opportunity council

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPORTS TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANNUAL BUDGET: $70M

TOTAL STAFF: 450

SALARY: $245,000 - $295,000 depending on qualifications

Apply now



THE ORGANIZATION

The mission of Opportunity Council is to help people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.



Values

At Opportunity Council, our values guide everything we do. Collaboration, respect, integrity, passion, and learning shape how we show up for each other and for our community. We're also committed to weaving our values into every part of our work, from the help we offer in the community to the kind of workplace we create for our staff.

Promise

We are one agency in a nationwide network of Community Action Agencies, created in 1965 to combat poverty in partnership with others. We believe Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Culture

For over 60 years, Opportunity Council (OC) has worked across Northwest Washington to build more just and equitable communities through service, investment, and collaboration. Headquartered in Bellingham, WA, OC is a private, nonprofit Community Action Agency serving Whatcom, Island, and San Juan Counties as its primary region. Through Community Resource Centers in Bellingham, East Whatcom county, and Oak Harbor, we connect people to programs and resources that support stability and opportunity. In addition, OC extends select services to other counties and statewide.

Opportunity Council's culture is deeply mission-driven, compassionate, and grounded in service to the community. Staff are passionate and empathetic, with a shared commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve. The culture reflects dedication, high-quality work, humility, and a strong focus on collective impact rather than individual recognition.

The organization's significant growth in recent years has created both opportunity and complexity. As a multi-program, multi-county agency, Opportunity Council is working to strengthen cohesion, align systems and practices, and build even greater connection across teams and locations.

PROGRAMS

For over 60 years, Opportunity Council (OC) has worked across Northwest Washington to build more just and equitable communities through service, investment, and collaboration. Headquartered in Bellingham, WA, OC is a private, nonprofit Community Action Agency serving Whatcom, Island, and San Juan Counties as its primary region. Through Community Resource Centers in Bellingham, East Whatcom county, and Oak Harbor, we connect people to programs and resources that support stability and opportunity. In addition, OC extends select services to other counties and statewide.

Housing & Homelessness
By matching available homes with the people who need them; managing supportive housing programs; working with landlords and property management firms; and weatherizing, repairing and building housing, we work toward our goal of housing stability for everyone.

Children & Families
With quality early childhood programs that set the foundation for healthy brain development; a commitment to supporting and investing in childcare providers; and family support services that begin with pregnancy, we make sure children get the start in life they deserve.

Basic Needs
When times are tough, we can help qualifying individuals and families in need make ends meet by helping with utility bills, paying rent, food, childcare, school supplies and more.

Job Skills & Financial Well-Being
Through employment support, financial literacy classes and more, people gain the tools they need to build the lives they've dreamed of.

Individual & Community Health
Reducing the impacts of climate change and making sure everyone has access to healthcare, nutritious food, and a safe and healthy home are all key to a vibrant, thriving community.

THE COMMUNITY

Opportunity Council is headquarted in the vibrant community of Bellingham, Washington. Bellingham, with its population of 99,000, marries local industry with the dynamic atmosphere of a college town. The city is adorned with breathtaking landscapes, offering a wide variety of outdoor activities, and is home to esteemed institutions like Western Washington University. Additionally, its strategic location near the Alaska Ferry, the Canadian border, majestic Mount Baker, and the serene Salish Sea adds to its allure.



Whatcom County offers a temperate climate and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, including skiing, hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, and paddleboarding. It is also home to a growing and increasingly diverse population, with strong schools and family resources that make it a welcoming place to put down roots.

The rural landscape outside of Bellingham is punctuated by fertile farmlands and bustling farmers markets, where local produce finds its way onto restaurant menus and into the hands of farm-to-table enthusiasts. The Bellingham Farmers Market is known for attracting large crowds to shop the 100 vendors that sell local produce and goods.

The county also boasts a thriving arts scene, featuring a local symphony orchestra, regular art walks, studio tours, and well-established performing arts centers, including those at Western Washington University and the historic Mount Baker Theatre.

Furthermore, the proximity to urban hubs such as Seattle, just 90 miles to the south, and Vancouver, B.C., 60 miles to the north, ensures easy access to the amenities and cultural offerings of city life.

POSITION SUMMARY & PURPOSE

The Executive Director is responsible for overall leadership and management of Opportunity Council, ensuring the implementation of the mission of the organization and the strategic plans approved by the Board of Directors.



Strategic Vision and Leadership

- Collaborates with the board and staff to refine and implement the strategic plan while ensuring that the budget, staff and priorities are aligned with Opportunity Council's core mission.
- Provides inspirational leadership and direction to all executives, and ensures the continued development and management of a professional and efficient organization; establishes effective decision-making processes that will enable Opportunity Council to achieve its long- and short-term goals and objectives
- Cultivates a strong and transparent working relationship with the Board and ensures open communication about the measurement of financial, programmatic, and impact performance against stated milestones and goals

General Administration

- Provides agency-wide leadership and oversight for the organization and its programs, including staff and Board planning, and builds systems for fiscal accountability, program integrity, compliance, evaluation, fundraising, and fund disbursement.
- Ensures the efficient, integrated delivery of high-quality services across programs while managing for current and future growth.
- Supports and motivates the organization's staff.
- Facilitates cross-departmental collaboration and strengthens internal communications with staff throughout the organization.
- Fosters a consistent, inclusive work environment across the organization's strategy, operations, and data practices.

Development

- Leads donor and funder cultivation, ensuring funding is adequate and well-allocated to support the mission, balancing present needs with future potential.
- Provides strategic direction for the formulation and execution of comprehensive marketing, branding and development strategies that will ensure consistency throughout the organization and enhance revenue from foundations, government agencies, and corporations.

Human Resources

- Holds executive level oversight for recruitment, training, evaluation, guidance, and management of all agency personnel.
- Ensures appropriate communication channels are established throughout the agency.



Community Relations

- Serves as chief spokesperson for the agency to all outside entities, including the media, the professional community, elected officials, regulatory agencies, and volunteers.
- Oversees and participates in outreach, public relations, and community engagement efforts.
- Plays a leadership role in working with peer organizations and community partners across the region and state.
- Builds strong working relationships with city and county council members and advocates with elected officials at all levels on policies affecting people with low and marginal incomes and related constituencies.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

- High level of expertise in all facets of leading large, complex, multi-service nonprofits and/or community action agencies, including laws and regulations, standards and protocols, organization and management techniques, operational efficiency, and other industry knowledge and skills typically acquired through a combination of formal education and training and practical experience.
- Excellent coalition building skills with an ability to communicate and work effectively with a variety of internal and external stakeholders; a persuasive negotiator able to achieve consensus amongst differing opinions.
- Outstanding presentation and communication skills; an outgoing, engaging spokesperson and relationship builder with a proven ability to raise and diversify revenue.
- Strong commitment to the professional development of staff; successful track record of recruiting and retaining a diverse team.
- Knowledge of the practices of housing programs, early childhood learning, social services, and community health sufficient to understand their roles within the organization and the general social service industry at large, to communicate effectively with staff and understand how to reconcile the needs of the community with the business processes of the organization.
- Knowledge of accounting and financial analysis practices sufficient to understand financial reports and understand the impact of financial performance on the organization’s operations.
- Demonstrated commitment to the Opportunity Council’s mission, values, and community impact.
- Curiosity about emerging technology and the judgment to adopt it where it advances the mission, paired with a willingness to back staff recommendations for better systems and processes.
- Ability to frequently travel within the agency's service area for community networking, meetings, special workshops and trainings, and other job-related activities, as well as national, state and regional meetings and conferences.



SKILLS & ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- Systems thinking principles.
- Political landscapes across all levels of government.
- Trauma informed leadership.

Ability to:

- Lead with a human-centered approach that prioritizes empathy, dignity, and inclusion.
- Align strategy, structure, and operations across complex, multi-program organizations.
- Exercise sound political judgment and navigate city, county, and state governmental systems and policy environments.
- Build and sustain relationships with staff, internal leaders, elected officials, donors, funders, and partners across diverse constituencies.
- Demonstrate humility, self-awareness, and low-ego leadership.
- Maintain composure and provide steady leadership during periods of uncertainty or change.
- Prioritize initiatives and allocate resources effectively in dynamic environments.

Skilled in:

- Public speaking and advocacy, with the ability to communicate persuasively to varied audiences.
- Active listening, and synthesizing and responding thoughtfully to stakeholder input.

INITIAL EXPECTATIONS

- Listen and build trust across staff, leadership, Board, elected officials and community partners before initiating major change.
- Strengthen agency-wide cohesion, reducing silos and aligning systems, standards, and expectations across departments and locations.
- Assess program portfolio and sustainability, identifying opportunities to focus, streamline, or refine offerings.
- Stabilize and diversify funding, with emphasis on growing philanthropy and unrestricted revenue, and building the donor pipeline.
- Support workforce sustainability, including staff wellness, leadership capacity, compensation equity, and performance management consistency.



Equal Employment Opportunity

Because our work is rooted in serving diverse, low-income communities, we believe our team should reflect the people we serve. That's why we strongly encourage people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, Veterans, and people with disabilities to apply. Opportunity Council is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. We do not permit discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, marital or family status, pregnancy, military or veteran status, age, genetic information, disability, use of a service animal, or any other status protected by law.

Opportunity Council is dedicated to ensuring equal employment opportunities for all individuals and will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you require accommodation to participate in the job application or interview process, please contact The Valtas Group.



Compensation

$245,000 - $295,000 per year DOQ.

Compensation is set by the Board of Directors and reviewed annually.

Benefits

- Paid time off earned on an accrual basis (vacation, sick, personal holidays)
- Paid time off for wellness needs
- Employer-paid holidays
- Employer-paid HDHP and low-cost traditional health care options
- HSA and FSA plans, subject to plan terms
- Eligibility for critical illness insurance coverage
- 403(b) Retirement plan with employer contribution
- Eligibility for health coverage for legal dependents
- Eligibility for employee/family dental and vision coverage
- Voluntary benefits such as life insurance, long-term disability, and long-term care and personal legal services

To Be Considered

If you're excited about this opportunity but don't check every qualification listed, we still want to hear from you and we encourage you to apply.

This role will remain open until filled with a priority deadline of Nov. 30, 2026. Candidate materials are reviewed continuously and screening interviews with Valtas will begin on a rolling basis in late October. Cover letters (two pages or less and addressed to the Search Committee) and a resume can be submitted to Valtas here.

You may direct questions to Ed Rogan at ed@valtasgroup.com or Matt MacLean at matt@valtasgroup.com

Apply now