



Executive Director

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

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Closing Date: 2026-04-17
Salary: \$195,000 - 235,000

Description:

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is an award-winning government agency located 20 miles west of Chicago. It is a nationally recognized conservation organization that envisions a community in which all citizens share a meaningful connection with nature and an appreciation for cultural history. The District works to acquire and protect lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, and associated plant communities, as well as areas capable of being restored to these natural conditions, in order to preserve native flora, fauna, and scenic beauty. These efforts support a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities designed to enhance the community's understanding, enjoyment, and stewardship of its natural resources.

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's Board of Commissioners is seeking an experienced, creative, politically savvy, mission-driven senior executive to serve as the agency's full-time executive director. This position supervises senior management and reports to the paid, partisan, publicly elected seven-member board. It also ensures the Forest Preserve District sustains its reputation as a model agency in Illinois and throughout the region and country.

For detailed information on this opening, [click here to view the Opportunity Guide.](#)

Essential Duties

- Lead senior management and oversee key programs, projects, and workforce planning to optimize operational efficiency and achieve organizational mission and objectives.
- Develop and manage the district's budget, ensuring responsible financial stewardship, compliance with regulations, and providing the Board with comprehensive data-driven insights.
- Oversee talent management, including hiring, promotions, performance evaluation, and staff development, to cultivate a skilled, engaged, and high-performing workforce.
- Structure the district's workforce by assessing operational needs and creating, amending, or eliminating positions as necessary to maximize effectiveness.
- Serve as the primary liaison between staff, the Board, and the public, ensuring transparent communication, policy execution, and alignment on strategic initiatives.

- Lead community engagement efforts, representing the district in public forums, media engagements, and government relations to strengthen partnerships and advocacy efforts.
- Foster an inclusive and engaged organizational culture that encourages collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement across all district operations.
- Provide guidance on policy development, legislative initiatives, and regulatory compliance to support the district's long-term success.
- Promote the development of team capabilities and enhance organizational effectiveness through the cultivation of interdepartmental cooperation, cohesive planning, and seamless exchange of information among subordinates and colleagues to ensure department objectives are in line with the district's mission and values.
- Provide ongoing feedback, coaching, and counseling in a constructive manner, and confront challenging situations directly with a positive approach, aiming to support and mentor employees in their development and progress.
- Resolve and rectify issues, prioritize based on gravity and urgency, analyze the root cause, gather relevant information, develop and evaluate viable solutions, decide on the most effective and logical solution, and plan and execute implementation.
- Supervise staff, including hiring, scheduling, and assigning work, reviewing performance, and recommending salary increases, promotions, transfers, demotions, corrective actions, or terminations.
- Foster a working environment that promotes safe work habits; become familiar with and observe all applicable safety rules, policies, and work procedures; follow all safety rules that pertain to the duties performed and support all aspects of the district's safety and risk management program; keep work area clean, orderly, and free of hazards; immediately report all unsafe conditions and incidents.
- Maintain a supportive working environment and demonstrate a desire to exceed the expectations of internal and external customers.
- Perform other duties as required.

Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Natural Resource Management, or related field; master's degree preferred; 8 years of progressive leadership experience at government, public, nonprofit or corporate agency of similar size and scope with demonstrated ability to manage staff; or equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.
- Valid Driver's License in good standing.
- Understanding and ability to communicate and enforce governmental administrative and budget-related practices and procedures, proven track record in financial management, budget preparation and management, purchasing and contracts, and revenue-increasing strategies.
- Ability to communicate and build strong relationships with diverse interest groups such as staff, volunteers, elected officials, partner organizations, and the general public.
- Understanding and ability to follow local, state, and federal legislation and regulations relating to forest preserves, land preservation, and conservation in general.
- Ability to advocate for the preservation of natural resources and issues affecting DuPage County, the Forest Preserve District, and county residents.
- Ability to develop, plan, and administer programs to achieve agency objectives.
- Change-management experience and conflict-resolution skills.
- Proven success in building strong and productive teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development.
- Effective written and verbal communication skills and strong public speaking and presentation skills.

Compensation and Benefits

- The starting salary range for this position is \$195,000 to \$235,000.
- The Forest Preserve District offers a competitive benefits program, including participation in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, medical and dental insurance, life insurance, paid leave programs, and additional voluntary benefits.

To Apply

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other legally protected categories.

To apply, a candidate should submit a cover letter, resume, and digital application through the online employment portal. A link to the portal is online at dupageforest.org/get-involved/work-with-us.

To ensure confidential tracking of all applications, inquiries will not be accepted by phone or email. The deadline to apply is April 17, 2026.