

POSITION DESCRIPTION

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UPSTART***

The Opportunity

This is an incredible and unique opportunity to become the founding Executive Director of a not-for-profit organization, upSTART, dedicated to transforming the lives of youth through entrepreneurship. This venture capital-based enterprise is being initiated by a group of successful entrepreneurs with a powerful idea, a passion for serving at-risk teens, and an unwavering belief in their potential. The founding Executive Director will be depended upon to play a leading role in shaping and building the organization from the ground up. The opportunities are limitless, and the expectations are high.

Certain decisions have been made: the organization will be located in Cambridge, MA, where space is currently being negotiated; the first participants will be high school students; venture funding is committed for the first few years; initial research is underway; and some partnerships with other programs have begun to develop. However, much remains to be explored and determined. During the first two years tenure of the new Executive Director, the organization will be a work in progress.

The ideal candidate will have a passionate commitment to making a difference in young adult lives and will be strategic, opportunistic, resourceful, and versatile. His/her strengths will include creative thinking, rigorous exploration of ideas and data and focused execution. S/he will be adept at integrating the ideas of others, building consensus, and moving from idea to action. S/he will have a can-do attitude and a successful track record of cultivating synergetic relationships leading fruitful, innovative ventures that are known for their excellence. With high integrity, high energy, and a high level of versatility, the Executive Director will inspire staff, students, and the Board to collaborate in building a successful, sustainable organization that enriches the lives of its participants and the community of which it is a part.

Background

The founders of upSTART believe that the skills and experience developed through participation in entrepreneurial ventures can be valuable tools that give vulnerable youth a sense of the real power they have to impact their lives and create choices for their

* *working organization title*

futures. In a safe and stimulating after-school environment, while having fun and learning from adult role models and mentors, students will explore and experience the various dimensions of entrepreneurship, including community, teamwork, and responsibility, and experience how entrepreneurship can lead to economic self-sufficiency. upSTART programs will engage participants' creativity and nurture their entrepreneurial spirit, build a sense of confidence and accomplishment, and provide the community with new entrepreneurial ventures.

The Position

The Executive Director will report, initially, to the Founding Committee, and, once it has been established, to the Board of Directors. S/he will be responsible for the daily operation and overall performance of upSTART. S/he will work with the founders/Board to set strategic direction and shape policies and programs, and with staff around the details of programmatic, administrative, and financial systems. Visionary, and with strong operational skills, s/he will create an environment where great people can accomplish great things. S/he will be responsible for developing and nurturing the diverse partnerships and relationships that will enable the organization to build its programs and achieve its mission. The Executive Director will be the ambassador for the organization and will develop relationships with community leaders, businesses and the media to create awareness of and support for the organization and its programs.

It is envisioned that the Executive Director will hire a core founding staff of exceptional talent with the complementary skills to build the foundation and culture to advance the mission of the upSTART. S/he will ensure that resources are optimally leveraged and distributed, and that the organization is financially stable into the future. In the early days, months and years, the Executive Director will exhibit his/her versatility and enthusiasm for launching this venture by getting involved in everything from strategy to supporting staff and volunteers to making sure that facilities and basic support systems are in place for work to begin. An important initial challenge will be for upSTART to develop a unique identity that differentiates the organization and its contributions from other organizations.

Primary Responsibilities:

1. ***Work in partnership with the founders/Board to develop a long-term vision and clearly articulate the mission and strategic direction for the organization.***
 - Affirm the agency's mission and develop a clear vision for the organization over the next 1-3 years;
 - Support the Founders/Board with legal incorporation as a 501(3)c entity;

- Work actively with the Founders/Board to set organizational direction; and over the longer term, develop a strategic plan;
- Shape policy and ensure that common priorities are established by developing long and short-term organizational goals.

2. *Translate the vision into quality programs that achieve the mission.*

- Identify program goals based on research on community needs, available resources, and best practices and clearly define who will be served.
- Ensure that programs, initiatives and activities are an optimal investment and deployment of the organization's resources, that they are well evaluated, and that they are continuously reassessed and reshaped to achieve the organization's goals.
- Build and modify models to identify successful programs;
- Develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of programs.

3. *Build an organizational culture and working environment that reflect the values and guiding principles of the organization and the community.*

- Work with Founders/Board and staff to identify and nurture an inclusive, positive culture that reflects the organization's guiding principles (*integrity, respect, optimism, possibility, diversity*);
- Hire, retain, develop and supervise staff with complementary skills and attributes to support organizational goals.

4. *Build operational capacity and capability to support the mission and programs of the organization.*

- Put in place facilities, administrative and management systems, IT, and other infrastructure to efficiently and effectively support the organization and its goals;
- Oversee the development of the organization's administrative, financial, and organizational functions, maintaining high professional standards;
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws, rules and regulations;
- Ensure the fiscal integrity of the organization and manage the revenues, resources and governing structure in ways that best serve its interests and mission.

5. *Develop and cultivate a high-performance, valuable Board.*

- Promote ongoing development of a strong Board and keep Board members engaged and focused, making best use of their talents and resources;
- Keep the Founders/Board informed about the performance and the financial and organizational status of the organization, enabling the Founders/Board to make informed decisions that best support the agency and its mission;

6. *Create an organizational brand and a presence for upSTART.*

- Speak eloquently, persuasively and credibly about the organization and its mission in a variety of settings;
- Forge and develop a diverse range of relationships and partnerships with civic, corporate and not-for-profit organizations, community leaders and elected officials;

7. *Plan for growth and sustainability, both near- and long-term.*

- In the short-term, establish strong programs and build a reputation to serve as a foundation for successful fundraising.
- Devise and implement a development strategy that diversifies the current funding base by identifying and securing new and diversified sources of revenue, and seeking support from traditional and non-traditional sources (including major gifts and foundation support);
- Refine systems and programs continually to ensure the best use of resources and the highest quality, most effective programming.
- Create a learning culture by continuously monitoring and evaluating programs for opportunities to enrich and improve them; keep a finger on the pulse of the community and field to ensure that upSTART leverages opportunities to advance its mission.

Initial Priorities and Expectations

In the first 6-12 months, it is expected that the Executive Director will focus on the following priorities:

- Work with the Founders to clarify the vision and clearly articulate the mission and goals;

- Perform an environmental scan: continue to collect data on existing resources and needs in the community and best practices in the field;
- Establish initial programming;
- Develop performance management metrics;
- Articulate guiding principles and goals for organizational culture;
- Determine staffing needs and hire core founding staff;
- Determine roles for volunteers; begin recruitment and training;
- Establish credibility and cultivate strong, trusting community partnerships;
- Recruit youth and launch programs;
- Participate in Board development; and
- Do whatever it takes to create a successful venture

Qualifications

Experience

- An excitement and belief in the idea, and an ability to make it happen;
- Experience/expertise in not-for-profit environment;
- Demonstrated success in growing and building effective organizations;
- Expertise in at-risk youth services and programming;
- Strong skills in working with, cultivating and nurturing Boards of Directors;
- Proven ability to think and plan strategically and manage tactically (translate ideas into action);
- Excellent program development and operations skills;
- Proven success in securing diversified resources;
- A strong manager and team builder.

Attributes

- Understanding of the changing requirements of a start-up not-for profit throughout the stages of its establishment and growth;
- Ability to surround oneself with those with complementary skills;
- Can-do attitude; excited about change and resilient to failures;
- Multi-talented generalist who is creative and flexible;
- Versatility, integrity, energy and enthusiasm;
- Belief in, and commitment to, upSTART's mission;
- Strong manager who knows how to create high-performing teams;
- Thoughtful listener and compelling communicator who inspires confidence, enthusiasm, and action;

- Strong relationship- and partnership-builder who is comfortable acting as an external ambassador for the organization;
- Able to integrate many ideas and build consensus to move an organization forward;
- Strategic and forward-thinking, with an entrepreneurial spirit;
- Committed to excellence and quality;
- Able to identify, create and seize opportunities;
- Able to balance multiple priorities in a fast-paced environment; and
- Enjoys a challenge!

To apply, submit a resume and cover letter to admin@ecdonnely.com. We also welcome nominations and requests for information to the same address.

upSTART is an equal opportunity employer with a demonstrated commitment to hiring individuals who reflect the diversity of the communities it serves.