

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH



## Executive Director



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# The Opportunity

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Mount Washington Observatory (MWOBS or Observatory) is an iconic nonprofit organization with a rich history as a pioneer of weather and climate science and highly regarded programs and outreach, which continue today. While its mountain-top weather station is known as the Home of the World's Worst Weather™, the Executive Director leads complex operations from offices located in the picturesque valley community of North Conway, New Hampshire.

The Executive Director (ED) of the Observatory is the chief staff officer and, as such, is the sole employee on the MWOBS Board of Trustees (Board). The ED partners with the Board to provide leadership and guidance regarding the strategic direction, oversight, and implementation of the Observatory's strategic plan. The ED assures adherence to the mission of the organization and oversees all activities, operations, and funding of MWOBS.

## Mount Washington Observatory: An Overview

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Mount Washington Observatory is a partly member-supported institution with a mission to advance understanding of the natural systems that create Earth's weather and climate. It serves this mission by maintaining a weather station on the summit of Mount Washington, performing weather and climate research, conducting innovative science education programs, and interpreting the heritage of the Mount Washington region.

With annual revenues between \$1.6M and \$2M, MWOBS gathers, disseminates, and analyzes daily weather data and contributes to the critical, long-term record essential to advancing scientific understanding of weather and climate in a unique, extreme environment. The Observatory's detailed data dating back to the organization's founding in 1932 constitute one of North America's longest continuous climate records.

Mount Washington Observatory's mountaintop weather station is the core of the institution. Staffed continuously since the organization's inception, it is operated by two alternating crews who live on the summit for a week at a time, recording hourly weather observations, performing research, and conducting educational programs. Weather observations are reported to the National Weather Service for use in nationwide forecasting models and regional reports, and Observatory scientists produce specialized and much-sought-after forecasts for the higher summits of the White Mountains and greater White Mountains region for hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

## The Executive Director Role

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Reporting to the Board, the ED is responsible for the overall operations of MWOBS as executed through Senior Staff, including assurance of sound financial management, policy guidance, and progress toward the goals, objectives, and the Strategic Plan established by the Board. The ED serves as the public face of MWOBS, advocating and promoting to the public the mission and goals of MWOBS, as well as its history and culture, to an increasingly broad audience. As the chief fundraiser for the Observatory, the ED is responsible for cultivating relationships with members, past donors, and prospects, including corporations, foundations, and universities. The ED is responsible for all required reporting to government agencies.

## Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The ED has primary responsibility for maintaining and strengthening significant relationships for the Observatory on and off Mount Washington. Those relationships include the commercial, nonprofit, and governmental entities that cooperate in the different operations at the summit of Mount Washington, and the diverse supporters, members, contractors, and other constituencies that contribute to the success of the Observatory.

### Organizational Leadership

- Implement strategic plan; support annual plan review and update.
- Continuously evaluate and, where possible, improve operations, including financial operations; recommend potential changes.
- Work with senior staff to help identify and develop corporate partners and research and testing opportunities.
- Identify and implement opportunities to maintain and expand upon the diversity of the Observatory staff.
- Negotiate and enter into agreements for MWOBS as needed and/or authorized and approved by the Board.
- Provide guidance, training, leadership, and supervision to staff, promoting professionalism and growth, including hiring, firing, promoting, developing, and recognizing staff, as well as oversight and improvement of staff structure.

### Board and Volunteer Engagement

- Establish, maintain, and grow leadership partnership with the Board of Trustees, especially the core officer team.
- Regularly report to the Board regarding the accomplishments of fundraising, strategic, and operational goal attainment and other details as requested.
- Serve as a nonvoting advisor to the Board.
- Interact with Board committees; coordinate senior staff with the appropriate Board committees to take advantage of the expertise and experience of individual Trustees.
- Identify ways the Trustees can support staff through Board committees and other volunteer activities.

### Fundraising & Donor Relations

- Strengthen the foundation of the Observatory through effective fundraising.
- Build and execute, with the Director of Development, Development Committee, and Development team, a strong development plan, targeting annual increases in funding. The ED is a key member of the Development team and will serve as the liaison with MWOBS' most significant donors.
- Cultivate relationships with members, past donors, prospects, corporations, and universities to grow and strengthen philanthropic connections.
- Lead the Development team to identify and visit prospective donors, establish and maintain relationships with donors and corporate partnerships, and finalize major gifts.

- Lead the Development team to seek grant opportunities, develop grant proposals, and execute grant projects successfully.

### **Outreach and Public Relations**

- Serve as the public face of MWOBS in advocating and promoting to the public the mission and goals of the organization as well as the history and culture of MWOBS.
- Represent MWOBS at all times, engaging with outside organizations, including potential partners and funders.
- Build relationships and seek to advance MWOBS and its mission to the local community and broader constituencies.
- Work to increase visibility of MWOBS, both within the Mount Washington valley and beyond, specifically in large metro areas which will be key to the continued growth of the organization.

### **Financial Management**

- Monitor and direct finances to ensure adherence to budget.
- Offer oversight for financial reporting, audits, and proper accounting procedures.

### **Evaluation**

- The Executive Director will receive regular feedback from the Board leadership including a formal annual review. The performance of the ED will be evaluated based on progress toward strategic plan goals.

## **Candidate Profile**

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### **Required Knowledge, Skills, and Qualifications**

- Significant experience working in a small- to mid-sized nonprofit organization. Prefer several years of experience as Executive Director, reporting directly to the Board of Trustees.
- Track record of establishing effective partnerships with nonprofit Boards.
- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree in nonprofit management preferred.
- Experience successfully contributing to the development of strategic plans and then managing their implementation.
- Proven success in development, including donor relations, major gifts, campaigns, and execution of development plans.
- Grant writing experience is highly desired.
- Experience establishing and working within budgets.
- Ability to analyze and interpret contracts, leases, technical procedures, and pertinent government regulations.
- Demonstrated ability to achieve results through others; highly skilled at building cohesive teams that support the organization's mission.
- Ability to identify and develop staff talents, looking for and capitalizing on opportunities to motivate, celebrate, and reward successful performance; ability to proactively pinpoint and address talent gaps.

- Excellent organization, planning, and administrative skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects from the conceptual stage through completion; ability to align resources appropriately while maintaining the flexibility to manage changes to projects as necessary.
- Ability to use common computer software and special applications software necessary to perform the job.
- Interest and/or passion for scientific education and ability to translate science to the public; familiarity with atmospheric science.
- An interest in the outdoors and weather, especially extreme weather of the type found on Mount Washington, is desirable.

## Key Executive Competencies and Desired Personal Qualities

- Relationship building, influence, and collaboration competencies; ability to forge strong relationships with a variety of stakeholders to accomplish goals.
- Ability to identify, navigate, and maintain important and occasionally complex long-term public and private relationships.
- Excellent communication, public relations, and negotiation skills that include active listening and emotional intelligence; skilled at listening to others, understanding their needs and collaborating to create solutions.
- Excels in nonprofit leadership and administration, particularly a nonprofit with complex funding sources and operations.
- Ability to learn and oversee scientific research, education, and other activities.
- Creative problem-solving ability; ability to think outside the box and investigate many sources to find a solution that is practical and effective.
- Ability to make sound judgments and decisions.

## Compensation

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

## To Apply

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To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (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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## Additional Information

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