

Position Specification

Executive Director



October 2025



ISAACSON, MILLER

The Search

The Donors of Color Network (DOCN) seeks a bold, strategic, experienced, and visionary leader to serve as its next Executive Director. DOCN is a landmark force in philanthropy, the first national network uniting high net-worth individuals of color across race and ethnicity to advance racial justice and build power for communities of color. Founded in 2019, DOCN has already played a pivotal role in advancing racial-justice causes and shifting philanthropic norms. As political and social headwinds threaten hard-won gains, the need for DOCN has never been greater. DOCN requires an Executive Director who will lead its network of accomplished, influential, and committed members with courage, clarity, and conviction.

Reporting to the board of directors, DOCN's Executive Director will be expected to: advance a strategic vision that fully leverages members' influence and resources; expand revenue to ensure sustainability and scale; strengthen staff and operations to deliver excellence with efficiency; create unique opportunities that deepen members' learning, leadership and impact; and cultivate and grow the network itself. Under its current strategic plan, DOCN seeks to increase its membership from 57 to 200 by 2029 and be the leading resource for donors of color seeking to create catalytic change. The next Executive Director must be energized by this rare opportunity to build a powerful philanthropic engine for racial justice—led by and for people of color—that has never existed before.

DOCN has retained the search firm Isaacson, Miller for this important recruitment. Instructions for applying, nominating, and inquiring about the position can be found at the end of this document.



Our Story

In 2017, two progressive-movement leaders, the late Urvashi Vaid and Ashindi Maxton, published [*The Apparitional Donor: Understanding and Engaging High Net Worth Donors of Color*](#), the first comprehensive study of such donors—their motivations, the barriers they faced, and the opportunities before them. A key recommendation emerged: The creation of a donor network connecting wealthy BIPOC individuals to learn from each other, build cross-racial solidarity, and collectively leverage resources to advance racial justice. In 2019, co-founders Vaid, Maxton, and Hali Lee catalyzed a pioneering group of donors to launch the Donors of Color Network. Its sister organization, Donors of Color Action, a vehicle for donors’ civic engagement and political advocacy, was established soon after. From the start, DOCN has been animated by its core values of joy, community, solidarity, and power.

DOCN unapologetically provides a space to grapple with the often-contradictory experience of holding wealth while having deep roots in communities that continue to face egregious and pervasive injustices. What might be isolating elsewhere becomes at DOCN a distinctive source of strength. Through learning series, webinars, working groups, strategy sessions, local gatherings, and national convenings, members engage with movement and philanthropy partners, explore how philanthropy can enhance or hinder justice, sharpen their skills as donor organizers and leaders, and develop member-driven, collective-impact initiatives.

Our Story (continued)

DOCN's impact work has included creating targeted funds to channel giving to organizations at the forefront of racial justice. DOCN has also recognized that its collective influence can be just as or more powerful than direct giving. A signature example is the Climate Funders Justice Pledge, sparked by a member working group on climate justice. It called on major climate funders to disclose their grantmaking and to pledge 30% of their funding to BIPOC-led environmental justice groups. The campaign, which reverberated across the philanthropic and climate sectors, mobilized \$120 million to frontline groups.

More information about DOCN can be found at www.donorsofcolor.org.



Role of the Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to DOCN's ten-member board of directors and also serves as the executive director of the affiliated 501(c)(4), Donors of Color Action, which is currently activated only for select initiatives. They oversee a small, fully remote staff and serve as the organization's chief spokesperson and primary fundraiser. In close partnership with the board, the Executive Director sets the organization's strategic direction; ensures DOCN's financial health; and builds and manages an effective staff team to advance DOCN's mission. DOCN's current operating budget is approximately \$1.2 million.

This is a permanent, full-time position that can be based anywhere in the U.S. The salary is estimated between \$220,000-\$280,000 not including benefits, commensurate with experience.

Key Opportunities and Challenges

The success of the Executive Director will be determined by how well they address the following leadership opportunities and challenges:



Develop a strategic vision with DOCN members

DOCN seeks a leader who can both inspire *and* be guided by its members in shaping a bold and sustainable strategic vision. The Executive Director must engage deeply with members to identify how their collective influence and resources can best advance the strength and power of BIPOC communities. This requires honoring members' experience and expertise and discerning the gaps and areas where DOCN can provide a distinct and lasting contribution alongside allies in the broader progressive movement. Critically, the Executive Director will translate vision into concrete plans and goals to turn aspirations into meaningful impact.



Continue to grow and cultivate DOCN's membership network

DOCN's current strategic plan sets an ambitious goal of expanding the membership network to 200 by 2029. To achieve this, the Executive Director must be a persuasive ambassador for the network, clearly articulating the unique value DOCN offers to high net-worth individuals of color who are committed to advancing racial justice. They will be charged with developing and executing an effective recruitment strategy that raises awareness of DOCN's mission and goals and the opportunities that membership provides. Just as importantly, the Executive Director will nurture the existing community of members, ensuring that their engagement deepens.

Key Opportunities and Challenges (continued)



Ensure strong and sustainable organization management

An early-state organization with ambitious goals, DOCN requires an Executive Director who can balance vision with disciplined execution. They must establish organizational systems, infrastructure, and processes that will meet DOCN's obligations to its members and the communities it serves, while setting the organization up for long-term sustainability. A critical task will be building and guiding a high-performing staff team and cultivating an organizational culture rooted in accountability, collaboration, and efficiency—ensuring that DOCN consistently delivers on its commitments with excellence.



Serve as an effective fundraiser

DOCN's revenue base is anchored by members' dues and institutional grants. The next Executive Director must ensure that this base not only continues to grow but also diversifies. They will be expected to cultivate and secure support from foundations and individuals aligned with DOCN's mission and explore innovative revenue strategies. In doing so, they will strengthen DOCN's financial foundation and position the network for lasting impact.



Create opportunities for members to both learn and lead

For many high net-worth people of color, navigating the culture of philanthropy can feel unfamiliar, as both wealth and organized philanthropy are relatively new experiences. Yet their distinct perspectives are an invaluable source of insight and innovation. The Executive Director will embrace this unique context as they provide opportunities that help members deepen their understanding of philanthropy's role in building movement power, clarify their own most effective roles, and step into leadership as donor organizers committed to dismantling racial barriers and advancing justice. The Executive Director will be expected to design platforms and events that are accessible and catalytic, equipping members to evolve as donors, collaborators, and change agents.

Qualifications and Characteristics

For this pivotal and visible role, DOCN seeks a leader who is passionate about the organization's mission and legacy and farsighted about its future. DOCN requires a highly facilitative and relational leader who can deal with ambiguity and fluidity and is open to feedback and course correction. The Executive Director must be adept at interacting with and inspiring people of wealth and those at the highest levels of philanthropic, political, and movement leadership. The successful candidate will also bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- Informed, demonstrated passion and sense of urgency for the mission of DOCN and commitment to its values of joy, community, solidarity, and power.
- Demonstrated fluency in donor engagement and acumen in working with wealthy and/or high-capacity donors.
- Strong record of astute financial management; ability to balance resources with strategic vision.
- Exceptional strategic abilities and the capacity to translate big ideas into clear strategies and action.
- Experience raising resources from a diverse array of sources such as foundations, individuals, corporations, etc.
- Track record of and appetite for building and growing an early-stage organization.



Qualifications and Characteristics (continued)

- Proven record of strong and accessible team management, including the ability to recruit, inspire, develop, and retain a strong staff, set clear priorities, and delegate effectively.
- Keen grasp of the political, economic, social, and cultural issues that impact DOCN's mission.
- Excellent advocacy skills and a well-honed resiliency to see through challenging circumstances.
- Very strong relationship-building skills and a wide network of contacts.
- Ease with a range of stakeholders at all levels and across different backgrounds.
- Exceptional speaking and writing skills. Public presence and media savvy.
- Understanding of new and innovative models of outreach, collaboration, and progressive power-building.
- High integrity, flexibility, approachability, humility, and good humor.



Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

The position will remain open until filled. Those interested in applying should submit their resume and statement of interest through the website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/donors-color-network/executive-director>. Nominations of individuals, along with inquiries about the

position, can be submitted through the same website. All correspondence regarding the search can be addressed to the Isaacson, Miller

representatives noted below:

Karen Avery, Partner

Kahn Lee, Managing Associate

Caroline Corry, Senior Search Coordinator

DOCN is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, transgender status, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions), genetic information, marital or partnerships status, caregiver status, veteran or military status, arrest or conviction record, unemployment status, credit history, or any other legally protected status under local, state, or federal law.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Donors of Color Network. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Donors of Color Network would supersede any conflicting information in this document.