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LEO Executive Director

Job Description and Application Information

The Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) is a research center dedicated to reducing poverty and improving lives in the United States through evidence-based programs and policies.

Founded as a research center in the Department of Economics at the University of Notre Dame just five years ago, LEO has quickly risen to prominence as a leader in evidence-based interventions against poverty. Since our founding five years ago, LEO has:

- Attracted over \$25 million in endowed gifts in support of our mission.
- Secured research funding and support from private foundations and government sources.
- Launched 25 active projects, with dozens more in the project pipeline.
- Published in leading peer-reviewed journals.
- Grown to eleven full-time employees.
- Forged partnerships with some of the most innovative providers of services to people living in poverty across the country.
- Developed an extensive nationwide network of faculty affiliates.

In the next five years, we plan to grow significantly: doubling our project portfolio, opening a second office in a major metropolitan area, and continuing to strengthen LEO's reputation as the gold standard of research in this area. We are looking for an Executive Director who will help lead the organization through this significant expansion.

We are seeking someone to:

- **Champion** LEO's approach: why it's unique and why the mission is integral in the fight against poverty.
- **Communicate** LEO's work to a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, including service providers to the poor, funders, policymakers, and the academic community.
- **Manage** a diverse (in both geography and responsibility) team responsible for research, field operations, fundraising and administration.
- **Lead** LEO's pursuit of its strategic goals, and help drive its strategy going forward.

Areas of Responsibility and Tasks:

The Executive Director will provide strategic and operational support for LEO's staff, programs, and the expansion and execution of its mission. This a senior leadership role that will suit a person who is passionate about reducing domestic poverty and improving lives, intellectually curious, possesses outstanding organizational and communication skills, and enjoys working with a highly skilled team in an energetic, innovative, and collegial environment.

Specifically, the Executive Director will be responsible for:

Strategic Leadership & Management:

- Work with LEO's co-founders to develop and implement the short- and long-term strategies required to achieve LEO's long-term vision.
- Provide strategic and operational leadership for LEO's team.

Fundraising:

- Collaborate with the Director of Academic Advancement for the College of Arts & Letters and the Dean of the College of Arts & Letters to outline critical fundraising priorities for LEO.
- Work with leadership of Notre Dame's Department of Development to outline strategic cultivation strategies with organizations (foundations and corporations) and individual benefactors to cultivate philanthropy. The Department of Development will be responsible for direct solicitation management of cultivation strategies, working closely with the Executive Director.
- Lead the LEO team in stewarding significant benefactors and communicating gratitude and impact.

Outreach & Communications:

- Serve as LEO's primary spokesperson to the organization's constituents, the media, and the general public.
- Oversee LEO's marketing and communication efforts. Help design and execute an effective communication strategy with a focus on building LEO's brand awareness among key constituents: service providers, academic researchers, and policymakers.
- Oversee LEO's project development efforts, ensuring LEO's strategies in this area drive expansion in LEO's project portfolio.
- Meet with and build relationships with key partners in governments, foundations, and the nonprofit sector.

Operations & Fiscal Management:

- Oversee the development and execution of LEO's operating budget and financial reporting. Monitor LEO's financial performance and viability.
- Hire, train, and manage LEO staff. Recruit, supervise, and manage the senior management who handle LEO's day-to-day operations, communications, financial planning, and administration. Help create and maintain our passionate work culture that emphasizes academic rigor, care for vulnerable populations, and work-life balance.
- Coach and mentor LEO's staff.

Research Operations

- Oversee the infrastructure through which researchers run rigorous impact evaluations.
- Build relationships with LEO's national faculty network, serving as a resource for those who are interested in conducting randomized evaluations and in matching researchers and providers.

Qualifications:

All candidates should have proven leadership, coaching, and relationship management experience.

Experience: Seven or more years of relevant management experience working in a research organization, the nonprofit sector, policy/government, or other related fields dedicated to mission. The ideal candidate for this position will be very knowledgeable about domestic poverty alleviation efforts, growing organizations, and academic research.

Communication: Advanced writing and presentation skills for communicating research findings in ways that service providers, policymakers, and potential benefactors understand. This requires clear, precise, non-technical writing, and confident, effective public speaking skills.

Strong management skills: Experience hiring, training, and managing employees. Ability to manage multiple projects and both internal and external stakeholders. Strong self-motivation with skill in working under tight timelines. Must be an excellent team player with experience in managing a large number of very talented staff.

Education: Master's degree or higher in economics, public policy or a closely related field. Candidates possessing a Ph.D. in economics, public policy or a closely related field are encouraged to apply. An ability to understand and effectively communicate research findings and knowledge of impact evaluations is essential.

Willingness to travel to meet with service providers, funders, policy makers, and members of our team.

This position will be based at the University of Notre Dame, but we are considering opening a satellite office in Washington D.C.

Application Information:

For more information about LEO, please visit www.leo.nd.edu. For questions, please contact Katie Kuka at kkuka@nd.edu.

Apply for this position [here](#).