



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Luis, Rehema, Alisha, & Brian

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

April 25 to May 17, 2024

SALARY

\$200,000 - \$225,000

LOCATION

Hybrid with primary office in Seattle

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Opportunity Scholarship in this search.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB OPPORTUNITY

Washington State Opportunity Scholarship seeks an executive director who can share our proven success story and fuel our growth!

WSOS accelerates equitable change for historically excluded students while building the local talent pool for Washington businesses. Through a unique public-private partnership, we provide scholarships and support to under-resourced students seeking education in the state's high-demand STEM, health care, and trade fields. We know WSOS works: Opportunity Scholars graduate faster than peers, and Washington companies are eager to hire them. And yet, many students, businesses, and potential funders don't know about this transformational opportunity. The time is ripe for growth.

As our next executive director, you will create lasting impact by sharing our compelling mission across the state and generating partnerships and funds so we can serve even more Scholars with transformative scholarships and programming.

We are looking for **an accomplished and inspiring leader from any sector** who will bring:

- A passionate belief in the mission of WSOS, the students of Washington state, and education's role in economic development.
- The ability to build relationships and call others into an inspiring vision.
- Experience generating revenue to meet growth goals and confidence in asking for support.
- Diplomacy to lead a bipartisan, public-private partnership supported by many stakeholders with disparate reasons for investing in the work.
- Experience and comfort with equity and inclusion, and the ability to lead the organization in both discussion and action.
- A collaborative and empathetic leadership and mentorship style.

People who have personal experience as a first-generation, under-resourced or historically excluded student like the majority of those WSOS serves are especially encouraged to apply.



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Dylan, Nancy, CC, Analicia, Salma, Jonathan, & George

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Mission

Transform Washington state by building pathways to high-demand jobs that strengthen our communities and economy.

Vision

We envision a Washington where all residents have access to our state's best jobs, and our companies have the diverse local talent they need to innovate for the world.

The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship was created by [state statute](#) in 2011 to address workforce gaps in the sectors that drive our economy like aerospace, engineering, technology and health care. WSOS aims to connect our state's leading employers with top Washington talent by reducing barriers to education and training and facilitating entry into high-demand careers. With the generous support of private donors – matched dollar-for-dollar by the state of Washington – WSOS prepares and launches high-potential Washington students into the careers that drive our economy.

The numbers tell the story about how WSOS is changing lives:

More than

18,000

students have received nearly **\$150 million in scholarships** and other support services.

Nearly

10,000



WSOS scholarship recipients have **received degrees in high-demand fields**.

67%



of our recipients are **first-generation college students**.

About

7 in 10

are **students of color**, and all are from low- or middle-income families in Washington state.

Just 5 years into their careers, Baccalaureate Scholarship recipients typically earn:

2x



what their families made when they applied.

After 1 year in the workforce, Career & Technical Scholarship recipients typically earn:

2-3x



what their families made when they applied.

For more information about our Scholars and the demonstrated impact of our work, please visit <https://waopportunityscholarship.org/impact/>.



WSOS' EVOLVING STRUCTURE

Since its inception, WSOS has expanded from its initial mission of providing scholarships to those pursuing baccalaureate degrees in STEM and health care to supporting a much broader range of educational opportunities for Washington students. WSOS now offers scholarships not only for bachelor's degree programs but also for apprenticeships, certificate programs, associate degrees, and advanced degrees in health care. We have launched the Rural Jobs Initiative to help remove the unique barriers to higher education faced by students in the rural areas of the state. And we expanded our support beyond financial resources, ensuring that every Opportunity Scholar has access to peer and industry mentors.



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Salma & Analicia

As a result of the hard work performed by a dedicated group of staff and volunteers on these initiatives, in just the last four years, the total number of students WSOS annually serves has more than doubled, from just over 1,000 in 2020 to approximately 2,500 today. **WSOS currently has an annual operating budget of approximately \$5M and a staff of about 30 FTEs**, primarily in Seattle, with several remote staff across the state. **WSOS supports a scholarship budget of about \$18M annually.**

Given the growth of the organization in both size and complexity, we are currently positioned for an important change in our administration. Due to its unique public-private nature, WSOS by law must operate under contract with an independent program administrator, a registered nonprofit, that provides back-office support to the program. In 2023, WSOS went to the Washington State Legislature and received permission to create a new WSOS Foundation to serve as the program administrator. The WSOS Foundation will commence operations in September, and will handle finance, technology, and human resource services for WSOS. Kimber Connors, who has served as the executive director of WSOS for the past five years, will lead the Foundation, which will have its own Board of Directors. The two organizations will be distinct but collaborative; the new Foundation will support WSOS and the vision of its new executive director.

The executive director is overseen by an 11-member, Governor-appointed **Board of Directors**. The Board meets quarterly and is composed of experienced executives representing the industries that donate to and benefit from the WSOS program.

OPPORTUNITIES AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROLE

The new executive director will join WSOS at an exciting time of growth and change. Currently, WSOS can only serve about a third of eligible students with existing funds. In 2021 we set a goal to raise another \$75M by the end of 2025, and we have already secured over \$50M. One of the top priorities for the new executive director will be to close the gap. WSOS is relationship-based with intersections in state and local government, workforce development efforts, the K-12 system, and other community-based organizations, but the pandemic and rapid internal growth have detracted from relationship-building in recent years. The formation of the new WSOS Foundation will enable the next WSOS executive director to focus most of their energy on building and rebuilding external partnerships while the Foundation's executive director provides back-end support to smooth internal operations. We expect the new executive director will primarily spend their time on these key activities:

- **Sharing the compelling vision and accomplishments of WSOS** with critical stakeholders including potential funders, legislators and other state and local officials, businesses, community partners, educators, and the students themselves, all across Washington state.
- **Being a thought leader and advocate** around issues of college access, the college-to-career pipeline, and the systemic barriers and inequities that impact the Scholars whom WSOS serves.
- **Securing funding to serve more Scholars** by asking for renewed and new corporate and philanthropic support while ensuring the continued state match.
- **Both guiding and being guided by the Governor-appointed Board of Directors** in defining and implementing the strategic vision of WSOS, and in meeting the statutory requirements of this complex public-private partnership.
- **Working closely with the WSOS Foundation's executive director and the leadership team** to implement and refine the new organizational structure and support smooth operations while developing, leading, and managing a collaborative, diverse, and effective staff team.



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Daud & Navia

IDEAL CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

The primary role of the next executive director will be to inspire and build strong partnerships with communities, funders, donors, businesses, and elected representatives so we can support even more Scholars across Washington state. A passionate belief in and commitment to the mission of WSOS is required. People who have personal experience as a first-generation, under-resourced or historically excluded student like the majority of those WSOS serves are especially encouraged to apply. **The following skills and attributes will be critical for success in this role:**

- **The ability to share a compelling story** that paints an inspiring vision, tailored to diverse audiences, sectors, and communities.
- **Experience with generating revenue** to meet or exceed growth goals paired with confidence asking for philanthropic support, primarily from the corporate sector.
- **Diplomacy and maturity to lead** in a bipartisan, public-private partnership with a complex governance structure, a high-profile, Governor-appointed Board of Directors, and stakeholders with disparate interests in WSOS and its outcomes.
- **Experience and comfort with equity and inclusion work**, including an ability to lead toward shared goals in an environment where stakeholders may have differing views, experiences, and opinions on optimal approaches.
- **A skilled staff team leader who is collaborative, empathetic and inspirational** with an ability to supervise and mentor effectively.



Opportunity Scholar pictured: Kyree

WSOS's next executive director will need to work closely with leaders across the public, private, nonprofit, philanthropic and education sectors. **We are open to candidates whose primary leadership experience and professional background come from any of those spheres.** Familiarity with the issues and challenges of college access today, as well as the current employment pipeline in high-demand jobs in Washington state, is desirable.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This is a full-time, salaried position requiring a willingness to work some evenings and weekends and to travel throughout the state of Washington on a regular basis. The expected salary range is between **\$200,000 and \$225,000**, depending on qualifications and experience.

Employees are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package including generous PTO and holidays, health insurance including medical, dental, and vision, and access to a 401k retirement benefit with a 4% employer contribution.



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Tabettha, Joanna, & Aubrey

WORKPLACE STRUCTURE AND CULTURE



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Sam & Sandy

The main WSOS office is located in Seattle's Mt. Baker neighborhood. Some staff work entirely remotely in other areas of the state but most staff work on a hybrid schedule, generally working from the WSOS office two days per week. The executive director can expect to spend some time working remotely, some time in the WSOS office and the majority of their time meeting with partners in the Puget Sound and across the state.

The workplace culture at WSOS is **fast-paced, innovative, solutions-centric and equity-focused**. All are encouraged to think creatively, voice their opinions, try new things, fail quickly, evaluate, iterate and try again. We spend time investing in relationships, and we acknowledge the humanity of our Scholars, staff and partners. We intentionally build our values into everything we do at WSOS. We encourage you to visit our [Careers page](#) to learn more about our team culture and the values that guide our work.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

WSOS is committed to establishing an equitable pathway for future trade, STEM, and health care leaders. WSOS affirms the intersectionality of people’s identities. **We use an equity lens in all aspects of our work** to empower our Scholars and staff.

WSOS recognizes that socio-economic burdens and benefits are not distributed equitably. Systemic barriers of intolerance, discrimination, and social injustice are deeply rooted in history and impact our state’s historically excluded communities. We challenge ourselves and our partners to dismantle these barriers on behalf of our Scholars.



Opportunity Scholars pictured left to right: Nancy, CC, & Analicia

HOW TO APPLY

Apply here: <https://cloversearchworks.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0vl15>

Online applications only, please no email or paper submissions. You will be asked to upload a cover letter and resume. In your cover letter, please describe how your experience and skills are a fit with WSOS’ goals, mission, and vision for the future as described in this announcement.

Applications received by May 17, 2024 will be given full consideration. All applications will be acknowledged via an email receipt. Interviewing is expected to begin in June, and it is expected an offer will be made in July for a likely September start. Equal employment opportunities and diverse staffing are fundamental principles of WSOS.

► Questions regarding the **executive director role** can be directed to:

Kimber Connors, Executive Director, WSOS

kconnors@waopportunitiescholarship.org

► Questions regarding the **search process** can be directed to:

José Leonor, Search Consultant, Clover Search Works

jose@cloversearchworks.com

Schedule a time to ask questions: <https://calendly.com/jose-xe/connect>



Clover Search Works facilitates leadership searches for nonprofit organizations whose missions strengthen communities. Clover is honored to be partnering with Washington State Opportunity Scholarship in this search.