



Search for the President and Chief Executive Officer  
Alternatives For Girls  
Detroit, Michigan

[Alternatives For Girls](#) (AFG), a comprehensive multi-service agency, seeks a president and chief executive officer who will further its mission to help girls and young women experiencing homelessness and other risks including violence, early pregnancy, and exploitation, and to be safe, grow strong, and make positive choices for their lives. The CEO will be an empathic, equity-driven, and trauma-informed leader with sophisticated nonprofit management skills who will strategically steer the agency to flourish programmatically, operationally, financially, and culturally.

Since AFG's incorporation in 1987, the agency has served more than 36,000 girls and young women. What began in southwest Detroit as a 24/7, five-bed shelter in St. Peter's church is now a resourceful \$10 million nonprofit powered by approximately 85 dedicated staff members, serving metro Detroit and beyond. With an excellent community reputation, AFG distinguishes itself with an approach that respects and supports girls and young women, helping participants identify their own values, become well-positioned to act accordingly, make their own life choices, and use their voices to participate in decisions that affect them. AFG's safety net and range of services include outreach and prevention programs, a crisis resource center, education and workforce development, a comprehensive continuum of housing services, and early childhood education.

At this important inflection point, characterized by tremendous growth with the soon-to-open [Dr. Maya Angelou Village](#), a \$17.3 million mixed-use permanent supportive housing facility with a range of support services including an early childhood education center that is open to the community, the president and CEO will lead with conviction and connection, invest deeply in community, and prioritize the professional growth of AFG's engine: the staff. The ideal candidate will have exceptional operational and financial experience from a similarly complex direct-service organization serving vulnerable communities. A lived commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility is a must. This leader will exemplify AFG's approach of meeting participants where they are and empowering their voices and choices.

The AFG board of directors selected a six-member transition team to conduct this important executive search in partnership with the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller. Confidential nominations, inquiries, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT ALTERNATIVES FOR GIRLS

Founded in 1987, Alternatives For Girls is a Detroit-based nonprofit organization driven by the mission to help girls and young women experiencing homelessness and other risks avoid violence, teen pregnancy, and exploitation, and help them explore and access the support, resources, and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong, and to reach the ultimate goal of becoming economically independent.

Today, AFG is a multi-service agency serving over 3,000 vulnerable girls and young women annually through a continuum of care covering an expansive range of services. Emphasizing measurable outcomes and evaluation in the work, AFG is increasingly developing programming and curricula based on its own evidence-based research. AFG's program areas include:

- **Shelter:** Emergency and transitional living for homeless young women (ages 15 to 24) and their children. Wrap-around services—including counseling, workforce development, on-site infant/toddler childcare, and life skills education—prepare residents for successful independent living. Staff and volunteers are available 24/7 by phone, web chat, and on-site to transition these individuals into safer situations. In 2022-2023, the Shelter and Transitional Living Program served over 100 new girls along with 35 of their infants/toddlers. Seventy-eight percent of participants left the shelter and moved into positive living situations, including back with relatives or into a safe, independent living situation. Services include an on-site early childhood education center, solely for the children living with their mothers in the shelter, and provides high-quality, enriching, and evidence-based curricula for the up to eight children in its care, along with parenting education, support, and promotion of parent/child bonding.
- **Community-Based Prevention:** Year-round educational programming, including academic enrichment, community mentoring, college and career pathways preparation, family engagement, post-secondary coaching, and college savings accounts. This team identifies and works with at-risk school-aged girls (ages 7 to 22) in the southwest Detroit community through activities and curricula that develop positive self-esteem, leadership skills, educational outcomes, and college readiness. As a result of the annual success of this comprehensive programming, AFG has authored a nationally awarded curriculum, [LeadHer](#), designed to reduce teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and associated sexual risk behaviors. Prevention also includes the singular Youth Street Outreach Program that trains and employs at-risk girls and young women to reach out to other youth who are at risk of being in precarious housing, experiencing homelessness, school dropout, gang involvement, or other risks.
- **Outreach and Education Services:** Serves young women engaged in sex work as well as victims and survivors of sex trafficking and domestic violence. Services include crisis intervention, street-based concrete assistance and advocacy, legal help, behavioral health counseling, supportive circles, peer support, peer leadership opportunities, and connections to workforce development and transitional housing programs. Over the past several years, more than 40 employers have

partnered with AFG to ensure mutual success, in that their business needs are met by AFG's participants: highly qualified young women who have dedicated time and effort to complete education and training for high-paying skilled trades and to go on to college. The staff at AFG identify economic and social mobility pathways and provide individualized career coaching, employability skills training, and direct employer and vocational training placement services.

- **Housing Stability:** Rapid rehousing, trauma-informed case management, financial support, and wrap-around services including education and workforce development, for homeless young adults (ages 18 to 24) and their families to obtain and maintain safe, permanent housing following their exit from a shelter or experiencing ongoing homelessness. This program department also includes the development of the Dr. Maya Angelou Village, a \$17.3 million, 45-unit apartment building set to open in June 2024, with half of the units dedicated to permanent supportive housing. The other 20 units will be affordable, serving individuals and families earning less than 50 percent of the Detroit area median income.

This housing development was conceived in partnership with AFG's nonprofit developer partner [Full Circle Communities](#). This mixed-use permanent supportive housing development marks the expansion of AFG to provide services for residents that include an on-site early childhood education center, counseling, and employment resources. Through its partnership with Full Circle Communities, AFG will receive 75 percent of the developer fees to provide a range of services that are trauma-informed and use a whole-family approach to promote long-term safety and stability for those living at the Village.

## GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND FINANCE

Alternatives For Girls is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and one of only a few Detroit agencies serving female-identifying youth holistically; it is the only Detroit provider with the capacity to residentially serve girls and young women experiencing homelessness along with their young children. The agency is governed by a 21-member board of directors—including two youth board members who are former AFG participants—which meets six times a year and provides strategic, governance, and financial support. Board committees aligned with AFG priorities also meet six times a year. In addition, on average, more than 140 volunteers actively engage each month.

Reporting to the president and CEO, AFG's executive leadership team is composed of the chief operating officer, chief development officer, and director of finance; additionally, an executive assistant also reports to the CEO. The vice president of programs, who manages the program directors, reports to the COO. AFG works with external partners for grant writing and evaluation (Evaluation Strategies), responsible to the COO, as well as for its chief human resources officer (Michigan HR Group) and chief financial officer functions (Financial One), responsible to the CEO.

AFG's FY 2024 operating budget is \$9.9 million. Fifty-six percent of that figure comes from government grants and contracts, 23 percent from corporations and foundations, 16 percent from individual

contributions, and the remaining five percent from special events and sponsorships. The fiscal year runs from October through September.

## **LEADERSHIP TRANSITION**

Amanda “Amy” Good was part of the founding of AFG and has served as its president and CEO since 1988. Under her leadership, AFG has grown from a volunteer-led project to a full-service agency serving homeless and high-risk girls and young women, along with their families, through street outreach, emergency shelter, transition to independent living, longer-term housing, early childhood education, and prevention services. Ms. Good served as a gubernatorial appointee on the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice and serves on the Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit board, and is a member of the Michigan Chapter of the International Women’s Forum. She was honored with Oprah Winfrey’s “Use Your Life” award (accompanied by \$100,000 for AFG’s capital campaign), the United Way Community Services “Executive Director of the Year” award, Leadership Detroit’s “Leadership Challenge” award, and the National Council of Jewish Women Josephine S. Weiner Award for Community Service. She was awarded the University of Michigan School of Social Work Distinguished Alumni award in 2014. Alternatives For Girls was awarded Crain’s “Best Managed Non-Profit” award in 2017. She will retire in the fall of 2024, and due to AFG’s resiliency and Ms. Good’s stewardship, the next president and CEO will inherit an organization well-positioned for a new era of progress.

In March 2024, the board of directors elected several new members who will contribute to the strength and excellence of the agency, joining tenured members who have served as volunteers since the early years of AFG. The president and CEO Transition Team will not only head up the executive search for the agency’s next leader but will also contribute to ensuring a smooth and strategic onboarding process. In anticipation of this important recruitment, the board of directors is collaborating with the executive leadership team to develop a two-year extension of their most recent five-year strategic plan (2018-2023), so that the next CEO will have flexible guideposts for priorities for the initial two years, but will also be able to provide vision and leadership for a new strategic planning process.

## **ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The next CEO will join AFG at a pivotal moment in the agency’s 37-year history. Its legacy and reach are without peers, and the potential to grow the agency’s impact to ever deeper levels motivates the ongoing work. AFG’s success is dependent on its ability to support and amplify the voices of girls and young women to redesign the landscape of support and promote their own safety. To this end, the CEO must be an authentic leader who can establish meaningful relationships with participants, staff, and external partners. They will cultivate open, transparent, and collaborative relationships with staff, the board, and community partners, proactively forging a strong and inclusive programmatic and workplace culture that enables AFG to adapt and continue to grow in its understanding of and responses to abuse, power, violence, opportunities for youth engagement and leadership, and resilience in our communities.

AFG has grown exponentially in recent years. This moment in the organization's trajectory calls for a skilled nonprofit leader to provide executive management for what has become a large and complex multi-service agency. Vision and strategic planning; financial oversight for a \$10 million budget; leadership for a team of 85, including five direct reports; and building and stewarding funder partnerships, community organization coalitions, and relationships with government leaders will all be key to success.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Working closely with the board of directors and the executive leadership team, key challenges and opportunities ahead for the next CEO include the following:

**Establish a clear, unifying, and inclusive strategic vision and plan that inspires new and renewed interest in strengthening and deepening Alternatives For Girls' programmatic impact.**

The CEO will provide comprehensive vision and strategic leadership for this complex nonprofit organization. This includes leading the development of a compelling new strategic plan and managing the revenue generation and organizational development to support this vision. The CEO will work in partnership with the leadership team, program directors, committed staff, and dedicated board to ensure programmatic implementation, measurement, innovation, and coordination across the full breadth of the agency, minimizing silos and enhancing collaborative work across AFG.

The CEO will further AFG's ability to provide care that respects participants' identities, experiences, and individual values. They will be a visible, impactful leader, perceptively and respectfully engaging with girls and young women who are experiencing challenging and often traumatic circumstances. It is imperative that the CEO build trust with communities of color and immigrant communities, ensuring that its services are widely recognized, understood, and accessible to all those in need of care and support. This leader will foster an environment that empowers staff and participants to co-create environments and programs that meet the needs of all who interact with AFG.

**Cultivate a strong internal organizational culture, empowering leaders across the organization.**

AFG has an extremely passionate and hardworking staff who are deeply committed to the organization's mission, are accustomed to operating under significant stress, and are frequently exposed to vicarious trauma, due to the nature of the work. The CEO will be an advocate for their staff: a people-first leader with strong emotional intelligence, intercultural humility and competence, and a trauma-informed approach to leadership. Throughout the agency—and with particular focus internally—they will center those same values that are core to and a hallmark of AFG's programmatic work, also fostering a trauma-informed culture and organizational practices for staff, board, and volunteers and, as such, promoting and codifying healthy work/life balance. 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.

The next CEO will assess the organizational structure, ensuring that teams are well-defined, well-staffed, and well-supported, and that there is strong connection and communication throughout the agency. They will model steady, transparent, responsive, and unifying managerial leadership to deliver equitable and safe program experiences for young people, as well as an empowering work environment for AFG's dedicated team members that fosters accountability at all levels. The agency's strategy for continued growth and sustainability must include an evaluation of performance management, compensation, and systems for professional development and advancement within the organization.

**Evaluate and enhance administrative systems, including for fiscal oversight and management.**

The new CEO will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the financial and administrative components of the agency, so that its systems keep pace with the rapid rate of organizational growth at AFG. The CEO will provide skillful management and oversight for an overall operating budget of \$10 million (and growing), ensuring sound fiscal management for the agency. Evaluating current business operations, this leader will update procedures and processes as needed, so that they reflect best practices and are consistent, coherent, effective, and accessible.

AFG's operations are complex, with multiple programs supporting overlapping participants. Currently, there are opportunities to improve AFG's systems, enhance data analytics, and increase ease of use for staff. Particularly as the new Dr. Maya Angelou Village represents a new mode of operating for the organization, the CEO will work closely with the leadership team, program directors, and staff to determine where there are needs for professional development and new skill integration.

**Continue to grow and diversify Alternatives For Girls' funding bases and partnerships, and ensure excellent stewardship of supporters; represent AFG externally to a wide array of constituents.**

As a skillful communicator, the next CEO of AFG must be able to enthusiastically convey the agency's mission, history, and work to diverse audiences—including participants, staff, board, community members, funders and donors, volunteers, government agencies, and policymakers—maintaining AFG's reputation as a reliable and trustworthy facilitator of transformative change. In doing so, this leader will elevate the voices of participants, with particular attention to those from historically marginalized groups, taking great care not to tokenize or commodify their stories.

The successful cultivation and stewardship of financial resources is imperative for the next CEO of AFG. AFG has roughly doubled its resource generation in recent years, particularly through strategically pursuing grants. The incumbent must be financially adept to assess the current financial condition and implement a business plan that strategically aligns with the organization's short- and long-term goals, and adapts to new development needs. Another substantial area of opportunity is in deepening AFG's focus on private philanthropy; this leader will make the case for support to prospective donors, cultivating and securing their support for AFG's vital work. They will also focus on identifying a new generation of donors who can identify with the values of the organization and sign on to be ambassadors for the organization.

**Work closely with the Board as meaningful partners in AFG's success.**

The Board is a key partner to the CEO and will expect the new leader to map out a clear path for this collaboration. This includes cultivating strong relationships with existing board members, communicating clear opportunities for engagement and participation, and developing strategies for ongoing board recruitment and board involvement in donor engagement. The new CEO will keep the Board well informed and closely connected to AFG through engaging opportunities for them to be effective ambassadors for the organization. They will prioritize deepening and expanding the scope and impact of the AFG board with the broader community, empowering board members to activate their wealth of skills into intentional and strategic roles in the organization.

**Develop meaningful ties locally and nationally, identifying select, high-impact areas of opportunity that will amplify the collective voice of organizations serving young people.**

Given its strong record of collaboration as well as the agency's evidence-based approach, AFG is poised to be a convener and model of high-quality program delivery for girls and young women. There is ample opportunity to assess increasing focus on a few well-defined areas where AFG resources and convening power could have large impact. In close partnership with the executive leadership team and the board, the CEO will be attentive to cultivating open and transparent opportunities for shared learning and deeper connection with local agencies and national organizations supporting young people.

The nationally awarded, evidenced-based *LeadHer* curriculum is a great example of the agency's capacity to expand its impact and support communities beyond southeast Michigan. An innovative leader will seize opportunities for national collaboration, ensuring that they align with the agency's mission and nimble business model.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- Unwavering and proven commitment to AFG's mission to serve girls and young women to live and grow safely.
- A deep understanding of trauma-informed and anti-oppression work, including the central role of relationships, and the importance of building culture and community accordingly.
- A nuanced understanding of the ways in which sexual and domestic violence, abuse, sex trafficking, and exploitation intersect with many other social justice issues, such as systemic racism, immigration, housing insecurity, access to education and employment opportunities, the criminal legal system, LGBTQ+ issues, dis/ability, mental healthcare, and more.
- A bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree is preferred.
- Experience leading a similarly complex organization or program; excellent strategic planning and effective management of a complex operation with talented professionals, including oversight of financial and human resources.

- A strong track record establishing a strategic vision and providing clear decision-making processes and leadership for a sizeable team.
- A strong history of success in fundraising, especially from individuals; exceptional communication, story-telling, and relationship-building skills.
- Experience with development and management of multiple grants.
- Experience with creation and management of organizational budget, ideally over \$5 million.
- Ability to think creatively and outside the box in partnering with others, including potential government partners, private philanthropy, and corporations.
- A willingness to take calculated risks and venture carefully into challenging program areas.
- A galvanizing and clear communication style in diverse settings; the ability to listen well and lead decisively.
- A deep appreciation and understanding of, and authentic interest in, the communities of Detroit and their stories are required.
- The highest integrity, wisdom, humor, emotional intelligence, and a can-do attitude; adept at conflict management; even-keeled and calm when leading through challenges.

## 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 one- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/alternatives-for-girls/president-and-ceo>.

Kennedy Kearney-Fischer, Managing Associate  
Berlinda Mojica, Senior Associate  
Karson Freeman, Associate  
Rachel Banderob, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*AFG recruits, hires, and promotes employees and prospective employees on the basis of individual merit and without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, weight, height, marital status, disability, AIDS/HIV, misdemeanor arrest record or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran or any other status protected by state, federal or other applicable law. Additionally, it is the position of AFG to prohibit discrimination based on hairstyles that are commonly associated with a particular race or culture, including Black hairstyles like locs, braids, or Bantu knots. This policy includes AFG's commitment to maintain a workplace free from harassment (including sexual harassment) or illegal discrimination of any nature.*