

Executive Director, Seattle Jobs Initiative

The Organization

The mission of Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) is to create opportunities for people to support themselves and their families through living-wage careers. SJI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a current annual operating budget of \$3.1 million. A workforce intermediary, SJI has a unique role in the community of combining on-the-ground programs with policy, research and advocacy to maximize its impact helping low-income residents get the skills and jobs they need to advance out of poverty.

History

Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) began in 1995 when Seattle was chosen by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) as a part of its Jobs Initiative program to link low-income/low-skilled adults to employers with good jobs. The City of Seattle, under then-Mayor Norman B. Rice, formed a partnership with AECF and the City's Office of Economic Development (OED) to create SJI, which would combine job-skills training, wrap around services and employer involvement to connect low-income individuals with living-wage careers. The goal of the partnership was not only for SJI to help individuals directly, but also to improve the workforce system as a whole to provide greater access and opportunities for skills training for the broader low-income community.

After eighteen months of planning by OED in conjunction with low-income individuals, businesses, foundations, community colleges and community-based organizations, SJI was officially launched as a program of OED in 1997. In January 2003, SJI spun off from the city and established itself as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Today, SJI continues to function as a workforce development intermediary, committed to improving the local workforce development system to benefit low-income job seekers. Through 2012, the organization has served almost 16,000 residents and placed nearly 7,000 in well-paying jobs. Locally as well as nationally, SJI is a recognized leader in workforce development, pioneering best practices for community-based case management and effective skills training for low-income individuals, as well as developing unique and highly-respected research and tools on career navigation and the labor market.

Current Situation

After 17 years with the Seattle Jobs Initiative, Anne Keeney has decided to leave the organization to pursue new career interests. Under her leadership as the second executive director of the organization --- a position she held for the last seven years -- SJI earned its reputation as an innovator in workforce development. Anne and her team led the way on refining a new Career Navigation model; offered expanded services to help individuals earn one year credentials; raised the understanding of middle wage jobs through extensive research and easy-to-use industry data snapshots; worked to expand the Basic Food Employment and Training program in Washington state; and developed practical tools and training to navigate community colleges and understand the labor market. Board president Tony Lee said, "Anne has played a key role in shaping SJI in her various roles over the years. We are grateful for her leadership and will continue to celebrate the many successes Anne has brought to the organization."

SJI's Work

Program

Seattle Jobs Initiative offers low-income individuals training that leads to college credentials in growing local industry sectors. We creatively align support services – intensive career and college navigation, housing, childcare and transportation – to provide participants the best opportunity to complete their career pathways and to secure and retain well-paying jobs. Our objective is to help individuals who live below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level to acquire the skills they need to advance out of poverty, while simultaneously meeting the needs of local employers for a skilled workforce. As a workforce intermediary, SJI's programs rely on multiple community-based organization (CBO) and community college partners to deliver services. A significant portion of SJI's budget is contracted out to community partners.

In January of 2012, SJI launched its Career Pathways program as a three-year pilot with a goal of helping more low-income individuals obtain better-paying jobs in high demand sectors through more education and training at the community colleges. The major assumption underlying the model is that participants will complete training and college credentials at higher rates as a result of support from our CBO partners in the form of career navigation: career planning and college navigation, support services, performance (soft) skills, coaching, and job placement assistance. Career Pathways not only provides direct services to participants but works to identify system-level improvements to benefit all low-income residents seeking to enroll (or already enrolled) in college programs.

In 2013, SJI is working with our CBO partners (Pacific Associates, Neighborhood House, TRAC Associates and the YWCA) and community college partners (South Seattle, North Seattle, Seattle Central, Shoreline, Highline and Renton) to enroll approximately 450 participants in our Career Pathways. We will continue to deepen our partnership with key local employers – such as Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Kibble & Prentice, Genie Industries, Lake Washington Human Resources Association, Capital Industries, Swedish Medical Center, UW Northwest Medical Center and many others – to provide learning, internship and employment opportunities for our participants.

Innovation, Research & Policy

Seattle Jobs Initiative's Innovation, Research and Policy work complements our program efforts and allows us to achieve far greater impact for low-income communities than we would be able to through program services alone. The overall objective of this work is to uncover and provide solutions to address the barriers that low-income individuals face in obtaining the education and jobs they need to advance out of poverty.

SJI's work in this area is focused on increasing the number of low-income adults who obtain one-year college credentials. We work with community colleges and community-based organizations to develop knowledge, tools, best practices and partnerships that will increase access to and persistence in community college among low-income adults, including those who are not yet college-ready. SJI conducts labor market research to help ensure education and training programs are connected to middle-wage job opportunities while meeting the needs of local employers for skilled workers.

Currently, we our work is focused on the following areas: 1) labor market research; 2) college attainment research, tools and best practices; 3) highlighting community need; 4) systems level research and planning; and 5) program evaluation.

Recent SJI publications include: *Entry-Level Job Requirements: An Assessment of Entry-Level Employers* (January 2013); *The Importance of Soft Skills in Entry-Level Employment and Postsecondary Success* (February 2013); *Industry Sector Snapshot: Professional & Business Services* (March 2013). SJI also publishes a popular monthly *Beyond the Headlines* series, which provides at-a-glance updates on news and research pertinent to jobs, the economy, postsecondary education and the working poor.

Executive Director

The executive director is responsible for implementing the strategic vision and daily operations in partnership with a nine-member board of directors, sixteen staff members, and two part-time consultants. SJI executive director's primary responsibilities are leadership, funding diversification, external affairs and organizational management.

Top Priorities in 2013

- Oversee refinement and outcomes of the Career Pathways program;
- Strengthen SJI's policy, research and advocacy profile and document its impact;
- Lead SJI's effort to diversify the agency's funding base;
- Partner with South King County stakeholders to bring services to the region by 2014;
- Build strategic partnership opportunities to maximize impact.

Job Responsibilities

Leadership

- Work with the Executive Team and the Board of Directors to drive the strategic direction of the agency, balancing the need to respond to new opportunities and a changing workforce landscape against the need to further SJI's mission, and ensuring a sustainable business model.
- Keep a pulse on national trends in workforce development and develop and maintain strong ties to national workforce agencies and funders.
- With the Executive Team, define outcomes and measurables that can be easily communicated to the community and funders.
- Demonstrate cultural competency and sensitivity to the needs of adults with multiple barriers to employment.

Funding diversification

- Work in conjunction with the Board and Fundraising Department to develop and implement strategies to broaden the funding base of the agency in line with program strategic priorities.
- Develop the fundraising capacity of the Board of Directors.
- Create new and manage existing relationships with funders—institutional, corporate, governmental, and individual.

External affairs

- Act as chief agency spokesperson to government agencies, legislators, funders, public policy groups, community-based organizations, media, and the general public.
- Work to increase the overall visibility/stature of the organization both locally and nationally
- Maintain a good understanding of the state and local political landscape and develop and maintain strong relationships with government officials to ensure SJI, and workforce in general, receive all appropriate government funding.
- Maintain a deep understanding of the local workforce development landscape and work to develop collaborative partnerships with key organizations and agencies within it.

Organizational management

- Oversee the overall agency operations and management, including financial management, program management, personnel management, fundraising and advocacy.
- Establish and maintain close working relationship with the Board of Directors, providing regular reports and suggesting strategic, policy and program changes.
- Prepare agency budget in consultation with Executive Team to allocate funds, maintain operations consistent with the agency's mission and strategic plan, and ensure the long-term fiscal health of SJI.

Qualifications

- Visionary leader with the ability to translate a vision into concrete strategies for the agency to pursue.
- Fully committed to the mission of Seattle Jobs Initiative.
- Experience with and significant knowledge of anti-poverty strategies in the areas of workforce development, housing, legal aid, health care and related areas.
- Highly developed management skills including solid understanding of strategic planning, managing multiple programs/projects, finances, operations, and communications.
- Track record of building high-level cooperative partnerships.
- Highly developed communication/public speaking skills and understanding of public/media relations.
- Demonstrated history of being a strong community player, developing political and organizational ties and partnerships to affect systems reform.
- Proven track record in fundraising and Board development.
- Ideal candidate will possess network of contacts in the business, political, workforce and human service communities and have the ability to employ/expand that network for the benefit of the agency.
- Outstanding communicator/public speaker and experience speaking at large conferences, events, and industry forums.
- Ability to foster a culture of collaboration both within and outside of the organization.
- Approachable with an open communication style.
- Willingness to consider the creative input of staff and willingness to delegate.
- Strategic thinker who is quick to learn and respond to new information.
- Entrepreneurial spirit with strong business savvy.
- Flexible with strong sense of diplomacy and humor.
- Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university in a related field and a minimum of seven years experience in a managerial role, preferably in a non-profit agency.

Compensation

The salary will be competitive and commensurate with experience. SJI offers excellent health care and retirement benefits.

To Apply

Please provide a resume and cover letter to Jobs@seattlejobsinit.com. The SJI board will only consider candidates who submit their resumes and cover letters to the agency by **Friday, June 7, at 5pm.**

Interested candidates are welcome to review a summary of SJI's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. Please contact EDSearch@seattlejobsinit.com to obtain a copy.

Any questions about the job or the process can be sent to EDSearch@seattlejobsinit.com.