

Position Announcement – February 2026
Executive Director
Equal Plates Project
Asheville, NC



Equal Plates Project seeks a visionary and transformational Executive Director to take the organization to the next level – supporting local farmers, addressing food insecurity, and building community through scratch-cooked meals.

The Area

When people think of Asheville, the word that comes to mind first is 'beautiful.' It is a culturally rich region that is both economically and geographically diverse. Its quality of life makes it highly attractive as a place where lifestyle complements professional opportunity. It is difficult to find a top ten list that doesn't include Asheville. Whether the list is touting our virtues for our local food system, outdoor recreation, restaurants, breweries, or a place to vacation or retire, the area continues to rank highly.

The Organization:

Equal Plates Project purchases from small farms at fair prices, transforms their quality ingredients into nourishing meals, and partners with community organizations to share thousands of meals each week with neighbors facing complex barriers to food access.

Our vision is a connected community where local farmers thrive by growing food for their neighbors, and everyone—regardless of barriers—enjoys access to nourishing, locally sourced meals.

In order to use local food as a lever for nourishment, social connection and community resilience, we work with a variety of nonprofit partners to share meals alongside their vital programming. Our partners include permanent supportive housing projects, subsidized senior residences, parenting support groups, youth groups, emergency shelters, family shelters and domestic safety shelters. We are committed to investing over 50% of our food budget into small, local farms, and have direct relationships with farmers in multiple WNC counties where we source quality produce, grains and animal products.

EPP is led by a diverse board of directors made up of 7 members who reflect the range of perspectives that shape our area - business, nonprofit, and civic leaders. EPP has a dedicated staff of 9.

In 2025, the organization served ~150,000 meals and invested ~\$250k into local farms. The annual budget is ~ \$1.2Million.

Position Summary

EPP's Executive Director will be the key player in growing the organization strategically, ensuring the organization's financial and operational health while overseeing the provision of high-quality services, partnership and community engagement, and board management.

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors and supervises the Operations Manager and Marketing Manager.

The incoming Executive Director will succeed Madi Holtzman who is leaving at the end of February. She has led the organization effectively since 2022.

Priorities for the new Executive Director

The new leader will lead the organization in focusing on the following priorities within the first 12-18 months of their tenure:

- Implement the strategic plan – particularly for expanding outside Buncombe County
- Grow and strengthen relationships with the community and partner organizations
- Secure new revenue streams
- Deepen the collaborative, team-oriented culture amidst the move to the new facility

Primary Responsibilities

Organizational Strategy and Leadership

- Responsible for the overall impact of EPP on the community.
- Maintain alignment between the overall vision, mission, and core values of the organization and our work of supporting local farmers, addressing food insecurity, and building community through scratch-cooked meals.
- Leads long range planning and visioning, including assessment of community needs in partnership with the Board of Directors and staff.
- Provides advice, counsel, and support to the Board of Directors, and helps maintain and leverage an engaged, powerful board.

Fundraising and Development

- Refine and enhance EPP's fundraising strategy, including short and long-term goals for individual donors, grants, and earned income.
- Manage, cultivate, and retain a solid donor base through quality relationships.

Communication and Advocacy

- Be the lead spokesperson for EPP via excellent verbal and written communication skills and experience.
- Oversee outreach, in partnership with the Marketing manager, to varied audiences about local food systems

People Development and Cultural Leadership

- Hire, manage, lead, retain, and empower a high-performing team enabled by a culture rooted in the mission and values of the organization.
- Manage the systems and processes related to human resources, staff benefits, payroll, etc.

Finance and Operations

- Ensure effective systems, in partnership with the Operations Manager, are in place to track progress to goals, evaluate program components, and communicate outcomes to the board, funders, and constituents.
- Manages budget development, financial forecasting, and mitigates financial risk in partnership with the Board of Directors.

The strongest candidates will have these qualifications:

- **Commitment to and passion for the EPP vision, mission, and values**
- **Strategic nonprofit leader** - Experience as a nonprofit senior leader who has managed staff and used global thinking to navigate organizational complexity.
- **Extraordinary relationship-builder** - Skill in developing deep and influential relationships with community leaders, board members, staff members, donors, and other key stakeholders.
- **Successful fundraiser** - Proven track record in diversifying funding streams and donor portfolios to include both institutional and individual donors.
- **Effective communicator** – Strong leadership presence and expertise as a strategic communicator who can both create compelling messages that increase understanding and organization support and listen deeply.
- **Finance and human resource manager** – High-level financial knowledge and human resource expertise.
- **High level of emotional intelligence** – accurately perceive and express yourself, personal confidence balanced with humility, empathy, integrity, develop and maintain social relationships, adapt to challenges, and use emotions in an effective way. Professional and personal style consistent with the supportive, open, collaborative team-oriented culture of Equal Plates Project.

Additional desired skills and experiences:

- Advanced degree in a related field - or other relevant experience.
- We prefer applicants with local knowledge but we also welcome transplants with nonprofit leadership expertise.
- Results-orientation - Past record of effective planning, tracking and achieving outstanding results.

Compensation:

- Salary: \$85,000
- Benefits:
 - Discretionary medical stipend: \$150/month
 - Full-time flexible work schedule
 - Paid Holidays: 10 days
 - Paid Time Off: 11 days

To apply:

To apply, please send a resume and a detailed cover letter, that demonstrates the fit between your qualifications to the skills and experience above, in one pdf file using the following naming convention: "Your Last Name-Your First Name.pdf", via email only to:

EPP Search Committee

search@equalplatesproject.org

Please, no phone calls or snail mail.

The hiring process:

The position closes March 13, 2026. Selected candidates may be invited to multiple interviews conducted on Zoom and in-person in April. Ideally the new Executive Director will start work on or before June 15, 2026.

Finalists will be required to complete a criminal background check.

Candidates from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Studies have shown that candidates that are female and/or BIPOC are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet all of the qualifications they find in the job description. We are seeking the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may be a person who comes from a less traditional background. We encourage you to apply even if you don't meet every minimum qualification described or are unsure if your experience could be considered related experience.