



Alliance of Therapy Dogs
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Executive Director Job Description and Posting Narrative

The Opportunity

Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) is seeking a dynamic, forward-thinking Executive Director to lead the organization through an exciting and consequential period of growth and strategic transformation. This is a rare opportunity to step into a highly influential leadership role not only manage the organization but help shape its future.

Following a period of rapid membership expansion, the organization is actively rightsizing its structure, systems and strategy to match its current scale and ready itself for a continued growth trajectory.

The incoming Executive Director will join a committed and engaged board midway through a year-long strategic journey. Having traversed governance strengthening and operational auditing, they will join the team as they move into a fully facilitated strategic planning activity allowing their voice and experience to help shape the direction of the organization for the next 3-5 years.

The ideal candidate thrives in environments of change and complexity. They bring a strategic mindset, a builder's instinct, and the leadership presence to translate board vision, consultant recommendations, and member feedback into a coherent long-range strategy. Their ability to operationalize strategy sets them apart as a leader.

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) is the chief executive of the organization, accountable to the Board of Directors for all operations, programs, financial health, and external relationships. The ED translates Board-approved strategy into organizational action, ensuring that day-to-day management, Staff leadership, Member engagement, and resource stewardship all advance the ATD mission.

In this moment, the ED will play a central role in building and structuring an internal leadership team, modernizing digital systems and member-facing platforms, and serving as the primary integration point between Board governance, Staff execution, and Member experience. The successful candidate will be as comfortable in a strategic planning session as they are rolling up their sleeves to solve an operational problem.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Planning - Working in close partnership with the Board, the ED leads the development, communication, and operationalization of the organization's strategic vision.

- Collaborate with the Board to develop and articulate a shared vision aligned with the organization's mission and membership needs.
- Translate strategic goals into actionable plans with clear priorities, timelines, accountability structures, and measurable outcomes.
- Champion a culture of feedback and continuous improvement, regularly assessing organizational performance against strategic benchmarks.
- Lead change management efforts as the organization evolves its structure, systems, and scope; bring Staff and Members along through transparent communications and inclusive processes.
- Integrate Board direction, Member feedback, and consultant recommendations into a coherent, long-range strategic framework

Administration and Operations - The ED ensures the organization runs with efficiency, accountability, and intention while building systems that scale with growth and serve the strategic plan.

- Oversee day-to-day operations across programs, administration, and Member services.
- Build and lead a right-sized internal leadership team structured to meet current and anticipated organizational needs and goals.
- Develop, implement, and continuously improve internal systems, policies, and workflows that support effective and compliant operations.
- Oversee technology infrastructure, including the renewal and revision of a proprietary Member Portal and digital application; work collaboratively with IT staff and developers to improve platform performance, usability and Member experience.
- Ensure that operational decisions are grounded in strategic priorities and reflect sound management practices.

Board Relations - The ED functions as a leadership partner to the Board of Directors. They keep the Board well-informed, well-equipped, and fully capable of exercising its governance role.

- Build and maintain a strong, trust-based working relationship with the Board, grounded in transparency and mutual respect.
- Develop and sustain reliable systems for reporting, communication, and information-sharing that enable effective governance.
- Support the Board's ongoing strategic journey, including governance strengthening, system auditing, and strategic planning.
- Follow through on Board decisions and directives.
- Proactively surface risks, opportunities and organizational needs that require board awareness or action.

Communications and Public Relations - As the primary spokesperson and public face of the organization, the ED promotes the mission, builds relationships and strengthens the organization's visibility and credibility.

- Represent the organization to Members, partner facilities, the therapy dog community, and the public with professionalism and passion for the mission.
- Oversee the development of a communications strategy that keeps Members informed, engaged, and educated.
- Cultivate and sustain relationships with key constituencies, including Members, facilities, insurance providers that are critical to organizational success.
- Serve as an effective advocate for the organization's mission in public, policy and partnership contexts.
- Oversee the organization's brand, messaging, and external presence across all channels.

Financial Management - The ED is the steward of the organization's financial health, ensuring resources are managed wisely and in alignment with strategic priorities.

- Ensure the development and management of sound annual budgets that reflect strategic goals and realistic resource projections.
- Oversee accounting systems, financial controls, and risk management strategies that protect organizational assets and ensure compliance.
- Provide the Board with clear, timely, and accurate financial reporting.
- Identify and respond proactively to financial risks; recommend course correction as needed.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable legal, regulatory and fiduciary obligations.

Revenue Sustainability and Financial Development - In partnership with the Board and appropriate Staff, the ED ensures the long-term financial sustainability of the organization by stewarding existing revenue streams wisely and identifying the opportunities to strengthen and diversify its financial foundation.

- Continuously evaluate the value delivered to Members relative to the true cost of membership, ensuring that dues structures are accurately set, financially sustainable, and reflective of the organization's operational reality and growth trajectory.
- Assess the return on investment of product and merchandise offerings, ensuring that swag and Member materials contribute positively to both revenue and organization's identity rather than creating operational or financial drag.
- Explore and selectively pursue diversification of revenue channels, including sponsorship, corporate partnerships, and cause-aligned relationships with businesses in the pet, veterinary, healthcare, and facility sectors, to reduce dependency on dues revenue alone.
- Identify and pursue grant opportunities on an occasional and opportunistic basis where mission alignment, capacity and reporting requirements make pursuit worthwhile.
- Actively engage with community giving initiatives, including state-based days of giving such as WyoGives and national campaigns such as

GivingTuesday. Recognizing low-barrier opportunities to build donor awareness, engage Members as advocates, and supplement organizational revenue.

- Work with the board to develop a clear philosophy and organizational position on fundraising and donor development, recognizing that Member dues are the primary funding model and that supplemental revenue strategies should be pursued in ways that align with and reinforce that model.

Qualifications

Required

- Demonstrated experience in a senior leadership role within a nonprofit, association, or mission-driven organization.
- Proven ability to lead organization change and manage through periods of growth, transition, or restructuring.
- Strong strategic thinking skills with a track record of operationalizing plans and driving measurable results.
- Experience working effectively with a board of directors in a governance partnership role.
- Financial acumen, including budget development, oversight and reporting.
- Strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills; ability to represent the organization credibly to diverse audiences.
- Experience building, mentoring, and leading staff teams.
- Demonstrated ability to build and sustain a strong organizational culture fostering trust, shared purpose, and a cohesive sense of identity across staff, board and volunteer communities included in distributed or remote environments.

Preferred

- Experience in a member-based association organization.
- Familiarity with digital platform management, member portals, or technology modernization initiatives.
- Experience operationalizing a strategic plan.
- Background in fund development, financial sustainability and/or revenue diversification.
- Experience and knowledge of a therapy dog's role.

Compensation and Benefits

- Salary Range: \$65,000-\$80,000 annually, commensurate with experience.
- Time Off: This position includes 15 days of accrued paid vacation in year one, increasing to 20 days beginning in year two, in addition to paid holidays.
- Health Insurance and Retirement: Benefits package in development with plans to explore health and retirement offerings.
- Home Office Support: If this role is performed remotely, a home office stipend is provided to support a productive work environment.
- Professional Development: This position includes an annual professional development budget for conferences, certifications, and continued learning aligned with the organization's mission.

Location

This position is based out of our Cheyenne, Wyoming office. Candidates located in the region (Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska) are strongly preferred. Remote candidates outside the region may be considered for exceptionally qualified applicants. In-office presence is required periodically; frequency to be discussed with candidates.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following to Admin@backburnco.com with the Subject Line: **ATD ED Apply- [Last name, First name]**

- A cover letter describing your interest in this role and how your experience aligns with the current organizational moment.
- A current resume.
- Leadership Statement/Philosophy

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Priority consideration will be given to applications received by Friday, May 22, 2026. ATD is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply.