

# Executive Director Position Profile

## Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) is AHS's chief executive officer, accountable for advancing the mission, strategy, financial health, and public presence of the organization and for overall organizational performance and long-term financial sustainability. Partnering with the Board of Directors, the ED leads programs, advocacy, operations, and staff in alignment with AHS's mission of “empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience.”

The ED serves as the primary strategist, leader, and spokesperson for AHS, while providing insightful guidance to the Board on governance and fiduciary responsibilities. The role calls for a visionary nonprofit leader with strong management, financial, fundraising, and communications skills, and a genuine passion for trails and conservation.

**Location:** AHS is headquartered in the DMV region (DC/Maryland/Virginia), with an office in Silver Spring, MD. Staff are distributed nationwide; programs reach all U.S. states and territories. Travel required for mission delivery, donor and sponsor growth, and Board engagement.

**Salary range:** \$125,000 – \$140,000 USD annually. *We believe in rewarding impact. While the base salary range for this role is competitive, we are open to performance-based incentives & accelerated compensation reviews for candidates who exceed expectations and drive measurable results.*

## Key Responsibilities

### Strategic & Mission Leadership

- Lead strategic planning and execution to advance AHS's mission, vision, and long-term goals.
- Identify opportunities and challenges in the trails and outdoor recreation landscape; develop plans with Board input.
- Keep the Board fully informed of performance and factors affecting organizational health and mission impact.
- Embed Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles in all strategies and decisions, removing barriers and building belonging in the hiking community.

### Programs & Impact

- Oversee the design, delivery, and evaluation of all AHS programs (Volunteer Vacations, Alternative Breaks, National Trails Day, NextGen Trail Leaders, and others), ensuring they are inclusive and high-impact.
- Grow annual participation while maintaining high satisfaction; address financial, physical, and cognitive barriers in underserved communities.
- Implement impact measurement tied to AHS's mission components — enjoy, share, preserve.

### Financial Management

- Ensure financial sustainability through prudent fiscal management and strategic growth.

- Oversee budgeting, accounting, audits, and financial reporting; provide regular reports to the Board, and maintain adequate reserves.
- Develop annual budgets and long-range plans aligned with programmatic and strategic goals.

### **Fundraising & Resource Development**

- Serve as chief fundraiser; design and execute strategies to diversify revenue and meet annual and long-term targets.
- Personally cultivate donors, foundations, corporate sponsors, and agency partners alongside Board members, building a reliable and diversified annual revenue stream.
- Lead major campaigns (including AHS's 50th Anniversary initiatives) and donor stewardship efforts, supported by strong gift management and recognition systems.

### **Board Relations & Governance**

- Serve as the primary liaison between the Board of Directors and staff, building a partnership grounded in trust and transparency.
- Support Board operations (agendas, committees, strategic planning, evaluation) with the information needed for sound decisions.
- Implement Board policies throughout the organization; recommend new volunteer leadership to strengthen governance capacity.

### **External Relations, Advocacy & Communications**

- Serve as AHS's chief spokesperson to partners, policymakers, media, and the public, establishing AHS as the national voice of the hiking community
- Advance AHS's policy agenda to protect trails and public lands, lead signature initiatives like Hike the Hill® and National Trails Day®, engaging supporters across all 50 states
- Build productive relationships with government agencies, peer nonprofits, outdoor industry leaders, coalition partners, and community organizations; strengthen co-marketing and co-advocacy (e.g., quarterly webinars, in-person events).
- Oversee marketing and communications strategies (social, email, press, events) that broaden audience, deepen engagement, and elevate diverse voices in the hiking community.
- Pursue earned media and speaking opportunities for AHS leadership, program participants, and volunteers.

### **Organization & Staff Leadership**

- Lead, mentor, and manage the staff team; foster accountability and a culture of belonging and create a common vision with buy in via a cooperative, integrated team effort.
- Delegate to and empower senior staff and program managers; recruit, onboard, and develop talent aligned with strategic goals.
- Maintain modern systems, current policies, professional development, and succession planning to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and data security.

## Qualifications

### Education & Experience

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum 5+ years in a senior leadership role for a similarly sized or larger nonprofit organization with demonstrated success in organizational management, program development, board engagement, and fundraising.
- Experience working or volunteering for an organization focused on outdoor recreation, environmental conservation, or related fields highly desirable.

### Leadership Profile

- **Mission-driven:** deep commitment to connecting people with trails and nature, and to inclusivity in the outdoors.
- **Strategic visionary with high business acumen:** systems thinker with a strong grasp of nonprofit finance, operations, personnel, program evaluation, and governance; translates broad goals into actionable plans.
- **Adaptable change Leader:** integrity, sound judgment, and adaptability in complex situations.
- **Team-builder and communicator:** inspires staff, volunteers, and partners; exceptional written, oral, and public-speaking skills; comfortable with media.
- **Collaborative with Boards:** Open to giving and receiving feedback; history of effective Board partnerships.
- **Entrepreneurial:** innovative, resilient, takes initiative; servant-leader ethos.

### Core Skills

- Fundraising planning and execution with strong individual donor cultivation skills.
- Budgeting and financial analysis.
- Strategic planning, organizational development, and nonprofit compliance.
- Relationship-building across volunteers, donors, government officials, and community leaders.
- Project and time management across multiple priorities in fast-paced environments.

Interested candidates should apply by submitting cover letter and resume via the [American Hiking Society Executive Director Online Application Form](#).

Visit [www.americanhiking.org/career](http://www.americanhiking.org/career) for more information.