

Job Description

Chief Executive Officer Nurtury*

The Opportunity

Nurtury is an independent, nonprofit organization which provides Greater Boston's youngest, most vulnerable children the opportunity to reach their full potential. For over a century, Nurtury has been one of the city's largest providers of early education and care, currently serving over 1,200 children and their families at its six Early Education and Care Centers and its 125 affiliated Family Child Care sites.

This is an exciting opportunity for an accomplished, business savvy leader with a strong commitment to early education and care and a strong passion for making a difference in the lives of children, families and communities. The new CEO will lead an organization that has been an industry leader and work with a dedicated and committed Board of Directors and staff that have an appetite for growth in a field that is evolving and transforming. Reporting to the Board, the CEO will have the opportunity to be innovative and entrepreneurial and bring people and resources together to maximize Nurtury's impact and secure its future.

The ideal candidate will have proven success leading a fast-paced, multifaceted organization in a competitive and changing marketplace. They will bring the strategic thinking and pragmatic business and operations acumen needed to guide a diverse, community-based organization with complex administrative, financial, operational and service requirements through these challenging, yet exciting, times for early education.

A collaborative team builder who is able to both inspire and delegate, the CEO will work with the Board and senior staff to strengthen Nurtury's financial position, attract and retain talent, and continuously improve its services and enrich its offerings. Key to the new CEO's success will be their ability to clearly articulate Nurtury's value proposition to funders and outside stakeholders which includes providing an environment focused on children's healthy development and school readiness as well as supporting and strengthening families with young children.

Organizational Overview

Nurtury opened its first nursery in 1878 for the children of working mothers and grew to become the first early education and care center in New England. Almost 50 years ago, Nurtury opened its first early education center to care for abused and neglected infants and toddlers near the Mission Main Housing Development in Roxbury. Over time, Nurtury has broadened its approach to early education and care to include strengthening families and communities and has emerged as an industry leader, transforming its childcare services to include the delivery of high-quality educational programming to promote language, literacy, and social/emotional development of children in Greater Boston.

**Formerly known as Associated Day Care*

Nurtury is a richly diverse organization, ethnically, linguistically and culturally. Its Early and Education Care Centers and affiliated Family Child Care sites provide a range of services including academics, social/emotional development, nutritional and comprehensive family support, and professional development for their staff. In 2014, it opened its Learning Lab at the Mildred C. Hailey housing development with the goal of incorporating the most creative thinking and evidence-based practices and the long-term objective of becoming a replicable, national model for delivering early education and comprehensive family services in an urban area. While viewed as a state-of-the-art facility, it has yet to realize its full potential.

Nurtury also has a legacy of leadership in advocating for standards and establishing quality assurance measures in early education and child care. They founded the National Association of Nursery Educators in the 1920s – the precursor to the current National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – which is the leading professional organization in the field. Nurtury also worked with other local agencies to establish the Put Massachusetts Kids First campaign in 2014. This coalition focuses on stabilizing and strengthening the early education workforce to improve outcomes for children who benefit significantly from qualified educators.

Nurtury is operating in a highly regulated environment. Its budget is \$18 million; 90% of the children served are supported from government funds, whereas only 10% of them are full pay. The organization has struggled in the recent past to maintain a balanced budget, and though the deficit has been significantly reduced this year, like all similar publicly-funded organizations the funding model can be insufficient and, at times, unpredictable.

[Nurtury Today](#)

Nurtury is at a critical juncture. In 2018, after the retirement of the long-tenured CEO, the Board brought on an interim CEO, Mary Kay Leonard, to ensure that Nurtury remains a vital and productive organization. Ms. Leonard is a well-regarded executive with leadership experience in both the private and public sectors and knowledge about early childhood education. With the support of the Board, she put in place a plan to strengthen the organization's financials, focus on program quality improvements, and rebuild its leadership team.

Over the last year, under the interim CEO's guidance, a new CFO has been hired, teacher salaries have increased resulting in improved retention and morale, there has been a significant decrease in open teaching positions, current enrollment is ahead of the last three years and the operating deficit has been substantially reduced. Given recent progress and Nurtury's visibility and positive reputation, its history of attracting funding from local, state, and federal government and foundations, and its team of dedicated staff and Board members, the new CEO will have a strong foundation upon which to build.

CEO Transition: The new CEO will have the opportunity – and responsibility – to work with the Board to use this transition period to continue the focus on operational improvements while defining Nurtury's future direction. A successful transition will include continuing to build a strong leadership team and staff, promoting a culture of inclusion, openness and teamwork, ensuring a high level of accountability and developing a compelling vision and strategy for the future.

The Commonwealth's early childhood education environment, including Greater Boston, is experiencing unprecedented change. Teacher shortages are impacting programs, while competition from public school early education initiatives and demographic shifts in the communities served are affecting

enrollment. Delivery organizations like Nurtury, while focused on maintaining quality, are working in a highly regulated environment with inadequate financial reimbursement. Nurtury will need to clearly define its niche, communicating its value to funders and other stakeholders in order to diversify revenue streams, and explore new business models and partnerships which could enhance the organization's impact, reach and financial stability.

The CEO Role: Scope and Responsibilities

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO will provide leadership, set direction and shape policy while overseeing day-to-day management and being accountable for overall performance. The new CEO will build organizational capacities and capabilities, foster growth as appropriate, and ensure quality services and financial sustainability for the future.

The new CEO will be transparent, communicate openly, and cultivate trusting relationships and partnerships. They will invest in Nurtury's future through innovation and the use of smart business practices. Given these challenging times, it will be incumbent upon the CEO to strike an effective balance between internal management responsibilities and external fundraising, strategic partnership development, and design of new and enhanced services.

Specific responsibilities

Lead the organization and work in concert with the Board to develop the Nurtury of the future

- Work with the Board and staff to develop a clear vision, strategic plan and short- and long-term goals, translating them into action in a way that continues to promote excellence
 - Assess the current and future market conditions and Nurtury's competitive position
 - Evaluate the current program offerings and financial models and explore new models and revenue streams
 - Identify best practices and other opportunities
- Balance the passion for the mission with the responsibility to effectively run a business

Oversee and support the senior leadership team and staff in enhancing and improving Nurtury's operations and programs

- People and Culture
 - Cultivate a personal connection to Nurtury's staff and inspire them in their daily work, setting the tone for a culture that reflects Nurtury's values and celebrates its diversity
 - Develop a dedicated senior leadership team who are empowered to make decisions
 - Work to retain, recruit and develop a team who are skilled and devoted to the mission
 - Cultivate a culture of openness and fairness that supports staff and encourages teamwork
 - Evaluate organizational structure and improve coordination and consistency across sites
- Programs
 - Continue to implement and build off the existing plan, focusing on staffing, professional development, performance management and quality assurance and consistency
 - Encourage high professional standards with a focus on program innovation, excellence and accountability
 - Review, and improve as necessary, internal policies, procedures and programs
 - Develop processes to improve partnerships with families and support them in the future education of their children

- Strengthen strategic community partnerships to improve and expand services offered to children and families
- Ensure compliance with all federal and state legal and regulatory requirements

Establish long-term financial sustainability by building on current business models while developing and securing new and ongoing revenue streams

- Ensure enrollment remains strong, while continually aligning the capacity and type of slots with demand
- Expand the number of full-pay families to diversify/broaden the mix of the student body and revenue opportunities
- Continue to expand Nurtury’s family child care system
- Implement dashboards and other systems to provide timely and accurate data, analysis and other information to better make decisions
- Ensure that the organization is maximizing the benefits of its size and scale
- Enhance development capacity and build new revenue-generating products/partnerships that align with and complement Nurtury’s mission
 - Steward and grow current and develop new public and private funders and donors
 - Identify new mutually beneficial partnerships
 - Lead the identification of new revenue-generating products and partnerships

Serve as the face of Nurtury and as its ambassador.

- Speak eloquently, persuasively and credibly about Nurtury and its mission in a range of settings
- Enhance the organization’s visibility and the recognition of its expertise in early education and care and its role in serving vulnerable children and their families
- Negotiate effectively in the best interests of Nurtury and the communities it serves
- Serve as a thought leader in shaping early education policy in a variety of forums and at the local, state and federal level
- Advocate effectively for support of Nurtury and early education and care with government agencies and elected and appointed officials
- Work actively to forge a diverse range of trusting collaborations and partnerships with key stakeholder groups that are vital to Nurtury’s performance and operations

Work effectively in partnership with the Board of Directors, maintaining regular and open communication.

- Promote and maintain transparency
- Enable the Board to make informed decisions: communicate effectively about organizational performance as well as environmental factors that impact Nurtury’s work and opportunities
- Help to expand and continue to develop a strong Board, exploring composition and governance
- Leverage Board members’ talents and encourage their engagement

Initial Priorities and Expectations

In the first 12–18 months, the CEO will be expected to:

- Create a smooth transition resulting in a clear vision and strategic plan for moving forward
 - Listen and learn: develop an understanding of Nurtury, its work culture and the communities it serves

- Nurture a positive culture that is focused on maintaining high performance standards, accountability and enrollment, enhancing program quality and ensuring regulatory integrity and financial health
- Establish credibility as Nurtury’s leader, both internally and externally
 - Build mutual trust and a strong working relationship with the Board and staff
 - Cultivate relationships with key stakeholders
 - Maintain existing partnerships and explore new opportunities to collaborate
 - Be transparent – communicate openly and frequently to all interested parties
- Steer Nurtury through uncertain times, ensuring it has the agility to adapt to funding and regulatory changes, expand revenue streams, and retain its position and role in the broader ECC conversation

Qualifications

Proven leader who is respected by virtue of their accomplishments and embraces Nurtury’s mission

- Visionary, strategic, pragmatic and innovative
- Successful leadership and oversight of operations, finance, administration and strategic planning and execution for complex, multi-site organizations serving vulnerable populations
- Skillful at working at the intersection of education, human services, health care, government, politics and business
- Proactive, with an entrepreneurial mindset; skilled at recognizing/creating opportunities and leveraging resources
- Able to balance the need to be both externally and internally focused
- Projects calm, confidence and stability
- Reflects the communities Nurtury serves

Gifted communicator, listener and relationship-builder

- Highly effective and compelling communicator; persuasive; comfortable with a wide variety of audiences and settings
- Able to inspire trust, credibility and support
- Strong advocate for the organization and for the vulnerable in our communities
- Strong interpersonal skills and comfortable working with individuals and groups from diverse racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Effective negotiator; able to get people to “yes”

Exceptional manager

- Able to motivate and build high-performing, collaborative teams; values professional development and growth
- Strong belief in accountability and transparency at all levels of an organization
- Financial acumen, fiscal stewardship and track record of diversifying revenue
- Energy and vision, with the ability to execute
- Change agent who has a proven ability to conceptualize and develop strategies to overcome challenges and bring people together to forge solutions

Knowledgeable about:

- Challenges faced by vulnerable populations, particularly in education
- Community-based organizations

- Business systems and process improvement
- Developing and working with nonprofit boards
- Advanced degree(s) preferred

E. Catlin Donnelly & Associates is conducting the search. Please do not apply directly to Nurtury.

To nominate a candidate, or to apply, forward resume and cover letter in confidence to:

E. Catlin Donnelly & Associates at nurtury@ecdonnaelny.com

Nurtury provides equal employment opportunity to all persons, regardless of age, race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or non-disqualifying physical or mental disability. We value diversity and are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming work environment.