



## Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

**Department:** Administration **Reports To:**  
Board of Directors **FLSA Status:** Full time;  
Exempt

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### Position Overview

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the chief executive and strategic leader of Ljams Nature Center, responsible for stewarding the organization's mission, advancing long-term sustainability, and leading the organization through its next phase of growth and impact. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO provides vision, executive leadership, and operational oversight while cultivating strong relationships with staff, board members, donors, public partners, and the broader community.

This role requires a seasoned, future-facing executive capable of leading a complex, high-visibility nonprofit, sustaining momentum through periods of transition, and positioning the organization for continued success. The CEO must balance strategic foresight with disciplined execution, inspire confidence among stakeholders, and ensure continuity while preparing the organization for its next chapter of leadership.

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### Key Responsibilities

#### Strategic Leadership & Organizational Direction

- Lead the development, execution, and refinement of organizational strategy in partnership with the Board of Directors and senior leadership.
- Ensure alignment between mission, vision, strategic priorities, and measurable outcomes.
- Anticipate emerging trends, risks, and opportunities affecting environmental education, land conservation, and public access to nature.
- Guide the organization through growth and change with clarity, stability, and intentional succession planning.

#### Board Partnership & Governance

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, fostering transparency, trust, and effective decision-making.
- Partner with the Board Chair to set agendas, prepare materials, and support strong governance practices.

- Provide the Board with timely, strategic, and actionable information to support fiduciary and policy responsibilities.
- Support board recruitment, onboarding, engagement, and leadership development.

## **Financial Stewardship & Operational Excellence**

- Ensure the financial integrity and long-term sustainability of the organization.
- Oversee annual operating budgets, multi-year financial projections, and capital planning.
- Ensure strong internal controls, compliance, and risk management systems.
- Lead organizational operations to ensure efficiency, accountability, and alignment with strategic priorities.

## **Executive Team & Organizational Culture**

- Recruit, lead, and retain a high-performing executive and management team.
- Establish clear performance expectations, accountability systems, and leadership development pathways.
- Foster a healthy, inclusive organizational culture grounded in trust, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Model adaptive leadership practices that support staff resilience and organizational stability.

## **Resource Development & External Leadership**

- Lead and support comprehensive fundraising strategies, including major gifts, foundations, corporations, public funding, and capital initiatives.
- Serve as a key external ambassador, strengthening relationships with donors, public partners, and community leaders.
- Partner with the Board and development team to sustain and grow philanthropic investment.
- Ensure donor stewardship practices reflect organizational values and best practices.

## **Community Engagement, Programs & Assets**

- Position Ijams Nature Center as a recognized leader in environmental education, conservation, and public engagement.
- Oversee mission-aligned programs, land stewardship, facilities, and infrastructure with an emphasis on sustainability, accessibility, and safety.
- Emphasis in nature pre-school education, an expanding scope of the Ijams mission
- Encourage innovation while maintaining programmatic excellence and community trust.

## **Accountability, Reporting & Continuity**

- Establish and monitor key performance indicators to assess organizational impact, financial health, and operational effectiveness.
- Report regularly to the Board and key stakeholders on progress, risks, and opportunities.
- Ensure systems, documentation, and leadership practices support continuity, institutional knowledge, and leadership transition readiness.

## Core Competencies

- **Strategic Thinking:** Ability to develop and implement forward-thinking strategies.
  - **Leadership & Teamwork:** Proven ability to lead diverse teams, foster collaboration, and encourage innovation.
  - **Communication:** Excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills.
  - **Marketing and Branding:** Demonstrated abilities in overseeing strategic marketing.
  - **Fundraising:** Background in leading fundraising campaigns.
  - **Adaptability:** Flexibility to manage shifting priorities and changing environments.
  - **Problem-Solving:** Skilled in analyzing complex issues and developing creative solutions.
  - **Community partnerships:** Experience in collaborations with governmental and non-profit partners.
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## Qualifications & Executive Profile

- Master's degree in nonprofit management, environmental science, public administration, or a related field, or equivalent executive experience.
  - Minimum of seven (7) years of senior executive leadership experience, preferably within complex nonprofit, conservation, or mission-driven organizations.
  - Demonstrated success in strategic planning, financial stewardship, fundraising, and organizational leadership.
  - Proven ability to partner effectively with governing boards and lead through organizational transition.
  - Exceptional communication, relationship-building, and executive presence, with the ability to be politically and community savvy.
  - Commitment to environmental stewardship, public service, and community-centered impact.
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## Compensation & Benefits

- Full-time, exempt position requiring occasional evening and weekend hours.
  - Starting Salary: \$120,000 annually
  - Health benefits include medical, dental, and vision insurance.
  - 403(b) retirement plan match.
  - Paid vacation, holidays, and sick leave.
  - Flexible work arrangements available.
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## About Ijams Nature Center

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit nature center located along the Tennessee River near Knoxville's urban core. Its mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace where people can learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Ijams manages more than 320 acres of protected land with trails, a visitor center, quarry lake, river access, gardens, and diverse educational and recreational amenities. The organization serves hundreds of thousands of visitors annually and partners with local and regional entities to advance conservation, education, and public access to nature. Ijams provides established and expanding nature pre-school programs.

## Equal Opportunity Employment

Ijams Nature Center is an equal opportunity employer committed to creating a workplace where all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Ijams Nature Center does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable state or federal laws. These anti-discrimination policies also apply to volunteers and program recipients. Ijams Nature Center provides reasonable accommodations to all applicants and employees. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.

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Send resume, cover letter, and three references (*will not be contacted without notice*) to [admin@ijams.org](mailto:admin@ijams.org) **This position will be open until April 24, 2026.**

***Join our team and play a pivotal role in inspiring environmental stewardship and connecting people with nature!***

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