

Wisconsin Nurses Association Executive Director

Job Overview

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive of the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) and is responsible for advancing WNA's mission, strategic priorities, and long-term sustainability. The Executive Director provides oversight for WNA operations and programs, leads WNA's advocacy initiatives and membership recruitment/retention, and fosters external partnerships while ensuring the effective implementation of policies and procedures established by the WNA Board of Directors.

Working in partnership with the Board of Directors, the Executive Director serves as the Board's principal professional advisor, providing objective guidance, strategic recommendations, and timely information regarding organizational programs, personnel, finances, and emerging issues affecting nursing and healthcare. The Executive Director collaborates with the Board to develop and implement long-range plans that promote organizational sustainability, resource procurement, leadership development, succession planning, financial viability, and continued member value.

As the Association's chief spokesperson, the Executive Director represents WNA and the nursing profession before members, policymakers, healthcare organizations, community partners, allied professional organizations, governmental agencies, and the public. This position requires a collaborative, visionary leader with expertise in nonprofit leadership, healthcare policy, association management, financial stewardship, and organizational development. This is a full-time position that requires frequent presence in Madison, WI along with some regional and national travel.

Executive Director Responsibilities & Duties

Board Governance & Strategic Leadership

- Serve as the chief executive of the WNA and provide leadership for all organizational operations.
- Serve as the principal professional advisor to the Board of Directors, providing objective counsel and recommendations on strategic, operational, financial, governance, and policy matters.
- Partner with the Board to develop, implement, and evaluate strategic priorities and long-range plans that support organizational sustainability, resource procurement, leadership development, succession planning, financial viability, and member value.
- Recommend policies, procedures, and governance practices that strengthen the effectiveness of WNA.
- Implement policies and strategic priorities adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Ensure the Board receives timely, accurate, and comprehensive information regarding organizational programs, personnel, finances, operations, and emerging issues to support informed decision-making.
- Interpret organizational needs and provide professional recommendations regarding opportunities, risks, and strategic priorities.
- Facilitate and actively participate in Board, Executive Committee, Council, committee, Annual Meeting, and other WNA meetings.

Organizational Leadership

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of WNA and ensure the efficient administration of all organizational programs and services.
- Recruit, supervise, mentor, develop, evaluate, and retain talented staff while fostering a collaborative, accountable, and high-performing organizational culture.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate annual work plans aligned with strategic priorities.
- Establish performance expectations and support staff professional development and leadership growth.
- Maintain records and ensure appropriate governance, confidentiality, security, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Provide executive administration and oversight of the Wisconsin Nurses Political Action Committee (WINPAC), working in accordance with its governing policies, applicable laws and regulations, and established organizational priorities.
- Provide executive administration and oversight of the Nurses Foundation of Wisconsin (NFW), supporting its governance structure, operations, financial stewardship, and advancement of its mission and priorities.
- Represent WNA at American Nurses Association (ANA) meetings and convenings (both virtual and in-person).
- Carry out additional duties as assigned by the Board of Directors in support of WNA's mission.

Financial Stewardship

- Develop the annual operating budget in collaboration with the treasurer, finance committee, accountants, appropriate staff, and Board of Directors.
- Monitor financial performance and organizational sustainability, keeping the Board informed of budget progress, financial risks and opportunities, and recommended corrective actions.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of assets and maintain the financial and legal integrity of WNA and its affiliated organizations.
- Oversee financial forecasting and planning to ensure the long-term sustainability of WNA.

Advocacy & Public Policy

- Represent WNA on nursing, healthcare, legislative, regulatory, and public policy matters consistent with positions established by the Board of Directors.
- Lead and coordinate WNA advocacy initiatives and serve as, or be eligible to serve as, a registered lobbyist in Wisconsin.
- Monitor legislative, regulatory, workforce, healthcare, and nursing practice developments and advise the Board and membership regarding issues affecting nurses and patient care.
- Build productive relationships with legislators, policymakers, governmental agencies, healthcare leaders, and advocacy partners.
- Represent WNA before public officials, allied organizations, and community stakeholders.

Membership, Programs & Communications

- Lead initiatives to strengthen membership recruitment, engagement, participation, retention, and organizational growth.
- Maintain strong communication with members regarding WNA priorities, programs, services, and advocacy efforts.
- Foster effective communication among WNA leadership, members, staff, affiliated organizations, and external stakeholders.
- Oversee continuing education and professional development activities, including WNA responsibilities related to continuing education approval and programming.
- Support programs that address nursing practice, workplace advocacy, professional development, and patient care concerns.
- Maintain productive working relationships and collaborations with ANA, other constituent member associations, specialty nursing organizations, healthcare organizations, educational institutions, and community partners.
- Ensure all WNA programs and services are implemented effectively and evaluated for quality and impact.

External Relations

- Serve as the principal spokesperson for WNA.
- Represent WNA with professionalism and credibility before members, healthcare organizations, business leaders, legislators, regulators, media, and the public.
- Promote the mission, vision, and strategic priorities of WNA while strengthening the visibility and influence of the nursing profession throughout Wisconsin and beyond.
- Build collaborative partnerships that advance the interests of nurses, patients, and the healthcare system.

Executive Director Qualifications & Skills

Education & Experience

- Master's degree or higher in nursing, healthcare administration, nonprofit management, business administration, public administration, public health, or a related field strongly preferred.
- Current Registered Nurse (RN) license in Wisconsin or eligibility for Wisconsin licensure strongly preferred.
- Five or more years of progressively responsible executive or senior leadership experience in a nonprofit association, healthcare organization, professional membership organization, or comparable setting.
- Demonstrated experience working collaboratively with a governing board and volunteer leaders.
- Experience leading multidisciplinary teams and managing organizational operations, finances, and strategic initiatives.

Knowledge & Expertise

- Strong understanding of nursing practice, healthcare systems, workforce issues, and trends affecting the nursing profession.
- Knowledge of legislative, regulatory, and public policy processes and experience in advocacy or government relations.
- Understanding of nonprofit governance, association management, and membership organizations.
- Experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and long-range sustainability planning.
- Demonstrated financial management expertise, including budgeting, financial forecasting, and nonprofit fiscal stewardship.
- Knowledge of continuing education, professional development, and member engagement programs is preferred.

Leadership Competencies

- Exceptional strategic leadership and organizational management skills.
- Proven ability to advise and partner effectively with a Board of Directors.
- Strong relationship-building and consensus-building skills with diverse stakeholders.
- Excellent written, verbal, presentation, and public speaking abilities.
- Ability to analyze complex issues, exercise sound judgment, and make strategic recommendations.
- High level of professionalism, integrity, diplomacy, political acumen, and emotional intelligence.
- Demonstrated commitment to fostering an inclusive organizational culture and advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Proficiency with contemporary office, financial, communication, and association management technologies.
- Ability to work independently while effectively leading collaborative teams.
- Ability to maintain a flexible work schedule and travel throughout Wisconsin and nationally as required.

Preferred Experience

- Experience serving in a senior leadership role within a professional nursing association, healthcare association, nonprofit organization, or similar membership-based organization.
- Experience working with ANA or another constituent member association.
- Experience representing an organization before legislative bodies, regulatory agencies, and other public policy forums.
- Experience overseeing membership growth, continuing education programs, and strategic organizational initiatives.

Reporting Relationship

The Executive Director reports directly to the WNA Board of Directors and works in close partnership with the WNA President and other elected and appointed volunteer leaders.