Position Specification

Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
Chief Executive Officer
Our Client
The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County (the Coalition, or CFTH) is the leader of the homeless response system for Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties, TX. Founded in 1982 and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1988, the Coalition has a long-standing history as a leader of the local homeless response system.

The Coalition for the Homeless acts as a catalyst, uniting partners and maximizing resources to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services. The greater Houston/Harris County community is fortunate to have many direct service nonprofits working directly with people in crisis; the Coalition helps these partners by using data to make sure that the right number and kinds of housing and service programs are being implemented, that the community has the funding and other resources to implement these programs, and that everyone has a safe place to call home.

Since 2011, the Coalition has also been proud to serve as lead agency to the local homeless response system, The Way Home. The Way Home is the collaborative effort underway to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Pasadena, Harris County, Fort Bend County, and Montgomery County, Texas. As a result, homeless service agencies, local governments, public housing authorities, the local Veterans Affairs office, and other nonprofits and community stakeholders have been working together to refine their programs, practices, and policies so the Houston region can provide permanent housing and wrap-around supportive services to as many individuals and families experiencing homelessness as possible.

Currently, more than 100 partners are collaborating through The Way Home to implement programs that are all based on a Housing First model. This means that people experiencing homelessness are moved into permanent housing as quickly as possible then provided with supportive services (like case management, healthcare, substance use counseling, income coaching, and more) to help them remain stabilized in housing and improve their quality of life.

For every $1 the Coalition receives in private funding, they bring more than $47 in public funding into the Houston region to implement homelessness solutions. Under the Coalition’s leadership, since 2011 overall homelessness in the Houston region has decreased by over 60% and since 2012, more than 28,000 people have been placed into permanent housing programs, the overwhelming majority of whom have remained housed after two years.

The Coalition currently has a budget of approximately $15 million and a staff of 45. For more information on the Coalition, please visit: https://www.homelesshouston.org/.

The Role
The next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has a significant opportunity to ensure that the gains made in fighting homeless in Houston/Harris County continue while further establishing the organization as a national leader in this work and in particular, the Housing First model. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO will provide the strategic and operational leadership to successfully manage the organization and navigate its partner and stakeholder relationships. The CEO will be responsible for leading, building, and supporting all aspects of the organization.

This person will need to continue to grow and diversify the funding streams of the Coalition, including maintaining current funding relationships as well as identifying new sources of support and partnerships. This will serve to sustain and increase the operational capabilities required to move the Coalition and its partners closer to its goal of ending chronic homelessness in Houston/Harris County.
As the public face of the Coalition, the CEO will represent the organization’s mission and programs. To do so effectively, the successful candidate must possess outstanding oral and written communication skills, as well as experience representing an organization to a broad set of external audiences. Further, the CEO must be the “chief advocate” of the Coalition and deeply passionate about the community it serves.

Specific responsibilities include:

**Provide vision and focus for a dynamic organization with numerous stakeholders.** The Coalition is a highly mission-oriented organization with many partners and stakeholder running a diverse set of programs simultaneously in many locations, with a unique combination of professional staff, volunteers, partners, donors, and constituents. The CEO must be able to inspire, motivate, coordinate, and honor these multiple groups in ways that advance its mission while maintaining the highest standards of service and integrity.

**Effectively collaborate.** The Coalition collaborates with a large network of partners and stakeholders in order to be effective in their collective mission. The CEO must lead with humility and an ability to mobilize forces in order to ensure that the organization’s partners and service providers are able to be impactful.

**Attract new partners, advocates, donors, and volunteers.** The CEO must be able to lead the Coalition in building on its impact by effectively finding new ways to retain and attract a broader funding base. They must be skilled in coalition building, working in partnership with other organizations locally and nationally working to end homelessness.

**Manage through change.** The effectiveness of the Coalition will depend on how well it manages uncertain changes in the housing and other sectors, the evolving needs across the multiple counties that comprise the Coalition’s region, and how nimble it can be in responding to (and influencing) systemic policy and funding opportunities. Managing these changes in ways that keep the Coalition relevant and central to the communities and individuals it serves will be critical for success.

**Represent and lead the Coalition in the most positive manner, enhancing its visibility and influencing public opinion.** The CEO of the Coalition has the ability to reach government and business decision-makers and influence public opinion on issues vital to its mission. It is essential that the successful candidate is able to convey the organization’s activities effectively and persuasively to the staff, thought leaders, the broader public, and the individuals served by the Coalition and its partners, through a wide variety of communication tools.

**Engage diverse constituencies.** The organization delivers its mission through a workplace that welcomes and embraces diversity and encourages industry, teamwork, and mutual respect. The CEO must not only embrace these values, but continually lead in creating an atmosphere that promotes teamwork, responsiveness, empathy, accountability, professional development, and succession planning – while helping the organization adapt to changing and disparate needs within the community. The CEO will lead with respect, compassion, and appreciation of the work and diversity of every individual the Coalition employs and serves, the organizations with which it partners, the individuals they serve, and more broadly in the community.

**Candidate Profile**
The CEO must first and foremost bring a depth of leadership experience as a collaborator, problem solver, and relationship-builder with strong interpersonal skills and mission orientation toward the work of the Coalition. They should also have a depth of financial acumen, a background of working with diverse populations, and experience building and maintaining partnerships and identifying new sources of revenue.
The successful candidate will demonstrate the capacity for leadership through vision, communication, action, and passion for the mission of ending chronic homelessness through a Housing First approach. Ideally, they will bring previous experience working with and advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations and with a strong commitment to DEI principles. They will be an experienced leader in the nonprofit, business, or public sectors, and will have a track record of accomplishments, credibility, and recognition in leadership roles. The CEO will have exceptional management, operational, organizational, and people skills. The Coalition is open to candidates from all across the country, including those that may or may not have ties to the greater Houston region.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Setting Strategy
- Develops and implements strategic direction that reflects community priorities and the organization’s mission
- Defines challenging and achievable objectives and inspires the team to action
- Inspires and leads change, effectively working with stakeholders and getting input along the way
- An entrepreneurial and creative approach to developing new, innovative ideas that will stretch the organization and push the boundaries within the industry.

Passion and Shared Values
- With authenticity and empathy, possesses the ability to connect with the diverse populations the Coalition and its partners seek to serve
- Values and promotes cultural awareness, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Demonstrated understanding and empathy for the populations the Coalition and its partners serve; experienced working with vulnerable populations.

Community Partnerships and Fundraising
- Maintains strong and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders, including: community partners, employees, the Board of Directors, public entities, and donors
- Cultivates relationships with potential and active donors
- Builds strategic plans for partnerships and fundraising
- Ability to innovate to meet the current and future needs of our communities

Communications and Interpersonal Skills
- Naturally connects and builds positive, productive relationships with others which build enduring respect, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively
- Represents the Coalition externally with the community, media, government and elected officials
- Exhibits the skills to attract, recruit, retain and inspire volunteers and staff
- Seeks feedback proactively; utilizes input to enhance employees’ job experience and productivity, contribute to an effective Board and make a positive impact in the Houston/Harris County community

Financial and Operational Acumen
- Ensures adherence to government and Coalition policies and guidelines and maintains the Coalition’s reputation of ethical standards
- Ensures financial controls are in place and that the Coalition is following applicable rules of the accounting profession regarding nonprofit accounting, including independent annual audits
- Maximizes resources; monitors financial and operational trends, priorities and practices
- Aligns budget and resources with strategic plan priorities

Leading Teams
- Creates and supports a work environment that links stakeholders to the organization’s mission
- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate the team, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and manage performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others.
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- Inclusive, works towards collaboration and is a bridge builder.
- Transparent, high integrity leadership that creates a culture of accountability and engagement, convening diverse constituencies to attain excellence in achieving the missions of the entities.

Contact
Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at cfthceo@russellreynolds.com with a resume and brief explanation of interest.