THE FOLK SCHOOL
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Executive Director

Full time staff position: Salary, 40 hours per week
Location: Fairbanks, Alaska
Application Deadline: Open until filled
Start date: Immediately, with flexibility for the right candidate.

About The Folk School

The Folk School's mission is to perpetuate the joy of hands-on learning, with an emphasis on place and community. We work with community instructors to offer classes and programs for all ages in traditional crafts, woodworking, outdoor skills, and hands-on arts and sciences. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization primarily serving the greater Fairbanks community and the Tanana Valley.

As a small organization, we value collaboration, self-motivation, and adaptability. Our work culture is built on transparency in communication, strong relationships, and mutual trust, creating a supportive atmosphere where everyone contributes to our shared mission.

Please visit https://folk.school/ or find us on Instagram and Facebook to learn more!

Position Overview

The Folk School seeks an inspiring, passionate and curious leader who is forward-thinking and values relationship building to lead this dynamic organization. Our next Executive Director will be responsible for building upon recently implemented systems and structural improvements, while leading a talented and dedicated staff in the continued modernization of daily operations. The Executive Director serves as the chief administrative officer of The Folk School, overseeing strategic direction, operations, finances, and community relations. They report to the Board of Directors and lead staff, instructors, volunteers, and the community to achieve the mission, sustain growth, and expand impact. The strongest candidates will possess a passion for lifelong learning, community-building, folk education, and environmental stewardship. This is a full time 40-hour per week position.

Key Responsibilities

Organizational Leadership & Strategy

- Guide the organization in alignment with The Folk School's mission and vision, fostering an inclusive community.
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop and implement sustainable strategic initiatives.
- Lead the organization in the continued modernization of systems and operational structures.
- Lead a team to develop a long-term plan for the Folk School's growth and future location.
- Inspire and motivate staff, instructors, volunteers, and participants to build a vibrant, resilient, mission-driven organization.

Board Relations and Governance

- Partner with the Board of Directors in maintaining the vision and uphold the values of The Folk School.

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, attending meetings, providing organizational updates, and supporting informed discussion and decision-making .
- Support effective governance, Board engagement, and development.
- Provide timely and transparent reporting on organizational performance and strategic initiatives.

Financial Management

- Develop and manage the annual operating budget.
- Ensure sound financial practices, accurate reporting, and long-term sustainability.
- Align financial planning with strategic priorities and capital investments.

Fundraising

- Develop and lead an earned revenue strategy that strengthens and sustains the school's long term viability.
- Plan and lead annual fundraising efforts.
- Pursue grant opportunities, write proposals, secure sustained, long-term funding, track grant requirements and expenditures, and ensure timely reporting.
- Cultivate, solicit and steward major donors and strategic philanthropic partners.

Staff Leadership & Organizational Culture

- Lead a team of 4 staff members and a program fellow in daily administrative tasks and operations, workshop management, program coordination and execution, and community engagement.
- Recruit, develop and retain a strong, effective team.
- Support professional development, collaboration, and opportunities for staff growth.
- Foster an inclusive, creative, curious and resilient workplace culture that perpetuates joy.
- Align staffing structure and systems to support organizational growth.

Program & Instructor Development

- Oversee educational experiences; championing the values that inspire learning, connection, and stewardship.
- Collaborate with the Programs Coordinator on program management, development, and expanding offerings as capacity allows.
- Create and sustain instructor development opportunities that strengthen teaching skills, expand program offerings and support program quality.

Community Outreach & Involvement

- Serve as the primary spokesperson and ambassador of The Folk School.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with partners, public agencies, donors, and community stakeholders.
- Work closely with and guide the Community Engagement Coordinator in developing communications, outreach and public relations strategies.
- Lead the effort to expand local involvement to better reflect the community served by The Folk School.
- Engage in the national and international folk school community through participation in the Folk School Alliance and other relevant networks.

Other Duties

- Support instructors and classes as needed, including classroom and event setup.
- Maintain a friendly, welcoming office presence.
- Coordinate with appropriate agencies on building maintenance, develop cleaning schedules, and oversee facility upkeep.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications & Technical Competencies

Education & Experience

- Preferred 5 years experience in a directorial role or similar capacity.
- Experience building relationships with donors, community partners, and boards of directors.
- Strong financial management, operational, and organizational leadership skills.
- A post-secondary degree in a related field or equivalent experience.
- Experience in the nonprofit sector, especially in the area of arts and culture.

Skills & Abilities

- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to convey information clearly and effectively.
- Proficiency with spreadsheets, databases, and financial reporting tools; experience with QuickBooks or similar accounting software preferred.
- Experience with or ability to learn organizational software, including Google Workspace, Keela (CRM), Ramp (spending and expense management), and Sawyer (class registration), Canva (graphic design), Mailchimp (email marketing), and WordPress (website management).

Schedule & Environment

Staff at The Folk School work customizable schedules with an emphasis on afternoon, evening, and weekend work to support classes & events. The primary work location is The Folk School Cabin and Workshop. There is a mix of in-person, on-site, hybrid, and remote work. Please note: The Folk School currently occupies a historic building that is not ADA compliant.

Compensation and Benefits

- Annual salary of $68,000–78,000, depending on experience.
- 10 days of paid leave, the Executive Director is strongly encouraged to take five consecutive days.
- Seven paid holidays.
- Paid sick leave.
- $250 monthly health care stipend.
- Paid attendance at select Folk School classes and a staff discount on all classes.
- Reimbursement for approved travel expenses.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Preferential staff consignment rates.
- Opportunity to work in a creative, upbeat environment with flexible scheduling.

Application Process

To apply, email a cover letter, resume, and three professional references in PDF format to president@folk.school with the email subject line: Executive Director.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and qualified candidates will be considered until the position is filled.