

Executive Director | Minds Matter Colorado

Minds Matter Colorado Mission & Vision

Minds Matter Colorado connects driven and determined students from low-income families with the people, preparation, and possibilities to succeed in college, create their future, and change the world.

Bridging the gap between potential and opportunity, Minds Matter Colorado empowers high-achieving high school students from low-income families to thrive at the college of their choice, graduate with purpose, and launch fulfilling careers that enable upward economic mobility.

ABOUT MINDS MATTER COLORADO

Minds Matter Colorado was founded in 2004. Our three-year program, beginning in the tenth grade, provides robust wrap-around support, including 2:2 mentoring with dedicated volunteers, individualized college and career coaching, weekly college readiness, career exploration, and life skills curriculum, enrollment in pre-collegiate summer programs at top-tier postsecondary institutions, guaranteed acceptance into college through strategic higher education partnerships, and scholarship support.

For more than two decades, 100% of Minds Matter Colorado seniors have gained admission to a four-year college or university — with scholarships to help pay for it.

Our PROGRAM

The Minds Matter programming model includes the following for all students at no cost:

- People: Intensive mentorship
- Preparation: Rigorous after-school college-readiness programming, and
- Possibilities: Attendance at summer experiences on college campuses

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Executive Director (ED) will lead a high-performing organization with a proven model for college and career success and a 20-year track record of transformational outcomes for Colorado students. You will guide a committed staff and volunteer community, support donor relationships and fundraising activities, deepen partnerships across the state, and shape the strategy that advances access, opportunity, and economic mobility for students from low-income families. You will have the foundational support of an experienced and capable Board of Directors, an engaged Associate Board of Directors, and a connected Board of Trustees. For a leader who is energized by relationships, organizational stewardship, and measurable impact, this role offers the rare chance to both safeguard a proven model and innovate for the future.

Reporting to the MMCO Board of Directors, the ED will work in close, transparent partnership with Board leadership and collaborate with local stakeholders and partners, fellow Minds Matter chapters, and the National team to optimize the work in Colorado. The ideal Executive Director is a trusted, relationship-driven leader who cultivates a strong internal culture while representing Minds Matter Colorado with authenticity and credibility in the community. They build deep trust with staff and volunteers, cultivate powerful partnerships with funders and stakeholders, and serve as a visible advocate for educational equity and the transformative power of mentorship.

The ED will hold strategic and operational leadership for the organization, guiding a committed staff and a dedicated corps of volunteers in genuine partnership with an engaged Board of Directors. As an experienced and entrepreneurial professional, the ED's primary focus will be ensuring the overall health of organizational operations and culture, fundraising for sustainability, and strengthening and evolving programming. To be successful, the ED must be an effective, transparent communicator who is energized by building relationships across a diverse set of stakeholders. Key focus areas for the first years will include leading the creation and execution of a multi-year strategic plan to enable our strategic future vision of serving 200 high school students by FY 2030 while maintaining a high-quality program, strengthening fundraising and development, and diversifying revenue streams.

MMCO has four employees in addition to the ED and an annual budget of approximately \$1.2 million. The organization serves 110 students across 15 partner high schools, and is supported by 190+ volunteers and a Board of Directors.

MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As Executive Director, you will lead an organization that supports students to help students broaden their dreams and prepare them for college success, to believe in the power and importance of a college education, and to continue evolving the model to advance not only college admission but persistence and completion.

In this role, you will be responsible for the following threads of work:

Organizational Strategy & Execution

- Demonstrate a powerful belief in, and passion for, MMCO's mission.
- Develop and execute MMCO's strategic plan to guide the organization's work, and monitor progress toward goals, including supporting our strategic future vision of serving 200 high school students by FY 2030 while maintaining a high-quality program.
- Oversee human resources and financial management, including budgeting, forecasting, reporting, benefits, and employee relations.
- Evaluate operational needs and work with the Board to advance organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Work closely with other Minds Matter chapters and the National office on long-term organizational priorities and strategy.

Team Leadership and Management

- Lead an experienced, dedicated staff team by building trusted working relationships, seeking to understand, shaping long- and short-term goals and priorities, and supporting issue resolution.
- Prioritize staff retention, development, and wellbeing; invest deliberately in the people who carry the program every day.
- Nurture a transparent and compassionate culture of high support and high accountability for ambitious outcomes, where staff can bring their whole selves to work and engage openly and productively in critical conversations.
- Center diversity, equity, inclusion, and student voice in program design, decision-making, organizational practices, community partnerships, and culture.
- As the organization grows, develop the staffing structure and hire for new positions as needed, in partnership with the Board.

Fundraising and Board Leadership

- Cultivate, steward, and grow relationships with Colorado-based community partners and funders to reach organizational growth and sustainability goals in partnership with the Director of Advancement.
- Directly manage, cultivate, and solicit a portfolio of 25 major donors.
- Develop and implement fundraising strategies to secure support from a range of sources (foundations, corporations, and individual donors), and work to diversify revenue (e.g., beyond the annual signature event, to include earned revenue).
- Develop, maintain, and support a strong Board of Directors; build Board engagement around strategic direction for effective operations, impactful programming, resource development, and community partnerships.
- Work in close, transparent partnership with the Board to recruit, develop, support, and retain highly engaged Board members who bring meaningful resources to the organization.
- Support the Associate Board of Directors as the staff liaison by driving engagement of the current board, communicating a clear vision for the Associate Board, and facilitating appropriate communications between program staff and the Associate Board. Intentionally cultivate the Associate Board as a strategic pipeline to the Board of Directors.
- Engage and grow the Board of Trustees by nurturing relationships and recruiting additional members to help support organizational development goals.

Qualifications and Experiences

There are innumerable ways to learn, grow, and excel professionally. We respect this when we review applications and take a broad look at the experience of each applicant. We want to get to know you and the unique strengths you will bring to the work. That said, we are most likely to be

interested in your candidacy if you can demonstrate the majority of the qualifications and experiences listed below:

- Progressive senior-level leadership experience leading, managing, and growing a performance and outcomes-based department, organization, or enterprise, preferably within the educational, nonprofit, or philanthropic sectors.
- Established relationships and a strong network across the Denver metro area and Colorado — spanning the philanthropic, education, business, and civic communities — with the credibility and presence to serve as a visible face of the organization locally.
- A collaborative, transparent leadership style, with a track record of earning the trust of and retaining experienced teams and of working in genuine partnership with a board.
- Exceptional oral and written communication and public engagement skills, including adapting style and approach to diverse constituencies and needs.
- Thrives in a lean, fast-paced, highly collaborative, and entrepreneurial environment; has the integrity, wisdom, persistence, and humor necessary to address the practicalities of a dynamic organization.
- Self-motivated problem solver with maturity and tact to collaborate effectively with colleagues, Board Members, external partners, and team members.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Dedicated to active and ongoing learning, understanding one's identity, power, and privilege, and acknowledging the intersectional identities of students, staff, volunteers, and the Board.
- Employs strategic, analytical, and problem-solving skills to overcome challenges by developing equity-based and creative solutions.
- A proven track record and passion for fundraising with a commitment to maintaining current funders, a zest for cultivating new donors, an ability to generate new revenue streams, and a history of taking organizations to the next level of sustained philanthropic support.
- Demonstrated experience leading through organizational change and growth.
- Experience working with driven and determined students from low-income families.
- Experience in education, training, curriculum, programming or a related area, preferably in the college and career success field.
- Experience managing or partnering with volunteers.
- Experience managing budgets and forecasting financial performance.

COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND LOCATION

- Base salary is \$135,000-\$150,000
- Excellent benefits, including flexible work schedule with unlimited PTO
- Healthcare insurance

- Monthly contribution to retirement plan with up to 4% matching
- Monthly cell phone contribution of \$50
- A professional development allocation that can cover memberships, executive coaching or other professional enhancement opportunities

This is a hybrid role based in the Denver Metro Area. This includes:

- Weekly in-office days as agreed with the organization and staff.
- Attending Monday night program sessions
- Donor and partner meetings across the greater Denver metro region
- Bi-monthly board meetings and regular board committee meetings
- Other MMCO events within and outside normal business hours as needed.

MMCO maintains office space in central Denver, and desk space is available.

Additionally, the Executive Director will travel to any relevant locations in the broader Denver Metro Area to meet donors, volunteers, or partners. They will also travel once a year to the National Minds Matter conference. Travel may also include broader state travel as needed for potential expansion.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please submit your resume and cover letter that specifically answers these questions to this link: <https://wkf.ms/3Rbp1vT>

- How do you understand the mission of Minds Matter Colorado and what makes you passionate about leading that organization? If you have an existing connection to MMCO, please describe.
- Our Board has an ambitious plan for growing the number of students we are serving while maintaining a high level of quality in the programming. What experiences and skills make you equipped to lead this change and manage potentially competing priorities?
- How would you describe your approach to leadership, and how do you believe it would position MMCO for success?

For confidential inquiries or assistance in completing the application, please contact Stefan Ramsbott at stefan.ramsbott@mindsmatterco.org and Claire Wilder at claire.williams@mindsmatterco.org.

TIMELINE AND HIRING PROCESS

We will review and respond to all applications received. While subject to change, candidates selected to advance can expect two interviews with ZIM Consulting, an interview with members of the Hiring Committee (representatives of the Board and staff), and — for finalists — an interview day with Board members, staff, and community members, including a robust reference check process and background check. The expected start date is September/October 2026.

Minds Matter Colorado is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to sustaining a diverse community with a work environment that is welcoming, respectful, and encouraging to all. We foster a culture of inclusion that celebrates and cultivates diversity along multiple dimensions, including race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, out-of-home care, age, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, culture, and experience. We encourage applications from those who identify as people of color and/or as first-generation college graduates.