EXECUTIVE SEARCH SPECIFICATION FOR THE POSITION OF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OF

Tarrant To & Through Partnership

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

CLIENT
T3 Executive Council Members:
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- CONFIDENTIAL -

The information contained in this search specification is confidential and must be treated with the utmost of discretion. Candidate and organizational considerations demand the highest level of confidentiality ensuring the interest and priorities of all involved are addressed most professionally.
THE ORGANIZATION

The Tarrant To and Through Partnership will ensure more Fort Worth students obtain post-secondary credentials and that all students have the training and skills they need to thrive in today’s workforce. This newly formed local partnership, comprised of school districts, colleges, universities, employers, and communities, is a collection of program components that will help students graduate post-secondary ready and complete a post-secondary credential. Through a college scholarship, enhanced college and career counseling, collaborative partnerships, and supportive programming, Tarrant To & Through (T3) aims to ensure all students in Tarrant County excel to and through higher education, reach their career goals, and become changemakers in their communities.

Currently only 23% of Tarrant County eighth graders complete a Post-Secondary credential within six years of high school graduation:

The trend intensifies for economically disadvantaged students, with only 1 in 10 earning a post-secondary credential. Of the 9,919 economically disadvantaged 8th grade students enrolled in 2006, 39% did not earn a high school degree, 60% did not enroll in higher ed, and only 10% (1,022) earned a college degree six years after graduating from high school.

National research shows that graduates lacking a credential earn $1M less in lifetime earnings, amounting to $12.8B in lost lifetime earnings for every Tarrant County graduating class. This results in $320 million less in total state and local sales tax over the course of each graduating class’ life. A 25% increase in college completion rate in Tarrant County would result in an additional ~1,373 students per graduating class; leading to an additional $27M earned every year, or $1.4B more in a lifetime earnings per cohort. This would result in $34M more in total state and local sales tax over the course of their life.
Further, most Tarrant County jobs of the future will require some type of post-secondary credential. Employers already report challenges filling high-demand positions and finding applicants with the right mix of technical ability and workforce readiness skills. Currently 65% of jobs require a postsecondary credential, yet only 39% of Tarrant County adults possess a post-secondary credential (associates degree or higher).

There is a great sense of urgency for regional stakeholders to align and develop systems and structures to ensure each student is prepared for post-secondary success. With increased financial support from the state (through the 2019 passage of HB3 and 2020 federal stimulus packages), key institutional leadership support for this initiative, and demonstrated progress and momentum from this model in communities across the nation and in early childhood education in Tarrant County, multi-year funding to support the launch of T3 has been committed. T3 will scale proven practices and align them in a way that makes sense for students and families, leading to more students prepared for college and career. The practices or interventions that have been shown to increase the numbers of students who are ready, who matriculate, and who complete, and thus are prioritized for initial focus for T3 include:

T3 partners include stakeholders from across the community, each contributing to and benefiting from the partnership. Students, business partners, school districts, community colleges and universities, nonprofits, and community members are engaged starting in middle school, to high school, and through completion of a post-secondary credential (certificate, 2-year degree, or 4-year degree). The T3 team supports the partnership by managing the TCU College Advising Corps partnership which places additional college and career advisors in high schools, public campaigns, and a shared data platform. This backbone team will also report on outcomes of the partnership, fundraise to support the scaling of effective programs, and administer the Promise scholarship program.

The ultimate impact and goal for the partnership is to increase the number of students graduating that are college, career, and military ready (CCMR), per the latest TEA definition, and the number of students completing a post-secondary credential. To reach the Governor’s stated goal of 60% of all high school graduates obtaining a post-secondary credential, the partnership has a goal of increasing the number of students completing a post-secondary credential by 4% year over year. The data is clear, credentialing changes lives individually and generationally. And, drives economic prosperity for the region.

In 2020, T3’s progress was significant with 3,347 or 70% of Fort Worth ISD’s seniors completing The Pledge to pursue a postsecondary pathway, 30 new college advisors were embedded in Fort Worth ISD high
schools through the TCU CAC partnership, and every low-income senior in Fort Worth ISD is now eligible for a last-dollar tuition free scholarship to Tarrant County College or University of Texas at Arlington. The foundation for scaled impact has also been established. Six institutions of higher education have now signed MOU’s to offer T3 Scholars scholarship benefits, persistence programming and personalized support. Over twenty-six corporate, community, and higher education partnerships have been secured to facilitate data platform development, mentor programming, college success and workforce readiness. Over $5M has been raised through partnerships, corporate alliances and community support to champion the T3 mission: Student success is our success.

Higher education partners with signed T3 Scholar Scholarship MOUs

T3 is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit governed by its Executive Council. The T3 Executive Council, which collectively brings immense expertise and a broad network of influential stakeholders across the County is focused on recommending and securing founding partners, both programmatic and fundraising in nature. Three years of funding to support the T3 backbone staff has been committed, including $1M contributed to a fund at the North Texas Community Foundation. T3 is now leasing space inside the Fort Worth Chamber offices located at 777 Taylor Street in downtown Fort Worth.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- Build on impactful work already happening in Tarrant County
- Align existing community assets to maximize impact
- Learn from leading, effective practices across the country
- Craft something that uniquely fits the county
- Focus on the student experience
- Develop a sustainable plan covering first 10 years of initiative

THE OPPORTUNITY

With significant funding secured, key partnerships established, and the infrastructure in place, T3 is seeking its Executive Director to operationalize its vision and drive the needed process and desired outcomes of the organization. This person will lead an initial team of eleven which is expected to grow to fourteen in 2021. The Executive Director will frequently represent T3 across Tarrant County and the nation within the growing Promise network.

A summary of the essential responsibilities includes the following:

Strategic Leadership
- Execute and refine the vision, goals, and program strategies for Tarrant To & Through as set by the Executive Council

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• Develop a long-term sustainability plan for the program including funding and staffing needs
• Proactively learn from other organizations (Dallas County Promise, Texas Impact Network, and Tennessee College Access & Success Network) to effectively refine and execute goals and strategies

Partnership Support
• Be the external facing leader of post-secondary readiness work which includes cultivating and developing strong, collaborative relationships with leaders of partner organizations including institutions of higher education, school districts, and workforce/community partners
• Represent T3 at the statewide and national networks of Promise organizations
• Present results to key stakeholders as needed
• Recruit and onboard new higher education and high school partners
• Develop routine progress reports, status briefings and updates with key stakeholders including funders, higher education partners, community leaders and potential partners
• Provide guidance and support to partner organizations in aligning their efforts and goals to the Tarrant To & Through strategy
• Develop and maintain articulation agreements, data sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding for all participating organizations
• Drive continued alignment on regional strategy with partner organizations

Facilitate Regional Initiatives
• Build marketing campaigns and develop strategies to promote the program to families
• Oversee the T3 Pledge campaign
• Support institutional and community level partners through formal and informal arrangements
• Implement an evidence-based continuous improvement process, utilizing data on outcomes and indicators to identify improvement in strategic plan implementation and any necessary adjustments to the strategy
• Equip internal staff and partners to be student-centered and data-driven

Team Management
• Directly manage an initial team of eleven with plans to grow the team as partnerships are added
• Guide and develop team members to achieve strong results
• Facilitate close collaboration with personnel within partner organizations

The Executive Director will report to the T3 Executive Council. The successful candidate will lead a talented, mission-driven, and innovative team, with director reports including: Director of College & Career Success, Director of Postsecondary Pathways, Director of Technology & Data, Director of Operations, Director of Corporate & Community Partnerships, Manager of Analytics, and Program Associate.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE OVERVIEW
The Executive Director presents a unique opportunity for an innovative and talented leader to strategically grow a new college access and success initiative in the 13th largest city in the US. The Executive Director will join an organization with an ambitious agenda for scaled impact, a solid financial foundation, and
growing support from area education institutions, civic leaders, and community stakeholders. In turn, T3 seeks a bright, results-oriented, collaborative leader who is passionate about improving educational outcomes for every student and aligning systems to significantly increase the number of students in Tarrant County who excel to and through higher education, reach their career goals, and become changemakers in their communities.

**Successful candidates will possess the following education and experience:**

- 10+ years of professional experience related to/working within higher education, K-12 education, education related non-profits, and/or workforce development
- Experience managing high-performing teams
- Knowledge and/or experience working with economically disadvantaged students and students of color, preferred
- Bilingual (Spanish), preferred
- Bachelor’s degree in a relevant field, Advanced degree strongly preferred

**Successful candidates will demonstrate the following competencies and personal characteristics:**

- Knowledge and demonstrated success in: strategic planning; change management; project management; people management; and educational policy and trends
- Commitment to achieve rigorous goals on behalf of students
- Flexibility to respond to and manage a range of stakeholders
- Ability to use data to problem-solve and set strategy
- Strong organizational skills; utilizes logical, systematic and orderly procedures to meet objectives
- Agility in adapting to change, thrives in a dynamic and ever-changing environment; creativity and innovative thinking skills to respond to emerging needs
- Strategic mindset; competently creates strategies that lead to impact
- Manages multiple short-term and detailed projects, committees, and initiatives seamlessly, while staying focused on the long-term objectives
- People oriented and naturally collaborative
- The job demands a positive and constructive view of working with others: there will be a high percentage of time spent listening to, understanding and successfully working with a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds to achieve win-win outcomes
- Must possess excellent interpersonal skills with external stakeholder management experience
- A true curiosity and commitment to finding more effective ways to meet the needs of underserved students with a willingness and desire to engage fully in the challenges of this work and to thoughtfully communicate its challenges, successes, and conclusions
- Self-starter, works independently
- Demonstrates ability to consistently make sound decisions
- Deep care and concern for being a conscientious and effective manager of others
- Committed to ensuring a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for the organization, as well as equitable and inclusive programmatic strategies
- Demonstrated passion for the transformative power of education

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VICTORY SEARCH GROUP PROFILE

Victory Search Group is a senior level retained executive search firm serving a select group of clients from six offices across the United States. Victory Search Group has successfully identified, assessed and recruited senior leadership for over 18 years. Victory Search Group is highly collaborative and focused on customer service; we prize partnering with our clients and are trusted by them for our judgment, integrity and responsiveness.

We follow a detailed five step search process that places significant emphasis on understanding our Client’s needs, organizational issues and the critical factors required for success by an outside executive. Our success is simply an intense focus on executing each step of the search process, without cutting any corners, while maintaining a constant dialog with both clients and candidates.

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