PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR: Executive Director

ORGANIZATION: Rochester – Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (“RMAPI” or “the organization”)

The Organization

The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (“RMAPI”) was established in 2015 in response to the exceptionally high poverty rates in the city of Rochester. Rochester ranked No. 2 nationwide among similarly sized cities with a poverty rate of 32.9%. Initially backed by state funding, RMAPI was launched as a multi-sector community collaborative effort to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency of residents in Rochester and Monroe County. Local and state government officials, employers, service providers, funders and community members living in poverty made the decision to unite efforts under RMAPI to identify and execute the systemic changes necessary to make meaningful reductions in the percent of people living in poverty. While all involved sectors recognized that there is not a “magic bullet” program or government initiative that would lead to a meaningful reduction in the community’s historic poverty rate, the path forward was less clear.

Since its launch, RMAPI has made great strides in understanding the scale and complexity of the underlying issues that contribute to persistent poverty. Research, data analysis, focus groups and community-wide collaborative conversations led to the identification of three principles to guide all future work:

1. **Address Structural Racism** – end the activities and actions that continue racial inequality in public policies, institutional practices and other cultural norms.
2. **Build and Support our Community** – help to rebuild struggling neighborhoods with quality employment opportunities, health care, and schools, making them safe, healthy and livable.
3. **Address Trauma** – help to heal people and neighborhoods suffering from repeated traumatic experiences like abuse, addiction and violence by providing trauma-informed supports and services.

To accomplish this work, the RMAPI community decided to adopt a “collective impact” framework model. Collective Impact is an approach to problem-solving that recognizes that “no single organization has the ability to solve any major social problem at scale by itself.” The RMAPI initiative employs a staff of seven, including the Executive Director, and exists to provide guidance and support to partners involved in the collective impact effort. The term “partners” refers to the individuals and organizations that have come together to reduce poverty under this initiative, including government, employers, service providers, funders and the community members impacted by poverty (together known as the “Collective”). In effect, the staff of RMAPI serves as the backbone of the Collective by facilitating, organizing and amplifying the work of the Collective, providing the “connective tissue” between...
the efforts of all involved. The following groups have been formed within RMAPI to best advance the work of the Collective:

- **The Steering Committee**, comprised of 40 community leaders who guide the initiative’s vision and overall strategies. The Executive Director reports to the co-chairs of the Steering Committee.
- **The Executive Committee**, comprised of a subset of Steering Committee members
- **The Community Advisory Council**, comprised of community residents who help inform, support and guide the work of the initiative
- **Working Groups**, comprised of frontline stakeholders who develop specific strategies and implementation plans that make RMAPI’s goals a reality. There are currently four working groups: Policy, Employment, Evaluation and Data, and Funding Alignment.
- **Community Partners** comprised of various government agencies, community members, and organizations that are critical to implementing RMAPI’s strategies

RMAPI staff is frequently referred to as the “backbone” of the initiative, an impactful term that underscores the fact that RMAPI staff doesn’t “own” the work of the initiative – the “Collective” owns it. The annual budget of the backbone organization is approximately $700K, funded by a combination of government, community and foundation grants. RMAPI is housed at the United Way of Greater Rochester which serves as fiscal agent for the initiative.

**THE OPPORTUNITY – “There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we have the resources to get rid of it.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“Making a difference” is a goal shared by many but realized by few. The next Executive Director of the Rochester–Monroe Anti-Poverty initiative will have the opportunity to realize this goal on a grand scale. The Executive Director will be taking over this collective impact initiative at just the right inflection point for measurable success. Staff is fully engaged and focused, the collective is committed to the long-term success of the initiative, and local government support is re-energized. While the impact of Covid-19 will be felt in the community for years to come, individuals and organizations are now working together in unprecedented ways to resolve systemic blocks to building a stairway out of poverty.

After taking the helm, the successful candidate will lead RMAPI through the next phase of its mission to reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency; moving from consulting and involving the community and partner organizations to collaborating with and empowering them to eliminate structural racism, help people and neighborhoods recover from sustained trauma, and rebuild communities to safe, healthy and livable standards. To best accomplish this next stage in RMAPI’s evolution, we are seeking an individual who possesses a rare balance of strategic leadership, motivational leadership, project management savvy, and courageous entrepreneurship.

**Strategic Leadership**

The next Executive Director will independently recognize opportunities for collaboration across internal RMAPI partners and external organizations that share similar goals. RMAPI doesn’t exist to offer programs. RMAPI exists to leverage the efforts of many people and entities to eliminate barriers to employment and living wages for impoverished members of our community. The Executive Director will be in the unique position to serve as an “orchestra leader,” integrating the efforts of many in a consistent, persistent manner to reduce poverty in our community. While the Executive Director’s efforts will be bolstered by many, only a gifted strategist will recognize and capitalize on potential opportunities by convening the right players, identifying attainable initiatives, advocating for policy changes and funding, and deftly holding like-minded professionals accountable for results without possessing the organizational authority to do so.
The Executive Director of RMAPI will also be called upon to take the lead in advancing the agenda of the Policy Working Group. The Executive Director will be supported by the efforts of the working group but will be in the best position to strategically convene other relationships internal and external to the RMAPI Collective to advocate for change together.

Motivational Leadership

The Executive Director of a collective impact initiative achieves success almost exclusively through the efforts of others. The Executive Director must possess the capacity to motivate others to a high degree of engagement and action. The Executive Director must be a master storyteller, equally gifted at captivating community members at kitchen tables, corporate leaders in board rooms, and politicians in Albany. The Executive Director will delight in sharing small and large “wins” internally and externally, evangelizing for the community’s success at every turn. The successful Executive Director will come to RMAPI with an established reputation for transparency. The combination of transparency, community involvement and motivational storytelling will build the trust and high energy level from the community that is critical to the long-term achievement of RMAPI’s mission.

Project Management – Focus, Facilitate and Assess

At present, RMAPI has a long list of potential initiatives and not enough time, funding or human capital to vet and execute them all. The next Executive Director will be tasked to develop a community impact strategy map based on the current mission and guiding principles of RMAPI, and to team with the Working Groups and the impacted community to identify actionable initiatives in support of the strategies outlined in the map. The Executive Director will team with the Evaluation and Data Working Group to identify measurable goals for each initiative owned by the working groups. Lastly, the Executive Director will develop a dashboard to measure and regularly report results against goals to the Steering Committee and the community. The successful candidate will team with staff to eliminate barriers to the achievement of goals by collective impact partners, holding them accountable to results along the way. Keeping the Collective focused and informed on the attainment of selected goals is one of the biggest challenges facing the Executive Director.

Courageous Entrepreneurship

RMAPI’s partner organizations have learned to be more comfortable with the concept that decisions are often made, and action must be taken, with imperfect information. Fail fast, learn, and move on. RMAPI's next Executive Director will be a lifelong learner, with an intriguing blend of confidence and humility; humble enough to know that the Executive Director needs the input of others for RMAPI to succeed, but confident enough to know that “perfect is sometimes the enemy of good” – consult with subject matter experts, review available data, and then decide on a path forward without the luxury of certainty.

WHY YOU? WHY NOW? WHY HERE?

If you are an innovative, thoughtful strategic leader with a reputation for motivating others to achieve audacious goals you won’t find a better opportunity to put those skills to use than in the service of improving people’s lives here in Rochester. This opportunity should be of particular interest to experienced organizational leaders, vice presidents, chief operating officers and/or chiefs of staff who want to make a difference but are fatigued with fighting through layers of bureaucracy and uninspired leadership. RMAPI’s staff is talented and passionate, RMAPI’s partners have shown unwavering financial, intellectual and physical support for the work at hand, and Rochesterians who are impacted by poverty are fully engaged in the future success of this grass-roots effort. Achieving audacious goals is in Rochester’s DNA; we are the home to the legacies of trailblazers like Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. We are one of the most generous communities in the country by all measures, from possessing the highest number of not-for-profit organizations for a city of our size to the largest amount of per capita giving in the nation. We are ready to take a stand against poverty with you.
GOALS

Within the first twelve to eighteen months, the Executive Director will:

- Within three months, meet one-on-one with each member of the Steering Committee and the co-chairs of each Working Group and the Community Advisory Council to gain an understanding of why they are involved and their vision for how their involvement can best be leveraged to meet RMAPI’s mission.

- Engage in group meetings and focus groups with identified community “voices” from the African American, Latino “single female heads of households” and faith groups as identified by staff as part of RMAPI’s Communication Engagement Strategy.

- Team with the Steering Committee and RMAPI staff to develop a one-page collective impact strategy map that will be used to focus and communicate RMAPI ideas and initiatives to all stakeholder levels. Strategies included on the map will support the work defined in RMAPI’s aforementioned Guiding Principles.

- Work with the Policy Working Group, the Employment Working Group the Funding Alignment Council and staff to identify one to three tangible initiatives that will support RMAPI’s guiding principles of addressing structural racism, addressing trauma, and/or building community strength. Initiatives focused on targeted populations of single female heads of households and the working poor (for example, those employed as home health aides) will be prioritized. Ideas and their execution should be supported and endorsed by impacted members of the community, including the Community Advisory Council and community “voices” as defined in the Communication Engagement Strategy.

- Leverage input from the Evaluation and Data Working Group to define measurable goals for the aforementioned identified initiatives, including data-driven definitions of impacted populations for each initiative.

- Team with the Evaluation and Data Working Group to develop a dashboard to track progress against identified initiatives.

- Take a leadership role in leveraging the time, talent and treasure of each Steering Committee member to minimize and/or eliminate roadblocks to the execution of identified initiatives.

- Develop and execute a clear communication plan across all stakeholder groups so information is shared regularly and on a timely basis. Stakeholder groups include the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, Working Groups, staff and the impacted community. The communication plan should include internally focused communications like meeting minutes, and externally focused communications like sharing progress against goals and with the community.

- Work with staff and the Data and Evaluation Working Group to assess the impact of COVID-19 on those living in poverty. Guide the Steering Committee through any resultant re-prioritization of goals and initiatives.
ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

- Directly lead, motivate and manage RMAPI staff

- Take ownership for keeping the Steering Committee and Executive Committee informed, active and engaged. Identify opportunities to utilize the talent of individual Steering Committee members as needed.

- Team with staff, the United Way as fiduciary, and the Steering Committee to identify the optimal deployment of resources under management to meet RMAPI’s mission and guiding principles.

- Lead the advocacy effort on initiatives identified by the Policy Working Group, identifying and leveraging optimal resources to accomplish RMAPI’s policy agenda.

- Recognize and take the lead to identify and act upon synergies with regional organizations outside of RMAPI who share the similar goals. “Own” the identification and execution of ad hoc initiatives that develop from joint meetings and initiatives.

- Identify and minimize roadblocks to the scalability of successful RMAPI initiatives. Current examples include the adult mentoring program, and the employer pledge initiative.

- Regularly celebrate RMAPI successes within and outside of the Collective, encouraging others within the Collective to “own” and share those successes with their own organizations and the community.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess the following:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. A master’s degree in business, public policy, political science, social work or other degrees relevant to RMAPI’s mission is preferred.

- Prior experience in a leadership role or as a member of the senior management team of an organization of at least a comparable size and complexity, including responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the organization and managing others through influence. If prior experience was acquired outside of the not-for-profit or government sectors, leadership experience should be supplemented by prior experience serving on one or more not-for-profit boards.

- Prior industry experience must include a positive track record for reducing poverty, improving employment metrics, and/or initiating policy changes within or on behalf of marginalized communities.

- Preference will be given for candidates with experience working within a Collective Impact or comparable community-ownership model.

- Preference will be given to candidates from Rochester, NY who meet the requirements for the role. If not from Rochester, the selected candidate must relocate to Rochester within 90 days of accepting employment.
• Proven experience managing complex projects to a successful conclusion, including goal setting, data analysis, result measurement, and holding stakeholders accountable for results.

• A reputation for a transparent and direct management style with prior organizations under management.

• Candidates who have personal “lived experience” as a member of a marginalized community are strongly preferred.

• Examples of creating mutually beneficial collaborations across organizations.

• An entrepreneurial spirit, as evidenced by a track record for making courageous decisions in the face of imperfect information.

• A reputation for listening that stems from insatiable curiosity and the humility of knowing that there is much to learn from the input of others.

• Unquestioned professional and personal integrity.

This description is not meant to be an all-inclusive list of duties and responsibilities but constitutes a general definition of position scope.

In support of the ADA, this job description lists only the responsibilities and qualifications deemed essential to the position. RMAPI and the United Way of Greater Rochester as fiscal agent is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Our policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, genetic predisposition, veteran status or status as a member of any other protected group or activity.

HOW TO APPLY/MAKE INQUIRIES:
This retained search is being conducted exclusively by Patty Phillips of Clarity Recruiting and Career Management, Inc. for the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative. All applicants must contact Patty directly, as all applicants and inquiries, regardless of how sourced, will be forwarded to her attention.

If interested, please submit a cover letter and resume to: patty@clarityracm.com. In your cover letter, please explain the basis for your interest in the position and highlight relevant experience for the role.