



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINDING OUR STRIDE

Finding Our Stride (FOS), a dynamic nonprofit organization serving K-8th grade youth in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire through FREE afterschool running programs, is seeking a passionate Executive Director who believes that all children should be empowered to enjoy physical fitness and achieve social-emotional growth. This person will be a seasoned leader who demonstrates the ability to drive the vision and direction of a growing organization.

Over the past twelve years, we have changed the lives of thousands of local youth through partnerships with multiple schools, nonprofit organizations, coaches, families, and funders. Today, we serve 33 sites and more than 1,000 runners, primarily in underserved communities. This is an exciting time to join FOS, after a pivotal period of strategic growth and measurable impact.

Reporting to FOS' Board of Directors, the Executive Director maintains fiscal, strategic, and operational responsibility for staff, programs, growth, and impact. In addition, the leader will foster a culture and work environment that is collaborative, flexible, and fun for all runners, volunteers, staff, and board members.

Given the importance of relationship building for this position, the ideal candidate will live in the Upper Valley full time. As there is no physical office for FOS, all employees work remotely.

findingourstride.org



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 2011, Finding Our Stride now serves 33 sites, primarily in underserved communities, in the Upper Valley region. FOS earned 501(c)(3) status in 2019 and completed a robust strategic planning process in 2022. We are currently in year two of our three-year strategic plan.

In addition to the Executive Director, the staff includes a half-time Director of Development and Operations and a half-time School Partnerships Coordinator who collaborate with school administration; manage curriculum, evaluation, and development efforts; and engage with several community groups focused on youth development. The staff also works closely with over 100 stipended coaches, 90 percent of whom are educators at the schools where they coach.

FOS' Board of Directors includes nine community leaders in the fields of business, education and psychology. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is evaluated annually.

FOS' annual operating budget is \$357,000. Our revenue is generated by generous philanthropic support, primarily from across the Upper Valley community. We also manage a reserve fund equivalent to six months of our operating expenses, and have set aside two years of compensation for the incoming Executive Director.



MISSION

Empowering Upper Valley youth through afterschool running programs, Finding Our Stride boosts fitness, self-esteem and resilience, and connects kids to peers, mentors and community.

VISION

We envision a vibrant Upper Valley where youth thrive socially, emotionally and physically and invest in their communities.

ABOUT OUR WORK

Finding Our Stride offers free programs at 20 sites in Vermont and 13 in New Hampshire, in the spring (early April to mid-June) and fall (September and October). Teams practice for six to eight weeks, twice each week for 60 to 90 minutes. FOS provides modest coaching stipends, training and resources for coaches, nutritious snacks, entry fees to an end-of-season community running event, and shoe vouchers on an as-needed basis. School leadership helps recruit coaches and tailors the program for each student body and school environment.

Research tells us that community engagement helps youth to foster self-esteem and resilience. Each spring season, runners and coaches collect funds or goods in support of local charities, including social service, arts and youth-serving organizations. In 2023, a generous donor matched all contributions, resulting in an investment of over \$18,000 in our local nonprofit community.

In the fall, all teams (including runners, coaches, and family members) run in the Dartmouth Health Children's "Hero" run. In 2023, FOS' was the largest team with 568 participants, and also the highest fundraising team, contributing \$75,648 to Dartmouth Health Children's. Year after year, FOS teams embrace this opportunity, and runners raise funds through coin drives, bake sales, and modest donations (even birthday money!) from family and friends.

VALUES

Inclusion & Equity: FOS believes every person should have access to opportunities to enjoy fitness and achieve social-emotional growth. We strive to ensure that every participant feels welcome at FOS, and we remove barriers so that each child and coach experiences an environment where they can grow and contribute.

Culture of Positivity: FOS fosters a culture of FUN, where runners support and celebrate one another. We prioritize participation over competition.

Opportunities for Growth: FOS welcomes kids with no running experience. We nurture self-esteem and resilience by encouraging participants to try new things and set goals for themselves. We believe fitness enhances lifelong social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Collaboration: FOS values coaches as co-creators of the program, and partners with school and community leaders to implement the framework that works best for them.

Commitment to Community: FOS builds community connections by inspiring youth to help others. These connections provide purpose, motivation, and resilience.

IMPACT

Schools, families, and youth report that they value FOS because we are:

- **FREE and accessible** afterschool programming to kids of all abilities. Practices are held directly after school, limiting transportation hurdles for parents.
- **Focused on fitness.** FOS builds fitness through participation and individual goal setting, rather than through competition.
- **Run by trusted adults,** known to children and their families. 90 percent of FOS coaches are educators from within the runners' schools, helping to create a smaller, more nurturing environment for participants, which can translate into improved confidence and success in the classroom.
- **An opportunity for social-emotional growth,** designed to encourage kids to take risks, gain self-confidence, and build resilience. Last fall, FOS launched a collaboration with the [Positivity Project \(P2\)](#) and designed our own curriculum to incorporate into practices. The positive psychology curriculum focuses on and nurtures the 24 VIA Institute on Character strengths.
- **Committed to continuous improvement,** driven by feedback from our many stakeholders.

87%

**OF RUNNERS
CONTINUE TO RUN
AFTER THE SEASON**



81%

**OF TEAMS PARTICIPATE
IN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
ACTIVITIES**



27%

**INCREASE IN THE
NUMBER OF
STUDENTS WHO
WERE ACTIVE MORE
THAN FIVE DAYS
PER WEEK**



ABOUT THE POSITION

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- **Plan Strategically for the Future:** Over the past twelve years, FOS has carefully managed growth in our operations and geographic scope. Having completed a strategic plan in June 2022 and expanded the number of sites by over 50 percent since then, FOS' leadership will determine the organization's next set of priorities, which may include additional strategic planning and evaluation of our impact.
- **Strengthen Organization's Financial Position:** The current ED and DOD have set a high bar for fundraising, with robust support from 30 institutional funders and more than 60 individuals. Continued diversification of funding sources is critical. FOS has an opportunity to deepen and broaden support from individuals within the community and to explore additional regional and national funders.
- **Build Strong Relationships:** As the founder of FOS, the current Executive Director has excelled in building a collection of strong relationships within the region, touching every facet of the organization. The next leader will embrace the opportunity to move FOS into our next chapter with a focus on continued team building at every level.
- **Focus on Equity and Inclusion:** FOS is committed to diversifying our organization and ensuring our programming is accessible and welcoming to all, and we are making progress. For example, recent data indicates that 12% of FOS families identify as non-white, compared to 6% of all families in VT and 10% in NH. In the coming years, FOS will also work to build a board constituency that better reflects the makeup of the communities we serve.

KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Management of the overall vision and direction for Finding Our Stride.
- Fundraising: Oversees Director of Operations and Development (DOD); works with DOD on all individual, corporate and foundation fundraising.
- Financial Management: Oversees DOD on day-to-day accounting. Prepares annual budgets and budget updates, in collaboration with the finance committee and accountant.
- Communication, recruitment, engagement and annual financial ask of each member of the Board of Directors. Sets agenda for board meetings (in collaboration with Board Chair); helps governing committee to identify and recruit new board members; trains new board members (in collaboration with DOD).
- Oversight of Board Committees, including Finance, Fundraising, Governance, Recruitment and Retention.
- School Partnerships: works with DOD and School Partnerships Coordinator (SPC) to ensure efficient team management, including the recruitment of teams and coaches; the maximization of runner enrollment, t-shirt orders and distribution; and the management of community engagement projects each season. Ensures that under-resourced communities remain a focus for FOS. (The SPC has primary responsibility for the above and reports to the DOD.)
- Communications: Works with DOD, SPC, and the communications consultant to educate and engage current and future stakeholders via FOS website, social media, quarterly newsletters, and two annual appeals.
- Up to 20 percent of time will be required for travel. Almost all travel is within the region.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES FOR THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- An exceptional and experienced nonprofit leader, preferably with ED experience, who excels at planning and organization.
- Familiarity with the Upper Valley strongly preferred.
- An accomplished fundraiser with best practice knowledge and skills to successfully motivate, engage, and interact with high-level donors, board members, and other volunteers.
- A strong financial manager with experience in budgeting and financial oversight.
- A person of integrity and compassion who will care deeply for the welfare of each student, coach, family, staff and board member.

- A strategic thinker with proven ability to assess and enhance program effectiveness based on feedback and data, who is familiar with the challenges and opportunities of leading a growing nonprofit organization.
- A strong communicator with the ability to inspire all constituencies and audiences.
- A collaborative manager who effectively directs and supports others' efforts, motivating them and giving them authority to lead and room to grow, and who seeks and accepts guidance from the Board.
- A leader with a demonstrated commitment to fostering inclusivity and equity, aligning with FOS values, and preferably a track record of promoting diversity within an organization, including the board.
- A self-starter who is able to multitask and manage a diverse set of responsibilities and thrive in unstructured/unsupported environments.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- College degree required.
- Seven plus years of related experience required, preferably as a nonprofit Executive Director.
- Must be fluent with the Google Suite and have familiarity with Quickbooks and donor software, ideally Little Green Light.

SEARCH PROCESS

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume and two writing samples via email to: Jenny@findingourstride.org. All materials will be held in strictest confidence.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a salary of \$85,000 - \$105,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Given that FOS does not offer a retirement plan or health insurance, this position's competitive salary is intended to give the director flexibility in fulfilling their own benefit requirements. FOS also offers flexible paid time off. FOS is an equal opportunity employer.