



THE WATERSHED ORGANIZATION FOR THE  
SUDBURY ASSABET & CONCORD RIVERS

## OARS SEEKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OARS, the Watershed Organization for the Sudbury, Assabet & Concord Rivers

OARS seeks an Executive Director to lead one of Massachusetts' most respected watershed organizations at a pivotal moment for river health, climate resilience, and environmental equity. With a strong foundation of science, partnerships, and community trust, OARS is well-positioned to expand its impact in the coming decade.

Working closely with a committed Board of Directors and a talented staff team, the Executive Director will serve as OARS' chief executive, strategist, fundraiser, and public ambassador—guiding the organization as it deepens its programs, broadens engagement, and advances bold, science-based solutions for watershed protection.

---

## ABOUT OARS

Founded in 1986 by concerned citizens, OARS is a leading watershed conservation nonprofit dedicated to restoring the health and building the resilience of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord rivers for all people and wildlife. Originally known as the Organization for the Assabet River, OARS expanded its mission in 2011 to include the Sudbury and Concord rivers, reflecting a holistic, watershed-wide approach.

Today, OARS is a trusted, science-driven voice for clean water, ecological restoration, climate resilience, and community engagement across MetroWest Massachusetts. Supported by 1,500 active members, public and private funders, as well as state and federal agencies, OARS brings together science, stewardship, advocacy, education, and recreation to protect and restore our rivers.

Since its establishment, a priority of OARS has been environmental policy advocacy to address pollution discharged to the Assabet River from four municipal wastewater treatment plants. OARS' long-running citizen science water quality monitoring program—now in its 31st year—provides data used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in Clean Water Act implementation. On-the-ground restoration work includes dam removal, invasive species management, and nature-based solutions to stormwater and climate impacts. Educational programs connect children—especially in underserved communities—to hands-on environmental learning, while public events, river cleanups, film festivals, and recreational resources foster deep community connection to the rivers.

Learn more at [oars3rivers.org](https://oars3rivers.org).

## THE ROLE

The Executive Director (ED) is OARS' chief executive and strategic leader, reporting to a 15-member Board of Directors. The ED leads a staff of seven (plus seasonal staff and interns) and oversees an annual operating budget of approximately \$700,000. The ED is highly visible in the community and serves as the primary spokesperson and fundraiser for the organization. The Board is seeking a leader who keeps OARS' mission and impact at the center of decision-making while communicating clearly and managing people thoughtfully and with respect.

This role is full-time and mostly on-site at Bradford Mill, West Concord (near the commuter rail and Bruce Freeman Rail Trail), with some flexibility for hybrid work. Some evenings and weekends are required, as well as local travel throughout the watershed.

---

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Organizational Leadership & Strategy

- Lead implementation of OARS' strategic plan and guide future planning
- Ensure programs align with mission, values, and measurable impact
- Foster a positive, inclusive, and accountable organizational culture

### Staff Leadership & Management

- Supervise, mentor, and support a growing team across multiple program areas
- Build systems that support collaboration, clarity, and professional development
- Recruit, retain, and develop staff needed to advance organizational goals

### Community Engagement & Communications

- Serve as OARS' chief spokesperson and ambassador
- Build strong relationships with communities throughout the watershed
- Communicate OARS' work clearly and effectively to diverse audiences, including members, funders, partners, and public officials

### Policy, Advocacy & Partnerships

- Work with staff, Board, and partners to analyze and advocate for science-based environmental policies
- Represent OARS in public meetings, hearings, and collaborative initiatives
- Maintain and strengthen partnerships with municipalities, agencies, and peer organizations

## Fundraising & Financial Oversight

- Oversee and play a key role in implementing a fundraising strategy that includes grants, individual solicitations, corporate and foundation giving, and events, as well as collaborating with the Board and staff on donor cultivation and stewardship
- Oversee budgeting, financial reporting, audits, and compliance
- Ensure responsible stewardship of organizational resources

## Board Partnership

- Work closely with the Board of Directors and its committees
  - Keep the Board informed and engaged
  - Support effective governance and strong Board-staff collaboration
- 

## IDEAL QUALIFICATIONS

We recognize that no one candidate will bring everything listed below. We encourage candidates to apply if they meet many—and are excited to grow into others.

- Strong alignment with OARS' vision, mission, and strategic focus
- Proven leadership experience, particularly in people management and team development
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with strength in public speaking
- Fundraising experience, including grants and individual giving
- Financial acumen and comfort overseeing budgets and organizational operations
- Knowledge of environmental issues, regulations (such as NPDES and stormwater permitting), public policy, or watershed science that impact our rivers
- Demonstrated ability to build relationships across diverse communities and stakeholders
- Experience working in or with nonprofit organizations
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Bachelor's or Master's degree in a relevant field or equivalent professional experience with demonstrated increasing responsibility over time
- Entrepreneurial and innovative at heart

Prior executive director experience is not required; this role may be a strong next step for an experienced nonprofit leader ready to grow.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- Salary range: \$100,000–\$120,000, commensurate with experience
  - Benefits include paid vacation and time off, with health insurance and retirement options negotiable
  - Opportunities for professional growth as the organization continues to expand
- 

## HOW TO APPLY

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Preference will be given to applications received by March 13, 2026.

### **Please submit:**

- A resume, and
- A cover letter describing your interest and relevant experience

Email materials to [edsearch@oars3rivers.org](mailto:edsearch@oars3rivers.org) with the subject line:  
Executive Director Search – [Your Last Name]

No phone calls, please.

---

OARS is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds, identities, and experiences.

---