

EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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Chief Executive Officer



SEARCH CONDUCTED BY

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a s s o c i a t e s

The Opportunity

The International Association of Fairs and Expositions ([IAFE](#)) is conducting a search for its next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO is central to the continued growth and success of IAFE and its ability to support, develop, and promote the fairs and exposition industry. The CEO is responsible for advancing IAFE's mission and improving its value to members through its meetings and trade shows, educational programs and media, and advocating on the industry's behalf. The IAFE CEO role offers the right candidate the opportunity to promote the significance of the fair industry, both nationally and locally, as a community dedicated to providing fun, safe entertainment to people worldwide.

About Fairs & IAFE

Starting from humble beginnings, agricultural fairs have grown to become one of the largest segments of the outdoor event industry. Today, more than 2,000 fairs are held in North America each year, attracting more than 100,000,000 guests and providing billions of dollars in economic impact. From the largest fairs with professional staff that draw more than two million guests, to the smallest fairs run strictly by volunteers that only draw a few thousand visitors, the annual fair is usually the largest event held in the communities they serve. Large agricultural fairs are also held in the United Kingdom, Australia and Mexico.

Fairs are woven into the fabric of their communities, bringing together people from all walks of life to share, learn and have fun. Every fair has its own identity, traditions, and impact, but all celebrate agriculture, youth, and education. The celebration of agriculture through exhibits, demonstrations, and competitions is the common bond between fairs, while emphasizing educational activities such as 4-H, FFA, and similar youth development programs. Most fairs also provide exceptional educational activities to help today's consumer understand the importance of farming and the food source on their plate.

It's not all about education, fairs provide incredible entertainment too. With carnivals and concerts, marching bands and tractor pulls, kids' activities and every deep-fried food on a stick you can imagine, and everything in between, there's truly something for everyone at a fair.

- With roughly 1,800 members, the IAFE is a voluntary, nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization dedicated to serving state, provincial, regional, and county agricultural fairs, shows, exhibitions, and expositions. Its associate members include state and provincial associations of fairs, non-agricultural expositions and festivals, associations, corporations, and individuals engaged in providing products and services to its members, all interested in improving fairs and allied fields.
- IAFE is governed by a Board of 20 Directors: up to 19 elected Directors, plus the Board-appointed President and CEO (ex-officio).
- IAFE has total revenues of \$2M and a staff of 13. Its headquarters is located in Springfield, MO. Though the CEO's relocation to Springfield would be ideal, relocation is not required. Other locales and remote work will be considered.

The Chief Executive Officer Role

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement the organization's strategic vision and long-term goals.

Operational Management

- Oversee day-to-day operations, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in all organizational activities.

Financial Oversight

- Manage the organization's financial health, including budgeting, forecasting, and financial reporting.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Represent the organization's interests at industry events, conferences, and in legislative and regulatory matters.

Advocacy

- Build and maintain strong relationships with members, industry partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders

Team Leadership

- Inspire, mentor, and lead a high-performing team of professionals.

Membership Growth

- Drive membership recruitment and retention strategies to expand the organization's reach and impact.

Program Development

- Oversee the development and delivery of programs, services, and events that provide value to members.

Required Skills, Experience, and Desired Qualifications

- Strong leadership skills including the ability to communicate and inspire a shared vision, organizational design, team building, performance management, mentoring, and succession planning.
- Proven executive leadership experience (Executive Director, COO, or senior-level position) within an organization of comparable complexity with oversight responsibility for strategic planning and implementation, operations, staff, finances, and budget.
- Proven business and financial acumen and budget management skills.
- Strong operations management and administrative abilities, including modernizing systems and optimizing processes and work efficiencies.

- Work experience within the fairs, shows, exhibitions, festivals, or events industry or related industry is desirable.
- Understanding of the regulations relevant to the industry preferred.
- Experience acting as the spokesperson for an organization and building strong relationships with external partner organizations required.
- Ability and willingness to travel.
- Excellent communication skills, including strong speaking, public relations, and presentation skills.
- Proven experience building and maintaining strong relationships built on trust combined with an ability to influence and build consensus among diverse stakeholders.

Personal Qualities and Competencies

- A passion for the fair and exposition industry and IAFE's mission.
- Forward-thinking, future-oriented visionary and planner.
- A motivated—and motivational—leader who leads by example.
- Strong managerial skills and the ability to develop a team and delegate.
- Demonstrates sound ethics and judgement and maintains confidentiality.
- Candidates from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities are encouraged to apply.

Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To Apply

To apply, please send a cover letter and current resume (Microsoft Word® format preferred) [here](#). The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

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protected characteristics. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.

Additional Information

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