

## **Philadelphia READS Seeks an Executive Director**

Philadelphia READS, a highly respected and mission-critical nonprofit organization focused on early childhood literacy is hiring an executive director to launch its next phase of growth. Philadelphia READS is an organization with strength in its diverse children's literacy programming, quality staff, and receptivity to meeting the early childhood literacy needs of the City of Philadelphia. Philadelphia READS is now poised to grow and adapt to meet new demands.

The Board of Directors of Philadelphia READS Center seeks an energetic, personable executive director who is knowledgeable about early childhood literacy. Philadelphia READS' next leader will be ready to embrace the organization's legacy and interact with the political, academic, civic and corporate leaders of the City of Philadelphia to assure high quality, relevant services are being delivered. The Philadelphia READS office is located near the verdant, picturesque Rittenhouse Square.

## **About Philadelphia READS**

Philadelphia READS is a mature and successful 501(c)3 tax exempt nonprofit organization. One of a kind in the area, it is a model for early care and education, preschool special education, school-age programs and family services. The mission of Philadelphia READS is to "raise a city of readers" through quality out of school time programs focused to get children and youth to read on or above grade level by grade 4.

Philadelphia READS provides services for children grades kindergarten through eighth through the following programs: the Tom and Adrienne Jacoby Book Bank, where, among other things, educators, who serve our City's children and youth within daycare, preschool, public, private, charter, parochial, religious, and after-school classrooms, are able to get up to 350 books per school year, as well as supplemental classroom supplies; Summer READS, a quality 6-week integrative literacy program operated during Summer months that infuses Reading, Enrichment, the Arts, Development, and STEM-2 (READS) into its daily programmatic delivery through its curriculum, community collaboration, parental engagement, and overall dynamically engaging and empowering environment; Power Partners, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program that

connects corporations and professional organizations with students from Philadelphia's public and charter classrooms for one-on-one literacy coaching on a weekly basis throughout the school-year; and Reading Olympics, a City-wide collaborative reading competition coordinated by Philadelphia READS, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia, the Archdiocese, and the City of Philadelphia that engages fourth through eighth graders from Philadelphia's public, parochial, charter, independent and after school programs in a reading competition.

## **Strategic Opportunities and Challenges**

Philadelphia READS is at an important juncture as it transitions to a new executive director empowered to bring new skills and strategic focus. A strategic plan and accountability process is being carefully developed to guide the work of the staff and board. The next executive will be expected to address the following strategic and operational priorities:

- Seek readily available collaboration opportunities to strengthen existing services and add new ones. Assess current program strengths and determine Philadelphia READS' role in programmatic services delivery.
- Advance the look and visibility of the organization to appeal to those interested in service enrollment. This includes enhancing marketing materials and the facility, as well as active outreach into the community.
- Broaden diversified funding opportunities through a revived donor appeal, writing new partnership and sustaining grants, and seeking corporate underwriting.
- Shape a cohesive staff team and attend to succession planning of the long-term staff.
- Partner with the board to clarify roles and determine areas where it can be of essential assistance to the senior staff.

## **The Ideal Candidate**

In addition to the strategic and operational acumen required of every executive director in a nonprofit of Philadelphia READS' size, this position requires the executive director to be the community face of the organization, a program planner and a staff supporter. The ideal candidate will possess and demonstrate these skills, attributes and experiences:

- **Passion for Mission:** The successful candidate must have a genuine passion and commitment to Philadelphia READS' mission.
- **Knowledge of the Field:** The ideal candidate is current in the trends of the early childhood literacy field and programmatic best practices.
- **Communicator:** The ideal candidate will have excellent written and oral communication skills and will be a proven spokesperson who is comfortable representing Philadelphia READS in public settings.
- **Team Builder:** The ideal candidate will demonstrate a commitment to a diverse and inclusive work environment. S/he will inspire confidence and trust in agency staff to work to their greatest potential and be accountable to their work. Candidates will demonstrate that they will embrace and encourage a learning environment.
- **Community Builder:** The ideal candidate will have the interpersonal skills and savvy to forge collaborative relationships and partnerships with various public, private and nonprofit constituencies, parents, community residents, and stakeholders. S/he will have proven problem solving, listening and facilitation skills.
- **Nonprofit Acumen:** Philadelphia READS' next executive director will be experienced in effective operational and organizational management. Philadelphia READS' budget requires a hands-on executive who is knowledgeable about financial management, human resource practices, facility management and licensing compliance/government regulations. Comfort with information technology at a level expected of an executive director is required.
- **Effective Fundraiser & Resource Manager:** The next executive director will have proven skills in acquiring and managing diverse funding, applying a compelling vision for the organization to funding opportunities.
- **Experience Working with Boards:** The next executive director will be experienced in working effectively in partnership with boards of directors or advisory groups to carry out the mission of the organization.

**Educational Requirements:** A Bachelor's degree is required, with a degree in Early Childhood Education or related field preferred. Candidates with seven years or more of increasing leadership responsibility in the nonprofit / education arena preferred.