

Position Announcement Boston Opportunity Agenda - Executive Director

The Boston Opportunity Agenda, an innovative new long-term partnership aimed at achieving greater opportunity and economic mobility for Boston's young people and adults, is seeking a dynamic and experienced leader to serve as its first Executive Director. The Executive Director will play a pivotal role at an exciting time when recent legislation, Massachusetts' successful application for Race to the Top funding, and important systemic developmental work have laid the foundation for transformational reform. The Executive Director will be a driving force and lead in attracting and leveraging substantial new resources and strategic partners to achieve the aspirational goals of this unprecedented partnership.

The Organization

The Boston Opportunity Agenda (OA) marks the first time that the City of Boston and the Boston Public Schools have come together with all of the city's leading public charities and many of its foundations with the goal of ensuring that all of Boston's residents have the opportunity to acquire the education they need to find work in the knowledge economy and to lead fulfilling lives. The partnership was launched on June 22, 2010 by the partners: The Barr Foundation, The Beal Companies LLP, The Boston Foundation, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston, the City of Boston, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston, Eos Foundation, the Robert & Myra Kraft Family Foundation, the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation, New Profit Inc. and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. These partners have committed an initial \$27 million to support an education pipeline that spans the full range of services from early childhood care and education through post-secondary achievement.

The partners fervently believe that by combining resources, expertise and influence around a unified agenda, far more can be accomplished and that Boston can be a place where upward mobility occurs for large number of people now living in poverty. The OA sets a national standard for collaboration around a shared set of goals, driven by data and accountable through regular reports to the community. The approach connects leading edge nonprofit organizations with city and state education and administrative entities to create or support deep systems change across the education pipeline – from preschoolers all the way to adult learners (see www.bostonopportunityagenda.org).

Boston Opportunity Agenda's success will be measured by achieving the following system-wide goals:

- **A Strong Educational Foundation** – By 2014 75% of all Boston preschoolers will enter kindergarten with the literacy skills that make them ready to succeed.
- **On Track for High School Graduation** – Eighth grade math participation and performance and tenth grade MCAS performance are reliable indicators of high school success. The OA endorses Supt. Johnson's Acceleration Agenda goals: by 2014 80% of eighth graders will earn a B or better in Algebra I or Math; at least 40% of non-exam school students will take Algebra I; 75% of all tenth graders will score passing or higher on all three MCAS exams; 100% will be at proficiency or above in English Language Arts and Math.
- **High School Completion** – The OA endorses Superintendent Johnson's Acceleration Agenda goal for an 80% four-year graduation rate for all BPS students and an annual dropout rate of 3% or lower by 2014.
- **Post-Secondary Attainment** – Starting with the class of 2011, 70% of BPS high school graduates will go on to attain an associate's degree or higher. Among adult learners (i.e. those coming from Adult Basic Education, ESOL, GED courses), there will be a 150% increase in students entering post-secondary degree or professional certificate programs.

The OA will track data over time through the Boston Public Schools, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Boston Indicators Project which draws from the information and research generated by public agencies, civic institutions, think tanks and community-based organizations.

The Position

The Executive Director will report through the Chairperson to the Leadership Group made up of the CEO of each partner. This job is a unique opportunity to drive and manage a network, not an organization. S/he will call upon the staff of the network organizations to make things happen, (supervising only 1-2 OA staff) and will help craft a new roadmap as the collaboration continues to develop. For administrative reasons, s/he will be an employee of The Boston Foundation (www.tbf.org).

Duties and Responsibilities

- Drive progress, collaborate with and provide strategic leadership to the Leadership Group as they guide and support the OA. With the Leadership Group, develop standards for collaboration, contribution and investment. The Executive Director will supervise working groups composed of staff of the OA partners that are responsible for collaboration on Data and Evaluation, Communications and Development. In addition, s/he will assist working groups composed of OA CEOs and staff that are responsible for developing strategies related to early childhood education, K-12 education, college completion and adult education. This will include assisting working group chairpersons on agenda setting, meeting facilitation and follow-up, strategy development and the development of recommendations for the Leadership Group.
- Oversight of Investments – Communicate regularly with leaders of each initiative receiving funding, monitoring results and preparing briefing materials for the Leadership Group. Manage the process for identifying, selecting and exiting from investments. Ensure that cross-learning and collaboration takes place across the initiatives and develop/maintain relationships with key community stakeholders to inform recommendations.
- Management of Fundraising – Develop strategies and mobilize fundraising with major givers and additional foundations. Take responsibility for the fundraising process and be a compelling part of the current partners' solicitations of additional partners and significant contributions.
- Facilitation of Strategic Review and Improvement – Organize and lead the OA in a formal, annual analysis and review of the collaboration's effectiveness, emerging operational needs and progress toward the goals. Communicate specific recommendations about strategic direction, tactical priorities and operational issues. Advise the Leadership Group on formative and emerging lessons learned, and create conditions to deepen the partnership and maintain its healthy functioning.
- Staff/Consultant Management – Oversee 1-2 OA staff and negotiate terms of contracts/renewals for consultants. Create work plans, facilitate information sharing and develop a core expertise and commitment to maximizing systems reform opportunities. Manage, coordinate and leverage significant in-kind human resource contributions of the partners.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will be a highly seasoned professional comfortable providing leadership and working with a diverse group of individuals. S/he must be able to:

- Provide leadership to the group and help drive results.
- Strategize about how to maximize resources and harness the aspiration of Boston Opportunity Agenda.
- Work at a strategic level, thinking constantly about how to weave key elements together.
- Bring content knowledge about the entire education pipeline.
- Work as a peer with the Leadership Group and interact with civic, community and public sector leaders.
- Work with and advise the programs and organizations in which BOA is investing.
- Work under the pressure of tight deadlines.
- Make decisions about how to organize and manage own workload.
- Receive feedback and work in a participative, collaborative way.

Experience and characteristics desired:

- Senior leadership experience for a complex cross-sector initiative. Start-up experience a plus.
- Proven track record of management success with financial, planning and operations responsibilities.
- Passion for and commitment to the mission and ability to develop and project a vision.
- Understanding of the use of data and metrics in evaluation.
- Success in resource development and personal presence to recruit high-level participation.
- Entrepreneurial and flexible style.
- Outstanding public presentation skills and a capacity to effectively communicate complex information to the Leadership Group, staff, media and the public.
- Strong listening, writing, verbal communication and critical thinking skills.
- High personal and professional integrity.
- College degree required. Master's degree in education, management, or related field preferred.
- Residence in or near Boston or ability to relocate.

To apply, send cover letter, resume and salary history to Susan Egmont at segment@egmontassociates.com.