

CORNWALL LIBRARY

Cornwall, Connecticut

Executive Director

Position Announcement

A Rare Opportunity to Lead

The Cornwall Library is seeking a dynamic, mission-driven Executive Director to step into a role brimming with possibility. This is an exceptional opportunity for a seasoned nonprofit professional to shape an already-beloved institution's next chapter.

ABOUT THE CORNWALL LIBRARY

Nestled in the hills of Cornwall, Connecticut, the Cornwall Library is far more than a place to borrow books. It is the cultural and intellectual heart of a remarkable community, where literature, the arts, and civic life converge.

“The Cornwall Library is a welcoming community resource for all, promoting life-long learning and the free exchange of ideas.”

Founded on the belief that great libraries belong to everyone, the Cornwall Library has grown significantly in recent years – in programming, visibility, community reach, and fundraising. What was once a small, quietly beloved local institution has evolved into a dynamic cultural organization with an ambitious programming calendar, thriving annual fundraising events, a healthy endowment, and a board of engaged, skilled community leaders who are ready to invest in the library's future.

Literacy, in its broadest sense, is the heartbeat of everything the library does: from its children's programs and community reading initiatives to its celebrated speaker series and the writers and thinkers who call Cornwall home.

THE LIBRARY AT A GLANCE

- Location: Cornwall, Connecticut
- Thriving programming: literary, children's, arts, nature & community events
- Signature fundraisers: Books & Blooms, Labor Day Art Sale
- Active, skilled, and committed board of directors
- Loyal patron/donor base and philanthropic community
- Deep roots and trusted presence in Cornwall civic life

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Cornwall Library is at an intentional inflection point. With a planned leadership transition underway, the board has taken time to think carefully about what the library needs next.

The board is looking for someone who will arrive with energy and ideas, engage deeply with the community, and build — growing the library's fundraising, expanding its programming, and establishing the organizational infrastructure that makes it a model small-town cultural institution.

The incoming Executive Director will have the rare privilege of shaping the role itself. With a supportive and engaged board, a dedicated staff, a strong financial foundation, and a community that genuinely loves its library, this is an opportunity to make an outsized impact in a place that is ready for it.

This is a full-time, exempt salaried position. The annual salary range is \$75,000-85,000 annually, commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Cornwall Library offers a competitive benefits package including health insurance, paid time off, and retirement benefits.

THIS ROLE IS PARTICULARLY WELL-SUITED FOR:

- A leader who is excited by the prospect of building — not just maintaining — an organization with real momentum
- Someone who thrives in a close-knit community setting and understands that relationships are the hallmark of small-town leadership
- A candidate who brings genuine fundraising confidence alongside deep mission alignment
- Someone who has been doing the work of an ED without the title, and is ready to own the full scope
- A seasoned nonprofit professional currently in a leadership role — Chief of Staff, Deputy Director, Director of Development, Program Director — who is ready and eager to step into an executive leadership position

THE ROLE

The Executive Director is the chief executive of the Cornwall Library, responsible for translating the board's vision into organizational reality. The ED leads externally — cultivating donors, engaging the community, and serving as the public face of the library — while ensuring that internal operations, staff, and programs run with excellence.

The ED reports to the Board of Directors and works in close partnership with board leadership. As the organization matures and the board transitions from operational involvement to governance, the ED will have increasing ownership over day-to-day leadership and decision-making.

Leadership & Vision

- Serve as the primary steward of the library's mission, ensuring vision and values are articulated and guide the strategy and day to day leadership
- Lead the development and implementation of a multi-year strategic plan in partnership with the board
- Foster a culture of excellence, accountability, and genuine community service across all library functions
- Take initiative — identify opportunities, propose solutions, and act with confidence and good judgment
- Develop and sustain a motivated, high-performing staff team

Fundraising & Development

- Lead all fundraising efforts — cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding individual donors
- Build a programmatic development function: move beyond periodic giving toward a strategic, year-round donor stewardship program
- Own the library's signature fundraising events, including Books & Blooms and the Labor Day Arts Sale
- Develop a legacy and planned-giving program, engaging long-time patrons and community members
- Pursue grant opportunities from foundations, government sources, and community organizations
- Provide regular, transparent financial reporting to the board and ensure fiscal stewardship of the endowment

Community & External Relations

- Serve as the visible, energetic face of the Cornwall Library in the community and beyond
- Cultivate relationships across Cornwall's full community — longtime residents and newer arrivals
- Build partnerships with local organizations, schools, civic groups, and cultural institutions
- Lead communications and public relations — ensuring the library has a compelling, consistent presence across channels
- Represent the library at community events, board gatherings, and donor meetings

Programming & Operations

- Partner with the Program Committee to expand and diversify the high-quality program calendar
- Ensure literary, children's, arts, nature, and community programming continues to reflect the library's identity and ambitions
- Oversee library operations, including collection management, technology, and facilities
- Identify and address organizational infrastructure gaps — systems, technology, and processes that support a more autonomous organization
- Ensure compliance with all applicable nonprofit governance, legal, and financial requirements

Board Partnership

- Work openly and collaboratively with the Board of Directors — a board that is engaged, skilled, and committed to getting this right
- Support the board's transition from operational involvement to governance: build staff capacity so the board can govern rather than operate
- Provide regular updates, candid assessments, and strategic recommendations to board leadership
- Support board development, including recruitment, onboarding, and committee effectiveness

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The Cornwall Library is not looking for a manager. It is looking for a leader — someone with energy, confidence, and genuine affection for the community. The right person will arrive curious, get to know the library and the people who love it, and then build.

We recognize that great leaders come from many paths. If you are excited about this opportunity and believe you have most — but not all — of what we've described, we encourage you to apply. The Cornwall Library is committed to finding the right person, not the perfect resume.

Must-Have Capabilities

CAPABILITY	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE AT CORNWALL
People leadership	Builds trust with staff. Sets clear expectations, develops talent, and creates a culture where people are proud to work.
Mission alignment	Genuinely excited by what libraries do and what this library is becoming. Understands that culture, access, and community connection are the point — not a background condition.
Fundraising confidence	Comfortable in the room with donors. Makes the ask without hesitation. Understands that stewardship — the thank-you, the follow-up, the relationship — is as important as the solicitation.
Community presence	Warm, energizing, and genuinely interested in people. The kind of person who lights up a room and makes everyone feel the library is lucky to have them.

Initiative & ownership	Identifies what needs to happen, proposes a path, and executes. Comfortable making decisions and accountable for outcomes.
Board partnership	Understands the board-ED relationship. Communicates openly, accepts feedback, and helps the board do its best governance work.

Experience & Background

We are open to backgrounds across the nonprofit sector. The Cornwall Library's next ED may come from libraries, arts and cultural organizations, education, environmental nonprofits, community foundations, or adjacent fields. What matters most is leadership capacity, fundraising confidence, and genuine community orientation.

- Experience managing staff and building organizational culture
- Demonstrated success in fundraising — individual giving, events, and/or grants
- Track record of external relationship-building and community engagement
- Financial management experience — comfortable reading a P&L, managing a budget, and reporting to a board
- Confident communicator with experience in marketing, program promotion, and public outreach
- Familiarity with small-to-mid-size nonprofit operations and governance
- Experience with database management and Google Workspace

WHAT WE OFFER

<p>THE OPPORTUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A role you will genuinely make your own • An organization with momentum and a community that wants to see it grow • A board that is engaged, skilled, and ready to be true partners • Real latitude to build — programs, fundraising, infrastructure, culture • A platform to establish yourself as an executive leader • A community that will know your name and be glad you're here • A light filled, well maintained open post and beam building 	<p>THE ORGANIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A healthy financial foundation — endowment and growing earned revenue • A beloved brand with deep community trust built over many years • A dedicated, mission-driven staff team • Strong programming infrastructure and an active volunteer base • Competitive compensation commensurate with experience • A community setting that is both intimate and culturally rich
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HOW TO APPLY

The Cornwall Library is an equal opportunity employer.

We welcome candidates of all backgrounds and are committed to building a leadership team that reflects the full diversity of the community we serve.

Please send a cover letter and resume to searchcommittee@cornwalllibrary.org