



Position Description

Chief Executive Officer

Irvine, CA



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

What started out in 1984 as a humble effort to house families experiencing homelessness in two farmhouses and five rented apartments, has since grown into one of Orange County's most impactful nonprofits. Tackling the pervasive issue of homelessness for families with children, last year Families Forward improved the lives of nearly 18,000 people. From providing food assistance through the Community Market, career coaching, mental health counseling, to financial literacy education, Families Forward is committed to strengthening overall well-being as it is to ensuring families have a safe and affordable place to call home and the opportunity to thrive. One of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population is working families with children struggling to make ends meet. The high cost of basic living, including rent, transportation and childcare, coupled with the significant lack of affordable housing puts many families at risk.

Families Forward works with families experiencing homelessness to find realistic solutions for sustainable housing and build individualized plans to return each family to self-sufficiency. Its comprehensive housing program provides families with a wide range of housing solutions, including emergency motel stays, brief interim housing support, rapid re-housing assistance, homeless prevention services, and long-term affordable housing opportunities. Families Forward believes that once a family is securely housed, supportive services can then provide the resources needed for a family to overcome their unique challenges and achieve economic stability.

Families Forward incorporates a holistic family care model that recognizes the connection between poverty, housing, health, and food security. Client success is defined as the achievement and long-term maintenance of stable housing, increased income, and overall family well-being, particularly for families who are extremely low-income and at high risk of entering or re-entering the homelessness response system. Families Forward's approach is grounded in research showing that housing stability and income growth are critical predictors of long-term resilience among families exiting homelessness.

For the 15th consecutive year, Families Forward has earned Charity Navigator's top 4-Star rating, placing our agency among the top 2% of rated charities nationwide. Additionally, Families Forward was awarded the 2025 Platinum Seal of Transparency. Due to Families Forward's exemplary management of resources, an extensive volunteer corps, and thousands of in-kind donations, 90% of financial contributions directly fund programs and services for families.



MISSION

To prevent and end family homelessness by providing access to housing and resources that create lasting stability.

VISION

We see an Orange County where every family has a home and the opportunity to thrive.

Families Forward holds strong to their commitment of five fundamental values:

- Dignity:** Honor each individual through an atmosphere of respect, trust and confidentiality.
- Empowerment:** Inspire resilience through the development of courage, confidence and pride.
- Accountability:** Accept responsibility for commitments and accomplishing our goals.
- Community Spirit:** Realize our vision through teamwork, cooperation and collaboration.
- Hope:** Share a belief in new beginnings and allow dreams of the future to emerge.

To learn more about Families Forward, please visit <https://www.families-forward.org/>.

THE OPPORTUNITY



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for leading Families Forward's strategy, operations, and organizational performance in support of its programs and services to deliver the mission. Working closely with the Board of Directors, the CEO ensures that the organization's mission is carried out while providing vision and operational leadership for the organization's continued growth and development. As a highly visible representative of Families Forward, the CEO builds and maintains strong relationships with key constituencies including families served, Board members, donors, volunteers, government agencies, and community partners.

Families Forward currently has an annual operating budget of \$10 million. The CEO will oversee the budget and a staff of 55 employees, providing support to the following direct reports: Chief Advancement Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Program Officer, Senior Director of Talent and Operations, and Executive Assistant.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Leadership

- Articulates and advances the vision, mission, and strategic direction of Families Forward, positioning the organization as a leader in housing stability and homeless prevention services.
- Leads implementation of the strategic plan and works with the Board to develop short- and long-term priorities, goals, and budgets.
- Champions innovation and continuous improvement to expand impact, increase efficiency, and strengthen service delivery.
- Ensures a positive, welcoming, and dignified experience for all staff, clients, volunteers, and community partners.
- Elevates Families Forward's visibility and brand as a trusted expert in affordable housing, homeless prevention, and family stability.

Board Relations

- Partners with the Board of Directors to support strong governance and strategic leadership.
- Keeps the Board informed on organizational performance, emerging opportunities, and risks.
- Supports Board recruitment, engagement, and alignment with Families Forward's mission and strategic priorities.
- Ensures clear communication between Board and staff to support effective decision-making.

Management & Staff Development

- Leads and develops a high-performing senior leadership team aligned with programmatic, financial, and operational goals.
- Oversees talent management including recruitment, professional development, workforce planning, and succession planning.
- Cultivates a collaborative, inclusive workplace culture that values staff, volunteers, and clients with dignity and respect.
- Identifies organizational capacity needs and implements training and development programs to strengthen staff effectiveness.
- Evaluates operational practices and introduces innovative approaches that improve service delivery, efficiency, and organizational growth.

Fundraising & External Relations

- Develops and sustains strong partnerships with government agencies, corporations, foundations, and individual donors.
- Serves as the chief ambassador, strengthening relationships with key stakeholders and expanding funding opportunities.
- Works closely with development staff and the Board to advance fundraising strategies that support long-term sustainability.
- Represents Families Forward with major funders and partners, communicating stories of impact, data, and community needs.

Quality, Compliance, & Reporting

- Ensures organizational compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and contractual requirements.
- Oversees systems for measuring and evaluating program outcomes, performance, and community impact using data-driven decision-making.
- Oversees the preparation and submission of grant applications, program reports, and regulatory documentation.

Housing & Asset Management

- Provides strategic oversight of Families Forward's real estate assets - including 62 units of affordable housing - housing developments, and investment portfolio.
- Leads partnerships with affordable housing developers, investors, and community partners to expand housing opportunities.
- Ensures housing programs and assets are managed effectively in alignment with Families Forward's mission and long-term sustainability.
- Works with community partners to advance housing solutions that support long-term family stability.

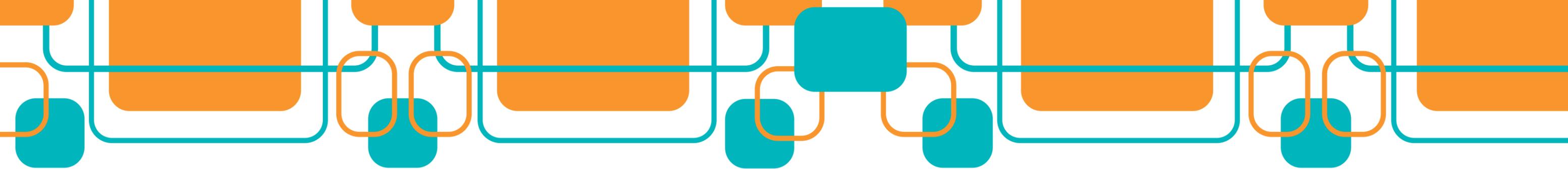
Financial Oversight

- Oversees financial strategy and stewardship of all organizational resources.
- Works with leadership and the Board to develop and manage annual budgets and long-term financial plans.
- Ensures accurate financial reporting, fiscal accountability, and strong internal controls.
- Oversees financial performance, investment strategy, and completion of annual audits.

Advocacy, Community Relations, & Communications

- Serves as the public face and spokesperson for Families Forward, representing the organization with media, community leaders, and policymakers.
- Strengthens community awareness and understanding of Families Forward's mission, programs, and impact.
- Builds strong relationships with community organizations, county and regional partners, and policy stakeholders working.
- Monitors external trends, policy developments, and data related to homelessness and housing to identify opportunities, risks, and populations in need.
- Engages and elevates the role of volunteers as valued partners in advancing Families Forward's mission and delivering services.





CAREER PATH LEADING TO THIS POSITION

The ideal candidate will bring a demonstrated track record of senior leadership in a nonprofit, human services, housing, homelessness, or related mission-driven organization with a strong reputation for community impact. Experience developing and executing strategic plans that drive organizational growth, service excellence, and measurable outcomes is essential.

The successful candidate will have experience building, leading, and retaining high-performing leadership teams while fostering a resilient and collaborative organizational culture. They will demonstrate the ability to strengthen programs, systems, and operations while expanding organizational capacity and impact.

Experience working closely with and supporting a Board of Directors in advancing mission, strategy, and governance is required. The candidate should also bring experience in fundraising, donor engagement, and building partnerships with government agencies, foundations, corporations, and community stakeholders.

Candidates with experience in both nonprofit and for-profit sectors will be considered. Strong knowledge of Orange County, including housing affordability, homelessness, and homeless prevention services is preferred, along with an understanding of public systems, community partnerships, and emerging trends affecting vulnerable families.

TRAITS & CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED

The Chief Executive Officer will demonstrate a deep commitment to Families Forward's mission of helping families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness achieve stability and self-sufficiency. The ideal candidate is a strategic and visionary leader who can translate long-term vision into effective execution while guiding the organization through growth and change.

The CEO will be a collaborative and relational leader who builds authentic support for the mission among staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and the broader community. A natural relationship builder and compelling communicator, the CEO will serve as a visible ambassador for Families Forward, effectively conveying the organization's impact and community importance. Strong written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking, are essential.

This leader will foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, and excellence while maintaining an approachable and grounded leadership style. The CEO will treat all individuals with dignity and respect, cultivating an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued and staff feel supported to do their best work.

The successful candidate will demonstrate resilience, remain steady under pressure, and be willing to engage directly with the work of the organization when needed. They will mentor and develop staff, encourage teamwork, and inspire high performance while sustaining a positive and mission-driven workplace culture.

Above all, the CEO will lead with integrity, transparency, clear communication, and a genuine commitment to strengthening Families Forward's culture and advancing its mission to support families in need.



COMPENSATION

The annual salary is **\$210,000 - 240,000** based on experience. A comprehensive benefits package will be provided.

The CEO is expected to be in the office four to five days a week, including evenings and weekends to meet with donors and community members.

TO APPLY

Candidates are invited to submit a resume and compelling letter of interest via Morris & Berger's [website](#). Please direct inquiries and nominations in confidence to:

Karin Berger Stellar

kstellar@morrisberger.com

Morris & Berger

1 (818) 507-1234

Electronic submission is required.

