

Executive Director

Opportunity Guide



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



Our Agency, Mission, and Vision

Our Agency

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is an award-winning government agency 20 miles west of Chicago. It manages 26,000 acres of prairies, wetlands, and woodlands that are home to over 1,200 species of native plants and animals. Each year more than 5.9 million people visit its 60 forest preserves, 175 miles of trails, 30 lakes, seven education centers, and three golf courses.

The District's \$151 million budget includes a \$51.8 million operating budget that supports the agency's mission and vision and is primarily funded by local real estate taxes.

In 2024 a referendum to increase the agency's property tax levy passed with 63% voter support. This increase along with the fiscal year 2025 issuance of bonds enables the agency to pursue the completion of the Board of Commissioner's adopted master plan, acquire additional property, and fund mission-aligned operations.

Our Mission

To acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, and associated plant communities or lands capable of being restored to such natural conditions for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of its citizens

Our Vision

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is a nationally recognized conservation agency that envisions a community in which all citizens share a connection with nature and an appreciation for cultural history.





Our Guiding Principles

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Stewardship

The District serves as a responsible steward of the financial and natural resources that have been entrusted to it by the citizens of DuPage County. We adhere to the principle of excellence in all we do and our actions are guided by a basic respect for nature, one another, and the communities we serve.

Sustainability

The District values sustainability from an organizational and environmental perspective. To ensure its long-term ability to continue its mission, the District is guided by a commitment to financial and operational sustainability. The District is also committed to the responsible and sustainable preservation and use of the natural lands, waterways, and plant and animal life under its protection for current and future generations.

Community Engagement

We strive to continuously engage the communities and individuals we serve in an ongoing dialogue and partnership to improve our relationships and foster greater trust and collaboration around common goals.

Innovation

As a leader in our field we seek innovative ways to integrate new technology, engage our public, respond to changing needs, and advance our mission and vision.

Empowerment

We will provide a supportive working environment that respects and relies upon each individual's expertise, skills, and diversity while encouraging teamwork, creativity, and professional development.

Diversity and Inclusion

We seek to honor and represent the growing diversity within our community through our practices, programs and services, communications, and commitment to accessibility to our preserves.





The Opportunity: Executive Director

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's Board of Commissioners is seeking an experienced, creative, politically savvy, mission-driven senior executive to serve as the agency's full-time executive director. This position supervises senior management and reports to the paid, partisan, publicly elected seven-member board. It also ensures the Forest Preserve District sustains its reputation as a model agency in Illinois and throughout the region and country.

The ideal candidate will be a self-confident and effective leader, communicator, and administrator with an intrinsic passion for conservation and the mission of the Forest Preserve District. This individual is expected to take a strong role in continuing and advancing a culture within the District that all stakeholders perceive as service-oriented, fiscally responsible, and ethically accountable.





Performance Objectives

General Leadership and Staff Management

Identify, develop, and implement measurable objectives, strategies, budgets, funding strategies, and timelines.

Ensure programs support the Forest Preserve District's goals and its mission of conservation, education, and recreation.

Promote an organizational culture that sustains a motivated climate for staff, commissioners, and external partners.

Guide the hiring, promotion, evaluation, and discipline of Forest Preserve District employees and develop and maintain a productive and cohesive staff with the professional and technical expertise needed to oversee programs and operations.

Serve as an advocate for staff while balancing staff needs with agency and public demands.

Financial Management

Manage the Forest Preserve District's financial resources in a responsible, ethical manner.

Guide the development of annual operating and capital budgets, including budgets for long- and short-range capital improvements, and present and defend the budget to the board.

Ensure the board is able to make informed decisions by providing timely financial updates.

Monitor budget-related reports and statements and revise strategies as needed to ensure departments meet assigned objectives.

Board of Commissioners Relations

Communicate effectively and promptly with commissioners individually and collectively and serve as the chief liaison between staff, the board, and the public.

Guide the preparation of meeting agendas and attend all board meetings.

Guide the execution of ordinances and resolutions, pertinent state and federal laws, and policies of the board.

Maintain a positive, productive relationship among the board, partner organizations, and volunteers.

Community and Volunteer Relations and External Management

Oversee and participate in Forest Preserve District efforts to maintain and enhance its public relations image with employees, commissioners, and the public.

Ensure the Forest Preserve District maintains a viable and relevant volunteer program that engages constituents with varied interests.

Continue and advance communications to ensure citizens have confidence in the Forest Preserve District and its stewardship of tax dollars.

Make public appearances and speeches and represent the Forest Preserve District through the media.





The Qualified Candidate and How to Apply

The Qualified Candidate

Minimum eight years of progressive leadership and management experience at a government, public, nonprofit, or corporate agency of similar size and scope and a demonstrated ability to manage staff

Understanding and ability to communicate and enforce governmental administrative and budget-related practices and procedures

Proven track record in financial management, budget preparation and management, purchasing and contracts, and revenue-increasing strategies

Ability to communicate and build strong relationships with diverse interest groups such as staff, volunteers, elected officials, partner organizations, and the general public

Understanding and ability to follow local, state, and federal legislation and regulations relating to forest preserves and land preservation and conservation in general

Ability to advocate for the preservation of natural resources and issues affecting DuPage County, the Forest Preserve District, and county residents

Ability to develop, plan, and administer programs to achieve agency objectives

Change-management experience and conflict-resolution skills

Proven success in building strong and productive teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development

Effective written and verbal communication skills and strong public speaking and presentation skills

Compensation and Benefits

The starting salary range for this position is \$195,000 to \$235,000. The Forest Preserve District offers a competitive benefits program, including participation in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, medical and dental insurance, life insurance, paid leave programs, and additional voluntary benefits.

To Apply

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other legally protected categories.

To apply, a candidate should submit a cover letter, resume, and digital application through the online employment portal. A link to the portal is online at dupageforest.org/get-involved/work-with-us.

To ensure confidential tracking of all applications, inquiries will not be accepted by phone or email. The deadline to apply is April 17, 2026.

