

Executive Director Optimist International



St. Louis, Missouri, USA

About Optimist International

Optimist International is a global volunteer organization focused on providing hope and positive vision to “bring out the best” in youth, communities, and Optimist members. The organization is comprised of over 70,000 adult and youth members in 2,200 Optimist Clubs and 600 Junior Optimist Clubs in 28 nations. For more than 100 years, Optimist International has continued to provide this positive focus and impact on communities throughout the world. Today, Optimists conduct thousands of service projects annually in the areas of youth scholarship competitions, youth leadership development, youth sports, and childhood health and wellness. In addition, local Optimist Clubs conduct a variety of other community and youth programs. (For more information, including accessing The Optimist Creed, go to www.optimist.org.)

Optimist International is a 501(c)(4) corporation and is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. At the corporate office, over 20 dedicated professional staff members—with expertise in a variety of fields—administer the affairs of the organization and provide service to Optimist Clubs as well as individual members. In particular, the professional staff works to implement the policies established by the organization's volunteer officers and directors. In addition, Optimist International works closely with the Optimist International Foundation, which is a 501(c)(3) corporation, and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, which is a Canadian charity.

Position Summary

The Executive Director of Optimist International serves as the corporation's Chief Operating Officer, Secretary, and Treasurer. In these capacities, the Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Optimist International as well as for the supervision of the professional staff, the implementation of Board policies, the preservation of official corporate records, and the safekeeping of all funds held by Optimist International. As the principal professional employed by Optimist International, the Executive Director is directly accountable to the International President and Board of Directors. Working in concert with the organization's volunteer officers and directors, the Executive Director provides guidance to the Board of Directors regarding the adoption of short and long-range strategies for the worldwide growth and fiscal stability of the organization. In addition, the Executive Director is responsible for engaging Optimist Clubs and members in the organization's signature service programs as well as in the development of volunteer and professional leaders. The Executive Director also leads efforts to develop and implement innovative ways to raise the profile of the Optimist brand at the local and global levels.

Long-Term Objectives

1. To improve the delivery and the value of the services provided by Optimist International to the local clubs and members.
2. To increase the awareness of the mission and ideas of Optimist International and to promote an increase in membership, global expansion, and enhancement of service to children and communities around the world.
3. To strengthen and expand the financial resources of Optimist International.
4. To strengthen organizational governance and administrative functionality of Optimist International.

Current Climate

The well-respected Executive Director of Optimist International has announced his retirement after more than 15 years of dedicated service. The Optimist International organization has an incredible history of service to youth and communities in 28 nations around the globe. Similar to other service club organizations, Optimist International has been challenged by a decline in membership that has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the pandemic has provided the organization with new opportunities to continue its historic youth programs and other events using modern technology. As Optimist International moves forward, it seeks a proven consensus builder who can help drive innovation while respecting the organization's rich heritage.

Candidate Profile

With a July 1, 2021 anticipated start date, Optimist International is seeking an executive-level leader whose experience includes success in planning, organizing, supervising, motivating, directing, and charting an innovative path forward of a volunteer or similar organization. The successful candidate should have servant- leadership skills, good communication abilities, and the ability to work in partnership with volunteer leaders. This person should have demonstrated success in bringing together—and collaborating with—diverse constituents who share a common mission and values. In cooperation with the Board of Directors, the new Executive Director will be responsible for making recommendations to develop and implement goals for the success of the organization in a transparent and highly participatory manner. Although experience in an international volunteer organization is not required, familiarity with the service club industry and experience in international relations would be highly advantageous.

The successful candidate must possess the ability to serve and collaborate with the organization's volunteer leadership. At the same time, this person should be able to create a solid internal management structure and supervise the professional staff to ensure that the strategic objectives are appropriately implemented. In supervising the staff, the Executive Director should have the skill to effectively delegate, encourage professional development, and be confident in his or her decision-making abilities. The successful candidate should also possess a high understanding of the business, financial, and risk management issues that impact not-for-profit organizations. In addition, this person should have experience in continuous process improvement and increasing operational efficiencies. Ultimately, the successful candidate should demonstrate ability to raise awareness of the Optimist mission, the promotion of Optimist programs, and the ability to build relationships with businesses or other groups that share the Optimist vision of providing service to youth and communities.

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required. In addition, the successful candidate should have 5+ years of experience in management of a volunteer organization, association, or similar entity at the state, provincial, national or international levels. Continuing professional education or accreditation in a professional field is highly desirable with preference for Management, Marketing, Finance, Fund Raising, and/or Risk Management emphasis. English language proficiency is required and the ability to communicate in a second language would be advantageous (with priority on French, followed by Spanish).

Functions

1. Corporate Secretary/Treasurer and Board Liaison

- Performs all corporate duties required by federal, state, and local laws.
- Executes policies, plans, financial affairs and other duties as determined by the Board of Directors.
- Utilizes and coordinates the collective experience and resources available through the

Board of Directors.

2. Planning and Development

- In concert with the International President, Board of Directors, and the senior staff, the Executive Director will provide leadership in establishing a system-wide planning process which produces short and long-range goals and objectives for implementation.
- Directs and implements approved strategies and plans that will result in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization.
- Proposes financially sound budgets to implement the goals and policies of the organization.

3. Organization Growth

- Advises the International President and Board of Directors regarding growth strategies for Optimist International and Junior Optimist International.
- Oversees the implementation and evaluation of programs, strategies, policies, and activities targeted to grow the organization within North America and internationally.

4. Fiscal Responsibilities

- Under the guidance of the Board of Directors, oversees the development of operating and capital expenditure budgets as well as facility management and planning for future needs.
- Develops and implements action plans as needed to improve financial performance and cost effectiveness.
- Working with the Optimist International Foundation and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation, identifies, cultivates, and seeks out partnerships, major donations, and planned gifts with foundations, corporations, organizations, and individuals who share the Optimist vision.

5. Organization

- Performs all duties in compliance with the Bylaws and policies of Optimist International and ensures that the staff members under his or her supervision do likewise.
- Provides administrative leadership to personnel in carrying out the goals, policies, and objectives of Optimist International.
- Develops and maintains a sound plan of organization to ensure the productivity of the professional staff and to maintain morale at high levels.
- Creates a succession plan for senior staff positions.

6. Operations and Programs

- Provides administrative direction over business operations, volunteer coordination, and programs.
- Oversees all day-to-day activities and participates in significant decisions in consultation with the International President.
- Ensures that the policies, procedures, and methods adopted by the Board of Directors or required by law are implemented.

7. Communications, Marketing and Public Relations

- Oversees the publication of *The Optimist* magazine and other materials distributed by or under the name of Optimist International.
- In concert with the International President, creates or oversees the distribution of all communications, marketing, and public relation efforts of Optimist International.
- Maintains relationships with volunteer leaders, local Optimist Clubs, community leaders,

volunteer organizations, government officials, and other appropriate constituencies to establish goodwill and to share the Optimist story.

Requirements, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Bachelor's degree plus 5 years of relevant experience
- Demonstrated ability to work with a Board of Directors and volunteer leaders
- Ability to successfully manage staff members to achieve the goals established by the Board of Directors
- Experience in the implementation of policies and procedures related to Board, staff, and facilities
- Effective team building and 360-degree leadership skills
- Demonstrated ability to develop and manage sound fiscal budgets
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Public speaking and training experience
- Optimistic philosophy and demonstrated ability in listening to diverse individuals and groups
- Ability to make rational decisions and offer sound advise
- Successful team-building skills
- Experience in conflict or alternative dispute resolution
- Ability to lead organization to make positive changes while respecting history
- Knowledge of insurance and risk management issues
- Ability to use and promote technology
- Experience in leading the process of ongoing strategic planning and implementing the plans adopted by the Board of Directors
- Ability to maintain daily office hours at St. Louis headquarters
- Valid passport and ability to travel internationally
- Proper credentials to legally work in the United States of America

Benefits

- Competitive Salary in accordance with background and experience
- Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, and 401(k) Retirement Plan
- Travel and expense reimbursement
- Moving Expenses

Travel

The Executive Director of Optimist International is frequently required to attend meetings, conferences, and other events that may be held outside of metropolitan St. Louis. When travel is required, Optimist International will reimburse the Executive Director for reasonable expenses. Once current COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, it is estimated that the Executive Director will likely travel approximately 30 to 40 days per year to various locations in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. On occasion, additional international travel may be required.

Diversity and Inclusion

Consistent with the organization's mission, Optimist International is committed to creating a diverse environment and is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment. Optimist International is also committed to complying with fair employment practices regarding citizenship and immigration status as mandated by the laws of the United States. Optimist International and its members are committed to providing services to local communities to help build a just and equitable world as well as to turning our positive vision into reality.

Application Process

Questions should be directed to Don Harkins, Senior Search Consultant, The Moran Company:
don@morancompany.com

To apply for this position, submit resume and cover letter to Don Harkins, The Moran Company.
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