



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND PRESIDENT

### JOB DESCRIPTION

February 1, 2023

Job Title: CEO and President

Reports To: Board of Directors

Job Classification: Full-Time/Exempt

#### About CWLA

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) is the oldest and largest organization that represents both the public and private sectors committed to serving children and families in need of support and resources to achieve improved outcomes. ([www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org))

A strong membership organization from its founding in 1920 to this day, CWLA is a prominent voice for children and families. It brings together those committed to the highest quality of care and leverages its competency and capacity to advocate for children, youth, and families.

The CWLA mission is to..... *lead and engage its network of public and private agencies and partners to advance policies, best practices, and collaborative strategies that result in better outcomes for children youth and families that are vulnerable.* And its vision is ..... *that every child will grow up in a safe, loving, and stable family.*

Its strategic direction places an emphasis on advocacy, updating its *Standards of Excellence*, and the implementation of the *National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare (National Blueprint)*. The primary goal of the *National Blueprint* is to be a catalyst for change: to broaden the thinking of communities, individuals, and groups, including public and private organizations within and outside of the child welfare system, and to help them understand how their roles and responsibilities fit into the overall strategy to improve outcomes for children and youth. Simultaneously, it serves as the basis for updating and creating CWLA program-specific *Standards of Excellence*, which play a unique and pivotal role in moving child welfare practice forward.

CWLA is also reshaping its membership, consultation, and training services to reflect the *National Blueprint*. Along with these initiatives CWLA is reviewing its publication capacity and creating partnerships beyond core child welfare services in line with its historic advocacy for all children,

CWLA represents both public and private members. In addition to an annual conference that attracts practitioners and policymakers, CWLA provides an opportunity for its members to help craft federal policy through advocacy efforts that address the needs of children and families by educating legislators, their staff and other policy makers. On an ongoing basis CWLA is monitoring and advocating for public policies that ensure organizations, families, children, youth, and communities have needed services and resources.

CWLA advances its practice excellence agenda by developing and disseminating information and education to organizations and individuals, providing opportunities for shared learning, and convening advisory committees focused on practice improvement. In addition to its advisory committees, CWLA sponsors the Mental Health Advisory Board that focuses on the behavioral and mental health policies that impact children and families in care.

## **Opportunity**

At a time when the fundamental assumptions of how best to serve children and families are being questioned and analyzed, the next CEO of CWLA will help reimagine the organization to be ever responsive at a time of significant development for the child and family servicing systems.

The person selected for this leadership position must be a visionary in tune with a mandate to assure that the system of care is free of biases that might jeopardize those it serves. CWLA is a convener of the many interests engaged in this critical conversation. As such, the CEO must be willing to diplomatically entertain and lead the discussion that helps to reimagine the child and family caring system.

This is an opportunity for someone committed to making a lasting impact on how children and families in need achieve their dreams. CWLA is committed to finding a candidate that is not only experienced but also representative of the diversity of those it serves and its members.

## **Position Description**

The CEO of CWLA is a position that combines the typical responsibilities of an executive with the sensibilities of a grassroots advocacy organization leader. The CEO is someone who can bring together the disparate interests of its members to create an environment that effectively addresses the critical issues challenging children and families today and to be a forceful spokesperson on their behalf. As a result, the CEO must be a versatile leader, knowledgeable of the critical issues affecting the care of children and families, familiar with membership organizations and recognized as a passionate advocate.

The CEO will direct a very committed cadre of professionals, each managing a portfolio representing advocacy, best practice, standards of excellence, the interests of members and the overall mission of CWLA. CWLA has a flat operating model, one in which the CEO, and staff, function collegially and collaboratively to address a very comprehensive value driven agenda.

The CEO is also responsible for directing all aspects of CWLA's publishing business. Although it is a small enterprise, it is nevertheless a significant arm of the organization. This will include managing royalty agreements, contracts with authors, product profitability analysis, business plan development and all aspects of publication.

This position reports directly to the Board of Directors and will work collegially with the governing body that represents members in both the public and private sectors.

## **Leadership Traits**

- **Mission driven.** Provide leadership rooted in the mission to raise a voice on behalf of children and families who are vulnerable.
- **Strategic visionary.** The ability to focus on long-term organizational goals and the evolving reimagining of the child and family systems of care while effectively addressing immediate operational concerns.

- Possess the **fiscal acumen** necessary to manage a \$2 million non-profit, multi-faceted, membership organization and demonstrate the capacity to **creatively operate** with finite resources and lead the organization to identify new sources of revenue and support.
- **Versatile.** The ability to manage and provide multiple executive functions and support the consulting driven agenda of its staff to maximize its organizational effectiveness.
- **Advocate** effectively on behalf of children and families including those served by member agencies.
- Possess effective **interpersonal skills** capable of diplomatically maneuvering through a field of diverse opinions and interests while building consensus.

## Responsibilities

### Operational functions:

- Management and oversight of staff including hiring, termination, promotion, performance appraisals and all the aspects of a supportive work environment. Adherence to policies and practices approved by the board of directors and within the boundaries of labor laws and standards.
- Provide an annual organizational work plan outlining goals and benchmarks for each of the organization's initiatives and areas of practice, resource development, marketing and communications, member relations and operational concerns.

### Financial accountability:

- Submits the annual operating budget for approval by the board of directors and provides monthly financial statements, analysis, and variances of actual performance against budget targets.
- Develops a business model and plan that incorporates all aspects of the organization's revenue sources including membership fees, professional development services, consultation agreements, and publication to sustain the financial viability of CWLA.
- Adheres to financial policies and practices approved by the board of directors regarding signing authority approval and bidding processes, financial controls, and timely satisfaction of all financial and contractual obligations.

### Organizational governance:

- Plans for board meetings and board committees. In consultation with the chair of the board, prepares agendas and supports the board to complete projects in a timely fashion.
- Ensures and provides the resources needed by the board to meet its responsibilities, including the preparation and distribution of materials, recording of minutes for review and submission by the secretary and the preparation of financial statements for review and submission by the treasurer.

### Stakeholder relationships:

- Board of Directors. Maintain regular contact with the board of directors, in particular the chair of the board, executive committee members and chairs of board established committees to support and advance the agenda of each. Collaborate with the chair of the board of directors to develop criteria for an annual performance review, and to establish or revise operating policies and procedures as needed.

- Funders / donors. Establish a working relationship with funders and donors. Identifying their specific interests and synchronizing their funding agenda with the needs and interests of CWLA.
- Members. Provide regular contact with members by establishing and maintaining structures to solicit and support their engagement.
- Community leaders. Develop a cordial and working relationship with leaders within the larger ecosystem of entities working on behalf of the well-being of children and their families to advance common initiatives.
- Policymakers. Establish and maintain direct and indirect relationships with federal policy makers, staff, and media to address critical policy related issues.

#### Resource development:

- Serve as the principal agent for resource development, responsible for all necessary fundraising activities, tracking mechanisms, contribution recording, grant requirements and reporting, and contributor recognition.
- In conjunction with the development of an annual budget, provide a fund development plan that outlines not only cultivating individual donors but also addresses opportunities for grants and other revenue sources.
- Support the involvement of the board and key community leaders in developing funding strategies and securing support.

#### Media relations:

- As a prominent national standard bearer for quality care, CWLA is a resource for media inquiries regarding best practice. Collaborating along with staff, the CEO serves as the principal spokesperson with media outlets and for developing an ever-evolving communication strategy.

#### Strategic and organizational planning:

- Leads the development and implementation of a strategic plan, which identifies goals and objectives, achievement time frames and a reporting mechanism that tracks the various activities and initiatives identified in the strategic plan.

#### Core services development:

- Advocacy. Directly and through staff oversight serve as the spokesperson to raise a voice on behalf of children and families in need of resources and support with public officials, policymakers, and other influencers. Supervise the advocacy and public policy arm of CWLA, assuring the development of a public policy agenda and regular contact with policymakers and elected officials.
- Practice Standards. Promote the maintenance and development of standards of excellence reflective of best practice in the field. Supervise all efforts on the part of CWLA to engage members, and practitioners in the advancement of best practice.
- Publications. While supervising the Publication Director, the CEO maintains and develops the body of knowledge held by CWLA and advances its access and availability to the field of practice. Examine all aspects of providing access to materials, adapting to various communication platforms and opportunities to generate revenue.
- Convener. Assemble interested parties to explore, analyze and develop the advancement of quality care for children, youth and families who are vulnerable. Provide regular forums for gathering members and other interested parties to explore best practice and public policy.

- Direct Reports: CFO, Vice President of Policy, Vice President of Practice, Director of Training, Director of Program Development, Director of Administration, Director of Publications.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

The CEO shall possess the following qualifications and levels of experience necessary to fill the job responsibilities as described.

- Familiarity with the critical issues in the field of child and family services including the fundamental public policy issues and a broad knowledge of the leading practitioners, policy makers and theorists.
- Intrinsic experience in child welfare, social services and child and family systems of care.
- Demonstrated business acumen, possessing relevant knowledge and experience in planning, operations, finance, and strategy.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a complex environment, to prioritize tasks, delegate and evaluate critical initiatives.
- Strong oral and written communication skills with experience as a public speaker
- Ability to engage a broad and diverse group of people.
- Familiarity with membership organizations
- Visionary to address the challenges of an evolving society.
- A bachelor's degree in either Social Work or a related field and a minimum of 10 years of progressive leadership experience in a child welfare or human service agency.
- Basic computer and information technology skills including the use of Microsoft Office applications and a familiarity with donor management software.

### **Desired or Preferred Qualifications**

- Lived experience with the child welfare system as youth, parent, or kin.
- A graduate degree in either Social Work, Human Services, Public Administration, Business Management, Law, or any related field.

This position is based in Washington DC and structured to allow for remote access but requires a presence at the Washington DC office.

CWLA offers a competitive compensation package with an annual salary range of \$160,000 - \$190,000 depending upon experience.

CWLA is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization registered in the State of New York with its principal operation in Washington, DC. It is an equal opportunity employer. It welcomes applications from candidate's representative of the diverse constituencies served by our members. CWLA considers all applications without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, medical issue, or any other protected status.

All applications will be managed confidentially.

### **Application Process**

- Please e-mail your cover letter and resume to: [search@cwla.org](mailto:search@cwla.org)
- For more information about this opportunity, please contact Joe Costa at [justcalljoe651@gmail.com](mailto:justcalljoe651@gmail.com)
- For more information about CWLA, please visit [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

### **About the search process facilitator**

After more than 30 years in executive leadership positions in child welfare agencies in both Massachusetts and California, Joe Costa launched **Strategic Executive Resource** as a consulting practice providing an array of executive services to nonprofit organizations. Having served on the board of directors of CWLA until 2021, including a three-year stint as the chair of the board, Joe is in a unique position of being familiar with the organization and the leadership qualities required of its CEO. For more information about Joe and Strategic Executive Resources go to <http://www.strategicexecutiveresource.com>