



Towards Employment

Chief Executive Officer

Cleveland, OH

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OUR CLIENT

Towards Employment is a nationally respected, Cleveland, OH-based workforce development nonprofit with a 50-year track record of helping people overcome barriers to employment and advance toward family-sustaining careers. Grounded in equity, partnership, and accountability, Towards Employment combines hands-on training, wrap-around support, and employer engagement to open doors to careers that transform lives and strengthen communities. TE serves over 2000 people annually and has steadily increased job placements, earned credentials, starting wages and career advancements year over year. The organization is seeking its next President and CEO to replace its long-tenured retiring leader.

POSITION SUMMARY

A Strong Foundation and a Bright Future

The President and CEO provides strategic and operational leadership for all aspects of Towards Employment's mission — championing equitable access to quality employment and economic mobility. The role encompasses stewardship of resources, storytelling and advocacy designed to change narratives, partnerships with public and private sectors, and leadership of a talented, mission-driven team.



This is a rare leadership opportunity. The organization operates with fiscal strength and a strong government funding base, even during pandemic-era volatility and public funding shifts. With a staff of 70 and an \$8 million budget, Towards Employment (TE) is widely viewed as a trusted and impactful partner across Cleveland's workforce ecosystem.

Culturally, Towards Employment “walks the walk.” Staff at all levels are encouraged to participate, and TE hires from the communities it serves. The board is highly engaged and collegial and is deeply committed to supporting the next President and CEO. With only three chief executives across its 50-year history — the current one serving 20 years — stability, integrity, and mission focus combined with embrace of innovation are at TE's core.

The next President and CEO will join at an exciting moment: the board has deliberately postponed launching a new strategic plan until the new leader is on board, signaling genuine partnership in shaping Towards Employment's future. The board is also highly invested in providing the next leader with a map and the time they need to successfully integrate into the community and team-build with the staff senior leadership team. A planned large-format event celebrating TE's 50th anniversary in the fall of 2026 creates a perfect springboard for the new leader to build relationships and jumpstart their work.

For more information, please visit towardsemployment.org

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Strategic Leadership and Vision. Shape and implement a bold multi-year strategic plan that builds on TE position as an innovative force in equitable workforce development.
- Board Partnership and Governance. Partner closely with a highly engaged board to drive strategic decisions, governance excellence, and shared organizational success.
- Program and Impact Oversight. Ensure delivery of high-impact programs that connect participants facing barriers to training, support services, and quality career pathways.
- Financial Stewardship and Funding Model. Maintain financial health through government contracts, grants, and earned income while optimizing resources for maximum mission impact.
- Revenue Development. Grow and diversify funding through individual philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and mission-aligned revenue opportunities.
- Policy, Advocacy and External Relations. Serve as the organization's chief ambassador, building bridges with employers, funders, policymakers, and community partners and advocating for policies and investments that strengthen the region's workforce system and support TE's participants and employer partners.
- Organizational Management and Talent. Build and lead a diverse, high-performing team culture that reflects TE's values of equity, collaboration, and staff well-being.
- Compliance, Risk Management and Operations. Safeguard the organization through strong compliance, risk management, and operational infrastructure to support growth and stability.

Our 2025 Impact



QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- Minimum of 8–10 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in workforce development, human services, community development, or a closely related field.
- Demonstrated experience managing complex, multi-source budgets that include government contracts, foundation grants, and earned revenue.
- Proven track record of successful partnership-building with public systems, employers, philanthropy, and community organizations.
- Experience building and/or maintaining an inclusive, positive culture where diverse opinions and perspectives are sought and nurtured.
- A bachelor's or advanced degree in public administration, business, social work, public policy, or related field is preferred but not required.
- Strong strategic and systems thinking, with the ability to translate vision into clear priorities, operating plans, and measurable outcomes.
- Excellent communication skills, including public speaking and storytelling.
- Strong networking and relationship-building skills among diverse stakeholders and communities.
- Demonstrated commitment to economic inclusion, and participant-centered program design.
- Ability to lead through change, manage complexity, and make data-informed decisions in a dynamic funding and policy environment.

KEY COMPETENCIES AND CHARACTERISTICS



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- Passionate advocate for the mission
- Executive presence
- Collaborative leader
- Strong relationship builder
- Transparency
- Trustworthiness
- Compassion and empathy
- Strategic Thinking
- Innovation and Creative Thinking
- High Emotional Intelligence

FOR CONSIDERATION

If you are an exceptional leader who is deeply passionate about advocating for enhanced workforce development and wrap-around services, we are very interested in speaking with you. Please submit your interest in confidence to:

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