



**Executive Director**  
Waltham, MA

**THE SEARCH**

REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, a nonprofit organization committed to creating healthy and safe relationships for individuals and communities by ending domestic violence, is searching for a people-centered leader to serve as its next executive director.

REACH—which stands for Refuge, Education, Advocacy, and CHange—provides direct services to domestic violence survivors and their children through intervention, prevention, and advocacy programs. Based in Waltham, Mass., it serves people in 27 cities and towns in Boston’s western suburbs. For over 40 years, REACH has provided safety and support to survivors of domestic violence, while engaging communities to create lasting change. REACH partners with government and private agencies to support survivors, raises public awareness about domestic and dating violence, and advocates for policies and programs to protect and assist survivors.

REACH seeks an executive director who will amplify the voices of survivors and their experiences, lead with conviction and connection, invest deeply in community and coalition, prioritize anti-violence and anti-racist movements, and build a pipeline of leaders within the REACH community, with particular investment in leaders of color. REACH has a long track record of positive impact in the diverse communities it serves, driven by a commitment to evolving and innovating to meet the needs of its clients and communities. Starting from this place of strength, and with a strategic planning process ahead, this is a prime opportunity for a leader to be a catalyst of change, building on REACH’s momentum to empower survivors and create healthier communities.

REACH Beyond Domestic Violence has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT REACH**

### **History**

For 40 years, [REACH](#) has worked with survivors of domestic violence within the communities it serves to create lasting change. REACH began in 1981 as the Waltham Battered Women's Support Committee, when a group of women in Boston's western suburbs saw a need for more services to address the needs of women in abusive relationships. This grew into a multiservice agency that helps more than 6,000 people a year. REACH was one of the first shelters in Massachusetts to accept male survivors, parents with teenage sons, and LGBTQ+ survivors. REACH is a founding member of the Boston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and/or Transgender Domestic Violence Coalition (GLBTDVC).

In 2005, REACH founded the Peers Against Violence Educators (PAVE) program, one of the first teen dating violence prevention initiatives in Massachusetts. In 2010, REACH doubled its shelter capacity from four to eight bedrooms and added a full-time youth specialist to its prevention program. In October 2017, REACH moved into new office space: a warm, light-filled, welcoming environment for survivors and staff with confidential meeting rooms, a supervised play space for children while their parents are meeting with advocates, and room to hold trainings in-house.

In 2018, REACH adopted a three-year strategic plan with four integrally connected priority areas:

- 1) Develop more robust prevention and community engagement strategies,
- 2) Increase the number and scope of its partnerships and collaborations,
- 3) Create change by increasing its staffing resources, and
- 4) Ensure that its future is bright by strengthening the organization's financial sustainability.

### **Programs + Services**

The range of programs and services that REACH provides is both broad and deep; it is both a service provider and a movement-maker. REACH's hotline and shelter serve survivors from Massachusetts and surrounding states. REACH serves all survivors regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, or income level. All of REACH's support services are completely confidential and free of charge to individuals.

#### ***Emergency Shelter***

REACH's eight-room emergency shelter is a place where survivors can feel safe, join a supportive community, and begin the process of recovering from abuse and starting over. REACH does not place a time limit on how long guests may stay at the shelter, since recovering from trauma is an ongoing process and each person's emotional, familial, and financial situation is different.

REACH's services are always in demand, as there are only 200 domestic violence shelter beds in the entire state. REACH also provides a 24-hour, toll-free hotline, answered by staff and volunteers every day of the year.

### ***Community-Based Advocacy***

REACH's [community-based advocacy program](#) serves more than 300 survivors each year, providing both compassion and practical help to survivors who need to stay in their communities, often continuing to live with their abuser. This includes legal consultation, logistical help with housing, job applications, safety planning, and other practical needs, as well as therapeutic support. REACH also offers ongoing support groups in English and Spanish. One of REACH's most innovative initiatives is [Latinas Know Your Rights](#), a program that trains and empowers survivors to become advocates and resources for their communities, including by learning about immigrants' legal rights.

### ***Education + Prevention***

REACH believes strongly that the best way to eliminate domestic abuse is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Its [education and prevention programs](#) are at the forefront of this critical effort and work to change cultural norms and increase understanding of healthy relationships. REACH trains first responders, medical professionals, social service agencies, faith organizations, and middle, high school, and college students and their teachers. REACH was among the first domestic violence organizations in Massachusetts to have youth-focused prevention programming, and it is often enlisted by schools and other organizations to lead trainings for students, teachers, and school staff. REACH helps convene community groups that want to bring prevention messages to their towns, including innovative and empowering initiatives such as its Survivor Speakers Bureau, which trains survivors that have utilized REACH's services to engage community members in discussions about domestic violence. Its prevention work, as well as its inclusive approach to services, is part of what distinguishes REACH.

### ***Children's Program***

REACH supports the healing process of children in the shelter and in the community through discussion, play, and art therapy with its adolescent and child therapist. Individual counseling and group sessions help children process what has occurred in their lives and understand that the violence is not their fault. REACH works with each child to explore and voice their fears, concerns, and feelings of guilt, shame, and anger.

### ***Administration, Governance + Finance***

In addition to the executive director, REACH is led by a talented [Executive Staff](#) that includes the associate executive director, director of community advocacy, director of development, director of policy and systems change advocacy, and director of residential programs. The organization is supported by a dedicated 13-member [Board of Directors](#), and a 21-member [Advisory Board](#).

Through strategic planning and deployment of resources, as well as generous support from donors and funders, REACH is fortunate to be on strong financial footing. The organization has an annual operating budget of \$3 million. Approximately 45% comes from state, local, and federal funding; 18% from corporate and foundation funding, 18% from private philanthropy, and 18% from event fundraising. For more information, please review REACH's [Annual Report and Financial Statements](#).

To learn more about REACH and their approach, please visit <http://reachma.org/>.

## THE ROLE

REACH's next executive director will be a people-first leader with strong communication and interpersonal skills, who will bring a proven commitment to anti-racism and social justice, understanding their critical role in domestic violence response and prevention. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the executive director will oversee the programmatic, financial, and operational management of the organization, as well as leading REACH's external affairs, fulfilling its mission and vision, and ensuring accountability to its diverse constituents. They will understand and own accountability for the organization's commitment to diversifying its leadership and voice to reflect the constituencies that it serves.

Through [Jane Doe Inc.](#), a statewide coalition of agencies fighting against domestic and sexual violence service and advocacy fields, the executive director will be part of a community of leaders that provides support and technical expertise. Jane Doe Inc. provides access to a wealth of peer-to-peer mentorship, informal support, and opportunities for partnerships, as well as an avenue for state policy advocacy.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

REACH's next executive director will have the opportunity to shape the future direction of this impactful organization. Their key responsibilities will be to:

### Plan the Next Chapter

- Lead strategic planning (including the upcoming development of REACH's next strategic plan), revenue generation/fundraising, fiscal management, and organizational development.
- Oversee a budget of about \$3 million, working with and supervising the executive staff to ensure programmatic implementation, innovation, and coordination across the full breadth of the organization.

### Lead with Passion and Empathy, Building Community

- Inspire and evoke the [core values](#) and mission of REACH through intentional engagement, mentoring, and cultivation of leadership across staff, clients, funders, board members, and volunteers.
- Bring a deep understanding of trauma-informed and anti-oppression work, including the central role of relationships, and build a culture and community accordingly. Intentionally deepen relationships with existing partners and coalitions, and develop new relationships.
- Prioritize deepening and expanding the scope and impact of the REACH board with the broader community, empowering board members to activate their wealth of skills into intentional and strategic roles in the organization.

### Engage and Connect through Compelling Communication

- Enthusiastically convey REACH's mission, history, and life-changing and life-saving work to diverse audiences, including survivors, funders, volunteers, staff, community members, fellow advocates, government agencies, and policymakers. This includes public speaking, interviews, meetings, and various other settings.

- Provide strategic direction for REACH communications, to provide a shared narrative and messaging across the organization.
- Build community and connections by finding common ground, sharing stories, and elevating the voices of survivors, with special attention to those from marginalized groups. This may include writing blogs and messages to the REACH community.

### **Empower and Cultivate an Outstanding Team**

- Actively guide staff members, being mindful of their long-term development, and cultivate a talent pipeline for future leadership opportunities. Assist in recruiting personnel; negotiating professional contracts; and ensuring processes for selecting, developing, retaining, and evaluating staff, providing clear and appropriate feedback as appropriate.
- Enhance partnerships and collaboration within the organization, breaking down silos and ensuring all staff feel supported. Celebrating the team's wins—big and small—and helping all staff experience vicarious resilience in trauma work will be critical to success in this leadership role.
- Foster an environment that empowers staff and survivors to co-create environments that meet the needs of all who interact with REACH.
- Center the experience of people by modeling and curating a strong and healthy culture throughout the organization.
- Foster an open and transparent relationship with staff and actively seek collaboration to establish a strong and inclusive workplace culture with community norms that enables the organization to adapt and continue to grow in its understanding of abuse, power, and violence in our communities.

### **Manage and Lead in Times of Uncertainty and Crisis**

- Lead with creativity and optimism while navigating the many uncertainties and realities of a direct service organization whose staff, clients, and other stakeholders are experiencing burnout and trauma as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Approach organizational systems and structures that are in transition or in need of support with understanding, humility, and pragmatism.

### **Operate with an Intentional Approach**

- Be experienced and deliberate in centering and prioritizing the diverse needs of myriad social justice issues, including but not limited to domestic violence, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ issues, immigration, housing access and stability, the criminal justice system, dis/ability, mental healthcare access, and more, with a nuanced understanding of the intersections of these issues. The executive director will work to maximize organizational impact by looking to the root causes of these issues, rather than treating the symptoms.

### **KEY QUALIFICATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS + EXPERIENCES**

While no candidate will bring all these experiences and traits, REACH envisions that the next executive director will have several of the following traits:

- Demonstrated commitment to the mission and values of REACH, including engagement with domestic violence issues, professionally, or on a volunteer basis, and a passion for social justice,

equity, and inclusion of historically marginalized people, including immigrants and refugees, low-income people, LGBTQ+, gender non-conforming and non-binary people, and people living at the many intersections of these experiences.

- Robust experience as a manager, ideally leading a multidisciplinary and diverse team, and ideally, but not necessarily, in the nonprofit sector. REACH seeks a leader who can recruit, inspire, and nurture a dedicated staff in a field that can be stressful and emotionally draining.
- Proven organizational and strategic skills, with a track record of setting ambitious goals, laying out clear plans, and delivering results; excellent fiscal stewardship; inclusive and transparent decision-making; and both internal and external accountability.
- Deep emotional intelligence and empathy, including a proven record of listening, honoring diverse lived experiences, building relationships, and elevating and empowering people – especially those who have been marginalized and/or experienced violence. Knowledge of trauma work and healing processes is a plus.
- Ability to bridge across differences, connect people, foster collaboration and partnerships, and build community, engaging effectively with REACH’s diverse partners, stakeholders, fellow advocacy groups, elected officials, clients, and staff. Professional and/or lived experience engaging across differences and ability to speak a language(s) in addition to English are a plus.
- Exceptional communication skills, including public speaking and interpersonal skills, to persuasively convey the urgency and value of REACH’s mission, build understanding and public awareness, and grow support for REACH’s advocacy, fundraising, and other goals. Excellent writing skills are a plus.
- Proven record of fundraising success and long-term relationship-building with funders, donors, and community partners. Experience serving on or reporting to a volunteer board is a plus.
- Ability to manage ambiguity, adversity, and conflict with calm and compassion.

## TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and one- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically to the Isaacson, Miller executive search team via the link below.

Kennedy Kearney-Fischer, Managing Associate  
Tiara Mack, Associate  
Victoria Castillo, Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

[www.imsearch.com/8716](http://www.imsearch.com/8716)

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