



Search for the Chief Operating Officer  
The McCain Institute  
Washington, DC

The McCain Institute is seeking a collaborative and operationally-savvy leader to serve as its next Chief Operating Officer (COO). Nationally known as a high-level convenor and a do-tank, the McCain Institute's programs, research, and events build upon Senator John McCain's drive to turn ideas into action and action into impact. This is an exciting opportunity to lead the McCain Institute into its next decade, promoting the legacy and vision of Senator McCain across the U.S. and the world and continuing his fight to create a free, safe, and just world for all.

Inspired by the legacy of Senator John McCain and his family, the McCain Institute fights for democracy, human dignity, and security. The Institute, located in downtown Washington, DC, is part of Arizona State University (ASU) and is a nonpartisan organization that includes and benefits diverse groups across the globe and brings Arizona to Washington and the world to Arizona. Anchored by three pillars – advancing democracy, human rights, and character-driven leadership – the McCain Institute is uniquely positioned to convene leaders across the global political spectrum, resulting in a tangible impact on the world's most pressing challenges. Since its inception over ten years ago, the McCain Institute has experienced tremendous growth and has remained responsive to current issues facing society.

The incoming COO will have the opportunity to be a key leader at the Institute, helping to manage the Institute's continued upward trajectory. Through the strategic direction and management of all operational and financial aspects of the Institute, the COO will provide critical leadership, organizational management, internal communications, and an innovative vision consistent with the mission of the Institute and Arizona State University. As part of the Executive Management Team led by Executive Director Dr. Evelyn Farkas and including the Chief Program Officer (CPO), and in partnership with ASU leadership, the next COO will advance programming, manage operations, and effectively lead a team of dedicated staff members in fulfilling Senator John McCain's vision of fighting for democracy, human dignity, and security.

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Chief Operating Officer can be found at the conclusion of this document. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

## About The McCain Institute

The McCain Institute is a nonpartisan organization inspired by Senator John McCain and his family's dedication to public service. Throughout the Institute's 10-year history, the McCain Institute has become renowned for its high-level convenings across the U.S. political spectrum and around the world, as well as its unique programs on defending democracy, advancing human rights, and empowering character-driven leaders. In partnership with ASU, one of the world's largest research and innovative universities in the country, the McCain Institute strives to foster constructive nonpartisan solutions to forge common ground, champion innovative and sustainable solutions, and build enduring national and international connections and partnerships. Funded by ASU, private philanthropy, and federal agencies, the McCain Institute prides itself on partnering with various stakeholders to identify challenges and promote innovative and research-backed solutions. To learn more about the McCain Institute, please visit: <https://www.mccaininstitute.org/>.

The [Sedona Forum](#) is the Institute's signature event and provides unique opportunities for national and world leaders to have informal, face-to-face discussions about solutions to the problems facing the world today. With yearly themes that promote civil discourse and unity, the Forum convenes thought leaders, activists, humanitarians, and diverse experts from across the country and around the world. At the 2024 Sedona Forum, the McCain Institute hosted U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, and more than 40 lawmakers, policy experts, and other speakers. Journalists from NBC News, The Washington Post, and the Associated Press moderated thought-provoking panels, and NBC News Meet the Press Moderator Kristen Welker conducted [interviews](#) from the Sedona Forum with Arizona newsmakers.

From its earliest days, the importance of developing future global leaders – in the mold of Senator McCain – has been at the center of the Institute's mission. The [McCain Global Leaders Program](#) supports character-driven leaders from around the world who embody Senator John McCain's legacy of serving a cause greater than oneself. Structured as a 12-month fellowship and experiential learning experience, each cohort includes 20 diverse leaders from around the world who are working to advance democracy, human rights, and freedom. The program is designed around a thematic focus area to advance each Leader's personal and professional leadership journey. Participants are provided training, resources, and access to highly relevant regional and global networks to prepare them to meet emerging global challenges.

As part of its strategy to build a strong network of leaders, the McCain Institute launched a [fellowship program](#) that fosters learning, leadership, and the opportunity for constructive public discourse on present and emerging important policy challenges. These fellowship programs provide a select number of public servants and policy experts from a variety of administrations, federal departments, and professions to engage in national and international forums and have real-world impact. These fellowships include the

John S. McCain Democracy Fellowship, the John S. McCain Distinguished Fellowship, and the Kissinger Fellowship.

Programmatic efforts are the cornerstone of the Institute, with each aiming to develop action-oriented solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing the world today. These include:

- *Democracy Programs:* The McCain Institute believes that the denial of freedom is a denial of one's humanity; the Institute's [Democracy Programs](#) are focused on advancing democratic values at home and abroad. The Democracy Programs brings together leaders from the U.S. and abroad to address democracy and human rights issues on a global scale through three focus areas: American Democracy, Frontline Democracies, and Human Rights Defenders. The McCain Institute is also home to various partnerships that address various threats to democracy across the U.S. and the world, including the Ukraine Business Alliance and the Defeating Disinformation Attacks on U.S. Democracy taskforce. Over the next five years, the Institute will focus on impacting front-line democracies at risk, with a particular emphasis on supporting a free and democratic Ukraine. Through this work, the McCain Institute will not only become a premier voice in spotlighting abuses in democracy around the world but also in influencing policymakers to action.
- *Human Rights and Freedom:* The principle of inherent human dignity, and the individual rights and freedoms it naturally implies, forms the foundation of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Declaration of Independence. America and its liberal democratic allies embrace a values system grounded in the belief of universal, intrinsic human dignity, a dignity that in turn affords each individual a fundamental set of rights and freedoms. The liberal world order, which largely has been created and led by the United States, has not been perfect, but it has contributed to more freedom, prosperity, and peace than ever before in history. Unfortunately, the principle of inherent human dignity is very much under threat, particularly from three interrelated causes—authoritarian repression of individual rights, rising global fragility, and weak regulatory frameworks. Inspired by the legacy and values of Senator John McCain and Ambassador Cindy McCain, our program is working to tackle these challenges. We are committed to protecting and advancing individual human rights and freedom around the world by working with American policymakers and other strategic partners to spur bold action to prevent violations from occurring and to hold perpetrators accountable. Current efforts include work to combat human trafficking and forced labor, counter authoritarian repression of individual rights and pioneer new approaches to business and human rights matters.
- *National Security and Counterterrorism:* A leader in national security, Senator McCain championed effective and humane policies to fight terrorism. As threats have evolved and adapted to modern times, the [National Security and Counterterrorism Program](#) (NSCT) focuses

on building the leadership capacity in national security and strengthening intelligence alliances between the Five Eyes partner nations: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Leaning into the McCain Institute's ability to bring together experts from all areas of expertise and partisan affiliation, the NSCT Fellowship program provides rising leaders in national security and counterterrorism within the Five Eyes partner nations the opportunity to develop leadership skills, further technical expertise, and build an enduring international professional network.

### *Leadership*

Executive Director Dr. Evelyn Farkas brings three decades of experience in national security and foreign policy in the U.S. executive, legislative branch private sector, and international organizations. Prior to her arrival at the McCain Institute, she served as president of Farkas Global Strategies, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Atlantic Council, and national security contributor for NBC/MSNBC. Dr. Farkas has also served in various federal positions, including the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia, the senior advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and special advisor to the Secretary of Defense for the NATO Summit. She also served as the executive director of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism and senior fellow at the American Security Project. Dr. Farkas is currently a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and on the Board of Directors for the Project 2049 Institute, and Supporters of Civil Society in Russia. Dr. Farkas obtained her MA and PhD from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

### **Role of the Chief Operating Officer**

As the McCain Institute enters a new era characterized by ambitious growth, political relevance, and sustained impact, the COO will draw upon their experience to serve the Institute both internally and, as needed, externally. As a strategist and thought partner to the Executive Director and Chief Program Officer, the COO will manage, direct, and lead the operational, financial, development, and personnel portfolios of the Institute while also providing strategic and operational guidance to the external communications team. In doing so, the COO will leverage the strengths of the Institute's programs and seek out ways to foster collaboration and break down organizational silos. Furthermore, the COO will be responsible for the administration of the McCain Institute's Board of Trustees activities by providing guidance and recommendations on the financial and operational performance of the McCain Institute, as well as representing the McCain Institute at ASU's regular high-level meetings. The COO will also be expected to represent the Institute to external stakeholders as needed.

Working in support of the Executive Director and alongside the CPO, the COO will provide leadership to ensure the successful execution of the Institute's goals and objectives. As the organization has transitioned to a hybrid work environment, the COO will have the opportunity to build a more cohesive and collaborative environment for the 30 dedicated staff members at the Institute. In doing so, the COO

will leverage the strengths of individuals and teams to improve communication, collaboration, and overall performance. The COO will strive to ensure a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the vision and aspirations of the Institute by recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of all staff members. As the leader of the McCain Institute Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Task Force, the COO will have the opportunity to grow, promote, and implement diversity and inclusion policies and practices that embrace the nonpartisan spirit. A strong manager of people, the COO's leadership style should be visible, accessible, and cooperative while maintaining a culture of trust, transparency, and inclusivity.

The relationship with ASU remains paramount to the future success of the McCain Institute. The COO will be expected to serve as a liaison to ASU to increase philanthropic endeavors, assess and implement operational infrastructure and processes, and improve communication and collaboration with academic and administrative leaders. The COO will need to be a creative problem-solver to effectively navigate and leverage various relationships across multiple divisions and academic departments at the University. The COO will also partner with the ASU Office of Human Resources and OKED HR to oversee all aspects of human resource management and retention, policies, practices, performance, and professional development of staff members.

The COO will ensure alignment between the operations and the mission of the Institute and will oversee a budget of \$9.5 million. Financial responsibilities include budget preparation, authorization, execution, and accountability; compliance with ASU and ASUF financial procedures; and resource management. In addition, the COO will be responsible for developing and implementing standard operating procedures, policies, internal controls, and accounting standards to ensure optimum utilization of resources and full compliance with all local, state, and federal statutes, codes, and regulations. With multiple funding sources, the COO will also work closely with the ASU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration (ORSPA) and manage relationships with Knowledge Enterprise (KE) and Arizona State University Foundation (ASUF) Finance and Procurement staff to ensure accurate reporting, accounting, and budget management. The COO will need to have a comprehensive understanding of the different funding sources that make the work of the Institute possible and will be skilled at communicating the nuances of using these funds across the organization.

### **Qualifications and Characteristics**

The successful candidate will be an innovative and collaborative problem-solver with a distinctive record of achievement. A master's degree in business administration (MBA) or a related field and eight years of directly related operational experience, including four years of experience in a senior leadership role in a culturally diverse organization; or any equivalent combination of experience and/or education from which comparable knowledge, skills, and abilities have been achieved is required.

The successful candidate will also bring many of the following qualifications:

- Ten years prior senior management role, including organizational fiscal accountability with a proven track record of exceeding goals, evidence of strong/solid decision-making, and successful facilitation of progressive structural and functional change/development in a growing and culturally diverse organization.
- Experience and judgment to plan and accomplish goals, including a willingness to think creatively;
- Comfort with problem-solving complex issues, meeting deadlines, problem-solving when problems arise, and nimble decision-making;
- Experience in managing and prioritizing multiple projects simultaneously;
- Experience in working with a high degree of confidentiality and discretion;
- Ability and experience with coordinating and prioritizing work and activities for oneself and others;
- Demonstrated track record of proactivity and the ability to take initiative while operating within broad guidance parameters;
- Highly effective written and verbal communication skills;
- Ability and prior experience in working effectively in an environment with tight deadlines;
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail;
- Experience in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships;
- Evidence of leadership, maturity, sensitivity, teamwork, and collaborative abilities;
- Analytic skills and the ability to briefly summarize information from various sources;
- Experience creating and managing budgets;
- Excellent judgement and experience working with a high degree of confidentiality and discretion;
- Commitment to the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and culturally sensitive and educated to interact effectively with a wide range of colleagues.

### **Compensation**

The Chief Operating Officer must be based in Washington, DC. This position is eligible for hybrid work and requires quarterly travel to Arizona.

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

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/mccain-institute/chief-operating-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*<https://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd401.html> and <https://www.asu.edu/titleIX/>.*

*In compliance with federal law, ASU prepares an annual report on campus security and fire safety programs and resources. ASU's Annual Security and Fire Safety Report is available online at*

*<https://www.asu.edu/police/PDFs/ASU-Clery-Report.pdf>.*

*You may request a hard copy of the report by contacting the ASU Police at 480-965-3456.*

*All employees of federal contractors must receive COVID-19 vaccinations as required by an executive order from President Biden. ASU employees, including new hires, must be vaccinated unless approved for medical or religious accommodation. Visit the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion webpage for details about medical or religious accommodations.*