



**Women's Lunch Place
Executive Director
Boston, MA**

WLP is a safe, welcoming day shelter community, providing nutritious food and individualized services for women who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. We meet our guests where they are and treat them with dignity and respect.

THE SEARCH

Women's Lunch Place (WLP) is an inviting day shelter community, whose mission is to provide nutritious food and individualized services in a welcoming environment to all self-identifying women experiencing homelessness or poverty. With its personalized approach to its guests and the flexibility its non-governmental funding affords, WLP has carved a unique niche among human service providers in greater Boston since its founding in 1982.

Women's Lunch Place has grown from a three-day-a-week program serving lunch to 12 guests to a multi-service agency open six days a week and serving upwards of 200 guests per day. It has an annual budget of over \$4 million, a staff of 24, and a committed team of volunteers who annually provide 32,000 service hours, the equivalent of 16 full-time staff. WLP serves healthy breakfasts and lunches restaurant-style and offers programs and services that provide opportunity and promote wellbeing, meeting guests where they are and treating them with dignity and respect. WLP is a low-threshold, safe, judgment-free shelter addressing the myriad of obstacles that accompany poverty: homelessness, housing instability, hunger, trauma, and isolation. Its holistic approach – more than hunger relief – has been and continues to be the most effective and successful in fostering meaningful and sustainable life changes. With demand for its services growing, Women's Lunch Place will evolve with the needs of its guests, continuing to care for and empower Boston women experiencing homelessness and severe economic insecurity.

Women's Lunch Place has a skilled and dedicated team of staff and volunteers to provide individualized care in a warm and compassionate environment. In 2018, WLP prepared and served 106,201 meals to more than 1,400 women. The Healthy Meals Program and WLP's advocacy services and interventions were developed using the public health model. This approach allows women to improve their lives while making healthy decisions about food and nutrition; affords them access to health, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment; allows them to participate in supportive services; and increases their earned and unearned income. Programming is designed using a five-tier framework, starting with the lowest level of intervention that positively impacts every woman: healthy nutrition and a safe environment.

Some WLP guests only know life on the streets, while others experience episodic poverty due to changes in their social and/or employment status. The WLP guest population is ethnically and linguistically diverse, including both US-born and immigrant women of all ages. The profound need of Boston's

population of vulnerable women has positioned the organization as a vital resource and a leader in the city's human services community.

The new Executive Director (ED) will join a vibrant organization, one whose mission drives its direction. The ED will be a passionate and tireless advocate for homeless and low-income women. They will work with WLP's 18-member Board of Directors, comprised of civic and corporate leaders, to articulate a compelling vision and strategic direction for the organization. The ED will align all programs and services with the organization's mission and will oversee their planning, implementation, and management. The ED will be expected to meet annual fundraising goals, ensuring that WLP remains fiscally healthy and maintains a diversified funding stream. They will preserve existing community partnerships and will raise the profile of WLP in the local community.

The Executive Director will be a decisive leader, while remaining approachable, thoughtful, and empathetic. They will address the particular challenges faced by guests, challenges made more acute by income disparity and the violence and trauma experienced by homeless and low-income women. The role requires a commitment to social and economic justice, sensitivity to community needs, and strong financial and interpersonal management skills necessary to lead an organization whose role is so exceptionally important.

The Women's Lunch Place has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm based in Boston, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Women's Lunch Place was founded in November of 1982 by friends Eileen Reilly and Jane Alexander, who identified a need among homeless women for a safe place to go during the day. The two had met as volunteers at the Pine Street Inn, an overnight shelter for men. They noticed that women dressed as men in order to obtain a meal and a bed, even though this put many of them at risk from violence from males in the shelter. Reilly and Alexander decided to address this critical gap in services, obtaining space in the Church of the Covenant on Newbury Street in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood, where they began serving hot lunches to women in need.

From the beginning, Reilly and Alexander insisted on table service for their guests, a departure from the traditional soup kitchen model. The use of tablecloths, china plates, and silverware on tables adorned with fresh flowers became the practice then and remains so today. WLP volunteers are encouraged to dine alongside guests in a spirit of hospitality. These long-standing practices distinguish WLP and foster respect and dignity for every guest.

In 1985, Women's Lunch Place increased its days of operation and began serving breakfast. Advocacy services were introduced in 1995. In 2011, WLP undertook a major renovation, which created a more attractive, welcoming space to meet the growing need for its services. In alignment with its traditions and core mission, WLP continues to evolve with the needs of the community, addressing guests' physical and emotional well-being, and empowering them through dignified service.

FOCUS

Most often women are introduced to Women's Lunch Place through the Healthy Meals Program. The dining room at WLP is open Monday through Saturday from 7:00 am until 2:00 pm, serving breakfast and lunch restaurant-style, as well as hot coffee, tea, and toast throughout the day. Meals are prepared by WLP chef Sherry Hughes and a talented group of staff and volunteers.

While WLP's meal program is its focus, its approach to care is holistic. Guests may access a plethora of services, including showers, laundry, and a nap room. Medical care is provided by Health Care Without Walls, and advocates assist guests with issues related to domestic violence, housing, finances, legal matters, education, employment, and obtaining access to benefits. The State Street Resource Center and library provides guests with useful office supplies and access to computers and the Internet, enabling them to search for employment or housing or stay in touch with family and friends.

There has never been a greater need for comprehensive shelter care in Boston. Driven by skyrocketing rents and stagnant wages, homelessness in Massachusetts increased by approximately 14% in 2018. Women's Lunch Place is an important piece of Boston's human services landscape. In fiscal year 2018 WLP served 106,201 high quality and nutritious meals to more than 1,400 guests. 3,520 visits were provided by Health Care Without Walls, and advocates helped 155 women find and maintain safe and secure housing. Women report that WLP has impacted their lives in six critical areas: an improved sense of safety, increased housing stability, improved access to health care, increased earned and unearned income through work or public assistance benefits, and decreased hunger and isolation as they develop relationships with other women and the WLP team. 94% of guests report that WLP has made a positive difference in their lives. As the organization experiences increased demand for its services, it will be strategic about its growth and evolution. The next Executive Director will be central to defining WLP's future, carefully considering its programmatic offerings, as well as the size of its physical footprint and its location.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Healthy Meals Program

Women's Lunch Place's Healthy Meals Program is its hallmark. Healthy, hearty breakfasts and lunches are offered Monday through Saturday to every woman, without questions or requirements. With a focus on high quality, nutritious foods, these meals improve the physical health and emotional well-being of guests. WLP serves an average of 200 women each day, about 62,000 meals every year. Menus are planned to emphasize nutritional content and diversity, and food preferences are accommodated. The emphasis placed on quality food and service is integral to WLP's trauma-informed model of care, and is specifically designed to minimize trauma accompanying food insecurity. Women have the opportunity to share meals with one another, promoting a sense of community, comfort, and safety.

Basic Necessities

WLP strives to restore a sense of dignity to its guests by offering immediate support through the provision of basic necessities. These include: hot showers, laundry services, and a nap room, as well as personal care items such as sunscreen, water bottles, lotion, sanitary napkins and tampons, soap and shampoo, and toothpaste and toothbrushes. WLP also offers emergency seasonal clothing, including new winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves.

Advocacy Services and the Outreach Advocacy Initiative

Women who experience poverty or homelessness face obstacles that can make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to improve their life circumstances. Skilled advocates at WLP facilitate access to housing benefits, employment, and other resources and opportunities. Support is also offered to women who have experienced trauma due to violence, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. Volunteer attorneys and undergraduate- and graduate-level interns complement staff services with generous donations of their time and expertise. Case management services aim to address some of the root causes of chronic homelessness, such as helping guests with debt resolution, or making referrals for shelter, medical, psychological, or addiction services.

The Outreach Advocacy Initiative (OAI) is employed when WLP staff observe subsets of guests who are entering the day shelter for something to eat, but are not engaging with staff or other guests and are not accessing any additional services or programs. WLP seeks engagement with these highly fragile, vulnerable women, welcoming them with compassion and providing intensive care. As a consequence of the OAI, these guests begin to engage with services and programming: they begin to access healthcare services; they achieve greater financial stability and increase the likelihood that they will find stable housing; and they move toward greater social connectedness with WLP's community of women.

The Resource Center

The Resource Center at Women's Lunch Place provides guests the tools to search for employment, housing, medical care, and other forms of assistance. Guests have access to email, computers, phones, and other basic office supplies. Classes are offered on a variety of topics including literacy, computer skills, housing and legal issues, employment, financial literacy, nutrition, and stress reduction. Many women use 67 Newbury Street as their home address, important when applying for jobs and housing. Located adjacent to the Resource Center is the Susannah Waldo Reading Room, a quiet space for guests to sit and read, or browse for books to take with them.

Wellness Program

Through a collaborative partnership with Healthcare Without Walls, WLP offers services to its guests to improve their physical and emotional well-being. Doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, and a psychiatrist offer guests free on-site healthcare services for both urgent and chronic health conditions. Medical case managers assist women in accessing MassHealth and other benefits, and make appointments with specialists. Community health centers, local colleges and universities, and agencies present informational workshops on relevant topics. WLP also trains and partners with LGBTQ groups to educate and offer services to meet the needs of its diverse community of women.

Creative Expressions Program

Women's Lunch Place's Creative Expressions Program gives guests the opportunity for expression through art, music, drama, and dance. Women can demonstrate their talents and pursue their interests, promoting healing, confidence, pleasure, empowerment, and positive interpersonal connection. Volunteers lead weekly art, writing, and reading groups, and sewing, knitting, and jewelry-making classes. Volunteers lead a women's choir and also teach yoga, dance, and offer Reiki. Once a month, guests are invited to attend live musical performances.

Outings and Special Events

Small group activities held twice per month give guests the chance to participate in the social and cultural environment of Boston. These outings are enriching for the women who take part and are a reprieve from their day-to-day environments and experiences.

GOVERNANCE

Women's Lunch Place is governed by a highly skilled 18-member Board of Directors, committed to its fiduciary, strategic, and fundraising leadership role and actively engaged in fulfilling WLP's mission. WLP's Advisory Committee members offer professional and personal expertise as leaders in their respective fields, help introduce new supporters to the organization, and provide financial support for events and special projects, all in service to WLP's vision.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

WLP employs approximately 24 staff, committed to WLP's advocacy, programs, development, and direct care work. The senior leadership team is composed of the Executive Director, who oversees a Director of Finance and Human Resources, Director of Operations, Director of Development, and Director of Programs. Supplementing WLP's staff is a team of devoted volunteers who logged approximately 32,000 hours of service in FY2018, serving meals and providing medical care, advocacy services, and art therapy.

FINANCES

Women's Lunch Place is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit social services organization with a diverse and balanced funding stream. Annual revenue is derived from individual donors (31%), events (31%), corporations and foundations (26%), and other income (12%). The organization's reliance on private rather than public funds provides helpful programmatic flexibility. The budget for FY2018 was \$4,020,223, with expenses running at \$3,900,029. The leadership of WLP and its board are strong stewards of the organization's finances and strive to maximize every dollar donated, maintaining a lean organization with low overhead.

THE ROLE

The Executive Director of Women's Lunch Place will be an accomplished non-profit executive, passionate about WLP's mission, respectful of its history and traditions, and energized by its potential. The preferred candidate will be a practical visionary, able to conceive of, communicate, and execute a successful future for WLP. The Executive Director will report to and work collaboratively with WLP's Board of Directors, engaging them in strategic thinking around the vision and goals of the organization as it experiences increased demand for its services. The preferred candidate will bring extensive financial management experience and demonstrated fundraising aptitude.

Leading the day-to-day functions of the organization, the ED will set a tone of professionalism and excellence. WLP staff seek an inspiring leader and supportive collaborator who will foster an equalitarian environment, with consideration for WLP's racially, ethnically, and economically diverse staff. The ED will also be skilled in risk-management. They will be sensitive to staff and volunteers who may experience secondary trauma as a result of their work.

The Executive Director will be the face of the organization, maintaining a presence with guests and volunteers at the primary Newbury Street location and raising the profile of WLP externally in the community. The ED will engage, educate, and coordinate with a broad array of stakeholders and institutions to support and create programs, services, public policies, and financial resources in service

of WLP. A background in human services is preferred, with a sensitivity to the experiences of women struggling with homelessness, poverty, discrimination, and mental health and substance use disorders.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Develop a strategic vision for WLP, in service of its mission amidst an evolving urban landscape.

WLP aims to be a leader in providing a healing community to women experiencing homelessness and poverty in Boston. The next Executive Director will collaborate with the WLP Board to define a clear strategic direction that aligns the budget, staff, and priorities to implement organizational goals. The ED will convene with a network of mission-similar partners and collaborators to maximize alignment of vision and services. WLP will continue to deliver high quality, trauma-informed care that meets the needs of a diverse guest population facing increasingly complex challenges. Both direct care and advocacy will be priorities for the ED.

Support and develop WLP's organizational infrastructure through strategic leadership and management.

The Executive Director will be WLP's financial steward, working in partnership with the Board to develop and oversee the organization's annual budget and ensuring the budget is in service to WLP's core programmatic vision. The ED will be an effectual, strategic, yet empathetic leader, skillfully overseeing and supporting the well-being and professional development of staff. The Executive Director will weave a culture of inclusion and an appreciation for diversity into the fabric of the organization. The ED will give as much attention to the effective and efficient functioning of internal processes as they will give to outward-facing work.

Advance fundraising efforts and develop a culture of philanthropy.

The Executive Director will work closely with staff and Board members to design and implement a sophisticated and judicious development strategy and annual fundraising plan, paying special attention to increasing planned giving and building an endowment fund. The ED will oversee WLP's special fundraising events, and will identify new donors and cultivate strong relationships with individual, foundation, and corporate sponsors. The organization's diverse funding portfolio will be maintained and will also be adjusted as the giving landscape evolves.

Increase public awareness of WLP and strengthen its local presence.

The Executive Director will be an articulate spokesperson for Women's Lunch Place in the Boston community, capably communicating with government officials, corporate leaders, and the media. They will participate in public conversations about economic justice policies and issues affecting homeless and poor women. Key to the continued success of WLP will be developing and maintaining healthy relationships with funders, businesses, community leaders, and policy makers. The Executive Director will reinforce existing relationships with constituents and will recognize and create opportunities for strategic alliances appropriate for the organization, identifying potential supporters.

Ensure continued alignment of programs with WLP's core mission.

The Executive Director will ensure the successful execution of WLP programs and services and will have the responsibility for its overall operations, ensuring the high quality of these services, and evaluating the outcomes of existing programs. New offerings will be implemented based on current and anticipated needs. Services will be eliminated when necessary and appropriate. The Executive Director will ensure that Women's Lunch Place evolves along with its guest population. In recent years, WLP has seen an increase in its elder guests, who now represent 36% of the total population served. Recent research predicts that elder homelessness will increase three-fold by 2030. WLP is also seeing more

guests who are struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. To maintain a connection to the pulse of the organization and the issues these women confront, the ED will have a regular presence in the day shelter.

Work closely as a strategic partner with the WLP Board of Directors.

The incoming Executive Director will serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board, which includes civic, corporate, community, and philanthropic leaders. All are highly engaged, keeping WLP in touch with its constituents and securing additional funding for the organization. The ED and the Board will work as partners on strategic planning efforts to review WLP's infrastructure and goals, making necessary changes to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination. The ED will be expected to report on a regular basis to the Board on strategic progress. The Executive Director will also work with the Board Chair and Executive Committee to support effective Board functioning and will work with the Governance Committee and Chair to ensure ongoing Board development, paying special attention to increasing the Board's diversity. The ED may also engage members of the organization's Advisory Committee as appropriate.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate must be committed to the mission and values of Women's Lunch Place, and will be able to demonstrate this commitment through their previous experience. The next Executive Director will be a skilled manager, a dedicated servant-leader, and a fierce advocate on behalf of vulnerable women from all backgrounds. It is expected that the next ED will bring many of the following skills, experiences, and personal attributes:

- Commitment to and passion for serving women in need, especially those experiencing homelessness or severe economic insecurity; an understanding of the particular issues experienced by these women in an urban context; and the ability to articulate these issues to a varied audience.
- Competency in long-term strategic planning, fiscal management, and general operational management, with a minimum of ten or more years of successful experience as a senior manager in a non-profit organization, preferably with a similar budget.
- The capacity to drive continuous improvement and to build best practice program models that respond to the needs of diverse constituencies.
- Experience reporting to and working closely with a Board of Directors; experience working in conjunction with a Board to set clear strategy.
- Demonstrated ability to establish, maintain, and increase diverse and stable funding from individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Ability to be a credible and effective spokesperson, advocate, and representative who can listen and inspire others, from women who depend on WLP's services to political, philanthropic, industry, and community leaders.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and sustain collaborative relationships with external organizations and stakeholders.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, specifically in regard to the cultivation of an inclusive internal culture, the recruitment of a diverse board, and the offering of programs that are inclusive in their services.
- Commitment to integrity, empathy, fairness, and transparency.
- An articulate, diplomatic, and persuasive manner.
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree or equivalent experience preferred.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations, resumes, and cover letters may be submitted to:

Donna Cramer, Principal
Tatiana Oberkoetter, Associate

Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
www.imsearch.com/7000

Electronic submission of application materials is strongly encouraged.

Women's Lunch Place is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against current or prospective employees based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, criminal record (inquiries only), handicap (disability), mental illness, retaliation, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, genetics, active military, or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and MA laws and regulations.