ways to improve operations of the organization and to create new opportunities.

Communication: Share information with individuals and groups in a genuine, compelling manner.

Authentic: Exhibit care and concern for the people and mission of Dakota Woodlands.

Organization: Set priorities, develop a work schedule, monitor progress towards goals, and track details, data, information and activities.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The target base compensation range is \$120,000-\$140,000 and includes participation in the organization's comprehensive benefits plan.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER STATEMENT

Dakota Woodlands is committed to diversity and to equal opportunity employment. Dakota Woodlands does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, height, weight, physical or mental ability (including HIV status), veteran status, military obligations, or marital status. This policy applies to hiring, internal promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, and terminations and applies to all Dakota Woodlands' employees, volunteers, clients, and contractors.

TO APPLY

Inquiries may be directed to Holly Kelsey-Henry, holly@ballingerleafblad.com.

Applications will be accepted until September 10, 2024 or until the position has been filled, which may be earlier. There will be an immediate and ongoing review of candidates, so *we encourage and appreciate early applications*. All inquiries will remain confidential.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The Twin Cities metro area includes Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the surrounding suburban area. Making up the 14th largest metropolitan area in the country, it is a unique blend of a small town and major cosmopolitan hub. Both urban cores boast a thriving business atmosphere. Saint Paul, as the state capital, is home to state government and has a more historical vibe. Minneapolis is the larger and more commercial of the two cities.

Separated by the Mississippi River, both cities share a common root of being river towns - and the great outdoors are still a major attraction for residents and visitors alike. There are over 100,000 acres of parks, walking and bike paths, and other outdoor spaces.

Outside of the central downtowns, however, both cities have many distinct neighborhoods, and residents identify more with their individual communities than with the larger city as a whole. The area has a diverse range of neighborhoods and homes, with an atmosphere of a small town feeling with the conveniences and cultural hallmarks of a big city.

The Twin Cities offer something for everyone, from six professional sports teams to a robust theater and arts scene. There is a thriving "foodie" culture offering award-winning restaurants (several chefs have been regional James Beard Award winners). Shopping is plentiful with area malls and unique shopping districts in both cities and in the suburbs.

Nearly every weekend in the summer there are several outdoor events for participants and spectators—triathlons, biking races, marathons, boat races, water skiing competitions, golf tournaments including several PGA tournaments. Winter is also celebrated with events such as the Saint Paul Winter Carnival, the City of Lakes Loppet Winter Festival and the U.S. Pond Hockey championships. And for those who want to get away from it all, ice fishing and snowmobiling are popular Minnesota pastimes.

RESOURCES

Meet Minneapolis | <https://www.minneapolis.org/>

Saint Paul | <https://www.stpaul.gov/>

Greater MSP Partnership | www.greatersp.org

Saint Paul Convention & Visitors Bureau | <https://www.visitsaintpaul.com/>

Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce | <https://www.stpaulchamber.com/>

Minneapolis Park & Recreation | <https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/>

Minnesota Compass | <http://www.mncompass.org/>

3.6M Population of
Greater MSP Region



60+ Museums in the Metro Area



300 Parks



1,750 Regional Lakes

Thriving Arts & Cultural
Districts



1,000+ Miles of Bike Trails