



## Executive Director

Whidbey Island, WA

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Hedgebrook is a global community of powerful women storytellers changing the world.

Nestled on 48 picturesque acres on Whidbey Island, Hedgebrook's ethos is grounded in [Radical Hospitality](#). Hedgebrook's mission is to amplify women's voices by providing an oasis of time, space, and nurturing, enabling each writer to connect deeply with herself, her surroundings, and her work. Hedgebrook brings together women from all over the globe and a broad diversity of backgrounds. Here, they create important and meaningful work, share and deepen essential cultural conversations, and raise awareness around equity, equality, and representation. At Hedgebrook, women are authoring change.



Founded by Seattle philanthropist Nancy Nordhoff in 1988, Hedgebrook's core [Writers in Residence Program \(WIR\)](#) currently attracts upwards of 1800 applications annually for 40 highly sought-after residencies. 75% of participants are women of color and many writers are emerging when they come to Hedgebrook. An impressive number regularly go on to publish bestsellers and many have been recognized with literary prizes including the National Book Award, the Booker Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur genius awards, and Tony, Obie and Emmy awards for theatre, film and TV, among others. In addition to its WIR

program, Hedgebrook's calendar of events includes writing workshops, masterclasses, salons, festivals, and labs for filmmakers and songwriters.

Hedgebrook has experienced tremendous growth over the last decade, and at this critical historical moment for women and people of color all over the world, **Hedgebrook is seeking an experienced and passionate leader to be its new Executive Director (ED)**. In collaboration with the Board, staff, and Advisory Council, the ED will ensure the integrity of Hedgebrook's mission, imagine, build, and support robust and vibrant programming, and maintain the financial and operational health of the organization. The new Executive Director will be a proven organizational leader, a natural team and community builder, an inspired and inspiring communicator, and a passionate advocate for amplifying women's voices.

This search is being conducted by Carolyn Ho and Catherine Seneviratne of [NPAG](#). Application instructions can be found at the end of this document.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

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Radical Hospitality is the radical idea at the heart of what makes Hedgebrook unique in the world. The ethos of supporting writers' creative processes through the alchemy of solitude and hospitality is woven into the fabric of every Hedgebrook program and event, as is a joyful emphasis on equity and inclusion.

Founder Nancy Nordhoff's vision for Hedgebrook was built on her realization that solitude and community building are not mutually exclusive. When she first bought the working farm on Whidbey Island in 1985, her intention was to live on the property and make it her home. Before long, the land with its sweeping views across Puget Sound to Mount Rainier, told her something different: This magical place was destined to be a home not just for one woman but many, a sanctuary for women of all races and backgrounds to experience both their independence, and find strength in each other's community. Nancy's hope was that women experience their independence, learn to trust their instincts, and rely on their own resourcefulness.

Nancy established Hedgebrook with an original founding gift, as well as 48 acres of land, six individual cottages and other buildings. Hedgebrook transitioned from a private foundation to a 501(c)(3) in 2001, launched an annual fundraising program in 2007, and added earned revenue programs in 2009. A decade later, Hedgebrook's budget is \$1.7 million, and the organization and its seven staff continue to be based on Whidbey Island.

Over the last thirty years nearly 2,000 writers have lived and worked in Hedgebrook's cottages, generating thousands of works in all genres. Their global impact has been tremendous. Every year millions of people are touched and inspired by the books, plays, music and films, TED talks, Op-eds, and digital media created by Hedgebrook alumnae. Their reach is further amplified by Hedgebrook's public events and revenue generating programs, produced both in the Pacific Northwest, nationally and even internationally in Europe and Asia.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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Whether in-person or online, Hedgebrook is committed to raising women's voices. Its mission of nurturing the voices of women authoring change has traditionally been delivered through a variety of residential learning opportunities, though the current global pandemic has made it necessary to postpone many of these until 2021, others have been successfully recreated online. In light of the volatility of the present moment, one of Hedgebrook's biggest and most urgent challenges is to continue building the scope and reach of its program offerings, as well as to reinvent and find new ways to deliver radical hospitality in an increasingly virtual world.

In addition to the land and its commitment to radical hospitality, Hedgebrook's most powerful asset is its network of close to 3000 alumnae. This steadily growing global network of women writers continues to seek out the support and wisdom of the Hedgebrook sisterhood, as they work to establish themselves in the business of art and writing. They often return as teachers, presenters, and evaluators, thus amplifying their voices and the impact of their work. As a group of artists and storytellers, they embody diversity across the spectrum and are Hedgebrook's most essential ambassadors in sending women's voices back out into the world.

Hedgebrook's core, multi-week [Writers in Residence program](#) is offered at no cost to writers chosen through a thorough, award-winning selection process. Six women are in residence simultaneously, each housed in a magical stand-alone cottage equipped with exactly one of everything a writer needs to spend

her days in solitude – and write. In the evenings, residents come together around Hedgebrook’s famous farmhouse table to be served a lovingly prepared dinner. More often than not, they also share nurturing and empowering conversations about their stories, their process, and their work. Of the approximately 40 writers invited each year, on average 75% are women of color and 30% are first- and second-generation immigrants. They are also diverse in ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, physical abilities, professional experience, and economic resources.

*“I connected at a deeper, more visionary level with my creativity... (and) incredible mental clarity, something I thought I had lost... Hedgebrook is a sacred place for women writers.”*  
- **Bernardine Evaristo**, author of 2019 Booker Prize winner *Girl Woman Other*

**Songwriters in Residence** at Hedgebrook is an opportunity for six women songwriters to experience **Radical Hospitality** while unplugged from life on the road and in the studio. Participants are nominated by women in the music industry, and in a field dominated by men, the ten-day residency is a rare opportunity to focus on creating new music and find inspiration in the company of other women songwriters. Working on a similar model, Hedgebrook has hosted weeklong Documentary Filmmaker Labs, Screenwriter Labs and, for the last 22 years an annual **Women’s Playwright Festival**. In collaboration with the Whidbey Institute, since 2010 Hedgebrook also regularly hosts a variety of creative writing camps for **Y-WE (Young Women Empowered)**, a Seattle based nonprofit, whose mission is to provide mentorship and cultivate the power of diverse young women ages 14 - 19 to be creative leaders and courageous changemakers. 85% of the youth and 50% of the adult mentors involved in these programs are women of color, representing a myriad of family, sexual orientation, religious, and educational backgrounds.

Hedgebrook also offers a wide variety of week-long, alumnae-taught **master classes**. An important source of earned revenue and community building, the classes are designed to connect with a broad spectrum of writers at different levels of experience and phases in their writing process. Topics can range from inspiring new projects and a focus on various aspects of craft, to the workshopping of projects already underway. Teachers give generously of their time, meet one-on-one with each participant, and share evening meals with the group, allowing everyone to enjoy the beauty of the Whidbey retreat while working on their writing. In addition, master classes are held at similar locations in Italy and India.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Building on 30 years of amplifying the power and diversity of women’s voices, Hedgebrook’s next Executive Director will lead, nurture, and inspire this dynamic community in the next phase of its impact. In the next 12-24 months, the Executive Director should expect to engage in the following leadership opportunities:

### **Leadership and Vision**

In collaboration with the Board, Creative Advisory Council, and staff, the Executive Director will ground Hedgebrook internally and externally in its core value of delivering radical hospitality, and amplifying women’s voices against a backdrop of promoting equity and inclusion. They will nurture and grow Hedgebrook’s transformative community, continuing to pivot the organization through the COVID-19 crisis while developing the vision for what comes next. They will lead annual planning and strategy development to solidify and broaden Hedgebrook’s impact, and will cultivate a strong culture of collaboration, learning, equity, inclusion, and innovation across the board.

### **Fundraising and External Relations**

The Executive Director will develop a sustainable, long-term fundraising strategy, building on and extending

Hedgebrook's strong base of philanthropic support. They will ensure that Hedgebrook continues to inspire current and potential funders to give generously in support of the mission, and will expand and deepen the vital link to Hedgebrook's alumnae network.

The ED will develop a thoughtful, intentional, and mission-consistent communications strategy. They will represent Hedgebrook on the local, national, and global stage, connecting with influential individuals and leaders of organizations who champion diverse women writers in a range of industries in new ways. They will seek opportunities for collaboration and network-building with other like-minded literary, arts, and community organizations.

### **Organizational Management**

The ED will foster trust, clear communications, strong team morale, and transparency throughout the organization. They will develop a collaborative and cohesive team and center radical hospitality and inclusion at all levels of the organization. They will oversee a current staff team of seven and an operating budget of \$1.7M. They will continually evaluate the allocation of appropriate resources and staffing in fulfillment of organizational goals, Hedgebrook's financial health, and effective business operations. This includes strengthening and developing policies, regular team building and staff coaching, and performance reviews in partnership with the board.

### **Board leadership**

The ED will build a strong partnership with the Board of Directors and engage board members as thought partners and advisors, effectively leveraging their diverse talents, perspectives, relationships, and passions. They will work with the board to clearly define roles, and work to establish a strategy to maintain transparency, collaboration, and mutual accountability.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

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While the ideal candidate will embody many of the following talents, skills, and experiences, the Hedgebrook Board of Directors anticipates that no one candidate will possess all qualifications listed below. In areas where aptitude and/or interest are greater than actual experience, candidates are encouraged to propose a plan for support. An ideal candidate may currently be serving as a senior leader or executive in mission driven organizations focused on promoting the arts, nonprofit management, fundraising, publishing, philanthropy, social and racial justice, academia, or advocacy for women and girls.

### **Connection to the Mission**

- Passion for the Arts and Literature, the creative process, and commitment to elevating the voices of women and underrepresented perspectives.
- Deep commitment to the concept of radical hospitality and the ability to build and nurture the transformative power of community.
- Core dedication to racial and gender equity and justice, and to living out those values personally and professionally.

### **Organizational Leadership**

- Reputation for effectively managing during seasons of change and transition, while maintaining organizational health and mission focus.
- Ability to promote and deepen sound financial management and planning processes, including deep experience in fundraising with an ability to manage diverse revenue streams.

- Respected operations and program development leader, known for the effective and transparent decision-making consistently focused on the best interests of organization.

#### **People Leadership and Management Style**

- A thoughtful and engaging communications style that connects to and reflects the experiences, backgrounds, and voices of diverse audiences in a variety of settings; ability to authentically listen and learn from others.
- A collaborative leader who acts with intentionality and integrity, and knows when to direct, when to delegate, and when to share leadership.
- Strong relationship-building skills, with an ability to engage diverse stakeholders, establish trust, and cultivate belonging.

#### **The Basics**

- A strong preference for undergraduate degree or relevant training and progressive executive leadership training in mission-driven organization, plus ten years of progressive leadership experience in an Arts or non-profit organization.
- Ability and willingness to travel nationally and internationally, representing Hedgebrook in the broader arts and literary community. Capacity to spend significant time at Hedgebrook's Whidbey Island retreat to collaborate with staff to build and reinforce the connection with programs and community.

#### **LOCATION & COMPENSATION**

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The salary range for this position has been set at \$115-\$125,000. Preference is to candidates who can reside or spend substantial time on Whidbey Island. Consideration will be given to candidates who desire a remote work arrangement who can thoughtfully plan their presence on Whidbey Island or relocate at a later time, particularly due to the pandemic.

#### **TO APPLY**

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More information about Hedgebrook may be found at: [Hedgebrook.org](https://www.hedgebrook.org)

Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to: **Hedgebrook-ED@Nonprofitprofessionals.com**. *In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your email.*

**Hedgebrook is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity.  
Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.**