



Nationalities Service Center

Search for Executive Director
Nationalities Services Center
Philadelphia, PA

THE SEARCH

The [Nationalities Services Center \(NSC\)](#) seeks a communicative, dynamic, and visionary leader to serve as its next Executive Director. Recognized as one of the leading immigrant and refugee resettlement agencies in Pennsylvania, NSC has spent the last 100 years committed to assisting its clients with building a solid foundation for a self-sustaining and dignified future. Through comprehensive services and support, including legal protections, health and wellness, education, and language services, NSC empowers immigrants and refugees to thrive and pursue a just future.

Even though immigration is under intensifying scrutiny in the United States and the future is uncertain, NSC is committed to serving as an important resource for the migrant communities of Philadelphia. NSC delivers life-changing work every day, providing critical support to communities that have been increasingly targeted over the last decade. Growing attacks on migrant communities across the globe present an unprecedented opportunity for NSC to continue centering the voices of immigrants and refugees to drive meaningful change. The next Executive Director will play a pivotal role in balancing the fortification of the agency's internal infrastructure and culture while working externally to elevate NSC's profile on a local and national stage. This leader will need to ensure that NSC remains both a beacon of hope for its clients and a leading advocate for systemic change.

Having recently turned 100 years old, NSC offers a breadth and depth of professional services to deliver a comprehensive experience for their clients, from early pathways to stability and long-term economic mobility. Whether resettling refugees from global crises in Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine or responding to local challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, NSC has proven to be a resilient and trusted resource for those in need. The organization's inclusive, one-stop model ensures that every client receives the support they need to build a self-sustaining, dignified future. As an integral part of the Philadelphia community, NSC continues to be a leader in immigrant and refugee services, and it remains steadfast in its mission to assist immigrants and refugees in creating strong, lasting foundations for their future.

Since these global crises emerged in 2020, NSC has seen exponential growth across the number of clients and services offered, and the workforce has increased to support these demands with 5,000 clients, 134 employees, and over 300 volunteers. The next Executive Director will lead NSC into its second century of serving those fleeing homes they never wanted to leave in search of safety, security, and community. As

such, the ideal candidate will have a demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of a fair and just pathway for immigrants seeking to enter the United States in pursuit of a better life. Through thoughtful and strategic leadership, the Executive Director will need to cultivate and sustain trusted, collaborative relationships with various local and federal constituencies to ensure that the diverse needs and concerns of NSC clients are accurately represented. Furthermore, the Executive Director will provide direction to staff, value their expertise, and nurture their well-being.

The Nationalities Services Center has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in recruiting for this important position. As noted at the end of this document, all inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence.

THE NATIONALITIES SERVICE CENTER

History

For over a century, the [Nationalities Service Center \(NSC\)](#) has been a cornerstone of support for immigrants and refugees in Philadelphia. Established in 1922 as the International Institute of Philadelphia, NSC has evolved to meet the changing needs of their clients, providing a comprehensive range of services that help individuals and families thrive. From offering language instruction and citizenship support in its early years to assisting displaced populations during the World Wars, NSC has continuously adapted its programs to ensure immigrants are empowered to integrate and succeed.

Today, NSC serves over 5,000 individuals annually from more than 100 countries, offering legal services, housing assistance, mental health support, and programs for survivors of domestic violence. The organization's commitment to fostering cultural diversity and community integration is reflected in its long-standing traditions, such as the Folk Festival and Global Tastes events, which celebrate Philadelphia's rich cultural tapestry.

Through an integrated approach to humanitarian aid, social service, workforce development, health and wellness, English Language Learning, and legal programming; NSC supports individuals with diverse immigration statuses, including refugees, asylum seekers, humanitarian parolees, survivors of torture, human trafficking, and domestic violence, as those pursuing legal status in the United States.

Current Context

The Nationalities Service Center (NSC) operates in a dynamic and challenging context marked by significant external pressures, including ongoing humanitarian crises at the southern U.S. border, the impact of the Ukrainian War, and the complexities surrounding Afghan parolees adjusting to life in the U.S. Internally, NSC has experienced rapid growth in staff and government funding but faces challenges related to securing unrestricted financial resources for professional development. The organization recently voted to gain union recognition through an NLRB election held in mid-March 2024, reflecting its commitment to employee engagement and support. As NSC continues to adapt to these evolving

circumstances, it remains dedicated to empowering immigrants through comprehensive services that address legal, health, economic, and language needs, ensuring they can thrive in their new communities.

In 2024, NSC launched a comprehensive four-year strategic plan, the culmination of a year-long collaborative process that engaged over 250 stakeholders—including staff, clients, donors, volunteers, and leaders in the field. This inclusive effort resulted in the identification of three strategic priorities to guide the organization's work: **Programming and Partnerships**, **Operational Excellence**, and **Fostering a Culture of Learning**. The next Executive Director will join NSC at a critical moment, stepping into the organization midway through this ambitious plan. They will have the unique opportunity to assess its progress, build on its successes, and identify areas for expansion to ensure NSC continues to evolve in response to the needs of the immigrant and refugee communities it serves. This leader will be instrumental in aligning the organization's vision with its growing impact and positioning NSC for sustained success in the years ahead.

Governance and Finances

The Nationalities Services Center (NSC) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a 21-member [Board of Trustees](#) that operates through several committees that ensure thorough oversight and engagement in the critical functions of financial management, fundraising, and organizational development.

The operating budget for 2025 is 13.4 million, with a revenue mix that includes government grants (80%), philanthropic support (17%), and program income (3%). In February 2023, NSC launched an internal Finance & Accounting Department to enhance its financial management capabilities. This department is responsible for budgeting, financial reporting, and ensuring compliance with funding requirements. The organization develops budgets that reflect its strategic priorities and operational needs, assessing current and future funding landscapes to allocate resources effectively across programs. Additionally, NSC has implemented inflation-related wage increases totaling 11% over one year, reflecting its commitment to staff welfare amid growth challenges.

Overall, the finance strategy aligns with NSC's broader strategic plan for FY24-27, focusing on sustainability and growth while addressing the evolving needs of the immigrant community it serves. Through these governance and financial structures, NSC aims to support its mission of empowering immigrants while navigating the complexities of funding and organizational growth.

THE ROLE

As the strategic and visible operational leader of the organization, the Executive Director is responsible for serving as a champion of NSC's mission, creating the conditions for programmatic excellence, financial sustainability, and organizational cohesion. This includes anticipating, managing, and mitigating risks, developing internal and external communication strategies, and cultivating and stewarding relationships with key stakeholders, including philanthropic partners, government agencies, and national service

collaborators. Working closely with the Board of Trustees and senior leadership, the Executive Director ensures alignment with NSC's mission, vision, and strategic objectives while implementing, monitoring, and refining the organization's strategic direction.

The Executive Director has oversight of a \$13.4 million operating budget, 134 staff, including the following 8 direct reports:

- Deputy Director
- Sr. Director of Business Operations
- Sr. Director of Finance, Accounting & Compliance
- Sr. Director of Program Operations
- Executive Fundraising Consultant
- Director of Institutional Giving & Data Compliance
- Director of Wellness
- Director of Welcome & Opportunity

The Executive Director serves as the primary relationship manager for NSC's critical funding and program partnerships, such as the [United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants](#) (USCRI), as well as federal, state, and local government agencies. Maintaining collaborative relationships with Philadelphia city officials and colleagues in the refugee and immigrant services sector is a core aspect of the role. They also engage in advocacy efforts alongside the Board Chair and Deputy Director, organizing outreach to U.S. congressional representatives and senators on legislative priorities and collaborating with state legislators in Harrisburg on policy and funding matters.

In this dynamic and complex operating environment, the Executive Director must remain informed about emerging issues related to immigration and global crises, including wars, famines, natural disasters, and political upheaval, as well as the challenges posed by legislative gridlock. These factors shape NSC's planning, logistical adjustments, and strategic relationships. The Executive Director's management style must be calm and adaptive, capable of navigating both immediate challenges and long-term opportunities, ensuring that NSC continues to be a vital force for immigrant and refugee advocacy and support in an ever-changing world. The Executive Director must build trust across the organization, ensuring that all decisions are made with integrity, in the best interest of the mission, and with the needs of those they serve at the forefront.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Articulate, refine, and champion a unifying vision and implementation strategy for NSC's future success.

NSC is made up of talented and distinct programmatic teams, each working on critical initiatives. As the organization continues to grow and evolve, the next Executive Director must foster a strong sense of collective purpose and impact, uniting this complex organization around a clear, cohesive vision and strategy.

The Executive Director will be a coalition-builder skilled in aligning all parts of the organization around a central focus on comprehensive direct services to Philadelphia's immigrant and refugee population. With a clear vision, sharp prioritization, and the ability to navigate necessary trade-offs, the Executive Director will shape an organizational structure and culture that supports the achievement of meaningful collective goals. Success in this role will require transparent communication, the ability to clearly define organizational priorities, a readiness to embrace innovation, and the foresight to design the best structure for the future.

Fortify transparent and consistent communication practices with all internal and external stakeholders, especially during crises.

The next Executive Director will need to ensure that the NSC delivers clear and compelling messages about the agency and the importance of supporting its mission to both internal and external stakeholders. The Executive Director will be expected to serve as a powerful and visible external spokesperson, elevating NSC's profile across the city of Philadelphia and promoting the agency's vital work with immigrant and refugee communities.

Internally, the new leader must develop clear and open communication channels for all staff throughout the entire NSC system, fostering productive and collaborative relationships among all NSC programs. To achieve this, the Executive Director will undertake a comprehensive review of the organization's communication infrastructure to ensure it is both effective and timely. This includes evaluating current systems, identifying gaps, and implementing strategies or tools that enhance the flow of information across departments and programs. By building a transparent and responsive communication framework, the Executive Director will empower staff, streamline operations, and strengthen alignment around the agency's shared goals and mission.

Ensure NSC's financial sustainability by diversifying revenue sources.

NSC is refining its narrative to better communicate its influence and impact, recognizing opportunities to expand and diversify funding streams. Currently, individual program directors lead much of the funding strategy, with approximately 80% of revenue coming from government sources. The Executive Director will ensure that programs maintain high quality, are well-resourced, and operate effectively, while fostering a collaborative culture among staff.

With a strong understanding of the financial complexities of a multi-stream, national nonprofit, the Executive Director will ensure NSC's program, finance, and operations teams are equipped with the necessary tools, resources, and technology to support organizational growth and evolving funding needs.

The ideal candidate will bring robust practical and strategic fundraising expertise, coupled with a deep understanding of how diversified funding streams drive organizational sustainability and growth. They will develop and strengthen philanthropic relationships, expand grant funding, and explore additional sources,

including major donors, corporate partnerships, public contracts, and fee-for-service revenue. The Executive Director will enhance existing partnerships while pursuing innovative collaborations to secure financial and media support for NSC's initiatives.

As a persuasive and engaging public speaker, the Executive Director will effectively share NSC's mission and successes with diverse audiences—ranging from local civic leaders to national media outlets—elevating the organization's profile among prospective donors and funders.

Build and maintain meaningful relationships that amplify NSC's profile locally and nationally.

As NSC continues to grow as the “go-to” organization locally for human services support to immigrant and refugee communities, the Executive Director must skillfully represent the organization across a wide range of communities and settings. They will confidently and respectfully navigate relationships with funders, the legal community, partner organizations, legislators, media, businesses, and the broader migrant rights advocacy field. In collaboration with the Board and staff, the Executive Director will assess and define the scope of NSC's work, identifying opportunities to expand its impact. This leader must be proactive, deeply grounded in the current needs of immigrant and refugee communities, and forward-thinking by anticipating and addressing emerging issues affecting NSC clients.

Manage an evolving workplace through unionization efforts and foster positive labor relations.

The Executive Director will support the internal functions of the organization by providing leadership, support, and direction to the organization's dedicated and mission-oriented internal team. The Executive Director will be transparent, relational, and trusting with their staff, providing them with opportunities for professional development and promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and wellness in the workplace. The Executive Director will maintain positive relations with the staff undergoing unionization by negotiating in good faith with union leaders. They will work in partnership with the Board as a union employer to identify steps to bolster and improve the workplace and know when to seek legal counsel for additional support and expertise.

Utilize extensive knowledge and deep expertise in social justice and human services to effectively support and empower immigrant and refugee communities.

An exciting charge of the next Executive Director will be amplifying immigrant and refugee voices while driving the mission and vision of NSC forward. The next Executive Director will serve as an effective external spokesperson for the myriad challenges faced by immigrant and refugee communities, workers, and families, particularly in the context of Pennsylvania and its surrounding areas.

This leader will address a diverse range of issues, including but not limited to immigrant and refugee rights, language access, economic empowerment, workforce development, access to healthcare and education, housing equity, legal protections, and inclusive policy reform. The Executive Director will build partnerships and coalitions to advocate for systemic change, support grassroots mobilization, and

champion initiatives that ensure access to critical social services and promote economic and social justice for immigrant and refugee communities.

The Executive Director will be a dynamic networker and representative of the organization, engaging stakeholders such as community members, policymakers, donors, public agencies, civic leaders, and government entities. They will be a passionate and persuasive communicator committed to uplifting diverse lived experiences, forging deep collaborations with public interest organizations, and advancing meaningful change for immigrant and refugee populations.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Administration

- Manage the development and administration of all direct service programs.
- Lead recruitment, selection, and retention processes, providing consultation to hiring managers.
- Supervise performance management and compensation implementation and ensure alignment with Board-approved budgets.
- Develop, implement, and monitor administrative policies and procedures.
- Oversee employee benefit programs in collaboration with external consultants.
- Ensure the effectiveness of IT systems in partnership with technology consultants.
- Perform personnel management tasks, including hiring, training, resolving issues, and supervising attendance records.

Board Relations

- Implement Board policies and maintain effective communication on agency activities.
- Provide program reports, analyses, statistics, and financial updates to the Board.
- Manage staffing, scheduling, agenda preparation, and records for Board meetings and committees.
- Collaborate with the Finance Committee and the Board on annual budgets and long-term financial plans.
- Work with the Finance Committee, auditors, and funding sources to ensure continuous financial review.

Development

- Direct and oversee all fundraising activities, including cultivating new funding relationships.
- Manage proposal and appeal preparation to achieve budgeted income goals.
- Facilitate fundraising and public relations efforts using Board members and external solicitors.
- Strengthen and nurture relationships with current and potential funding sources.

Public Relations

- Act as the primary spokesperson for the organization.
- Liaison with key stakeholders, like-minded organizations, and external affiliates.

- Oversee development and updates of published materials, including the website.
- Promote agency programs and services to enhance community understanding and support.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The next Executive Director will bring many of the following qualifications, professional experience, and personal attributes:

- A minimum of 10+ years of demonstrated leadership experience in a non-profit direct services environment in a related setting.
- BA/BS degree from an accredited college or university in a Social Services, Business, Law, or other related field of study; Master's Degree in a related field of study is preferred.
- Experience in an environment where crisis management and social welfare advocacy are central to an organization's mission and impact is essential.
- Lived experience with the issues affecting immigrants' and refugees' well-being and the impact of interlocking systems of education, health, immigration, crisis communication, etc.
- Demonstrated commitment to principles of trauma-informed leadership, with an ability to foster workplace values where employees are nurtured and supported.
- Demonstrated experience with board relations, community relations, and fundraising in a non-profit setting.
- Significant organizational leadership managing institutional complexity, as well as demonstrated management experience.
- Experience in successfully managing a large number of program funding streams (federal, state, municipal, pass-through, etc.).
- Confident, engaging, and inspiring public speaker who can represent the organization's work and elevate NSC's profile, expand the impact of its work, and increase fundraising ability.
- The ability to articulate and implement an intersectional vision and organizational strategy that energizes, motivates, and unifies internal and external stakeholders toward common goals. Additionally, experience managing organizational adaptation to growth and change.
- Demonstrated fundraising skills with a high degree of sophistication in curating and executing a sustainable fundraising strategy with foundations, public sector contracts, and major donors.
- Demonstrated ability to guide, support, and leverage staff and board expertise and the capacity to expand staff infrastructure where necessary.
- An approach to leadership that engenders confidence and trust is steadfast, inclusive, transparent, accountable, inspiring, and dedicated to both strategy and daily operations.
- Success in nurturing a dynamic, healthy, and balanced work environment.

- Commitment to the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion and experience measurably advancing those values in an organizational context.
- Experience with financial oversight, including budgeting, planning, and reporting.
- An effective oral and written communicator.
- Experience in a direct services program management role within the immigrant and refugee community is preferred.
- Residing within reasonable driving distance of Philadelphia, PA is preferred. Willingness to engage in frequent travel is essential.

TO APPLY

NSC has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search team confidently at the link below. Please include a CV/resume and a two-to-three-page letter of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above.

Tiffany Weber (she/her), Search Lead | Managing Associate

Karen Avery (she/her), Partner

Quizayra Gonzalez (she/her), Senior Associate

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/nationalities-services-center/executive-director>

Applicants with lived experience within any of our program areas, as well as Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, are strongly encouraged to apply.

NSC's policy is to provide equal employment opportunities to all Applicants (including Employees) regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding, national origin, age, abilities/disabilities, neurotypicality, socioeconomic status, veteran status, marital status, prior convictions, or any other protected classifications under federal, state, or local law.