

## **Recruitment Profile**

*for the position of*

# **Executive Director**



**(• Equality Ohio • Equality Ohio Education Fund  
• Equality Ohio Action Fund)**

***Columbus, OH (preferred)***

**LEADERSHIP TRANSITION | EXECUTIVE SEARCH | BOARD ADVISORY**

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Equality Ohio</b>
<b>Reports to:</b>	<b>Board of Directors</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Columbus, OH (strongly preferred)</b>

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### ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Headquartered in Columbus with staff working in locations across the state, Equality Ohio is the largest and most prominent nonprofit advocacy organization working on behalf of LGBTQ+ Ohioans of every identity. The organization was founded in 2005 by a group of 65 dedicated LGBTQ+ activists and allies from all corners of Ohio after voters passed a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage and civil unions. Nearly two decades later, Equality Ohio's work is broad and focuses on advancing social, racial, and LGBTQ justice in Ohio.

Equality Ohio advocates on behalf of LGBTQ+ Ohioans before the state legislature, the state's executive branch, and local governments. It provides free legal services and mobilizes LGBTQ+ and allied communities on issues that matter most to them. These priorities include securing LGBTQ+ inclusive public accommodations and non-discrimination laws, modernizing the laws that criminalize living with HIV/AIDS, and advocating for parental and family rights, inclusive anti-bullying and comprehensive sex education policies, and equitable access to health care (including abortion and gender affirming care).

Today's Equality Ohio is comprised of three separate but connected nonprofit entities:

- **Equality Ohio, a 501(c)(4)** nonprofit organization that conducts lobbying and advocacy efforts and works to elect pro-equity/pro-equality candidates
- **Equality Ohio Education Fund, a 501(c)(3)** nonprofit organization that provides educational programming on LGBTQ+ issues and conducts campaigns to build public support for equal rights
- **Equality Ohio Action Fund, a PAC** that makes independent expenditures on campaigns and issues of concern

In November of 2023, with the full support of its Boards of Directors and Executive Leadership, Equality Ohio entered into its first collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Chicago and Midwest Regional Joint Board of Workers United, SEIU. Our interim leadership is working in partnership with our bargaining unit to implement the CBA and support Equality Ohio's transition to a unionized workplace.

Historically considered a purple or "swing" state, Ohio has trended more conservative in recent election cycles. In recent years though, the state has seen an uptick in attacks on LGBTQ+ rights, putting Equality Ohio at the forefront of some of the highest-profile and highest-stakes legislative battles in the country. Those battles include grappling with the veto override of anti-transgender legislation (HB 68), pending legislation banning transgender bathroom access (HB 183), and multiple state agency rule-making procedures targeting transgender Ohioans.

That said, a striking majority of Ohioans led the nation in rejecting an onslaught of anti-choice legislation by adopting a constitutional amendment to protect Ohioans' right to choose and bodily autonomy. Additionally, another constitutional amendment targeting gerrymandering is being brought for a vote with the strong support of aligned organizations and leadership from both parties.

Equality Ohio and Equality Ohio Education Fund have a combined revenue and expense budget of ~\$2.9 million in 2024 and employ a passionate and dedicated team of 20 to 25 people (including full-time and part-time staff members, interns, and contract consultants) who work remotely/hybrid/in communities across the state. Two

volunteer Boards of Directors govern Equality Ohio; one for the 501(c)(3) and one for the 501(c)(4). These Boards have a combined 13 members, representing a cross-section of Ohio's LGBTQ+, nonprofit, business, and philanthropic communities. Collectively, Equality Ohio holds a vision of an Ohio where LGBTQ+ people of all identities and experience are welcome, affirmed, and flourishing through the state.

(For more information on Equality Ohio see <https://equalityohio.org/>)

## **LOCATION**

Columbus, OH. Equality Ohio Staff work remotely throughout the state, but there is a strong preference that the Executive Director be located in Columbus with direct proximity to the Statehouse.

## **REPORTING**

Reports jointly to the Boards of Directors of Equality Ohio and Equality Ohio Education Fund. Responsible for leading and supporting a current team of 24, including the following direct reports: Director of Finance & Special Projects, Public Policy Director, Director of Development, and Director of the Legal Clinic. Additionally, the new E.D. will have the opportunity to further shape the leadership team of the organization, in collaboration with the Boards.

## **THE POSITION**

The Executive Director will assume executive leadership responsibility for Equality Ohio, Equality Ohio Education Fund, and Equality Ohio Action Fund. In partnership with Equality Ohio's Boards of Directors, the E.D. will provide strategic, administrative, and financial stewardship of the organization. They will direct organizational development, fundraising/resource development, policy/advocacy, organizing, and external relations, and will partner with internal and external stakeholders to advance Equality Ohio's mission.

In addition to supporting and advancing the Racial Justice work currently underway ([EO Racial Justice History](#)), a top priority for the new E.D. will be leading the organization in clarifying a shared and needs-aligned vision for the future, and working with Boards, staff, and key stakeholders to create and implement an updated strategic plan.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

*[NOTE: It is understood that no single candidate will have equal expertise across all these areas of responsibility. Successful candidates will demonstrate a compelling combination of many of them and the self-awareness and professional maturity to leverage existing or new resources in the area(s) where they lack personal experience.]*

### **1. Organizational Leadership & Development**

- Solidify a clear vision, strategic priorities, and shared goals for Equality Ohio's work;
- Lead and inspire all stakeholders to work collaboratively to achieve organizational goals and to advance Equality Ohio's mission;
- Provide leadership to the full adoption and implementation of Equality Ohio's newly ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement;
- Oversee the development of organizational infrastructure – including processes, systems, tools, and protocols – to maximize efficiency and support future growth.

### **2. Fundraising & Revenue Generation**

- Work with the Development Director and Development Committee to grow financial resources through expanded individual, corporate, and foundation giving, as well as special events, grants, and fee-for-service offerings;
- Personally maintain positive, personal relationships with key individual and institutional funders;
- Drive efforts to expand the organization's base of membership and financial support.

## Equality Ohio Program Highlights

### Equality Ohio Legal Clinic

In 2019, Equality Ohio opened the state's first (and still the only) legal clinic committed to providing LGBTQ+ Ohioans with legal services such as consumer law (fraud and identity theft), family law, civil rights, administrative help (such as SSI or disability) and more – completely free of charge.

The Legal Clinic provides this no-cost legal support to LGBTQ+ Ohioans with incomes at or below 300% of the Federal poverty line. Having grown exponentially since its opening, the legal team provides culturally humble and trauma-informed direct representation, referrals, and social service resources to over 700 Ohioans annually.

### Statewide Advocacy

Equality Ohio's policy team engages deeply with the state legislature and executive branch to advocate for policies that protect LGBTQ+ people, fight against policies that harm the community, and produce an annual scorecard for legislative accountability and voter education.

### Local Protections

In the absence of statewide laws, Equality Ohio supports community members and stakeholders who seek to implement policies at the local level that protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations and/or LGBTQ+ youth from conversion therapy. Today, 36 localities have full LGBTQ+ protections, and 7 protect young people from conversion therapy. For more information visit

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### **3. Legislative Advocacy**

- Continue efforts to advance social and racial justice-centered policies and legislation and build effective working relationships with policy makers;
- Work in partnership with pro-equality partners and progressive coalitions to ensure Equality Ohio's continued visibility at the capitol;
- Re-energize PAC work in support of pro-LGBTQ+, pro-choice, and racial equity campaigns and candidates;
- Support and strengthen regional organizing efforts to extend Equality Ohio's reach, community support, and mobilizing abilities in all areas of the state;
- Act as an effective, trusted public advocate and spokesperson before public bodies.

### **4. Staff Management and Support**

- Manage and support Equality Ohio staff with an emphasis on mentoring, professional development, and empowering every team member to fully utilize their skills and abilities;
- Bring an intentional and trauma-informed lens to building an environment of trust, respect, openness, and collaboration;
- Develop and implement plans for recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse, representative, and high-performing team – in particular, centering the need for greater representation of trans/nonbinary and BIPOC people at all levels of the organization;
- Develop and implement performance metrics with clear accountabilities and measures for success;
- Break down silos and encourage collaboration and relationship building between departments, and among staff, leadership, and Boards.

### **5. External Relations**

- Build strong working relationships with local, regional, and national LGBTQ+ and allied social and racial justice organizations, and work collaboratively to accomplish shared goals;
- Strengthen partnerships and build alliances with diverse partners and allies in the business, philanthropy, education, civic leadership, and policy communities;
- Act as a public advocate and media-ready spokesperson for the organization and its mission at both the local and national level.

### **6. Finance & Administrative Management**

- Provide transparent fiscal stewardship, ensuring appropriate resource utilization and the ability to operate all three Equality Ohio entities in a positive financial position;
- Work with the Finance Director and Finance Committee of the Boards to develop, approve, and manage annual revenue and expense budgets;
- Manage the organization's resources within budgeted guidelines and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

## 7. Board Relations

- Support the operations and administration of the Boards of Directors, including meeting logistics and preparation of necessary reports, documentation of Board-approved organizational policies, etc.;
- Support Board development efforts by identifying and recommending candidates who represent the full diversity of the LGBTQ+ community in Ohio, and lead and/or participate in Board training as appropriate/necessary;
- Attend all Board meetings and participate in ongoing executive and other committee calls as required.

### **CANDIDATE PROFILE:**

The new Executive Director of Equality Ohio will be an experienced, creative, and visionary leader with an established track record of creating inclusive, trusting, and values-driven cultures. They will bring a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative leadership style and be committed to building an organization that represents the people and the communities Equality Ohio seeks to serve. They should have a healing and trauma-informed approach to management, along with the ability to support and empower staff at all levels of experience and professional development. They should be empathetic, compassionate, and people-centered, and also bring the professional skills and knowledge to lead Equality Ohio to new levels of success and impact.

Candidates for this position should have a personal style that is empathetic, warm, and engaging, along with the ability to actively listen/respond to the needs of a wide range of internal and external constituents. Key to success in this role will be passion for, and expertise in, building and leveraging political power to affect positive social change for the most vulnerable individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. Regardless of professional background, a deep understanding of intersectional identities and issues (race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, etc.) in the LGBTQ+ community is essential.

### **Desired Skills and Experience (Should Have):**

- Strongly developed, cross-functional leadership experience (ideally as Executive Director/CEO or Deputy Director/COO, VP, Senior Director or similar) in a progressive nonprofit environment;
- Professional background and expertise in policy/advocacy, lobbying, electoral politics, capacity building, and/or community organizing;
- Leadership and fiscal oversight responsibility for an organization (or department) of comparable – or larger – size and complexity;
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to build and work in coalitions and to grow and maintain effective individual and institutional relationships;
- Proven track record of nonprofit fundraising, including individual giving, corporate and foundation support, grants and contracts, fee-for-service/earned revenue, and/or special events;
- Excellent people and team management skills to positively coach and mentor staff across departments and functions while also ensuring accountability for results and outcomes;
- Strong diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) lens, with the experience to lead by example in centering racial, sexual, and gender equity, as well as disability justice, in all facets of an organization;
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills including media relations, marketing, and messaging, and comfortable and credible in on-camera and print interviews;

## **Equality Ohio Program Highlights** (continued)

### **Ohio Business Competes**

OBC is a non-partisan coalition of more than 1,300 businesses, nonprofits, institutions of higher education, and more from every corner of Ohio who know that a state free of discrimination is good for Ohio's brand and economy.

### **Ohio Health Modernization Movement**

A broad coalition of more than 500 individuals and communities who are disproportionately impacted by HIV advocating to replace fear-based, stigmatizing laws that criminalize HIV-status with evidence-based, nondiscriminatory laws that protect public health.

### **Notes for Trans Joy**

Inspired by the incredible work of Transgender Law Center (TLC) and their project #LoveLettersToTransPeople, the online and live installation campaign offers our community a resource for accessing affirmation whenever needed.

For more information visit  
[equalityohio.org/our-work/](https://equalityohio.org/our-work/) (*Our Work*)

- Organizational leadership abilities including strategic planning, systems improvement, policy development and implementation, budgeting and contract management, employee relations/conflict resolution, and project management/delegation;
- Ability and willingness to travel up to 25% of the time – mostly within, but some outside, the state of Ohio.

**Supplemental Skills and Experience (Nice to Have):**

- Previous experience in a c3/c4 or c3/c4/PAC organizational structure;
- Familiarity with local, state, regional, and national LGBTQ+ or allied social racial justice advocacy movements and organizations;
- History of managing or providing direct legal services to clients;
- Deep understanding of LGBTQ+ history and current issues, and knowledge of Ohio’s political landscape;
- Existing knowledge of/connections to Equality Ohio’s partners, funders, and allied organizations;
- Experience managing remote staff and building cohesive teams in a virtual work environment;
- Previous experience leading and managing in an organization with a labor union/collective bargaining agreement;
- Experience working with a Board of Directors or similar volunteer leadership group.

**Desired Personal Qualities and Characteristics:**

- Demonstrated commitment to centering the needs of the most marginalized LGBTQ+ Ohioans, and to operating within a broader social justice framework;
- Ability to connect authentically with people at all levels of power, privilege, ability, socio-economic status, and ideologies across the political spectrum;
- Deep cultural competency and humility, in particular with queer/trans and BIPOC identities, communities, and priorities;
- High levels of self-awareness and professional maturity;
- Open and collaborative by nature but can be decisive when necessary. Not afraid to make difficult or unpopular decisions;
- Bridge builder, collaborator, and reliable partner – internally and externally;
- Able to set and respect personal and organizational boundaries (for self and others), practiced in self-care;
- Agile, flexible, and adaptable; capable of dealing with energized (often hostile) opposition and complex issues and situations;
- Patient and resilient with a sense of humor;
- Shares Equality Ohio’s **Core Values**: Dignity, Trust & Self Determination, Equity & Racial Justice, Transformation (of people, institutions, and systems), Lived & Legal Equality, Collaboration, and Passionate Commitment

**COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:**

Equality Ohio is offering a comprehensive compensation package including a starting base salary in the range of \$135,000 to \$155,000 and generous benefits. Benefits include: health and vision insurance with minimal employee contribution (\$100 per month + \$100 per month for optional family coverage); employee-paid dental insurance; generous time off package, including four (4) weeks of paid time off (vacation, sick days.), ten (10) paid holidays, plus an additional fifteen (15) days of paid organizational shutdown/break; paid Family Leave and sabbatical opportunities based on length of service; employer paid life insurance and optional employee-paid long-term disability coverage; 403-B plan with employer matching; FSA with \$25 per month employer contribution; access to a Bodily Autonomy Assistance Fund; and multiple stipend opportunities, including Bring Your Own Device, cell phone, internet, and professional development funds.

**TO APPLY:**

Inquiries, nominations, or applications (including a resume and cover letter framing interest and fit with this Recruitment Profile) can be sent in confidence to: [search@kevinchasesearch.com](mailto:search@kevinchasesearch.com). We are pleased to answer any questions or supply further information.

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of Equality Ohio. Equality Ohio is an equal opportunity employer that champions a diverse workforce and anti-racist principles and practices. KCESG and Equality Ohio do not discriminate on any basis, including sex, age, class, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, ancestry, military status, genetic information, marital status, physical or mental ability or disability, race, religion, sexual orientation; access to public benefits and/or housing voucher assistance; other sources of income that do not conflict with the fundamental values or needs of the organization; veteran status; criminal record provided the past convictions do not impact funding, the organization's values and mission, the employee's ability to perform their core job duties, and licensing requirements; or any other characteristic protected by law.

**Queer, trans, nonbinary, and/or BIPOC-identified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Kevin Chase, Managing Partner  
[Kevin@kevinchasesearch.com](mailto:Kevin@kevinchasesearch.com)  
**Kevin Chase Executive Search Group**

Roey Thorpe, Senior Strategy Consultant  
[roeythorpe@gmail.com](mailto:roeythorpe@gmail.com)  
**Strategic Support for Social Justice**

All inquiries or referrals will be held in strict confidence.

*Please note that all education, dates of employment, compensation and other information provided will be verified prior to an offer of employment.*