



Executive Director **OPPORTUNITY GUIDE**

www.lamdl.org



Founded in 2007, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League (LAMDL) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports and provides access to the life-changing activity of competitive debate for students in underserved Los Angeles area public schools.

Currently LAMDL operates in 26 partner high schools and serves approximately 600 students annually. LAMDL also trains and recruits debate coaches, provides comprehensive materials and support to build successful teams, and runs a series of tournaments and other leadership-building activities for students. The LAMDL office is located on the beautiful University of Southern California, Los Angeles campus, close to public transportation.

LAMDL's academic debate programs are based on a time-tested, evidence-driven format that serves as a national model in the field of youth development. LAMDL is positioned for expansion of services, outreach and funding in upcoming years, with a strategic goal of reaching 1000 students annually through programs in 2023.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, LAMDL's primary partner, serves a diverse population of students. Among these students, around 82 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 23 percent are English and Standard English Learners, and 90 percent are students of color. These demographics are representative of the students that LAMDL serves through its debate programs.

Research shows that participation in competitive academic debate can close the learning achievement gap and improve graduation rates (high school and college) and college readiness for students from low-income families. Benefits of debate reach beyond academic development, building confidence and the ability to serve as leaders in peer groups and communities.



The Opportunity: Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for providing strategic oversight to and overall executive leadership for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League (LAMDL). Reporting to the Board of Directors, the selected candidate will provide direction for all organizational affairs in accordance with LAMDL's mission as defined by its by-laws, mission statement, guiding principles and policies established and approved by the Board.

Additionally, the Executive Director will be charged with building and nurturing strong relationships with the key stakeholders, tracking relevant initiatives and trends related to education, mentorship and youth achievement, and implementing best practices in realizing mission priorities. A key component of the new Executive Director's success will be in growing the organization's budget by identifying new funding streams that support

the next phase of LAMDL's growth. The dynamic leader will maintain and strengthen relationships with LAMDL's primary partners, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the University of Southern California, and other community partners, funders and stakeholders.

LAMDL is a strong and stable program which has reached a key point in its lifecycle. The Board expects the Executive Director to navigate LAMDL through its next phase by both expanding a presence in the educational sector and increasing funding to reach more students and schools.

The Executive Director leads the LAMDL staff, including three full-time Program Managers and several part-time staff members.



Performance Objectives

Under the leadership of a dedicated and passionate Board of Directors, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League has developed high quality programming and scalable models for partnership implementation. Growing LAMDL's external presence, partnerships and philanthropy is a priority for the new Executive Director. Through creative leadership and strategic decision-making, the Executive Director will further elevate LAMDL's reputation as a community leader and champion for youth, achievement and education.

Visionary and Strategic Leadership

- Identify and implement plans for the growth of the organization that are collaborative and foster partnership opportunities. Demonstrate "big picture" thinking and an understanding of how the pieces should best fit together to most effectively deliver the organization's mission.
- In collaboration with the board, develop and implement the newly developed expansion plan, with a focus on identifying opportunities, meeting or exceeding stated program and funding objectives, and adhering to budgets and timelines.
- Promote and foster an organizational culture that creates and sustains a diverse, productive, motivated climate for students, staff, board members, volunteers, partners and other stakeholders.



Performance Objectives [continued]

Philanthropy

- Provide executive leadership for LAMDL's philanthropic efforts. Expand and diversify all revenue streams and steward current gifts. Develop and implement fundraising plans that advance strategies and priorities adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Champion an overall culture of philanthropy, including working in partnership with and providing development training for the Board of Directors. Increase Board involvement in fundraising, including prospect identification, donor stewardship, peer-to-peer outreach, funder meetings and networking.
- Cultivate a portfolio of donor and prospect relationships related to all revenue sources and lead stewardship activities on major fundable initiatives for the organization.
- Promote sustainable growth by identifying and securing new funding, while maintaining present sources of support.
- Design and market opportunities for philanthropic support in collaboration with Board and staff.

Board Relations

- Engage the Board, seeking to utilize its expertise and existing personal and professional relationships to further the mission and vision of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League.
- Provide feedback on targets and suggest updates to the Board as deemed important to the success of mission delivery.
- Communicate effectively, regularly and promptly with the Board of Directors.
- Work with Board members to recruit and steward new members, with a strong priority on reflecting the diversity of the population served by LAMDL.
- Staff the Board members for meetings and alert Board members of any emergency or noteworthy developments as needed.

External Relations

- Serve as an articulate, passionate and visible spokesperson for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League and a face for the program throughout the organization, among corporate and foundation leaders, among peer and collaborating organizations, in philanthropic and industry circles, and in professional organizations, community groups and other entities relevant to LAMDL's work and mission.
- Navigate a large, constantly shifting educational landscape by fostering strong relationships with educational partners, including individual school administrators, peer community groups and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) central leadership.
- Advocate on behalf of LAMDL and promote its successes, finding opportunities to amplify the brand with the purpose of increasing name and mission recognition.
- Present compelling messaging about the work of LAMDL to ensure consistency and strong positioning in the debate community, with an intentional focus on raising the organization's profile to a broader and wider group of stakeholders and partners.

Program Oversight

- Ensure continued programmatic excellence and quality services that maintain high standards and best practices while supporting and growing program staff.
- Uphold the commitment to LAUSD to increase debate's presence within schools while maintaining quality programming.
- Explore and evaluate program replication, expansion and leveraging, as well as collaboration opportunities, to continually expand upon LAMDL's reach and impact.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, local, school district and organizational regulations.
- Monitor program outcomes in order to make informed decisions on program offerings, direction and delivery.

Financial Management and Administration

- Provide leadership, direction and motivation to the staff as they execute their responsibilities, building a cohesive and supportive team.
- Facilitate collaborative relationships between organizational team members.
- Guide the development, preparation, and administration of the budget and ensure that the organization operates within budget guidelines. Regularly monitor budgets, expenses, profit and loss, cash flow, A/R and balance sheet statements, and demonstrate fiscal responsibility and efficient use of all organizational resources.
- Provide executive-level strategy and accountability for all financial matters, including quarterly financial reports to the Board.
- Develop and implement strategic staff growth and succession plans.
- Guide and implement all operational policies of the organization.



The Qualified Candidate

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League is searching for a leader who is driven to advance enrichment, educational and growth opportunities for young people, with a strong appreciation and respect for policy debate. A mission-focused individual, the ideal candidate possesses excellent social and communication skills and a positive growth-oriented mindset. Additionally, they generate engagement and interact meaningfully with stakeholders at all levels of the organization, including students, educators, program staff, board members and funders. Candidates who relish the opportunity to advance solid programmatic offerings and secure new funding opportunities will find this role exciting and engaging. Candidates with history in leading small organizations through significant growth are encouraged to apply. The Executive Director must be adept with community partnerships, board relations, staff leadership, fundraising and fiscal management. A flexible, optimistic and proactive outlook is essential.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Passion for LAMDL's mission and the community it serves, augmented by demonstrated experience, achievement and follow-through in similar programmatic and nonprofit service areas.
- At least 5 years of experience at an organizational leadership level, particularly in a nonprofit organization, educational or related field; at least 3 years managing a team of professionals.
- A strong drive to work with youth, specifically in supporting their personal growth, academic development, and future orientation.
- Proven ability to develop and build a highly productive, effective team by enhancing collegiality and professionalism within the organization and training, mentoring and retaining staff.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with an engaged Board to achieve organizational goals.
- Culturally competent and fluent, taking an asset-based approach to diverse experiences and viewpoints of staff and LAUSD youth served.
- Track record in developing and executing strategies to successfully increase revenue and diversify funding sources. Demonstrated ability to identify, solicit and steward corporate, foundation and individual gifts.
- Successful history in financial management, stewardship, and developing strategies to increase revenue and control costs.
- Accomplished background in building strong external relationships with a variety of constituencies, including partner organizations, staff, volunteers, elected officials, business representatives and other stakeholders.
- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication and presentation skills, with the ability to serve as an advocate and spokesperson for the organization. A confident yet genuine communication style is required.
- Creative problem-solving skills.
- Impact and outcome driven approach to program development.
- Experience in the areas of youth achievement, youth development or education is preferred.
- Knowledge or experience in best practices working with large urban school systems is preferred.
- A Bachelor's degree is required, with relevant advanced training or degree preferred.
- Experience with middle school, high school or college debate is preferred.



This position offers a competitive salary and benefits package. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, marital status, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by local, state or federal law.

Candidates may apply by clicking the APPLY NOW button below.

APPLY NOW

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

This search is being managed by Laura Weinman, Assistant Vice President and Melissa Mallinson, Project Manager at KEES. Questions may be addressed to MMallinson@kees2success.com.

KEES is a retained executive search and consulting firm that builds transformative teams and leaders in the nonprofit sector. KEES was founded in 2013 as an expansion of Alford Executive Search. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.



More about Academic Debate

LAMD's programming is proven to improve student academic performance. Recent peer-reviewed, published studies demonstrate that participation in competitive debate leads to higher GPAs, higher graduation rates, and better college-readiness (based on ACT benchmarks).

Debate teaches the skills of civic engagement and enhances knowledge of important social issues. Debate engages students in a deliberative, structured process of learning, critical thinking, and dialogue on important and complex public policy issues.

Debate teaches research skills and improves learning. Key activities in academic debate are reading, research, close analysis of complex texts, critical thinking and evidence-based argumentation. Notably, learning to make arguments supported by textual evidence is central to the Common Core State Standards and reflects the learning approach favored by most colleges.

Debate strengthens communication and critical thinking skills. When students prepare their cases, they must structure their oral arguments logically.

To refute their opponent's arguments persuasively, students must listen closely and focus intently, critically analyze the case and respond quickly.

Debate supports anti-violence initiatives.

The core values of debate and the skills debate builds are critical to anti-violence efforts. Debate teaches students to respect diverse viewpoints and address conflicting ideas with communication and cogent arguments. Debaters become skilled in seeing multiple points of view and using words in a structured environment to discuss conflicts. In addition, the sheer amount of time urban students spend outside of school hours on debate activities helps protect them from street violence.

Debate gives students a voice. Our students tell us that debate gave them a voice and the skills to speak intelligently and persuasively, a vision of life outside their neighborhoods, and the confidence that they can make a difference in the world. As former U.S. Education Secretary Duncan stated: "By engaging students in real, complex public policy questions, competitive debate is nurturing a new generation of engaged, committed citizens."