



New Yorkers For Children Executive Director

New York, NY

The Search

New Yorkers For Children (NYFC), a public private partnership that collaborates with New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS), is seeking an Executive Director. There are approximately 11,000 children in foster care in New York City that are under the care of ACS. Close to forty percent of this population are teenagers, and NYFC devotes much of its focus and resources to the nearly 1,000 children who age out of foster care each year. These youth are forced to make difficult transitions into adulthood, often without traditional family support. Government funding cannot provide much of what is needed to help them with the unique and complex challenges they face. New Yorkers For Children aims to fill that void, providing the support, guidance, and opportunities that every child deserves.

The partnership with ACS is central to NYFC's identity and provides it with a unique opportunity to have an impact on the entire child welfare system as a thought leader, incubator, and strategic grantmaker. This partnership is most effective when NYFC and ACS collaborate on initiatives seeking to test best practices in New York City. The initiatives include evaluations to further the knowledge base of the field. In addition, NYFC runs six of their own programs.

The NYFC Executive Director reports to an active 32-member Board of Directors and oversees a talented and dedicated seven-person staff. The organization's yearly budget is approximately \$4.5 million.

The previous Executive Director served NYFC for 12 years and will be stepping down at the end of 2015. Under her leadership, New Yorkers For Children has grown dramatically. This is an exciting opportunity to build on an impressive foundation, meaningfully improve the lives of children throughout New York City and guide a respected and effective organization to the next level of impact. The position calls for a talented leader with outstanding strategic, management and political skills and a demonstrated commitment to New Yorkers For Children's mission and vision. Building on the organization's reputation as a catalyst for programmatic innovation, increasing and diversifying its sources of funding, and continuing to manage the staff and the finances effectively are key priorities for the incoming leader.

Background

New Yorkers For Children was founded in 1996 by Nicholas Scopetta, who was then Commissioner for New York City's Administration of Children's Services and who had spent time in foster care as a child. During his leadership of ACS, the agency completed a widely praised overhaul of the city's child welfare system. The goal of New Yorkers For Children was to improve the prospects of children in the child welfare system and to engage New Yorkers in that effort. As ACS's private partner, NYFC raised money for programs to supplement the work of the city agency.

Things have changed a great deal in New York City's child welfare system since NYFC was founded in 1996. While there are many fewer children in foster care today, the population has multiple and more serious problems and there are shrinking resources to address their needs. As they become young adults, youth in foster care are entering a world that is faster paced, more competitive and more technologically sophisticated than the world of 20 years ago. New Yorkers For Children is committed to identifying the most effective programs to prepare them emotionally, intellectually and financially for adulthood.

NYFC Today

Each year, almost 1,000 foster youth older than 18 age out of the system in New York City. Half of all former youth in foster care in NYC ages 21-24, about 1,800 young adults, are likely to be out of work. Of those who are employed, almost a third are working part-time. Among those who are unemployed, there are tragically high rates of incarceration and homelessness. With the proper tools and support, great progress can be made in helping these individuals access and hold onto employment that leads to self-sufficiency and life-long success.

NYFC is currently collaborating with ACS and funding programs aimed at improving the lives of transition age youth in foster care. Among them are:

Civil Service Pathways for Youth in Foster Care and Juvenile Justice

ACS is developing a program designed to support the readiness of young people to compete and secure civil service positions. ACS' Office of Child and Youth Initiatives (OCYI) will recruit youth in foster care and coordinate with the Division of Youth and Family Justice to identify youth in non-secure placements that express an interest in applying for a civil service exam.

College and Career Matrix for Youth in Foster Care

The ACS Office of Education Support and Policy Planning (OESPP) will institute a community scan in neighborhoods where a large number of teens in foster care reside to determine existing educational and vocational resources. An advisor will create a College and Career Asset Map to showcase services and opportunities and will develop a direct referral system that will track a student's inquiry from start to finish including an after-referral outcome assessment.

Driver's Education for ACS-Involved Youth

ACS will explore the feasibility of training young people with ACS involvement in driver's education including planning for a new initiative that would be implemented on a wider-scale.

Part of the feasibility assessment would include engaging driving schools with particular attention to those offering a driving career track.

LGBTQ Population Count & Youth Climate Survey

ACS will design and conduct a two-phase LGBTQ foster care population count and youth climate survey. The goal of these two phases is to learn how to best design and implement this survey system-wide, to establish a baseline estimate of LGBTQ youth in foster care, and to gain a better understanding of what the climate is like for these young people.

New Yorkers For Children also has programs that provide services to those in foster care. Among them are:

Youth CAN!

This is a pipeline program founded in 2013 to empower youth in foster care, ages 18-23, with the crucial skills, knowledge and support to become competitive in the marketplace. The program consists of an 11 week summer intensive professional skills workshop series. Upon completion of the workshops, our participants have the opportunity to be placed into part-time paid internships with our partner organizations, North Shore-LIJ Health System and Walgreens/Duane Reade, which provides additional hands-on career training.

The Back-to-School Package

This program equips youth in foster care who are enrolled in college or an accredited vocational program with \$2,500 in supplies, including: a laptop, software, gift cards, MetroCards, and other tools necessary to achieve their educational goals. Each package sends an important message to youth in foster care that they are valued, and they can and will succeed.

The NYFC Guardian Scholars

This initiative is a comprehensive program that provides support to youth in foster care who are enrolled at Hunter College, John Jay College, and Kingsborough Community College. By providing essential financial, academic, and emotional support, the program helps students realize their educational and personal goals to become successful, self-sufficient adults. The Guardian Scholars Program is a working partnership between the private sector, foster care agencies, and select CUNY colleges designed to support our students most effectively.

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

YAB shapes awareness and perceptions of children and youth in foster care, inspiring peers to become advocates for positive youth development, education, and professional success in their communities. YAB is open for membership to current and former foster care youth between the ages of 17 and 24.

The Charles Evans Emergency Educational Fund

This initiative assists young people who were formerly in the foster care system with one-time emergency funding to advance and complete their educational endeavors. Youth who have been

in foster care are often forced to make the difficult transition into adulthood without traditional family support. When a financial emergency hits, these students face a tough decision between continuing their education and leaving school in an attempt to earn the necessary funds. This Fund is run in close partnership with ACS, where staff members do an initial application review and make recommendations to NYFC. These emergency funds meet vital housing needs, tuition and other academic costs.

The NYFC Spirit Award

This is a \$10,000 scholarship awarded each year to a young person in foster care who is succeeding in college. The recipient is a young person who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills, a commitment to community, and the determination and ability to overcome the barriers to academic success.

Executive Director, New Yorkers For Children

The new Executive Director of New Yorkers For Children will inherit a highly respected organization with substantial strengths. While these strengths will serve as building blocks for future success, the incoming leader will be expected to build on this momentum and take advantage of new opportunities. Working closely with the Board and staff, the Executive Director will be expected to bring fresh energy and a new perspective to its core mission and principles. S/he will be responsible for board engagement and management, fundraising and development, administrative and fiscal management, and program and grants management.

The key opportunities and challenges for the Executive Director are as follows:

- **Provide strategic and visionary leadership.**

NYFC went through a strategic planning process several years ago and the new ED will be expected to refine, update and execute the plan. S/he will be expected to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization's programs and grantmaking as measured against their costs in terms of both financial and personnel resources, ensure that the organization is agile and responsive to changing conditions and is able to identify gaps it can effectively fill. With the Program Committee of the Board and the Program staff, the new ED will develop and implement initiatives to support NYFC's mission.

- **Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances with government entities and other partners.**

Collaborate with ACS to identify program areas for NYFC grant support. Reinforce and strengthen relationships with ACS, educational institutions and other potential partners.

- **Raise the profile and visibility of the work of NYFC.**

In addition to spotlighting the work of the organization, the new Executive Director will ensure that the organization takes best advantage of new media, social networking, and other technologies, and serve as one of the spokespeople for the organization, its vision, and its mission.

- **With the executive committee of the Board, ensure that the Board is engaged in the running of the organization.**

One of the reasons for the success of NYFC is that it has had a highly functional and effective Board. The new ED will be expected to work to continue this tradition by helping to attract people from underrepresented backgrounds and industries to the Board. The 45-member Friends Committee also supports the organization.

- **Increase and diversify funding.**

NYFC has enjoyed remarkable success in fundraising from its well known galas. The new Executive Director will play a leading role in moving the organization's fundraising beyond that substantial base to include more foundation, individual and corporate giving.

- **Serve as a unifying, supportive and decisive staff leader.**

The new Executive Director will be expected to be the unifying force of the organization, promoting a collegial, supportive, and diverse working environment that encourages accountability and excellence at all levels. Open channels of communication, transparent decision making and providing paths for professional growth are important in attracting and retaining a diverse staff of exceptional quality.

- **Play a leading role in the sound financial management of New Yorkers For Children.**

The Executive Director, in partnership with the Controller and with the help of staff, will prepare the annual budget for Board review, ensure that fiscal controls are in place, and that funds are wisely spent.

Qualifications and Experience

For this pivotal role, NYFC seeks an able leader who is deeply and demonstrably committed to the mission of improving the lives of children in foster care. The Board welcomes a leader who can lead through example and collaboration and make difficult decisions.

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- An informed and deep commitment to the vision and mission of the New Yorkers For Children. Sophisticated understanding of the pressures faced by children in foster care and the ramifications of those pressures.
- Experience working in the child welfare system and, preferably, a working knowledge of the relationships and principals in child services in New York.
- An aptitude and appetite for fundraising. Demonstrated experience raising funds from a variety of sources and a willingness to be actively involved in development.

Executive Director, New Yorkers For Children

- Outstanding interpersonal and listening skills. The ability to motivate a small staff and make them feel an integral part of the organization.
- Pragmatism, high energy, diplomacy, empathy, curiosity, resourcefulness, confidence and conviction. Resilience in the face of dealing with serious societal problems that often appear intractable.
- Public speaking ability and outstanding written communication skills. The ability to communicate with Board members, staff members, donors, and the youth who are being served.
- A track record of senior leadership that includes an inclusive management style and running a fiscally sound operation.
- Intellectual, analytical and emotional intelligence with the capacity to translate ideas and ideals into strategies and action plans.
- A talent for identifying and responding to both challenges and opportunities brought about by outside developments that affect the organization's work.
- An ability to work with people from radically different economic, ethnic, professional and social backgrounds.
- The ability to make difficult decisions in the interest of an organization.
- Experience working with a Board of Directors.

For More Information or To Apply

New Yorkers For Children has retained the services of Mary E. King Executive Search to assist in the recruitment of the new Executive Director. All inquiries, nominations and applications may be directed in confidence to: maryeking@comcast.net.

Additional information can be found at: <http://newyorkersforchildren.org/>

NYFC's commitment to equal employment opportunity is a basic part of our philosophy. All hiring and personnel policies are administered without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or sexual preference. This policy applies to all employment practices, including recruitment, hiring, training, compensation, transfer, promotion, and termination.