



**Search for the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS**

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) family of organizations, the state’s most comprehensive, effective, and respected environmental advocates for a healthier, more sustainable Ohio, seeks an engaging leader to serve as its next executive director (ED).

For more than 50 years, the OEC’s experts have developed and ensured the implementation of forward-thinking, science-based, pragmatic solutions to restore, protect, and strengthen quality of life, from the air we breathe and the water we drink to the food we eat and natural resources we enjoy. Ohio plays an outsized role in the national political landscape, and as the OEC’s work advances in each of its core areas of focus in Ohio—climate change, renewable energy, clean water, public lands, and democracy—its regional and national impact grows as well. The executive director will engage partners across the state, regionally, and nationally, providing strong leadership for the OEC team to navigate a complex and evolving political landscape, inspiring and motivating a broad coalition to effect meaningful change.

With a new strategic planning process ahead, this is a compelling opportunity for the next executive director to partner with the boards and staff to develop a strong vision and future direction for the organization, and to provide leadership for the OEC team to navigate a complex and evolving political landscape, inspiring and motivating a broad coalition to effect meaningful change. In alignment with the organizations’ missions and values, the next executive director will bring a strong track record of incorporating justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) principles and practices throughout their work.

The next executive director will galvanize this high-functioning team, the board, external partners, and political leaders, bringing diverse groups together for a shared purpose, forging strategic partnerships to strengthen Ohio’s environmental movement, and honoring community leadership. Experience with strategic planning; team management and internal culture; external engagement and partnerships; and fundraising, revenue generation, and financial management, will be pivotal to the success of the ED and the OEC family of organizations. This position calls for a people-first leader with outstanding abilities in communication and collaboration, as well as proven organizational management skills, who will invest in talented environmental advocacy leaders within the OEC team and across the broader coalition.

The OEC’s headquarters is in Columbus, with a satellite office in Cleveland; the location of the executive director is flexible within the State of Ohio, with a preference for one of these cities.

The Ohio Environmental Council has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE OEC FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS

The OEC family of organizations consists of the Ohio Environmental Council, a 501(c)(3) organization, and the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization, along with its affiliated political action committees.

The Ohio Environmental Council was created in 1969 and continues more than 50 years later because of individuals and groups who work together to protect and restore Ohio's natural resources and beauty. The organization has led many of the major environmental policy wins in Ohio. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC family of organizations holds polluters accountable in court while working with communities and companies that want to invest in a clean, more sustainable direction.

The OEC's core areas of focus are on [climate change](#); building Ohio's renewable, [clean energy](#) future; ensuring safe, affordable, [clean water](#) for Ohio families; securing Ohio's future in vibrant, [protected public lands](#); and safeguarding the integrity and accessibility of Ohio's [democracy](#). Over the past five decades defending Ohio's environment, the OEC has learned that the foundational principles of civic engagement—bipartisanship, constructive dialogue, and compromise—are critical in securing long-term protections for the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we enjoy. Protecting Ohio's environment includes protecting our democracy, and vice versa.

The OEC staff, board of directors, partner organizations, individual members, grantors, and community supporters all share the OEC's mission: to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The team is made up of [27 staff](#), [22 board members](#), interns, and volunteers who come from a variety of backgrounds and bring breadth and depth of experience to the organization, including state government, social justice and environmental organizations, law firms, and all corners of the state. The OEC's workers successfully voted to unionize in August 2019, and OEC leadership voluntarily recognized the union, OEC Workers United, finalizing contract negotiations and ratifying a three-year agreement in June 2020.

Founded in 2016, the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund (OECAF or Action Fund) is a 501(c)(4) organization that started as an entity to ensure stronger political accountability, and now includes a political action committee, the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund PAC, as well as a federal-hybrid super PAC, Conservation Ohio. These organizations have grown to become a powerhouse political force that is a key player in Ohio's environmental and progressive movements.

All staff are employed by the OEC and compensated for their work on OEC Action Fund programs via a shared services agreement between entities. In addition, the executive director of the OEC serves in the

role of the OEC Action Fund president alongside the officers and at-large members of its Board of Directors. Spencer Dirrig has recently been appointed OEC Action Fund director. Working closely with Spencer, the OEC's next executive director will have an opportunity to shape the structure of the leadership and approach of the Action Fund.

More information on the Ohio Environmental Council and the Action Fund can be found at: [theoec.org](http://theoec.org) and [theoecactionfund.org](http://theoecactionfund.org).

## **ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Reporting to the OEC and OECAF boards, the executive director is responsible providing strategic direction and articulating a vision that invests in community and coalition, motivating others and inspiring both internal and external stakeholders to support the missions of the organizations. To effectively support the mission and values of the organizations the executive director must possess solid team management skills; prioritize and foster a positive internal culture; develop and steward external partnerships; generate revenue; and exhibit strong financial management.

Overseeing combined budgets of \$3 million, the ED provides leadership for an organization of 27 staff, working with and supervising the leadership team to ensure that programs are developed, implemented, and coordinated across the Ohio Environmental Council and the Action Fund to the extent allowed by law. The OEC family of organizations is made up of diverse, hard-working, top talent who are continuous learners and who are passionate about this work. The ED will embody these values and cultivate them in the staff through deliberate mentoring, training, and evaluation.

The ED will recognize the State of Ohio's political significance and the role it can play in leading the national conversation around climate change. This leader serves as the OEC family of organizations' representative and thought leader to the national League of Conservation Voters as well as to many state-level conservation organizations around the country, and meets regularly with constituents, donors, and partners. A critical component of this work is leading fundraising efforts, working in close partnership with the vice president of advancement.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **Develop and implement a strategic vision and collaborative direction for the family of organizations**

Working collaboratively, the executive director will lead the development of a clear, ambitious, and achievable new strategic plan, building on recent successes and current initiatives. The ED will coalesce and galvanize staff, board members, donors, partner organizations, community members, and others in support of the OEC family of organizations' missions and values. Promoting and championing the OEC team's policy expertise and science-based approach, the ED will highlight the value of the organization's

work for the people of Ohio, and continuously seek opportunities to amplify the organization's impact. The executive director will ensure that the OEC remains a powerhouse political force that is a key player in Ohio's environmental and progressive movements.

### **Provide strong organizational leadership, management, and support to the staff**

The OEC family of organizations is fortunate to have a team of exceptional staff who are experts in their field and deeply committed to the values and mission set forth by the OEC. The executive director will serve as a unifying and inspiring leader, sustaining a culture that attracts, retains, and motivates a diverse and highly skilled team. This leader will find success by investing in and furthering the OEC's culture of collaboration, intentionality, and innovation rooted in shared leadership, open dialogue and feedback, and a willingness to learn alongside the OEC staff. The ED will champion a work environment that centers JEDI principles and practices throughout the OEC's work, both externally and internally across the organization, viewing the incorporation of these ethics as a clear expression of the OEC's mission and core values. Mentorship and ensuring appropriate professional development opportunities for the team will be an important component of the ED's stewardship of the organization.

### **Broaden the coalition of partners**

The executive director will steward existing partnerships and build new relationships to create an inclusive and diverse coalition of partners that spans myriad policy areas from climate change, to environmental justice and health equity, to clean energy, to job growth, and more. It is imperative that the ED possess the savviness to communicate with, engage, and energize individuals and organizations across the political spectrum, from grassroots community organizers to elected officials to private corporations, and understand the need for nuance without sacrificing the OEC's values. Critically, the ED will build authentic and mutually beneficial relationships with the OEC's partners, centering the voices of those most impacted by environmental injustice and emphasizing co-creation of solutions.

### **Increase fiscal resources and raise funds to support mission and work**

Fundraising will be a core task for the next executive director to ensure that the OEC has the necessary financial resources to be a successful champion for policy initiatives that are critical for the environment in Ohio, and for Ohioans' health, well-being, and future. The ED will creatively expand funding sources for the 501(c)(3) research, policy, and advocacy efforts and the 501(c)(4) political action initiatives. Working in close partnership with the vice president for advancement, the ED will advance a multifaceted fundraising strategy to secure support through foundation, individual, and corporate giving.

### **Communicate effectively and persuasively with a diverse array of constituents**

Committed to working with and for all who call Ohio home, the executive director is the chief spokesperson communicating the promise and impact of the OEC's advocacy efforts. To serve in this

capacity effectively, the ED must be able to communicate authentically and compellingly with all kinds of audiences across the state, building and reinforcing strategic alliances to advance the OEC's mission and influence public policy. Engaging with the diverse communities and perspectives that comprise Ohio, the ED will approach this work with nuance, intercultural competency, and emotional intelligence, and will ensure that their communication and advocacy efforts remain always aligned with the OEC family of organization's strategic priorities, organizational vision, and core values.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional experiences and attributes:

- Passion for and demonstrated commitment to the missions and values of the OEC family of organizations
- Exemplary organizational leadership and management skills: experience defining clear roles and responsibilities, establishing transparent shared decision-making processes and channels, laying out plans with key metrics and deliverables, and executing against those deliverables
- Ability to recruit, inspire, and mentor a dedicated, diverse, and talented staff and to place a high priority on the professional development of staff
- A collaborative thought partner willing to learn from and utilize staff's subject matter expertise
- A people-first leader with a clear and galvanizing communication style, accompanied by a high level of emotional intelligence, the ability to listen well and apply feedback, and the ability to lead decisively
- Adept at fostering dialogue with multiple constituencies, building coalitions, and achieving results through influence, empowerment, and understanding of the dynamics of difference and privilege
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; track record of successfully advancing positive change in a complex environment
- Proven record of fundraising success, relationship development, and ability to passionately communicate the vision and relevance of the mission with potential supporters and prospective donors
- A record of building and maintaining partnerships and coalitions, and advancing an organization's public profile and reputation
- Comfort navigating ambiguity and communicating around divergent and competing priorities
- Knowledge of and professional experience in the environmental advocacy space is highly desired, but not required
- Experience working in the context of an advocacy organization is desired
- Experience working with union staff/a collective bargaining agreement is a plus
- Experience working with affiliated 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations is a plus

### **Compensation and Location**

Compensation for this position will be competitive, with the range beginning at \$160,000. The OEC's headquarters is in Columbus, with a satellite office in Cleveland; the location of the executive director is flexible within the State of Ohio, with a preference for one of these cities.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and two- to three-page letters of interest to the hiring committee, responding to the challenges and opportunities outlined above), should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <http://www.imsearch.com/8471>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*The Ohio Environmental Council is committed to working toward a just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive environmental movement, and seeks to hire staff and contractors that reflect the diverse communities and perspectives that comprise Ohio. We pride ourselves on being a welcoming place for people from all backgrounds, including women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and all religions. The OEC is an equal opportunity employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are highly encouraged to apply.*