

Executive Director

Opportunity Guide



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



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Our Agency

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is an award-winning government agency 20 miles west of Chicago. The agency manages 26,000 acres of prairies, wetlands and woodlands, which are home to over 1,200 species of native plants and animals. It operates trails, picnic areas, fishing lakes, six education centers and other amenities for over 4 million visitors annually.

For over 100 years it has helped to improve the overall quality of life for DuPage County residents, which today number almost 1 million. Its nearly \$39 million annual operating budget is primarily funded by local real estate taxes and supports the agency's mission and vision.

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

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, 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 in our practices, programs & services, communications and the accessibility of our preserves.





The Opportunity: Executive Director

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's Board of Commissioners is seeking a creative, politically savvy, and mission-driven professional to serve as the agency's full-time executive director. This position supervises senior management and reports to a seven-member paid, publicly elected, partisan board of commissioners.

The board seeks an experienced, self-confident senior executive accustomed to exercising leadership and working with individuals and agencies. The ideal candidate will be

an effective leader, communicator and administrator with an intrinsic passion for conservation and the mission of the Forest Preserve District.

The executive director will ensure that the Forest Preserve sustains its reputation as the model agency in Illinois and throughout the region and country. This individual is expected to take a strong role in continuing and advancing a culture within the Forest Preserve 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 plans 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 the nearly \$39 million annual operating budget, including budgets for long- and short-range capital improvements, and present and defend the budget to the board.

Ensure that 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 offices meet assigned objectives.

Commissioner 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 the Forest Preserve District's efforts to 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 of eight years of progressive leadership and management experience at a government, public, nonprofit or corporate agency of similar scope and a documented 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 of and ability to follow local, state, and federal legislation and regulations relating to forest preserves and 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

How 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 occupationally irrelevant criteria.

To ensure confidential tracking of all applicants, resumes and inquiries will not be accepted via email or phone. The search will be led by Daniel Hebreard, Ed Stevenson and Janet Van Haren.

For a link to our online application, visit dupageforest.org/get-involved/work-for-us.