



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POSITION PROFILE

2025

This is a unique opportunity for a dynamic, mission-driven leader to shape the future of KOOTASCA Community Action and make a profound impact on the lives of individuals and families across the region.



POSITION OVERVIEW

POSITION

Executive Director

LOCATION

Grand Rapids, Minnesota (In-person Leadership Required)

IDEAL CANDIDATE SUMMARY

KOOTASCA Community Action seeks a mission-aligned, strategic, and compassionate leader for the role of Executive Director. The ideal candidate will:

- Foster resilience and innovation within the organization, leading KOOTASCA to adapt and thrive amidst changing community needs.
- Balance financial stewardship with a commitment to community engagement and internal cohesion.
- Prioritize building strong community partnerships, fostering an inclusive organizational culture, and ensuring financial and operational stability to support and expand KOOTASCA's impact.

With a blend of visionary leadership and practical expertise, the next Executive Director will drive meaningful progress toward KOOTASCA's mission of "Building Community to End Poverty", reinforcing the agency's role as a trusted resource within the community.

APPLICATIONS OPEN

January 1, 2025

APPLICATIONS CLOSED

February 28, 2025

DESIRED START DATE

July 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS



| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Roots and Reach | 1 – 5 |
| • Role in the Community | 6 |
| • Responsibilities that Matter | 7 |
| • Requirements for Success | 8 |
| • Resilient Culture | 9 |
| • Rewards of Leadership | 10 |
| • Route to Apply | 11 |

ABOUT US

ROOTS

For 60 years, KOOTASCA Community Action, Inc. has been a reliable force for positive change. Founded in 1965 during the launch of the national Community Action movement, we were built on a foundation of local governance, grassroots engagement, and poverty reduction.

Over the decades, we have evolved to meet the unique needs of rural communities, embracing new challenges while remaining steadfast in our commitment to equity and opportunity.

REACH

With a primary office in Grand Rapids and an additional footprint in International Falls, KOOTASCA covers an extensive geographic area and manages an annual budget of \$10 million with a diverse portfolio of federal, state, and private funding. The organization's tripartite board of directors ensures a balanced governance model, drawing voices from elected officials, community stakeholders, and low-income residents. This ensures that KOOTASCA's programs are shaped by the people it serves and centered on promoting the interest of those experiencing poverty.

Our 100 staff members, many with long tenures, work across multiple sites within Itasca and Koochiching counties to deliver programs that address both immediate needs and long-term stability. Through services like early childhood education, housing support, and crisis assistance, we reach more than 3,500 households annually helping individuals and families create pathways to a better future.



ABOUT OUR AREA

KOOTASCA Community Action serves the expansive and diverse regions of Itasca County and Koochiching County, two rural areas in northern Minnesota. These counties encompass a blend of scenic natural landscapes, strong communities, and unique challenges, making the role of Executive Director both impactful and deeply rewarding.

Itasca County - Nestled in Minnesota's Northwoods, Itasca County is home to Grand Rapids, KOOTASCA's headquarters and the region's largest city. With over 1,000 lakes and vast forestlands, it offers a blend of rural charm and small-town vibrancy. Its 45,000 residents benefit from industries like forestry, healthcare, education, and manufacturing, alongside a strong emphasis on arts, outdoor living, and community engagement.

Koochiching County - Bordering Canada, Koochiching County features International Falls, KOOTASCA's secondary office location and the gateway to Voyageurs National Park. Known as the "Icebox of the Nation," the county's 12,000 residents thrive in industries such as paper manufacturing, tourism, and cross-border trade, creating a close-knit community ideal for KOOTASCA's mission to foster opportunity and connection.

Together, these counties represent a dynamic and interconnected region where KOOTASCA works to address systemic barriers, build stronger communities, and foster sustainable development.

LIVING AND WORKING IN GRAND RAPIDS

While the Executive Director's work spans both counties, Grand Rapids is KOOTASCA's organizational and cultural hub. Nestled in Itasca County, it offers a vibrant mix of natural beauty, small-town charm, and urban amenities, with abundant opportunities for recreation, education, and economic activity.



Grand Rapids is ideal for outdoor enthusiasts, with access to over 1,000 lakes and year-round activities like hiking, biking, fishing, snowmobiling, and skiing. The city's thriving arts scene features the Reif Performing Arts Center, local galleries, and the Judy Garland Museum. Known for its family-friendly environment, Grand Rapids offers excellent schools, safe neighborhoods, and lifelong learning opportunities through Itasca Community College. Its diverse economy, driven by healthcare, education, tourism, and forestry, is complemented by a lively downtown with shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions.

MISSION

VISION & VALUES

Building Community to End Poverty

At KOOTASCA, our **mission** is simple yet profound. It is both a call to action and a guiding principle. Every program we offer, every partnership we build, and every success we celebrate moves us closer to a future where poverty no longer defines the opportunities available to individuals and families.

Our **vision** for the future is ambitious:

- Poverty is eliminated through engaged leadership and strategic partnerships.
- Communities thrive together, recognizing the interconnectedness of individual and collective well-being.
- Opportunity is accessible to all, regardless of background, income, or circumstance.

We are driven by these **core values**:

- Every individual deserves fairness, respect, dignity, and opportunity.
- Strong relationships with public and private partners create community success.
- Transparency and responsible stewardship are at the heart of everything we do.
- We embrace challenges with creativity and adaptability, focused on sustainable impact.

These principles serve as the foundation for KOOTASCA's efforts to address the root causes of poverty and build pathways to prosperity.

IMPACTFUL PROGRAMS

KOOTASCA offers diverse programs that address immediate needs while fostering long-term stability. We take a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty, ensuring that our services not only ease the burden of poverty but also empower individuals to thrive.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Our Head Start and Early Head Start programs empower children and families by providing a strong foundation for educational success and lifelong stability.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & STABILIZATION

Programs like Housing Development, HomeOwnership, Rental Assistance, Energy Assistance, and Weatherization keep families housed, warm, and safe during northern Minnesota's harsh winters.

BIG VIEW

This program provides a platform for community engagement and dialogue, addressing the systemic, social, and policy barriers that perpetuate poverty, while amplifying the voices and dignity of those impacted.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- **3,500+ households served annually**
- **100+ staff members across two counties**
- **\$10+ million operating budget**
- **8,000+ annual volunteer hours**
- **138 valuable partnerships with community organizations**

KOOTASCA is not just a service provider; it is a partner in community transformation. Whether helping a family secure their first home, guiding a teen parent toward graduation, or assisting with food or housing insecurity, KOOTASCA's work reflects the power of community action to change lives.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our future is guided by six key strategic priorities, developed during our 2024 strategic visioning session, to ensure sustainability, growth, and community impact.

These priorities reflect our commitment to building communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Strengthen our cash reserves with an emphasis on unrestricted funds for long-term stability.

DIVERSIFIED FUNDING STREAMS

Build sustainable funding sources beyond government grants to secure our future.

EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Promote excellence in recruitment, onboarding, and professional development.

COMMUNITY HOUSING PRESERVATION

Rehabilitate affordable housing to meet local needs and ensure sustainable living options.

MISSION CLARITY AND COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

Amplify our communications and strategic partnerships to enhance our impact.

EXPANSION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Increase access to infant and toddler care to support early development in our communities.

ROLE

IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Executive Director serves as KOOTASCA's primary leader and advocate, actively participating in shaping the organization's strategy and ensuring the agency meets the needs of the communities it serves. This role is integral to maintaining KOOTASCA's dual focus on internal operations and external impact, ensuring alignment between staff, board, partners, and the broader community.

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



Externally, the Executive Director is the public face and voice of KOOTASCA in both Itasca and Koochiching counties, building strong relationships with community partners, public officials, and key stakeholders. This leader engages with local residents to ensure KOOTASCA's services reflect the needs of the region and advocates for policies and partnerships that align with the agency's mission.

Through strategic partnerships with government entities, nonprofits, and businesses, the Executive Director ensures KOOTASCA's work contributes to systemic change. They will also represent KOOTASCA on boards, in coalitions, and at community events, building the agency's reputation as a trusted leader in the fight against poverty.

INTERNAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



Internally, the Executive Director provides high-level oversight and leadership to a staff of 100 employees, fostering an environment of collaboration, professional growth, and shared accountability. This leader works closely with and develops the Board of Directors and senior staff to translate strategic goals into actionable plans while maintaining operational excellence.

The Executive Director ensures effective cross-departmental collaboration, promoting teamwork across KOOTASCA's diverse programs and locations. They also provide ongoing mentorship to the leadership team, supporting staff retention and well-being, and ensuring that every employee feels connected to the mission.

RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MATTER

As a multi-dimensional leader, the Executive Director will oversee essential areas that uphold our mission and community impact. The Executive Director's responsibilities combine visionary leadership, financial and operational oversight, community advocacy, and organizational health. This role is central to ensuring our programs and initiatives align with our mission and drive positive, lasting change.

STRATEGIC VISION & LEADERSHIP

The Executive Director shapes and drives KOOTASCA's strategic direction in collaboration with the Board of Directors and leadership team. They ensure the organization remains focused on its mission and adapts to meeting the changing needs of the community.

TEAM BUILDING & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The Executive Director fosters a positive, mission-driven work culture where employees feel empowered to contribute their best. This leader must inspire collaboration, professional growth, and shared accountability that strengthen the organization's internal capacity and ensure long-term success.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT & SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable financial management is essential to the future of KOOTASCA. The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the agency's budget and fund development efforts, ensuring the effective use of resources while building financial resilience.

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT & EVALUATION

Ensuring KOOTASCA's programs remain relevant and effective is at the heart of this role. The Executive Director oversees the design, delivery, and continuous improvement of programs to meet evolving community needs.

ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Executive Director acts as the voice of KOOTASCA, advocating for the agency's mission and the needs of the community. This role involves building and maintaining relationships with public officials, funders, and community partners.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Our next Executive Director is a mission-driven, compassionate leader who is deeply committed to KOOTASCA's goal of ending poverty. They will prioritize community well-being in every decision, demonstrating empathy and a strong focus on social impact.
- This individual values inclusiveness and cultural competence, creating a diverse, respectful environment where all voices are heard. They will have a strong ability to engage diverse stakeholders and represent community perspectives, ensuring our work is inclusive and relevant to all.
- By fostering openness and transparency, they build trust with the Board, staff, and community partners, encouraging collaboration and confidence in our mission.
- Resilient, adaptable, and humble, this leader is prepared to navigate challenges with flexibility and optimism, responding to changing needs with authenticity and a grounded approach.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Educationally, the ideal candidate holds a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, such as nonprofit management, public administration, or organizational leadership, with a preference for candidates holding advanced degrees.
- This leader should bring significant experience in nonprofit or community-focused leadership, ideally within the social services sector, with proven expertise in managing diverse teams, financial oversight, and program delivery.

ABOVE ALL

The ideal candidate will embody KOOTASCA's core values—equity, collaboration, integrity, and resilience—with a visionary yet approachable style, uniting the team and community to create impactful, sustainable programs that effectively address and respond to the needs of those they serve, building stronger communities and creating pathways out of poverty.

RESILIENT CULTURE

KOOTASCA Community Action's culture is built on collaboration, trust, and shared purpose, with resilience at the heart of our operations. The Executive Director plays a pivotal role in cultivating this culture, fostering an environment where employees feel supported, engaged, and empowered.



Resilience is more than a value—it is embedded in KOOTASCA's day-to-day operations. The Executive Director ensures that cross-departmental collaboration is a foundation for success, breaking down silos and encouraging teamwork. Staff engagement and professional development opportunities help employees feel connected to the agency's mission and strategic direction.



By investing in mentorship, training, and leadership development, the Executive Director promotes long-term retention and builds a pipeline of future leaders. This leader also guides the organization through external challenges—such as shifts in funding or policy changes—while maintaining a steady focus on the mission.



KOOTASCA's resilient culture is rooted in strong relationships among employees, board members, and community partners. The Executive Director will ensure that these relationships continue to thrive, creating a cohesive team that is essential for operational excellence and meaningful community impact.

REWARDS OF LEADERSHIP

KOOTASCA Community Action offers a competitive compensation and benefits package designed to attract and retain exceptional leadership talent. While the starting salary will be determined prior to hiring, the range is \$110,000 to \$150,000 aligning with industry standards and regional benchmarks and will reflect the scope and importance of this role.

The Executive Director will have access to health, dental, and life insurance, ensuring essential coverage for themselves and their families. A retirement plan with employer contributions provides financial security for the future. Paid time off encourages work-life balance, and professional development opportunities support continuous learning and growth.

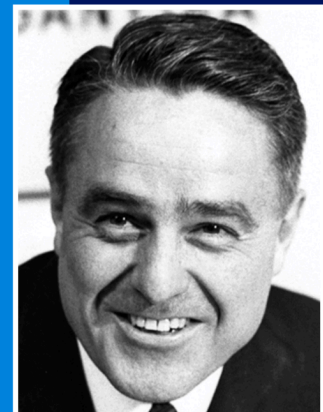
Beyond financial rewards, this role offers the opportunity to drive meaningful change in the lives of thousands of individuals and families. Working alongside a mission-driven team, the Executive Director will shape the future of KOOTASCA and contribute to the well-being of the communities it serves.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are local organizations founded to combat poverty by empowering communities to address issues of economic inequality and to provide resources like job training, housing assistance, and education. Sargent Shriver played a crucial role in establishing CAAs as part of the War on Poverty during the 1960s, envisioning them as a way to give communities direct control over federal resources to tackle local poverty challenges.

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Serve, serve, serve. Because in the end, it will be the servants who save us all.

— Sargent Shriver



ROUTE TO APPLY



Applications will be accepted beginning January 1, 2025, with a closing date of February 28, 2025.

To Apply:

- **Visit:** kootasca.org/executive-director-search/
- **Prepare:** Resume and cover letter detailing your interest in the role and alignment with KOOTASCA's mission.
- **Email:** Submit application & supporting Documents to martac@kootasca.org with "Executive Director Application" in the subject line.

Anticipated Selection Timeline:

- **February 28, 2025:** Application deadline
- **May 15, 2025:** Candidate selection and Board interview process concludes
- **July 2025:** Desired start date

Learn more about KOOTASCA:

- **Reports:** kootasca.org/about/reports/
- **IRS Form 990:** apps.irs.gov/app/eos EIN 41-0904805
- **Facebook:** [facebook.com/KOOTASCA](https://www.facebook.com/KOOTASCA)
- **Instagram:** [instagram.com/kootascacommunityaction](https://www.instagram.com/kootascacommunityaction)

In the News:

- bit.ly/KAXEKlobuchar
- bit.ly/HubGrandOpening
- bit.ly/BigView
- bit.ly/AlexanderBakerApts

Learn more about our Area:

- **City of Grand Rapids:** cityofgrandrapidsmn.com
- **Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce:** grandmn.com
- **Visit Grand Rapids:** visitgrandrapids.com
- **Koochiching County:** co.koochiching.mn.us
- **Voyageurs National Park:** nps.gov/voya
- **Reif Performing Arts Center:** reifcenter.org