Position Specification
JDC – American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer

Private and Confidential
Position Specification

Our Client

The JDC, established as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, is the leading Jewish humanitarian organization, working in 70 countries to lift lives and strengthen communities. JDC rescues Jews in danger, provides aid to vulnerable Jews, develops innovative solutions to Israel’s most complex social challenges, cultivates a Jewish future, and leads the Jewish community’s response to crises. For over 100 years, JDC’s work has put the timeless Jewish value of mutual responsibility into action, making JDC essential to the survival of millions of people and the advancement of Jewish life across the globe.

To put the work in perspective: Over 1 million Jews have been rescued by JDC and its partners since 1914; 84,000 people engaged in Jewish life through JDC last year; and, on any given day, 55,000 people will be helped by JDC around the world.

History

JDC was the first Jewish organization in the United States to give large-scale funding for international relief. The organization was founded during World War I when, in 1914, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau, Sr. wired New York philanthropist Jacob Schiff to ask for funds to help Jews suffering in Ottoman Palestine. World War I left in its wake the seeds of many additional catastrophes—pogroms, health epidemics, famine, revolution, and economic ruin—and JDC played a central role in rebuilding the devastated communities of Eastern Europe and sustaining Jews in Palestine.

JDC’s relief activities, emigration aid, and rescue operations were critical following the Nazi rise to power and the outbreak of World War II. The war was devastating to the Jewish world and, in its wake, JDC mobilized to support and resettle survivors, reconstruct the remnant communities of Europe, create a network of social welfare services in the fledgling State of Israel, set up an extensive assistance program for Jews in North Africa and the Muslim world, and provide discreet relief behind the Iron Curtain.

With the fall of communism, JDC established cultural and educational programs to foster a sense of Jewish identity in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where Jewish life had been repressed, and developed an innovative welfare and relief system for the tens of thousands of elderly Jews, many of whom are Holocaust survivors, who were left with nothing when the Soviet Union collapsed.

JDC Today

Today JDC continues the mission that began with a cablegram by lifting lives and strengthening communities in 70 countries. Its commitment to putting Jewish values into action remains as strong as ever and is focused around 5 main areas:

Providing Aid to Vulnerable Jews

Tens of thousands of elderly Jews and families around the world live in dire poverty. JDC ensures they never have to choose between essentials like food and medicine, and also provides something invaluable — the knowledge that they are not forgotten, but remain part of a global Jewish community that will always have their back.
Rescuing Jews in Danger

Jews around the world still face threats – anti-Semitism, violence, and social and economic upheaval. While JDC’s priority is to help Jewish communities live safely where they choose, when those threats endanger Jewish lives or Jewish life, JDC is the 9-1-1 of the Jewish people. The organization is there with boots on the ground and know-how to take them out of harm’s way. And JDC will continue to be there at a moment’s notice, wherever they are needed.

Providing Innovative Solutions to Israel’s Most Complex Social Challenges

Israel's future demands that the nation's most complex social challenges be addressed. JDC breaks cycles of poverty among the most vulnerable, fosters inclusion and independence for the elderly and people with disabilities, and provides access to opportunity for all. To drive that change, JDC brings together all of its partners — the Government of Israel, the business sector, and NGOs — to create solutions that draw on the same can-do spirit that made the desert bloom.

Cultivating a Jewish Future

The rebuilding and renewal of vibrant, self-sustaining Jewish communities around the world is a priority for JDC. That is why they work hand-in-hand with communities around the world, empowering them to realize their own dreams and care for their most vulnerable. Together with JDC, they build new generations of leaders capable of taking on tomorrow’s challenges and shaping the future of Jewish life.

Leading the Jewish Community’s Response to Global Crises

When natural disasters or other calamities strike, JDC helps communities of all backgrounds and faiths rebuild. JDC is on the ground when disaster hits and stays long after it is over to make sure those communities get back on their feet. JDC also brings its expertise to slow-moving crises, like endemic poverty, food insecurity, and the plight of refugees, because repairing the world means taking action when people are in need.

Operating Information

JDC’s total annual budget is approximately $355 million, and the organization has total assets of approximately $656 million. JDC has a global staff of over 1,000 employees of which 140 are based at headquarters in New York, 600 in Jerusalem, and the rest in Western and Eastern Europe (particularly in the countries of the former Soviet Union), Ethiopia, India and Latin America.

JDC is committed to the principles of non-partisanship and non-denominationalism. The organization does not identify with any political positions and is respectful of diverse Jewish beliefs and of an individual’s decision to live wherever s/he chooses.

For additional information please refer to: www.jdc.org
The Role

Reporting to JDC’s Board of Directors, the Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for the strategic, programmatic, financial, and operational leadership of the organization. The CEO will ensure JDC’s reputation as a trusted and welcome partner working with the public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors to mobilize resources to improve the lives of Jewish individuals and their communities across the world. S/he will work in collaboration with the Board on all matters of governance, mission, and strategic objectives and will ensure that the Board is kept fully informed on the operating and financial condition of the organization and of important internal and external influencing factors.

The CEO is the principal ambassador for JDC with external audiences and must be able to communicate JDC’s mission to new and existing high-level partners and funders, as well as to the community and other leaders on the ground, where JDC’s work takes place. S/he will embrace his/her role as the organization’s senior advocate and high-level fundraiser and will be a forward-thinking leader able to broaden JDC’s visibility and base of support across an increasingly diverse American and global Jewish community. This role requires an articulate and persuasive speaker, a deeply skilled listener, and a partnership builder with a strategic approach to revenue generation and stakeholder engagement.

As JDC’s key strategic and operational leader, the CEO must be able to set a compelling programmatic and operational vision for the organization. S/he will be a focused and disciplined manager capable of working effectively with an engaged Board; of establishing clear priorities; and of steering the organization toward maintaining its strategic focus, mobilizing new resources, and expending them efficiently. At every step, s/he will reinforce program strategy and delivery, ensure consistency, promote a results orientation, and strengthen human capital across the organization. The CEO will be an inclusive, fair, and present manager and must be able to foster a culture to which high-caliber staff is attracted and where it is valued, motivated, respected and retained.

Above all, the CEO will embrace JDC’s historical roots, demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of Jewish affairs, and fully embrace the organization’s commitment to safeguarding and furthering Jewish values, lives and communities around the world. S/he will personify the stature, courage, empathy and effectiveness for which JDC is known and will be able to look beyond the fray to identify trends and opportunities facing JDC and to devise strategies for the organization to continue to fulfill its mission in the future.

This role is based in New York and requires the CEO to be a present and engaged leader willing to travel in order to spend time with staff, volunteers and partners in the US, Israel and other places where JDC has active programs.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished and recognized leader with experience in a complex - preferably international - matrixed, field-based organization with multiple partners and stakeholders. S/he will have a demonstrated commitment to Jewish life and Jewish values and a strong grounding in international affairs as they pertain to the global Jewish community.

The next CEO will be an individual with demonstrated business and financial acumen and the experience to lead positive and sustainable change in an organization. This role requires a track record of successfully leading a nonprofit, private, or public enterprise with a diverse and complex constituency and evidence of...
fostering an atmosphere of commitment, teamwork, and mutual respect among board and staff. The CEO will personally demonstrate the highest degree of personal responsibility, accountability, and integrity.

The CEO will have had experience working successfully with a large and engaged Board of Directors. S/he must be skilled in Board development and in driving engagement from Board members through frequent communication and clearly established and maintained priorities.

The JDC is looking for an inspirational and motivational leader able to instill a culture of transparency, collaboration and responsibility; an authentic and strong communicator with a keen understanding of organizational dynamics; a strategic and pragmatic leader with a results-orientation; and an active and empathetic listener who will take the time to understand JDC’s culture in order to devise and implement a sustainable strategy for its evolution.

Competencies and skills required for this position include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Knowledge and Expertise**

- Demonstrated commitment to Jewish life and Jewish values
- An understanding of international affairs as they pertain to the global Jewish community
- An understanding of the issues involved in the delivery of complex social services and humanitarian assistance gained either in the nonprofit, private, or government sectors
- Will ideally have previous experience leading a distributed, field-based organization
- An understanding of the lay-professional relationship within philanthropic organizations.

**Strategy Leadership and Management**

- Demonstrated successful management of a complex organization or significant program with clear strategic results
- A strategic and visionary leader who can both create and implement the future direction of an organization
- A growth and results-oriented leader able to inspire staff and Board to achieve ambitious goals while ensuring the evolution of systems and processes to sustain viability in the long-term
- Encourages transparency, openness, and mutual respect while also being able to set priorities decisively, delegate responsibilities, instill best practices, and allocate resources efficiently
- Able to recruit, engage, and empower top talent, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and manage performance. Widely viewed as a strong developer of others
- A player-coach who partners with professional staff and leads through influence and engagement rather than hierarchy
- Makes decisions in the face of uncertainty or change that are aligned with the core values of the organization
- Has a high degree of integrity and forethought in his/her approach to making decisions; has the ability to act in a transparent and consistent manner while always taking into account what is best for the organization
- Self-reflective and aware of his/her own limitations; leads by example; hires to complement his/her own skills and competencies, and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement
Communication, Relationship Building and Influence

- Exceptional communication skills; highly articulate and persuasive and with a compelling manner
- At ease in a front-facing role representing the organization with peers, partners, funders, and the media
- Able to motivate others to pursue the achievement of common objectives; the ability to establish positive and productive working relationships and alliances at all levels within JDC, as well as externally is key to the success of this role

Fundraising

- Ideally will have previous experience raising funds from individuals, foundations, governments and/or international agencies
- If not from the nonprofit world, will have a previous track-record of building productive relationships leading to recurring donations or revenues for an organization or company
- Embraces the role of chief fundraiser and encourages a culture of development throughout the organization and the Board

Personal

- An inspirational individual with a heart for the Jewish community and the passion to make a transformational difference in their lives
- Has the experience, intellect, and maturity to make decisions in the best interest of the organization and ensure that they are aligned with its values
- Shows passion for and commitment to the mission of JDC and brings the highest level of energy and endurance to achieving the goals of the organization
- A highly ethical individual with a strong moral compass known to possess excellent judgment.

Contact

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