EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HURON WATERLOO PATHWAYS INITIATIVE (HWPI)

The Opportunity

Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) seeks an accomplished, entrepreneurial, and relationship-driven Executive Director to lead the organization into its next chapter.

HWPI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to facilitate development and promote enjoyment of regional trails connecting people, communities, and nature. Our business model relies on partnerships with public entities and communities with whom we work to develop non-motorized trails throughout Southeast Michigan. Our flagship project is the Washtenaw County Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail), a 55-mile nonmotorized trail that connects communities, parks, businesses, and natural areas across Washtenaw County. HWPI positions itself as a collaborative leader alongside Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and other public partners—who lead the technical aspects of trail design and construction—to complete the B2B Trail and expand the network of regional trails. The new Executive Director will focus on driving private philanthropy and securing public funding to accelerate construction, while partnering with public leadership to align high-level strategy and shared goals.

With four full-time and one part-time staff, an operating budget of approximately $1 million, and annual organizational and trail investments typically totaling $3-5 million, HWPI is a small organization capable of delivering significant impact.

The Executive Director serves as HWPI's chief executive and leads the organization's fundraising, external relationships, strategy, and staff. At its core, this is a fundraising and relationship-building leadership position. The successful candidate will be equally comfortable cultivating a major donor, meeting with a state legislator, collaborating with public-sector partners, leading and developing staff, and representing HWPI in the community.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising & Development

- Lead HWPI's fundraising strategy and execution, helping secure millions of dollars annually in private and public investment.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward major individual donors and build strong relationships with private individuals, community members, and private and family foundations.
- Identify new philanthropic opportunities, expand HWPI's network of supporters, and grow and diversify philanthropic support.
- Develop compelling cases for support and partner with staff and Board members on campaigns, proposals, and donor communications.

Government Relations & Public Funding

- Lead advocacy efforts to secure significant state and other public funding for trail development, including through Michigan's state budget appropriation process.
- Build and maintain productive, bipartisan relationships with state legislators, elected officials, government agencies, municipal leaders, and other public-sector partners.
- Work closely with Washtenaw County and local municipalities to advance trail projects and shared priorities.
- Communicate the benefits of trail investment and identify opportunities to leverage private philanthropy to secure and complement public investment.

Partnerships & Strategic Alignment

- Maintain strong relationships with public agencies, municipalities, parks and recreation agencies, community organizations, and other partners.
- Help advance the continued development and completion of the B2B Trail and other priority trail projects.
- Convene partners around shared goals, navigate complex funding and community challenges, and identify opportunities for new partnerships and trail connections.

Organizational & Staff Leadership

- Provide overall leadership and direction for HWPI and work with the Board and staff to establish and advance strategic priorities.
- Lead, manage, mentor, and develop a staff of four full-time and one part-time employees, establishing clear goals while empowering staff to lead their areas of responsibility.
- Foster a collaborative, accountable, entrepreneurial, and mission-driven organizational culture.
- Develop and oversee an approximately $1 million operating budget and $3-5 million in annual organizational and trail investments, ensuring sound financial management and nonprofit governance.

Communications & Community Engagement

- Serve as a visible ambassador and spokesperson for HWPI and the B2B Trail with donors, elected officials, community leaders, partners, trail users, and volunteers.
- Provide strategic oversight for communications, media relations, community engagement, volunteer activities, events, and trail programming.

Qualifications & Experience

- Demonstrated success raising significant philanthropic funds, particularly from major individual donors and/or private foundations.
- Significant leadership experience, ideally within a nonprofit, philanthropic, public-sector, advocacy, conservation, environmental, outdoor recreation, community development, transportation, or related organization.
- Experience managing staff and direct reports, with a demonstrated ability to develop people and build effective teams.
- Exceptional relationship-building skills and the ability to establish credibility with donors, elected officials, government agencies, community leaders, and organizational partners.
- Major gifts fundraising and/or capital campaigns.
- Strong strategic judgment, written and verbal communication skills, and comfort serving as an organization's external representative.
- Experience navigating complex projects and partnerships involving multiple organizations and stakeholders.
- Financial and organizational management experience appropriate to leading a nonprofit organization of HWPI's size and scope.
- A collaborative, entrepreneurial, and solutions-oriented leadership style and genuine enthusiasm for HWPI's mission.

Preferred Experience

- Government relations experience and background working with elected officials and public agencies.
- Securing state, federal, or other public funding.
- Developing and managing public-private partnerships.
- Experience in conservation, environmental work, parks, outdoor recreation, community development, transportation, public policy, or a related field.

Education: A bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience is expected. Advanced degrees are welcomed but are not required. HWPI values demonstrated leadership, fundraising success, judgment, relationships, and professional accomplishments over any educational credential.

The Ideal Candidate

- A relationship builder who enjoys developing trust with donors, public officials, partners, staff, Board members, and volunteers.
- A compelling fundraiser who is comfortable asking individuals and institutions to make significant investments in an ambitious vision.
- A skilled partnership builder who can work effectively across government, philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.
- Entrepreneurial and resourceful, collaborative but decisive, and able to translate long-term vision into practical results.
- An effective leader of people and a credible, enthusiastic ambassador for HWPI and the communities it serves.

Compensation & Position Details & How to Apply

COMPENSATION

Salary range starting at $120,000 with final compensation dependent on experience and qualifications; competitive benefits package.

LOCATION

Full-time executive leadership position based in Ann Arbor, Michigan working in a hybrid work environment.

REPORTS TO

HWPI Board of Directors.

ORGANIZATION

Approximately $1M operating budget; $3-5M in annual organizational and trail investments; four full-time and one part-time staff.

APPLICATIONS

Please send resume and cover letter to careers@huron-waterloo-pathways.org by **November 1st.**