



OUR PLACE

Executive Director Opportunity Guide



www.ourplaceofnewtrier.org

About Our Place of New Trier Township



Our Place of New Trier Township (Our Place) started with a simple vision: individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) should be able to remain in their home community into adulthood, living lives of meaning and purpose. Since 2008 the organization has provided opportunities for participants to build meaningful, productive, socially connected lives in and around Chicago's north shore suburbs. Our Place was established by a group of dedicated parents who secured a start-up grant from New Trier Township to ensure that participants develop the skills and gain the experiences they need to live as fully engaged citizens.

With an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.5 million, Our Place grew quickly over the past 16 years and today serves 110 participants. At its location in Wilmette, IL, Our Place has grown from a single recreation room in a local church to a full-service organization, with fully remodeled and updated facilities for social activities, cooking, arts, life skills, computer learning, and more. In fact, thanks to generous donors, Our Place is completing a capital campaign to purchase, own, and make capital improvements in its entire building. Our Place programming is not limited to the building itself, however. Almost 50% of activities are offered in the community alongside

local residents, including exercising and playing team sports at park district fitness centers, eating lunch at local restaurants, bowling, golfing, and swimming at local facilities, and providing service in community nonprofit agencies.

Our Place has created a participant-centered program that is accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), the prestigious leading accrediting and certifying organization for organizations serving the needs of individuals with IDD. Leadership has built a broad-based foundation of financial support, with funding from the local township, philanthropic contributions from families and community members, and support from corporations and foundations who invest in Our Place's extraordinary mission. Our Place currently receives no federal or state funding and thus enjoys the freedom to develop and administer new and creative programming.

Our Place operates in the center of Wilmette with in-person programs throughout the year, offering full day programming during the week and Saturday evenings, and also online programs six days a week. Participants choose from 30 distinct programs to meet their personal goals and interests.

The Opportunity: Executive Director



Our Place is seeking a compassionate and strategic leader to serve as a champion for individuals with IDD as active members of their communities. The Executive Director will play a key role in developing a long-term strategic plan to further Our Place's mission and maintain a positive and inclusive culture in which all participants and staff can thrive. The Executive Director will be tasked with the overall strategic and operational leadership for the Our Place staff, programs, funding, operations, and administration while serving as a visible and external advocate in the community for Our Place's participants and mission.

To create a dynamic future for participants, Our Place looks forward to building on previous successes, a strong foundation, and embracing growth and innovation. The Executive Director will report directly to the Board of Directors through the Board President and be charged with oversight of 15 professional staff members including the leadership team composed of the Program Director, Finance Manager, Administration Manager, and Development Manager.

A visible ambassador and involved community leader for Our Place in the Wilmette community, New Trier Township, and beyond, the Executive Director will

cultivate donors and pursue opportunities that may lead to significant financial support. The Executive Director will be expected to balance successfully these external responsibilities with the internal operational duties of the role.

Our Place Values

- **Participants come first in everything we do.**
- **Growth:** We create an environment where everyone takes on challenges and receives positive reinforcement for their effort and perseverance.
- **Respect:** We treat all participants, families, donors, volunteers, community members, and staff with respect.
- **Innovation:** We generate innovative solutions in all our work. In programs we meet the changing interests and needs of our participants and families. In management we pursue the most efficient and effective procedures.
- **Teamwork:** We work as a team to stay focused on our mission, work with participants and collaborate as a staff.

Performance Objectives

Propelling Strategy & Vision

- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop an impact-driven and person-centered long-range strategic plan that steers the mission into the future, and toward consistent progress.
- Partner with the Board and Leadership team to develop and implement strategic plans, budgets, measurable outcomes, and directed strategies to encourage growth while maintaining a solid operational infrastructure.
- Support a strong and engaged Board of Directors that proactively supports and advocates for the mission.
- Enhance Our Place's image and credibility by serving as a visible and active advocate for people with disabilities and Our Place's mission in the community.
- Develop plans for optimal uses of Our Place's building with input from Our Place stakeholders, neighbors, and the community.

Leadership, Administration, & Financial Management

- Create and maintain a climate and culture that will attract, develop, motivate, and retain a highly effective, productive, and cohesive staff with both professional/technical expertise and operational talent.
- Lead and manage staff with flexibility, openness to suggestions, and the ability to resolve/mitigate conflict.
- Collaboratively design and implement organizational policies, and processes to ensure Our Place's resources and staff are utilized to their fullest potential.
- Provide inspiring and goal-focused leadership in maintaining a positive and productive working relationship among all Our Place stakeholders.
- Explore, and where appropriate, develop strategies for additional revenue sources to sustain and grow programming options from all possible sources of philanthropy, grants, and fees/earned income.
- Develop and balance an annual operating budget and ensure that the organization operates within budget guidelines. Regularly monitor budgets and cash flow statements and course correct as needed.
- Maintain consistent and accurate reporting on the organization's financial position and outlook and ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Communicate effectively and regularly with the Board of Directors and provide all information necessary for the Board to function properly and make informed decisions.



Performance Objectives

Stakeholder Engagement & Community Ambassadorship

- Determine appropriate strategies, in partnership with the Board, to achieve Our Place's mission and vision, and partner with the Board to establish a best-practice governance model that is effective and nimble to meet the operating needs.
- Seek and build Board involvement with strategic direction for both ongoing operations as well as for special initiatives.
- Actively engage and partner with other professional, civic, and private organizations as well as volunteers, families, and funders to propel strategic and programmatic expansions and grow financial support to fund existing and new programs.
- Deepen and refine all aspects of communications—including the web, social media, and other outreach strategies – to increase the visibility of Our Place for new audiences, while protecting participant confidentiality wherever necessary.
- Ensure that programs are mission driven, in line with strategic plan goals, and support the needs and purpose of participants and the field.



The Qualified Candidate

Our Place is in search of a passionate, nimble, and innovative Executive Director who has knowledge of and a deep passion for individuals with IDD. The successful candidate will bring strong business acumen, be a strategic thinker and a stabilizer, and will provide leadership and oversight of Our Place's programs, operations, and business plans.

The ideal candidate will be a positive cultural influencer who leads with transparency and is ready to represent and empower the staff to nurture an environment of growth and excellence. A persuasive and articulate communicator, the Executive Director will act as an ambassador to extend the reach and message of Our Place to all types of donors and supporters and present a compelling vision of growth, outreach, and person-centered services.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Substantial, applicable experience with managing programming for adults with IDD, coupled with a passion for and commitment to inclusion and advocacy for Our Place's participants.
- Strong analytic and strategic-thinking skills, with a demonstrated ability to create, implement, and monitor complex plans and to translate those plans into goals and concrete strategies.
- Unwavering commitment to quality programs and data-driven program evaluation.
- Ability to build strong external relationships with a variety of volunteers, public leadership, partner organizations, donors, families, and other stakeholders.
- Ability and eagerness to promote philanthropic investment in Our Place's mission and future; engage directly with donors. Must have a solid understanding of best practices and emerging fundraising approaches and technologies.
- Track record in financial management, stewardship, and developing strategies to successfully increase revenue and manage expenses.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multi-ability setting and promote inclusivity of all kinds with all audiences, including participants and the communities served by Our Place.
- Aptitude for working with a Board of Directors with the ability to cultivate existing Board member relationships.
- Proven success in building strong and productive work teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development.
- Career track record that shows stability with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships culminating in overall success.
- A minimum of 5 years of progressive experience in nonprofit leadership and management, with documented ability to manage staff and lead teams.
- A bachelor's degree in combination with relevant years of experience.

Don't check off every box in the requirements listed above? Please consider applying anyway! Studies have shown that underrepresented communities — such as women, people of color, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and immigrants — are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. Our Place of New Trier Township is dedicated to building an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible workplace that fosters a sense of belonging — so if you're excited about this role but your past experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to still consider submitting an application.

How To Apply

This position offers a competitive salary and benefits.

Our Place of New Trier Township is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant criteria.

APPLY HERE

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

All candidate-submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/ background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check. KEES utilizes a 4-step screening process, the first of which is the formal Candidate Application. Applications are reviewed by the KEES team and advanced through various stages of inquiry and confirmation. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the search. Based on the timing of your specific application, you are welcome to reach out for information on the timeline.

This search is being managed by Laura Weinman, Vice President, and Megan Taylor, Project Manager, of KEES. Questions may be addressed to mtaylor@kees2success.com.



About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit [KEES](https://www.kees2success.com).

More About Our Place of New Trier Township



Our Place has established trust in the community through collaborations with local governments, community organizations, schools, and other agencies. Over 50 community volunteers support programs and provide leadership for the organization; more than 60 teen peer mentors provide friendship and social modeling. Participants, staff, and community volunteer teams provide over 4,000 hours of community service annually, including operating the Township food pantry, supporting seniors at a local retirement community, and participating in local service events. This involvement in the local community creates increased awareness, acceptance, and engagement of people with disabilities in many ways. To learn more about Our Place, please visit www.ourplaceofnewtrier.org.

