



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LOWCOUNTRY LOCAL FIRST
Charleston, South Carolina
[Lowcountry Local First](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Lowcountry Local First in the search for an Executive Director.

The Executive Director will lead the organization toward favorable growth as well as design and direct strategies that support Lowcountry Local First's (LLF) mission. The Executive Director will utilize entrepreneurial drive, excellent communications skills, exceptional financial stewardship abilities, inclusive practices, and strategic and organizational skills to develop diverse leaders and expand the influence and impact of Lowcountry Local First's work. This is a pivotal moment in the lifespan of LLF with the founding Executive Director stepping down after 15 years. This is an exciting opportunity for a new leader to create the vision and blueprint for fulfilling the mission of cultivating an economy anchored in local ownership and to build upon the strong foundation and outstanding team that is in place.

Lowcountry Local First is an entrepreneurial nonprofit organization, founded in 2007 and made up of more than 450 local businesses and community leaders working to transform and model a sustainable and equitable local economy. Lowcountry Local First cultivates an economy anchored in local ownership, because local-independent businesses are the cornerstone of the Charleston area's culture, economy, and character.

Lowcountry Local First educates the general public on why it is important to choose local and influence them to do so. It works with elected officials, decision-makers, and opinion leaders to foster a better environment for creating and sustaining local businesses and delivers resources, programming, networking, mentorship, and more to local businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Lowcountry Local First develops innovative models for sustainable and equitable local economies. Its work leverages understanding of over 12,000 employees across all sectors, and is informed by staff with expertise and on-the-ground experience in local economy building, innovative economic development, entrepreneur support, sustainable agriculture, and food systems. LLF is connected to local economy and sustainable business organizations throughout the country, granting it access to the best models, case studies, and thought leaders.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors, chaired by Terri Herubin.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lowcountry Local First serves as both the backbone and voice of the local business community in the metro area of Charleston, South Carolina. Established 15 years ago by the departing Executive Director, the organization has made great strides in cultivating a strong economy anchored in local-independent business ownership, integrating advocacy, public education, and technical support and being a voice for diversity and inclusion within the community.

We are truly in an unprecedented time for both the challenges facing small businesses and the great desire to protect these businesses that contribute so much to our local economy and our community character. This position is pivotal in the evolution of LLF, bringing the Charleston model and need for dynamic, inclusive, successful local businesses to the forefront of growing local, state, and national conversations.

The Executive Director will lead an exceptionally talented, long-term staff, familiar with the local landscape and with a passion for exploring the intersection of local economies, the built environment, and the vibrancy that independent businesses bring to our community. The nonprofit is on strong financial footing with a healthy donor base and active Board of Directors to offer additional support.

This is a very exciting opportunity for a visionary candidate to lead a beloved local organization through a new era and help create opportunity for the more than 450 local-independent business members, representing more than 12,000 employees across our region. We look forward to the next generation of LLF leadership who will elevate the value and investment through their ability to develop strategic partnerships, thus creating even greater success of the LLF mission.

–Jeff Plotner, Board of Directors

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will

- serve as the organization’s principal leader, representative, and spokesperson to the greater community;
- oversee all operations, programs, community outreach, and fundraising efforts;
- create a mutually supportive environment between the Executive Director and the Board of Directors;
- ensure integrity and strength of Board leadership and address issues around clarity of role, governance, bylaws/policies, corporate structure, and membership;
- assist with the recruitment and orientation of new Board members;
- develop the Blueprint and strategize the organizations’ short-range and long-range program and project goals;
- provide strong and consistent leadership for the LLF team;
- participate in the recruitment, interview, selection, and evaluation process for directly supervised staff;
- identify and research new organizational opportunities;
- identify overall resource development goals and the fundraising plan;

- identify, establish, maintain, and cultivate relations with individual donors, foundations, corporations, and other resources to support organizational programs and activities;
- maintain accountability for the operating budget and financial performance;
- prepare annual budget and forecasting;
- provide the monthly financial report to the Board of Directors;
- support the open-book finance philosophy of the organization;
- ensure quantifiable metrics are in place in all program areas; and
- ensure that Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP) are in place and that an annual audit is completed and federal and state filing of the 990 is reviewed by the Board of Directors and filed in a timely manner.

KEY COLLEAGUES



Terri Herubin
Chair, Board of Directors

Terri Herubin is a Managing Director of Portfolio Management at Greystar, a rental housing industry leader. In this role, Terri oversees the company's flagship perpetual life funds in the United States and serves as practice leader for Greystar's international open-end investment vehicles.

Prior to Greystar, Terri served as Managing Director and Real Estate Senior Product Specialist at Angelo Gordon, where she contributed to the strategic growth of the firm's real estate assets under management. She joined Angelo Gordon from Barings Real Estate, where she was a Managing Director and lead Portfolio Manager for the firm's core open-end fund, as well as a member of the real estate equity investment committee. Prior to Barings Real Estate, Terri held senior positions at The Townsend Group, United Development Company, and New York State Teachers' Retirement System.

Terri holds a B.A. in urban planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as well as a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, and she currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Brandywine Realty Trust in addition to chairing LLF's Board of Directors.



Jeff Plotner
Board of Directors

Jeff Plotner is the Co Founder and CEO of Brackish, an American accessories brand focused on quality craftsmanship. Based in Charleston, South Carolina, Jeff oversees the day to day operations in addition to leading the growth strategy for the company. Since the founding of the business in 2012, Brackish accessories have graced the red carpet on the likes of Billy Murray, Blake Lively, Don Cheadle, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and more. The company's media credits include *New York Magazine*, *Vogue*, *The Today Show*, *MSNBC*, *ESPN*, *Forbes*, *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living*, *People*, *Vanity Fair*, and *BRIDES Magazine*, to name a few.

Brackish employs a team of 40+ people at their Charleston studio and their products are found in over 350 retailers, including Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Neiman Marcus.

Jeff grew up on St. Simons Island, Georgia before obtaining his B.A. from Wofford College. Jeff serves on the Board of Lowcountry Local First, chairing the Executive Search Committee. He volunteers his time with the YES Carolina youth entrepreneurial program and with other members of Brackish at the Ronald McDonald House.

Jeff gives both time and treasure to the Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired, the Coastal Conservation Association, and the Avian Conservation Center.

For years, Jeff volunteered with the Green Heart Project. When he no longer had the time to give, he made sure it was a donation priority for Brackish. Through Brackish and personal contributions, Jeff also supports the MUSC Foundation, Charleston Parks Conservancy, SC Wildlife Association, Camp Happy Days, the Parkinson's Foundation, and Habitat for Humanity.

Jeff is also proud to be creating jobs for such amazing artisans in our community.



Jordan Amaker
Director of Marketing and Communications

Jordan came to be the lead story-wrangler and cheerleader for the organization in 2015 after seven years in the full-service marketing agency world. When not touting the local scene, you may find her enjoying time with her daughter, riding her bike, digging in the dirt, or listening to her husband perform spoken word. Jordan has previously served on the Board of Directors for Charleston Moves and the Charleston American Marketing Association and chaired the 2013 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.



Lauren Gellatly
Director of Operations

Lauren loves to say "every dollar we spend shapes our community," and brings her background in city planning and non-profit management to lead LLF's advocacy and operations. After earning a B.A. from the College of Charleston for Preservation & Community Planning, and a M.S. from Pratt Institute in City & Regional Planning, she completed a fellowship in Urban Planning at the Pratt Center for Community Development. In 2013, Lauren found a use for her 20+ year boycott of Walmart and joined the team at

Lowcountry Local First as the Community Development Director, transitioning in 2018 to become the Director of Operations. Lauren has served on the Charleston Regional Development Alliance Economic Scorecard Task Force, and currently serves on the ReThink Folly Road Steering Committee, as well as the James Island Neighborhood Council.



Raquel Padgett
Good Enterprises Program Director

Raquel is a graduate of SC State University, with more than 20 years of experience in marketing, PR, and business consulting. She has worked with large entities such as Charleston County Government, Charleston County Parks & Recreation, the USC, and MUSC cementing her skills in fundraising, marketing, budgeting, and event management. In her role as Good Enterprises Program Director, Raquel combines her love for community with her extensive experience in business development to help existing and

future entrepreneurs achieve economic sustainability through business ownership. As the owner of a business consulting firm, The Peacock Company, Raquel knows first-hand the amount of perseverance and grit it takes to run a successful business. She is a passionate advocate for the minority business community.



Barbie Schreiner
Director of Development

Barbie brings more than 15 years of nonprofit experience to the organization. From her work with large scale nonprofits like United Way and American Red Cross, to regional organizations like Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy and the College of Charleston, her commitment to the greater good is ubiquitous. Also committed to life-long learning, Barbie earned her Masters of Public Administration for Nonprofit Management from the College of Charleston and now teaches as an adjunct professor in the program. Prior to that, she received her bachelors degree in Public Relations from Ferris State

University. She serves on the board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and is a loud and proud advocate for West Ashley.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Lowcountry Local First seeks an Executive Director with

- a demonstrated commitment both professionally and personally to the mission and goals of Lowcountry Local First;
- a collaborative nature with the ability to establish credibility and gain the respect and support of the community;
- a track record as an effective communicator who is enthusiastic and persuasive;
- an ability to communicate effectively with a diverse group of stakeholders;
- an understanding of economic development and policies that impact local businesses;
- an entrepreneurial approach to partnership;
- an understanding of the long-term value of taking calculated risks;
- an ability to make critical decisions;
- an understanding of financials and budgeting;
- an ability to develop both short-term and long-term strategic goals for the organization;
- an ability to invest energy and time into building a great team;
- a strong understanding of the needs of and compassion for the local business community; and
- an ability to relay the needs of the organization to garner donor support.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least seven years of nonprofit or social enterprise experience including proficiency in finance, budgeting, business/economic development, and fundraising.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Lowcountry Local First is an equal opportunity employer. It celebrates diversity and is committed to ongoing organizational improvements to create an inclusive environment for all employees. LLF cannot achieve a thriving local economy without racial justice and it believes that achieving true equality requires dismantling racism and repairing the centuries of harm inflicted on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It aims to identify candidates committed to these values of equity and justice. All applicants will be considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Lowcountry Local First offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

LOCATION

This position is located in Charleston, South Carolina.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Lowcountry Local First.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Executive Director, Lowcountry Local First.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Shelley Semmler:

[shelleysemmler@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:shelleysemmler@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence