

FRANCES PERKINS CENTER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The board of directors of the Frances Perkins Center seeks a dynamic leader to guide the organization through a period of exciting expansion. The first woman to serve in a Presidential cabinet, as Secretary of Labor under Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945, Frances Perkins was a driving force behind the New Deal. The Center honors her legacy by promoting her principle that government should provide all its people with the best possible life, and by preserving and sharing with the public the place that shaped her character, the Frances Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark in Newcastle, Maine.

The Center builds partnerships with organizations and leaders in public policy, labor, women's organizations, and related fields to generate and promote creative solutions to today's social and economic problems; and teaches students of all ages about a remarkable woman whose work continues to improve the lives of ordinary Americans. The public opening of the newly restored Homestead this year coincides with unprecedented opportunities to engage learners worldwide, as the resonance of Perkins' legacy has never been greater.

As it embarks upon a new chapter of growth and increased impact, the board seeks an executive director who brings to the challenge the strength and spirit of Perkins herself: a leader who is bold but pragmatic, extraordinarily effective yet humble, highly engaging and deeply engaged in the essential work of human betterment.

Organizational Overview

When Frances Perkins died in 1965, Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz told the *New York Times*: "Every man and woman in America who works at a living wage, under safe conditions, for reasonable hours, or who is protected by unemployment insurance or social security is her debtor." Her work and legacy touch the lives of every American, yet too few recognize her name today or appreciate the model she provides for the possibilities of government working to improve lives and increase social justice. The Frances Perkins Center was established in 2009 to ensure that her legacy endures.

Since its founding, the Center has established a solid foundation of governance and financial support. It secured National Historic Landmark status for the Perkins family Homestead in Newcastle, which consists of an 1837 brick house and connected barns on 57 acres within a protected landscape of fields and forest leading down to the Damariscotta River. The organization purchased the site in 2020 and raised \$3.5 million to restore the special place Perkins always considered home.

Today, plans are underway for a state-of-the-art Education Center that will increase capacity and provide the base for expanded public programs on-site and virtually. A small welcome and exhibit center and offices in neighboring Damariscotta, Maine, support operations and feed visitors to the Homestead. Programs and events offered locally, nationally, and virtually engage noted scholars and leaders, reaching national audiences.

The Center's next steps include launching public programs that optimize the newly restored Homestead, and steadily increasing access to the land, buildings, archives and collections; growing a volunteer corps to support tours and programs for students of all ages; continuing to build relationships with mission-aligned organizations and diverse constituencies to expand the Center's programs significantly; increasing communications and marketing reach; and fostering constructive dialogue on relevant contemporary issues.

The Center has an actively engaged 12-member board of directors; and a non-governing 20-member advisory council provides opportunities to build involvement among national leaders and supporters of the Center's mission. With a current operating budget of approximately \$500,000, the Center employs three professionals full-time and engages part-time and seasonal staff.

More information about the Frances Perkins Center can be found on the website:
<https://francesperkinscenter.org/>.

Position Description

The Center's new executive director will play a prominent role partnering with the board to develop and execute a multiyear strategic plan. As a primary organizational spokesperson for the Center, the executive director will lead in sharing the story of Frances Perkins with wide and diverse audiences, and in promoting and deepening understanding of how Perkins' life, values, and legacy can contribute to a just, democratic, and sustainable future for all Americans. With the Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark as a starting point for public understanding of Frances Perkins, the executive director will work with the board of directors and community partners to articulate the key themes of Perkins' contributions to American life, including her firm belief in government as a positive force, her inspirational role as a public leader, and her commitment to working collaboratively across divides to forge public policy solutions to challenges.

The executive director will provide leadership internally and externally to build support for the mission of the Center; to ensure a sustainable financial base for its operations; to maintain the Homestead land, buildings, archives, and collections in accordance with the highest professional standards and best practices; and to develop mission-focused programs serving local, statewide, and national audiences. This individual will direct all aspects of the Center's day-to-day operations, serving as chief of staff and principal fundraiser. The director will work in partnership with the board to cultivate relationships and financial resources, while educating and energizing board members in their role as fundraisers, policymakers, and ambassadors.

Position Responsibilities

- Assume principal responsibility for fundraising, including researching and cultivating potential donors, as well as foundation and government support
- Actively participate in board meetings and help leverage the board's talents and resources
- Select, lead, mentor, supervise, and evaluate staff, interns, and volunteers
- Manage the development of capital and annual budget proposals for submission to the board
- Oversee the development and implementation of educational programs that successfully catalyze social justice action and increase awareness of current issues and the relevance of Perkins' work and how it grew from her personal experience as a lifelong member of the Newcastle, Maine community.
 - Ensure that the Center offers a high-quality visitor/participant experience in all of its activities

- Balance site-specific programs with virtual and remote programs to reach statewide and national audiences
- Build partnerships and coalitions to extend the Center’s reach and increase impact
- Implement operational plans for the Homestead, including preservation and cyclical maintenance projects, landscape management, collections care and management, and facility use
- Implement marketing and communication initiatives to build visibility for the Center and promote program participation, long-term engagement, and financial support
- Support board development including identification of promising new board members

Position Requirements

Leading the Frances Perkins Center to heightened levels of success requires a broad set of attributes and skills. Perkins vowed to “use what brains [she had] to meet problems with intelligence and courage,” essential strengths for this position. In addition, the board expects that the winning candidate will bring:

- A passion for the Center’s mission, deep appreciation for the life and work of Frances Perkins, and solid organizational leadership experience in the nonprofit sector
- Past success as the principal fundraising officer, designing fundraising programs, making individual and major gift solicitations, cultivating foundations, and developing development strategies
- A demonstrated track record of overseeing sustainable organizational growth
- A leadership style that is visionary, strategic, motivating, collaborative, and inspiring
- Experience as an effective relationship builder with the capacity to develop and maintain partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including the Homestead’s neighbors, board members, educators, donors, foundations, and elected officials
- Financial and operational acumen to grow and maintain a stable and sustainable organization including stewardship of a complex facility, budget preparation and management, analysis, decision-making, and reporting
- Strong organizational problem-solving skills, poise, and good humor under pressure
- The ability to prioritize and adapt to unexpected or changing circumstances
- Intellectual curiosity, transparency, and humility
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Understanding of the power of historic sites

This position, based in Newcastle, Maine, will require occasional travel and the ability and willingness to work weekends, evenings, and other non-traditional times.

Compensation

The compensation package includes a competitive salary of \$90,000—100,000 commensurate with experience; benefits include health insurance, holidays, paid leave, and retirement contribution. This position reports directly to the board of directors. The successful candidate can expect a formal review after six months as well as an annual review.

Nondiscrimination

The Frances Perkins Center is an equal opportunity employer. The board of directors recognizes and values leadership of diverse and historically marginalized communities and encourages people of all identities to apply.

To apply

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to Starboard Leadership Consulting at the following address: search3@starboardleadership.com. Paper copies may be sent to Jessica Weiner, Starboard Leadership Consulting, 84 Harlow Street, Bangor, ME 04401, but electronic submissions of material are preferred. No phone inquiries, please. The application deadline is April 16, 2023, and review of all submissions will begin immediately thereafter.