

POSITION DESCRIPTION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DEMOCRACY NORTH CAROLINA

Organization

Democracy North Carolina (Democracy NC) is a nonpartisan organization that uses research, organizing, and advocacy to increase voter participation, reduce the influence of big money in politics and achieve a government that is truly of the people, by the people and for the people. For 25 years, this 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization and its predecessor Democracy South has taken on powerful institutions and political leaders, regardless of party, and promoted reforms that expand public involvement in the political process.

In its quest to help North Carolina citizens achieve meaningful pro-democracy reform, Democracy NC engages in a variety of different, integrated activities, including:

- Research that analyzes election-related barriers and explores possible solutions. Findings are distributed to targeted audiences, media and other intermediaries. As a part of this effort, Democracy NC educates the public on the implications for their lives.
- Organizing both statewide and in local communities – from the halls of the legislature to city halls and local boards of elections – to bring together diverse groups of people to focus on shared advocacy and civic engagement goals. Through these coalition-building activities, Democracy NC is leading a coordinated, effective, racially and politically diverse reform effort in North Carolina.
- Advocacy that is conducted through local and statewide networks of informed citizens who are willing to pursue and defend meaningful pro-democracy policies and take a more active role in government. Training includes Democracy Summer, a paid program for outstanding college students.

Each of these activity areas complements the other, and contributes to Democracy NC's goal of expanding the effectiveness of organizations and individuals who are concerned about civic participation and government reform.

Democracy NC contributes a vital public service, as the preeminent leader and advocate to advance voting rights in the region. It also works, and must continue to work, in close coordination and full coalition with other reform-minded statewide organizations, with leaders who are rallying their constituents to the ballot box and with other mediums for change.

With a staff of 16 and an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million, Durham-based Democracy NC punches well above its weight.

For more information on Democracy NC, see: www.nc-democracy.org

Current Context and Opportunities

In the landscape of nonprofits concerned with voting rights and money in politics, Democracy NC plays a unique role. It has worked successfully to accomplish concrete wins that reduce the influence of money in politics and to expand the franchise. Our recent work showcases the profound impact and nationwide scale of Democracy NC's work. For example, we:

- Fought back against the most restrictive voting access legislation passed in the country, including collecting stories of the real life impacts of the 2013 voter suppression law passed by the NC General Assembly. We kept a drumbeat of media attention on the reach of this law, and we participated in a lawsuit that struck down these voting restrictions earlier this year.
- Shined a light on racially gerrymandered redistricting maps, which were subsequently deemed unconstitutional by federal court.
- Mobilized the country's largest nonpartisan voter protection efforts leading up to Election Day.

With the new political landscape, our work has become all the more important. Democracy NC is looked to and relied upon by national and state organizations as an important and highly respected entity in a key Southern state, one which can assess and respond to these changes by advancing policies which position the state over time to build and rebuild a stronger, more inclusive and more accountable state government.

Transition

Democracy NC has prepared for this executive leadership transition through a number of thoughtful and genuine steps, which are outlined below. Perhaps most importantly, we are prepared for an honest and mutual exchange with serious candidates, to achieve a common understanding of the strategic challenges, circumstances and personalities that will shape the Executive Director's mission.

After an exemplary 50 years fighting for social justice in the South, Democracy NC founder Bob Hall will retire in the Spring of 2017. He has welcomed and supported the Board and organization's preparation for this transition (planning has been underway for the past 18 months) and trusts their capacity to shape a new vision for the next generation of leadership. While he will be available to the new Executive Director to provide support and information, if that person asks, he welcomes the Board's leadership of this transition process.

Recognizing the upcoming loss of Mr. Hall's extraordinary knowledge and credibility with his retirement, the Board has worked with him in recent years to "deepen the bench" – adding new, experienced staff in key positions and documenting institutional history as a part of a thoughtful succession planning process. A strong and knowledgeable management and staff team is in place and the organization is on sound financial footing.

Organization Culture

Like many founder-led organizations, the culture and operational environment at Democracy NC reflects the personality and style of the founder. Mr. Hall has been a constant presence throughout the organization's history. He manages the intensive research and analysis that informs much of their work, which is a key source of Democracy NC's impact and credibility, and he is a widely respected expert and spokesperson. He has also been the chief strategist for Democracy NC activities.

Mr. Hall's management style has been to immerse himself in the details of an initiative, orchestrating activities and closely managing a Director-level staff member when he sees the need, and granting considerable autonomy to that person when he does not. Over time, staff have adapted to this approach, absorbing knowledge when he offers it, and owning full leadership responsibility when he does not. Mr. Hall has also established effective and consistent operational standards, assuring equitable personnel practices and measuring performance against the strategic plan. This approach has worked, developing strong leaders who also remain open to learning and growing.

There is a rich and sturdy dialogue within Democracy NC, dedicated to applying a racial equity lens to our work and to ourselves. This is a critical value to the organization, and we believe it greatly strengthens our performance and our standing.

In preparing for this transition, we recognize that Mr. Hall's approach to managing and developing staff has been effective under his watch, but we expect a different approach may be needed by someone who succeeds him, and who may not bring the same level of subject matter expertise or standing as the founder.

This is a healthy organization, with a highly skilled staff, much pride and excitement about the importance of this work, and a culture of genuine collegiality. The staff is incredibly dedicated to this work, and have given their all to support voting rights and access to the ballot, most recently in the 2016 election cycle.

One insight emerging from the transition process is that this talented team has the bandwidth and the flexibility to align with a new Executive Director and the mandate that person receives from the Board. With the right leadership from the

new Executive Director, we see a potential for this team to be a greater “sum of its parts.”

Democracy NC does not have a typical “Founders Board,” which can be disengaged and unprepared to govern at this moment of transition. The Board is composed of highly experienced individuals, with backgrounds in organizing, advocacy, politics, law, finance, fund raising and private, nonprofit and government executive leadership. The Board is fully committed and capable of meeting its obligations as a strategic and policy making body, supporting fund raising, providing steady and consistent oversight of the Executive Director and honoring the boundaries necessary to empower a strong, autonomous chief executive. Through this process and with staff input, the Board will shape a common vision and agenda with the new Executive Director, and will then empower that person as an autonomous leader and chief executive.

Future Role and Responsibilities

The Executive Director must be a skilled leader and manager. This person must fully share our values and our passion for the distinct role Democracy NC plays, organizing to advance voting rights and loyally supporting and providing expert advice to organizations and the movement to advance racial equity and civil rights. These criteria are nonnegotiable.

The strengths of this staff and Board allow us some flexibility in how we shape the assignment for the next Executive Director and how that person aligns the staff and resources of the organization to achieve the best results. The primary charge to the new Executive Director will be to continue the effective performance of this organization, lead a highly skilled and committed staff, and develop the strategies and policies necessary for growth and maximum impact.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will:

- Have overall responsibility for the planning, implementation, administration and management of all Democracy NC programs and systems.
- Serve as an advisor to the Board on all organizational matters, with the active involvement and support of the Board.
- Lead and support a collaborative, diverse, talented and energetic staff.
- Be a skilled and active spokesperson for Democracy NC in the many diverse settings where its voice needs to be heard – with the media, policy makers, partners and supporters.
- Facilitate public advocacy from expert Board members, volunteers and staff, as needed, while assuring that a consistent message and policies are promoted.

With the management team, the Executive Director is accountable for the fiscal health of the organization. S/he will:

- Oversee Democracy NC's operating and capital budgets and maintain fiscal control over expenditures.
- Provide leadership and take an active role in identifying potential and long-term sources of support for its operations and capital development.

The Executive Director will be expected to work with the Board and to direct staff to implement and refine the strategic plan for Democracy NC. The current 3-year plan, established at the start of 2014, has been effective, and has modeled a healthy balance between the Board's strategic leadership role and the staff's role as expert and implementer of strategy. With a new leader in place, the Board anticipates a full review of our agenda, to adapt to emerging needs and opportunities, beginning in 2017.

Qualifications

Democracy NC is seeking an Executive Director who has an unswerving commitment to social justice, principally through access to the ballot box, and who will inspire broad-based, deeply felt loyalty to the advancement of the Democracy NC mission. The Executive Director will be a leader with extraordinary vision who is able to realize that vision through a rich interaction with the Board, staff, supporters, volunteers and those who are served by the organization. The Executive Director must have a value set consistent with a culture that is based upon respect, collaboration, high ethical standards and a passion to make a difference.

The Executive Director must have the skills to assure that Democracy NC's programs are responsive to the dynamic political environment and changing needs of those it serves, and that the methods and resources employed reflect best practices. A minimum of 10 years' experience in a senior leadership role, or its equivalent, is required. A successful track record in effective organizational leadership and management is critical. An advanced degree in management, public policy, human rights, law or other related disciplines is a plus.

Specific skills and commitments required of the Democracy NC Executive Director include:

- **Leadership:** Commands respect for his or her character and values. Is well connected and has extensive experience working with local, southern regional or national governmental, policymaking and grant making institutions and leaders. Can inspire others and engage in collaborative leadership. Is experienced with and has a deep respect for organizing as a core strategy for social change.
- **Vision:** Has a clear vision for advancing opportunities for Democracy NC and for using the resources of the Board, staff, volunteers, funders, policymakers, citizens, activists and the media to realize this vision.
- **Diversity:** Is a skilled practitioner in issues of power, oppression, and cultural sensitivity; embraces diversity of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, and sexual orientation; and has a demonstrated track

record of developing and reinforcing an anti-oppression lens in the external and internal work of the organization.

- **Management Skills:** Possesses a proven track record managing staff, finances and a complex organization in a manner that is progressive, fair and consistent. Experienced in program development and implementation and skilled at building and growing an organization.
- **Fundraising:** Skilled as a fundraiser and capable and comfortable in the role of lead fundraiser for the organization. Has a proven track record of garnering significant resources and maintaining strong relationships with funders and donors.
- **Communication Skills:** Demonstrates superior verbal and written communication skills and is capable of serving as the primary spokesperson for the organization, while directing and inspiring Board leaders, program directors and volunteers to effectively represent the organization in their areas of expertise.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Is well grounded in techniques and skills of listening, providing feedback, catalyzing learning and creative activity, promoting respect, and setting limits.
- **Knowledge/Understanding:** Has a sophisticated understanding of the political, cultural, social, technological and educational issues confronting contemporary society in the United States and worldwide and a strong understanding of the landscape of progressive policy movements and change. Knowledge of the South and the North Carolina political landscape is a plus.
- **Organizational Skills:** Is creative and imaginative. Has a proven ability to attract outstanding and diverse talent. Is resilient, decisive, and has the ability to stick to a plan and lead it through to completion. Is skilled in appropriately assigning responsibility and authority.

Application

Democracy North Carolina is an equal opportunity employer. All candidates will be evaluated on a merit basis. Compensation is negotiable, depending on qualifications and experience.

Resumes and a cover letter may be submitted, in confidence, to:

Ford Webb Associates, Inc.
60 Thoreau Street
Concord, MA 01742
Or

DemNC@fordwebb.com