SITKA SOUND
SCIENCE CENTER

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Position Description

Position title	**Executive Director**
Reports to	Board of Directors
Direct Reports	Finance Director, Operations Director, Research Director, Education Director, Hatchery Director, Communications Manager, Aquarist, Development Director
FLSA Status	Exempt
Employment Status	Full time, regular
Place of Work	Sitka, Alaska
Effective Date	November 4, 2026

SUMMARY

The Executive Director is responsible for strategic, programmatic, financial, and operational oversight and accountability for the organization. They ensure that the organization's programs align with the mission, vision, and values approved by the Board of Directors, and act as a fiduciary to safeguard resources, manage risk, and promote sustainability.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following duties and responsibilities represent the primary functions of the position. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and other duties may be assigned consistent with the position's purpose and organizational needs.

A. Primary Responsibilities

- Partner with Board of Directors to develop and advance the organization's vision for research, education, and public outreach programs.
- Partner with Board of Directors and staff to develop, implement and update strategic plan to guide programs.
- Work with Finance Director to develop an annual budget for board approval, oversee revenue and expenses and cash flow and keep Board of Directors informed on financial management.
- Ensure that programs and budget are aligned with the organization's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan.
- Develop and implement plan to ensure a sustainable stream of funding, including government grants, institutional funding, major and individual donors, and earned revenue.

- Provide general organizational oversight and manage risk to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and program participants as well as compliance with federal, state, and local law and regulations and terms of funding.

B. Operational Responsibilities
- Work with department directors to identify grant opportunities consistent with strategic plan, lead and support development of grant applications.
- Develop and implement plans to ensure integrity and safety of facilities and equipment.

C. Administrative and Reporting Responsibilities
- Attract, retain, and develop talent at all levels.
- Practice and oversee financial management in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

D. Communication and Collaboration
- Establish and maintain a positive, respectful, supportive, and collaborative organizational culture.
- Forge and maintain strong, trusting relationships with major donors and institutional funders.
- Continue and enhance SSSC's partnerships with Tribal entities and communicate respect for Indigenous knowledge and Tribal sovereignty.
- Serve as SSSC's chief advocate locally, regionally, and nationally, communicating the institution's mission with clarity, credibility, and passion.
- Build and sustain productive relationships with federal, state, and local officials; visiting scientists and their students; peer institutions; civic leaders; and the general public.

E. Other Duties
- Support and play a leadership role in organization-wide events, including but not limited to Sitka WhaleFest.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director oversees department directors, including individuals responsible for finance, human resources, development, research programs, education programs, the hatchery, and facilities, as well as employees responsible for communications and the SSSC aquarium. Responsibilities for these employees includes, but is not limited to:

- Hiring, onboarding, training, and staff development.
- Assigning work, establishing priorities, and monitoring performance.
- Providing coaching, feedback, and performance evaluations.
- Supporting compliance with organizational policies and applicable requirements.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The Executive Director has independent authority to:

- Make program and spending decisions that are generally consistent with the strategic plan and annual budget.
- Make employment decisions consistent with the budget and SSSC's personnel policies.
- Make legal commitments on behalf of the organization that are consistent with the budget and strategic plan.

The Executive Director is expected to consult with the board on:

- Termination of major programs and commitments that are included in the strategic plan and budget.
- Commencement of programs that are not included in the strategic plan and budget.
- Spending decisions that would result in expenses exceeding the annual budget by more than 10 percent.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

- Five years of professional experience managing teams, with at least five direct reports.
- Three years of professional experience managing budgets exceeding $1 million, including but not limited to federal streams of funds.
- Three years of professional experience working in a management capacity for mission-driven organizations (i.e., nonprofit or faith-based organization, government agency or Tribal entity).
- Three years of experience applying for and managing grants from federal and state government entities and institutional funding sources OR five years of experience with managing grants inside a federal, state, or municipal government entity.
- One year of experience in individual fundraising for a nonprofit organization.
- Previous experience with strategic planning.
- Four-year degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
- Previous experience living and working in Alaska, at a field station, or in a community with fewer than 50,000 residents .

Knowledge and Skills

- Ability to understand and explain financial statements.
- Facility with computers, software, and other information technology, including but not limited to Microsoft suite of office programs for PCs, and CRMs.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Five years of experience as chief executive for a mission-driven entity with more than

five employees that is required to conduct a federal single audit on an annual basis.

- Five years of experience applying for and managing federal grants and a record of clean audits, or ten years of experience with managing grants inside a federal, state, or municipal government entity.
- One year of experience with advocacy on policy issues with federal and state elected officials and staff.
- Previous success developing and implementing a major donor program and overseeing a successful capital campaign.
- Post-secondary degree in science and experience in teaching at either K-12 or higher education institution.
- Master's degree in public administration, business administration, or related field.
- Current or previous residency in Alaska.

CORE COMPETENCIES

The position requires the following competencies, as applicable to its level as responsibilities:

- Mission Alignment: Supports the Sitka Sound Science Center mission, values, and service commitments.
- Communication: Communicates clearly, professionally, and appropriately in English with relevant audiences.
- Collaboration: Works effectively with direct reports, colleagues, Board of Directors, and external stakeholders. Values and promotes collaboration across departments and teams and between internal team and external partners.
- Accountability: Follows through on commitments and accepts responsibility for work.
- Problem-Solving: Identifies issues, evaluates options, and recommends practical solutions.
- Organization and Planning: Prioritizes work, manages deadlines, and maintains accurate records.
- Integrity and Professionalism: Exercises sound judgment and protects confidential information.

WORKING CONDITIONS, PHYSICAL, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Work environment: Majority of work is office-based with some presence in on-site hatchery and field sites.
- Physical requirements: Office is in an historic building with accessibility challenges.
- Travel requirements: Periodic travel to meetings, conferences, and field sites in Alaska and the Lower 48, including but not limited to travel on small boats and planes.

- Schedule: Regular hours are Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm, this position involves work in the evenings and on weekends on a semi-regular basis.

- Organization will conduct a criminal background check following offer of employment.

Reasonable accommodations will be considered for qualified individuals with disabilities, consistent with applicable law.

POSITION DESCRIPTION ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, qualifications, or working conditions associated with the position.

The organization may revise this position description as operational needs change, consistent with applicable law and organizational policies. This document does not, by itself, create an employment contract or alter an at-will employment relationship.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed this position description and understand the general responsibilities and expectations of the position.

Employee name_____ Date_____

Employee signature_____ Date_____

Supervisor name_____ Date_____

Supervisor Signature_____ Date_____