

# STERLING | MARTIN

associates

## Executive Search



## Executive Director

### Client Overview

The [California Water Environment Association](#) (CWEA) is conducting a search for a new Executive Director. Founded in 1927, CWEA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit association with approximately 10,000-plus water quality professional members, a revenue budget in the \$4.6 million range and a staff of 18. CWEA's members work for public agencies and collection systems, engineering firms, and equipment and service suppliers. They are responsible for cleaning California's water and returning it safely to the environment. CWEA educates and certifies water quality professionals, disseminates technical information, and promotes sound policies to benefit society through protection and enhancement of our water environment. The organization's headquarters are located in Oakland, CA where this position is to be based. Sterling Martin Associates has been retained to assist with this search.

The Executive Director will serve as the chief staff officer of the Association with full authority for the management of its affairs. The ED reports directly to the Board of Directors and will be responsible for overall strategic management, administration, and operation of headquarters, and all staff. S/he will formulate recommendations and advise the Board regarding the affairs of the Association. The ED will implement Association policy as determined by the Board and help guide the organization's strategy.

CWEA offer services at the state level as well as locally, through 17 geographical Local Sections. CWEA is a proud state member association of the Water Environment Federation (WEF) which provides technical education and training for thousands of water quality professionals throughout the United States. For more information, please visit any of the following websites:

[www.cwea.org](http://www.cwea.org)  
[www.cweawaternews.org](http://www.cweawaternews.org)  
[www.events.cwea.org](http://www.events.cwea.org)  
[www.cawaterjobs.org](http://www.cawaterjobs.org)  
[www.cwea.org/strategy](http://www.cwea.org/strategy)

## Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director is responsible for the following areas:

- Overall strategic management, administration, and operation of headquarters, and all staff
- Formulating recommendations to and advises the Board regarding the affairs of the Association
- Implementing Association policy as determined by the Board
- Representing and promoting the Association before the general public
- Managing the operations of the Association
- Supervising the Association’s human, financial, and physical resources
- Has sole and exclusive authority for the engagement, terms, and conditions of employment, and discharge of all other employees of the Association
- Delegating such duties and responsibilities of the position as he/she determines in good faith to be in the best interest of the Association
- Helping the organization define its collective vision and strategic direction. Offering advice, counsel and strategies
- Helping the organization revisit its strategic plan, review underlying assumptions, develop mid-course corrections
- Modeling and cultivating continuous strategic thinking, learning, and development
- Effectively addressing the unexpected and the unplanned at a strategic level

## Critical Competencies for Success

### Section I: Leadership Competencies

- **Vision**—Thinks in big-picture terms. Sees the whole picture and articulates that broad perspective with others to help create a common purpose that mobilizes people and coordinates their efforts.
- **Trust and Integrity**—Is predictable, shares information and power, supports a culture of candor and supports others in their ability to generate trust. Acts by deeply held principles, professionally, ethically, and morally; a strong sense of right and wrong, an understanding that good ethics are good business; functions as a role model.

- **Participation and Community**—Inspires people to get involved and pitch in with their knowledge, effort, and enthusiasm. Generates mutual commitment that inspires highest performance from those who work with him/her. Encourages others to support one another and function as a team.
- **Learning**—Has self-understanding, understands their own strengths and shortcomings, promotes creativity and innovation, encourages people to refresh their skills and renew their commitment and enthusiasm. Takes initiative to stay current in appropriate areas including association management.
- **Diversity**—Actively encourages and cultivates an appreciation of the positive aspects of people's differences and encourages a culture of mutual individual respect.
- **Creativity**—Pays close attention to people's talents, leans on their strengths, manages around their weaknesses; encourages independent, challenging thinking.
- **Efficiency**—Invests in technologies or practices that improve productivity of staff and volunteers
- **Credibility**—Is recognized as an effective leader by staff, CWEA leaders and members, leaders at related associations, and professional peers. Reflects the organization's values.

## **Section II: Strategic Thinking Competencies**

- Helps the organization define its collective vision and strategic direction. Offers advice, counsel and strategies.
- Helps the organization revisit its strategic plan, review underlying assumptions, develop mid-course corrections.
- Models and cultivates continuous strategic thinking, learning, and development.
- Effectively addresses the unexpected and the unplanned at a strategic level.

## **Section III: Management Competencies**

### **Planning:**

- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing, refining, and implementing a sustainable annual and long-term/strategic planning model and developing and refining a strategic/long-term plan.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing an annual plan/program of work with complementary budget that supports the strategic plan and proves to be effective once implemented.
- Tracks status of plans; recognizes when plans are off track; knows when to and can regroup effectively to accomplish goals despite unforeseen obstacles and/or provides timely recommendations to the Board/Board Committees for changes in approach.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees in developing resources to support the implementation of the strategic plan.

### **Organizing:**

- Manages time and resources effectively to accomplish multiple objectives simultaneously.
- Delegates tasks effectively.
- Deals effectively with unknowns and risk; conceptualizes from ambiguous to specific information thereby helping to reduce risk to appropriate levels.
- Effectively addresses the unexpected and the unplanned at an operational / tactical level.

### **Implementing & Initiating:**

- Maintains focus on defined objectives; has good understanding and knowledge of projects underway, schedules, and progress made.
- Anticipates problems and takes corrective action to keep projects on track without being told.
- Sets high standards for organization, staff, and self; work produced reflects excellent results within established deadlines and resources.
- Takes a plan from the "drawing board" to actual practice and makes it work with changes appropriate due to the unexpected; supports/carries out decisions made by the Board/Board Committees.
- Assumes responsibility for own actions; accepts challenges and takes appropriate risks.
- Assists the Board/Board Committees to set appropriate performance outcomes and metrics for the strategic and annual plans and program of work.
- Establishes milestones along the way to ensure the work is on track.
- Stays within scope of authority as defined/expected by the Board.
- Makes sound decisions on known facts; takes responsibility for decisions. Rapidly recognizes key factors in making a decision; is not distracted by irrelevant data; balances amount of information required with the time in which a decision must be made.

### **Entrepreneurship:**

- Generates new ideas and/or builds on ideas of others to create change/innovation within the organization. Continuously seeks new ways, methods, and streamlined approaches to producing results. Free thinking; not bound by the organizational "box" in approaching new ways to solve problems.
- Looks for opportunities for the organization to expand its influence and/or market; brings these to the attention of the Board/Board Committees without being asked.

### **Financial management:**

- Assures financial transactions are managed according to generally accepted accounting principles, as evidenced by independent audits.
- Exhibits appropriate understanding of tax laws and regulations that apply to non-profit organizations; promptly recognizes when expert advice is needed and obtains it to assure compliance.

- Prepares realistic annual and attainable budget for the organization for review by the Planning & Program Development Committee and approval by the Board of Directors; understands specific budget items; can articulate the rationale for costs and ensures staff can provide detail when appropriate.
- Adheres to annual budget with reasonable degree of accuracy; advises Operations Committee/Board of unexpected deviations as learned; recommends adjustments with logical rationale and creativity. Understands the difference between the annual budget and cash flow; plans expenditures and manages income stream to maximize cash availability; advises Operations Committee/Board when unexpected situations occur; presents effective plans for management of cash flow.
- Acts within authority delegated by the Board in financial matters.
- Identifies, reviews, and recommends cost-saving alternatives to Board; proposes adjustments in fees as necessary.
- Assists Board/Board Committees in developing and maintaining appropriate reserves and reserve policies.
- Assists Board/Board Committees in developing and maintaining appropriate investment policies, involving experts as appropriate; implements investment policy.

#### **Section IV: Board Competencies**

- Supports and participates in the Board's knowledge-based decision-making process.
- Promotes and reinforces board accomplishments to board & membership
- Envisions changes in organizational functioning
- Listens and responds as appropriate to board members' feelings and needs
- Implements policies as determined by the Board
- Keeps President/Executive Committee informed of appropriate matters in a timely way; willing to convey negative information; provides succinct information with appropriate detail.
- Provides useful guidance/advice to assist the President/Executive Committee in making appropriate decisions.
- Supports and implements decisions made by President/Executive Committee.
- Keeps the Board/Board Committees informed; willing to deliver bad news; expresses self in a professional manner to convey constructive understanding of issues discussed. Displays initiative in advising Board/Board Committees on new policies, recommending new programs or changes to existing programs; willing to openly discuss difficult subjects with Board/Board Committees.
- Acts as an effective liaison with the Board/Board Committees; knows when to contribute information in meetings; tactfully enters discussion to voice concerns, clarify issues, and presents ideas.

- Diplomatically assists Board in considering potential officers, committee chairs, and other representatives in best interests of organization.
- Prepares effective presentations for delivery by Board members.

## **Section V: People Competencies**

### **Proficient in developing and maintaining relationships:**

- Within CWEA (e.g. local section leaders, Past Presidents, members, customers, suppliers/vendors, staff).
- With CWEA's related organizations (e.g. WEF, Cal-Nevada-AWWA, CASQA, Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), California Water Environment Association (CWEA), Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA), and the Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (SCAP)).

### **Staff**

- Selects best candidates for key staff positions; interviews, evaluates, and selects individuals for proper fit with organization, management philosophy, and ability to integrate with team approach.
- Establishes effective standards related to duties and responsibilities of staff, including virtual staff.
- Reviews direct reports and ensures other staff are periodically evaluated in a job-related manner consistent with job descriptions, performance outcomes as well as strategic and annual plans.
- Recommends and establishes effective compensation plan and competitive benefit plans, using appropriate salary surveys.
- Ensures training of staff members under direct supervision and organization-wide as evidenced by effectiveness of employees at assigned tasks.
- Counsels employees regarding performance; ensures appropriate counseling of problem employees; documents difficulties; terminates without undue hesitation in the best interests of the organization involving experts as appropriate.
- Encourages staff to pursue related higher/continuing education
- Assures staff members function effectively at Board and committee meetings and are informed and aware of their roles.

## **Section VI: Communication Competencies**

- Effectively and professionally represents and promotes the Association with internal audiences (e.g., Local Sections, Committees, etc.) and with external audiences (e.g. related associations, governmental agencies).
- Listens actively and generates effective two-way communication.
- Prepares effective and timely written correspondence with Board and public.

- Prepares and delivers effective presentations to the Board and other audiences.

## **Requisite Qualifications, Characteristics, and Experience**

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent from an accredited college or university
- Ten or more years of experience as a senior executive with a volunteer-based association or other organization managing personnel in complex activities.
- Experience with 501 (c)(3) organizations a plus
- Experience with organizations offering training, education, and certification services a plus
- Certified Association Executive (CAE) certification a plus

## **Compensation**

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to [CWEA@smartinsearch.com](mailto:CWEA@smartinsearch.com). A well-written cover letter, outlining how your experience fits the requirements of the position, will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

*CWEA is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer committed to inclusion and cultural diversity in the workplace. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual preference, genetic information or any other protected class.*

### **For more information, contact:**

#### **Sterling Martin Associates**

1025 Connecticut Avenue | Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20036

#### **David S. Martin | Managing Partner**

[CWEA@smartinsearch.com](mailto:CWEA@smartinsearch.com)

202-257-1627

#### **Tricia Bork Canavan | Senior Consultant**

[CWEA@smartinsearch.com](mailto:CWEA@smartinsearch.com)

913-314-0114