



Executive Director
Upper Valley Haven
White River Junction, Vermont

THE SEARCH

The Upper Valley Haven (or the Haven), a multifaceted social services agency serving the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire, seeks a passionate, relational, and strategic Executive Director (ED). The ED will possess a closely held belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every human life and will demonstrate a commitment to investing in community members with the most significant economic and social needs so that they may achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

The Haven serves over 10,000 people annually via a series of low-barrier services, including emergency shelter, food access, community outreach, children's programs, and other critical support. The agency provides these essential frontline services while simultaneously seeking to address the root causes of poverty and homelessness through case management, supportive housing, community partnerships, and advocacy. The Haven operates 365 days per year, never charges for its services, and welcomes all who enter its doors as equals, respecting their dignity and accepting them with compassion and without judgment.

The Haven's FY2026 operating budget is \$5 million, plus \$1.3 million in donated food. It employs 58 full-time and part-time employees, including a leadership team of five, is governed by a 15-member board of directors, and is supported by hundreds of talented and dedicated volunteers. The agency's well-maintained headquarters house two residential shelters (one for families and one for adults), a community food market, and offices for administrative and other program staff. With the recent completion of its \$9.5 million capital campaign, the Haven will begin in earnest the construction of its third guest facility, a two-story, 9,000-square-foot all-season shelter and housing resource center that will dramatically expand its service delivery.

The next ED of the Haven will inherit an organization that has grown significantly over the past decade and continues to be recognized for high-quality, outcomes-oriented, and community-driven programs. To be successful, the ED will be adept at creative thinking and problem solving while managing everyday practicalities inherent to a nonprofit like the Haven. The ED will be a clear and diplomatic communicator, an unwavering advocate for the organization and Upper Valley residents, and a capable fundraiser. Further, the ED will excel at building strong relationships with staff, board, donors, government officials and policymakers, community partners, the public, and individuals served. The ED

will lead with empathy, acknowledge the impact of direct service work on staff, and create a trauma-informed culture that prioritizes psychological safety and open communication. Under its next leader, the Haven will adapt to meet the ever-growing need for housing and food access in the Upper Valley and will strive to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Upper Valley Haven has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications (including a resume and letter of interest) should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

History

[Upper Valley Haven](#) was founded in 1980 by five clergy and parishioners representing four different denominations as a temporary shelter for homeless families and adults. In the years that followed, the Haven grew beyond its faith-based roots and established its mission, values, and framework, which continue to anchor the agency today. By its 30th anniversary, the Haven had grown significantly to include two residential shelters, a large food shelf and kitchen space, private social work and service coordination offices, and community and educational spaces. Today, the agency remains a leader in the regional social services and nonprofit sectors and has become one of the Upper Valley's most valued and essential institutions. You can read more about the history of the Haven [here](#).

Current Context

Located along the Connecticut River, between the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Upper Valley is wonderfully scenic. The region offers diverse cultural and recreational opportunities, hosts the renowned institutions of Dartmouth College and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and offers many residents a high quality of life. While many thrive in the Upper Valley, a growing proportion of the community is experiencing burdens associated with the high cost of living. This is compounded by the lack of access to living wage jobs, public transit, affordable housing, childcare, and groceries, as well as mental health, substance use, and other medical care. The effects of the pandemic, inflation, systemic racism, and confusion around federal support policies continue to exacerbate hunger and homelessness at alarming rates. The Haven is on the front lines of this multi-pronged crisis, providing safety and recovery for more than 100 adults and families annually who live at or below 200 percent of the national poverty level.

In 2024, the Haven provided:

- Shelter for 14 families in the Byrne Family Shelter, including 24 children and 18 adults.
- Shelter for 46 individuals at the Hixon Adult Shelter.

- Housing navigation and support to help 72 households move into permanent housing.
- Food for 3,297 households, which accounts for 9,289 individuals, 2,723 of whom are children.
- Community service coordination for more than 500 households.
- Children's after-school and summer programs for 21 children.

You can view the Haven's Annual Donor Impact Reports [here](#).

Programs and Services

Many of the Haven's clients participate in more than one of the following programs:

[Shelters](#)

The Haven's Byrne House Family Shelter offers 46 beds to accommodate up to eight families and two family "pods" with shared kitchens and common space, and its Hixon House Adult Shelter includes ten bedrooms for up to 20 guests. Hixon House also offers a communal dining area with a kitchen and a library that provides computer and internet access, books, games, and meeting space. Neither shelter limits the length of stay. For the past several years, the Haven has also operated the Lebanon Seasonal Shelter on behalf of the city of Lebanon, New Hampshire.

The Haven has recently completed a \$9.5 million capital campaign to construct its third shelter, one mile from the Haven's main campus at [608 North Main Street](#). Included in this fundraising total is \$2 million in operating funding for the program's start-up over its first five years. Slated to open in 2026, the new shelter will centralize several services, dramatically reducing the logistical burden on clients. It will offer 20 emergency shelter beds, numerous drop-in services, and space for partner agencies. The shelter will operate on harm-reduction principles, utilizing the Haven's holistic approach to addressing homelessness, regardless of sobriety, identification, pet ownership, and other barriers.

[Food Support](#)

The Haven's Community Food Market provides reliable, nourishing groceries to anyone in need, regardless of income. Items in the Haven's Community Food Market are purchased through the Vermont Foodbank and generous donations from individuals, businesses, churches, and civic groups. The Haven also provides perishable and non-perishable food items to hospitals and medical centers in the region and partners with community groups to advocate with state and federal legislators to address the issue of food insecurity in the Upper Valley.

Supportive Housing

The Haven links safe and affordable community-based housing with flexible, voluntary support services designed to help individuals and families transition to and maintain stable and permanent housing. Family Supportive Housing is a program administered by the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity. The Haven also supports individuals who are chronically homeless or extremely low-income through its Parkhurst Community Supportive Housing Services Program. Parkhurst is an 18-unit apartment complex in Lebanon, NH, built in partnership with [Twin Pines Housing](#). In addition to providing housing for individuals, Parkhurst supports clients through work with service coordinators who help them meet their goals and needs on the road to attaining stable housing. The Haven also recently partnered with [St. Paul's Episcopal Church](#) and Twin Pines to complete an affordable housing complex adjacent to the Haven's headquarters, with the Haven providing ongoing supportive housing case management services.

Community Service Coordination

The Haven's service coordinators provide aftercare support to guests moving into permanent housing from both the family and adult shelters and assist people in both Vermont and New Hampshire who are experiencing poverty, homelessness, or food insecurity, both generational and situational. Service coordinators are front-line workers who guide clients through the Haven's services, help design tailored action plans, connect with community members and local partners for expanded services, and establish relationships with local housing facilities, landlords, and employers for timely service referrals.

Children's Programs

The Haven operates an after-school program that runs Monday through Friday every day that the local school system is in session, serving school-aged children who are current and former shelter guests. The Haven also operates a summer day camp for these children which focuses on experiencing learning and fun. The Haven offers programs for preschool-aged children and their parents to help them meet their goals for their children's development and navigate their often complex demands. The Haven partners with [The Family Place](#), a local nonprofit focused on a whole-family approach to helping children thrive.

Organizational Details

Upper Valley Haven is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in White River Junction, Vermont, mere yards from the Connecticut River and the border with New Hampshire. The agency has an FY2026 budget of \$5 million, 78 percent of which is derived from private support, 20 percent from state and federal government contracts, and 2 percent from other sources. The Haven has an endowment of \$5 million.

The Haven is led by a [leadership team of five](#), including the Executive Director and the Directors of Development & Communications, Finance & Food, Shelter & Community Services, and People, Culture, & Technology. The Haven employs 58 staff, 40 full-time, seven part-time, and 11 per diem. In 2024, the agency was supported by 400 volunteers on regular shifts. In total, volunteers spend an average of 2,625 hours a month serving their community through the Haven.

The Haven is governed by a 15-member [board of directors](#) that meets monthly. Directors may serve for two consecutive three-year terms and are eligible for a service extension if serving in a board leadership position. Board committees include executive, development, finance, governance, and program.

Leadership Transition

After seven years as Executive Director, Michael Redmond will retire from Upper Valley Haven in 2025. Building upon the legacy of his four predecessors, Redmond has maintained the Haven as a leading service provider and anti-poverty advocate in the Upper Valley and contributed significantly to its financial health. During Redmond's tenure, the agency ably responded to acute community needs during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and successfully raised over \$10 million for the construction and start-up operations of its new emergency shelter and resource center. The Haven is well-positioned for its next era of progress, community impact, and organizational development.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ensure organizational stability and vitality while responding to emergent community and client needs.

Working with staff and board, the ED will finalize and lead the implementation of the comprehensive strategic plan currently being developed. The plan emphasizes building more durable, holistic solutions for those experiencing poverty in the Upper Valley through the provision (both partnership and capacity-building) and coordination of a more comprehensive set of services to produce lasting change for those the Haven serves. The strategic plan must balance excellent service delivery with building organizational capacity and enhancing financial viability and will include a master plan to address capital needs over time. While looking to the future, the ED must also execute and integrate strategic initiatives already underway and effectively weave them into the Haven's service offerings and processes. The next ED must prioritize the Haven's evidence-based, trauma-informed, and "housing first" approach and will direct the work further "upstream" to develop strategies and partnerships that help community members transition from unhoused to permanently housed. Additionally, while the Haven is not formally a clinical organization, the ED must appreciate the clinical underpinnings of its services.

Steward key regional, state-wide, and cross-state relationships and partnerships.

The ED must ensure the Haven remains deeply rooted within and attentive to its community. The agency will seek deeper, more strategic collaborations with state agencies, elected officials, civic groups, funders, schools, employers, peer nonprofits, and others to develop a coordinated approach to homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity in the Upper Valley. The ED must be a persuasive advocate for the Haven's clients and mission to ensure the community understands the importance of the Haven's work, dispel common misconceptions about homeless populations, and gain community buy-in.

Bolster the Haven's financial stability amidst an evolving policy and economic landscape.

The next ED must bring financial acumen and the ability to prudently manage the operating budget and anticipate the Haven's future funding needs. As 78 percent of the Haven's support derives from private sources, primarily individual donors, it is imperative that the ED and the development and communications team compellingly tell the Haven's story to retain current donors and attract new ones, especially at the major gift level. The ED must effectively navigate the agency through potential disruptions to and from public funding sources and government policy, ensuring financial and service continuity, addressing impacts to those the agency serves, and providing strong leadership to the team through change.

Invest in the Haven's passionate and hardworking team as it navigates complexity.

Like many human services organizations, the Haven is challenged with recruiting and retaining staff. A new shelter space and increasing demand for the Haven's services will make staffing even more critical. The existing staff is capable and highly dedicated, but stretched thin in some areas. It will be important for the incoming ED to work quickly to build trust with staff at all levels and diagnose and address the specific staffing needs within each service area. The ED will assess the Haven's current management structure to identify areas for increased support and administrative clarity; invest in staff development, advancement, and well-being; and pursue a competitive compensation and benefit structure. Additionally, the ED must foster, recruit, and sustain the Haven's indispensable corps of volunteers. The ED must acknowledge the vital role of volunteers as some of the most effective communicators of the Haven's work and continue developing a corps that is deeply connected to the community. The ED will strive for diversity in the Haven's workforce across the various dimensions of social and cultural identity and foster inclusivity in how staff work with one another.

Promote a culture of open communication, transparency, and connection.

Historically, the Haven has operated out of one campus location. The opening of a new off-site shelter and counseling center will make operations more complex. The new ED will cultivate a culture of respect and cooperation across sites and programs to create connection and buy-in for programmatic growth. To do so, the ED must lead with humility and a service orientation that extends to clients and staff. The

ED must be a consensus builder who will engage staff in creative problem-solving toward a unity of purpose that will elevate the work. The ED will partner with internal communications to ensure staff understand how their contributions support the Haven's overall mission.

Work closely with the board of directors to further the Haven's regional impact.

The ED will engage board members as active contributors, thought partners, and ambassadors for the Haven, its programming, and the community it serves. The ED and board will develop short- and long-term plans for organizational success and, together, ensure that the board represents a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no individual will embody every quality, the successful candidate will possess many of the following qualifications, professional experiences, and personal attributes:

- A history of honoring diverse lived experiences and elevating and empowering people, especially those who have been marginalized. A sophisticated understanding of the web of social, financial, mental, and physical issues that impact people who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and poverty.
- Demonstrated success leading a complex human services organization with service lines similar to the Haven's.
- Experience with strategic planning and successfully orienting an organization to thrive in continuously evolving social, economic, and policy environments. Expertise in translating a vision and strategy into a practical plan with concrete implementation methods and measures of anticipated outcomes.
- Experience building and sustaining collaborative partnerships and networks with various constituencies.
- Exceptional public speaking and interpersonal skills that persuasively convey the urgency and value of the Haven's mission to a diverse audience of policymakers, donors, stakeholders, and members of the public.
- Knowledge of and experience with fundraising strategies and long-term relationship-building with individual donors and other private funders.
- Exceptional organizational skills and experience with financial oversight, including budgeting, planning, and reporting.
- Demonstrated ability to guide, support, and leverage staff expertise, capacity, and well-being. Success in building safe and courageous spaces to reflect on progress and check in across programs.

- The ability to attract, retain, and motivate a top-caliber, dedicated leadership team, building the individual and collective capability and capacity to lead the creation and growth of new programs, effectively assist in scaling the organization, and steward the larger team and culture.
- Personal and professional commitment to and experience in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and an understanding of how systems of inequity intersect with the Haven's work.
- Experience reporting to a governing board or equivalent experience.
- Understanding of facilities oversight and capital planning.
- A clear and open communication style, emotional intelligence, a sense of humor, and a collaborative yet decisive approach to leadership.

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Salary Range: The base salary for the role is \$150,000. This is a full-time position with all the benefits provided to full-time staff at the Haven. The total compensation package will vary based on the competitive employment market, the candidate's experience, and the strength of the candidate's demonstrated track record of leadership and accomplishment.

Location: This position operates from the Haven's administrative offices in White River Junction, VT. Occasional remote or hybrid work is acceptable.

Commitment: This position requires minimal travel, including local meetings and occasional trips to state capitals in Montpelier, VT, and Concord, NH, for government relations and participation in service coalition meetings.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

All nominations, inquiries, and applications (including a resume and a two- to three-page letter of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be directed in strict confidence to the search team below. Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted. To be assured full consideration, please submit materials by Monday, June 30, 2025.

Tatiana Oberkoetter, Phillip Petree, Angelo Alexander, Ryan Smillie
Isaacson, Miller

[Upper Valley Haven Executive Director Search](#)

The Upper Valley Haven is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to creating a diverse workplace environment that is welcoming and safe for all. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. We are committed to compliance with all fair employment practices regarding citizenship and immigration status.