



Executive Director
Seattle, Washington

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Puget Sound Sage and Sage Leaders (“Sage”) chart a bold path to a living economy in the South Salish Sea and Duwamish River Valley (South Seattle and South King County) regions by developing community power to influence, lead, and govern. At Sage, we organize for growing communities where all families thrive.

Built on a **relational framework**, Puget Sound Sage (501c3) works in coalition with other community-based organizations, government, and environmental groups, advocating for and passing some of the region’s most exciting policies that promote climate justice, good jobs, and equitable

development in low-wage and people of color communities. Sage Leaders (501c4) cultivates deep democracy in Washington state by developing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color community leaders for civic and elected leadership.

Sage seeks nominations and applications for a new Executive Director who will embody a collaborative, genuine leadership style that leverages the collective knowledge and power of staff, communities, and organizational partners working for lasting change. This is a unique opportunity to lead an organization which uses participatory research to help shape groundbreaking policies that center racial justice and equity, and allow Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, families, and workers to have the resources they need to be part of a living economy. The next Executive Director will be committed to working in a Just Transition framework and understand that the liberation of all people is inextricably tied to the liberation of Black and Indigenous peoples.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Sage charts a bold path to a living economy in the South Salish Sea and Duwamish River Valley (South Seattle and South King County) regions by developing community power to influence, lead, and govern. We ground our policies in community-based research and vet potential policy opportunities, people, and organizations serving BIPOC workers, their families, and communities. From this process, we have advocated for and passed some of our region’s most exciting policies that promote climate justice, good jobs, and equitable

development in low-wage and people of color communities. Our campaigns and theory of change are rooted in racial justice, which for us means work for Black liberation and in solidarity with Indigenous communities as we collectively build power in our region.

The Sage family of organizations includes Puget Sound Sage (501c3) and Sage Leaders (501c4), an affiliated organization that cultivates deep democracy in Washington state by developing Black, Indigenous and People of Color community leaders for civic and elected leadership.

Early Roots

Sage was founded as a coalition between faith, labor, and community organizations seventeen years ago. Originally a fiscally sponsored project of the hotel workers' union, UniteHERE Local 8, it was clear that some of the greatest threats to housekeepers in the region were not just declining wages and benefits, but also access to safe, affordable housing close to where they worked. The Church Council of Greater Seattle and UniteHERE Local 8 came together to see if they could create an organization that was able to work across sectors and issue areas to build power and drive policy to create more sustainable, equitable communities for all workers in our region. Several other unions got involved, and seven years later, in 2007, the Puget Sound Sage spun off into an independent organization with a coalition board comprised of labor, faith, and community-based organizations.

Sage Today

Working at the intersection of our region's most urgent problems, we are on the forefront of driving some of the nation's most dynamic policies for climate, economic, and racial justice. We have played a vital role in achieving policies such as a \$15 minimum wage, paid sick and safe leave, inclusionary zoning for affordable housing, and a new light rail stop to help curb displacement of low-income communities and communities of color from a gentrifying neighborhood. During the pandemic, we kept all Washington families connected to utilities by winning statewide moratoriums on utility shut offs four times, one of the only states in the nation to do so. This spring we will publish a report on Disaster Gentrification with policy solutions to keep our communities housed and shift land into community ownership. Sage is affiliated with the [Partnership for Working Families](#), a national network of regional advocacy organizations, where we collaborate on campaigns, strategy, and leadership development.

Through our campaigns and Community Leadership Institute (CLI), we are building a pipeline of collaborative leaders who are also immigrants & refugees, LGBTQ people, and women of color – the communities most impacted by economic and racial inequality and climate change. Sage Leaders then trains those community leaders to run for office, endorses their campaigns, and supports them in governing, once elected.

Our work is built on a **relational framework**, and the vast majority of our work is done in coalition with other community-based organizations, government, and environmental groups, ensuring mutual accountability and integrity in our work. Accountability is central to Sage's work because we are a nexus organization that serves as a critical intermediary between representative/base-building community groups and policymakers/government. Our unique ability to convene diverse partners and successfully build alignment among organizations, focusing on long-term power building and agenda-setting rather than short-term campaign wins, is one of our greatest strengths.

Finally, Sage convenes our own coalition, South Communities Organizing for Racial & Regional Equity (commonly known as South CORE), which is comprised of over twenty multi-racial community and faith groups located in Seattle and South King County. South CORE meets monthly to both partner and drive our work.

What We Value

Sage does our work in a Just Transition framework¹. We define a **Living Economy** as an environment where natural resources are renewable and people's labor is cooperative and all of the things a community needs are controlled and governed by everyday people, such as: housing, schools, farms and food production, local governance structures, art and culture, healthcare and healing, and transportation.

- We prioritize **relationships** and **building community**.
- We value **collective leadership** based in **trust** and **humility**.
- We honor histories by consistently applying **structural antiracist analysis** and pursuing a **feminist** approach that centers women, queer and trans BIPOC ways of working and being.
- We strive to be **bold in the face of power** by communicating directly and honestly.
- We champion **creativity**.
- We invite **love through accountability**. We adhere to James Baldwin's understanding of love: "as a state of being, or a state of grace... in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth."

Sage understands that the liberation of all people is inextricably tied to the liberation of Black and Indigenous peoples. **Black Liberation** is the restoration of the health, economic, social, spiritual wellbeing, and dignity of Black people as fully human. Achieving such liberation of Black people demands addressing both systemic and non-systemic barriers that continuously impede the wellbeing of Black people within and outside of Sage.

As a multiracial organization currently led by non-Indigenous people, we position ourselves in **solidarity with Indigenous communities**. We commit to supporting Indigenous leadership and organizations, and continuing our own education to be responsible partners and community members with Indigenous peoples, especially those whose land we occupy and organize in: the Duwamish and Coast Salish Tribes and urban Indian communities.

Moving Forward

Sage is a majority BIPOC (75% BIPOC, 25% white) and women (75% women and genderqueer) led organization. As an organization, we have made an intentional choice to ensure that the communities we partner with are not only represented in program partnerships and coalitions we hold, but also are the people executing the work. Our dynamic coalitions and programs represent the needs and leverages the power of our BIPOC communities.

- Our **Equitable Development** program builds community power and capacity for community stewardship of land.
- **Community Real Estate Stewardship Training (CREST)** is a nine-month learning circle designed to support grassroots organizations led by and for communities of color to pursue community-driven development, land stewardship, and strategies for long term affordability.
- South Communities Organizing for Racial & Regional Equity (**SouthCORE**) is our core coalition and represents a growing multi-racial coalition of community and member-based organizations created to be at the forefront of shaping the future of the city, county and region.

¹ <https://neweconomy.net/> Appreciation the New Economy Coalition for their definition of a solidarity economic ecological systems that informs our definitions.

- Our **Climate Justice** program advocates for a just and equitable transition to a renewable energy future. Recent campaigns include keeping Washington families connected to utilities during the pandemic and creating a Green New Deal framework for the City of Seattle.
- Our **BIPOC Workers** program advances worker power through solidarity actions with our labor partners, corporate accountability campaigns and research and policy development to support BIPOC workers in our region.

Our Leadership Development Pipeline at Sage Leaders:

- Our **Community Leadership Institute (CLI)** is a fellowship program that supports, trains and places emerging leaders from low-income communities and communities of color to sit on local boards and commissions.
- We convene BIPOC **candidate peer support cohorts** and offer **running for office trainings** for progressive civic leaders interested in becoming candidates for public office.
- The **Political Leadership Council (PLC)** is a grassroots team of CLI alumni who vet, endorse and support BIPOC candidates running for city and county office in Washington State.
- The **Local Elected Leadership Institute (LELI)** provides a supportive peer cohort space for progressive BIPOC leaders serving in local elected offices at the city and county level in Washington state.

In December 2020, the Sage Board adopted a new vision, mission, and values statement that explicitly name BIPOC workers, families, and communities, moving these communities to the center of our work. We also took a hard look at how we organized ourselves and sought to shift our organizational structure to better serve our mission and the staff who embody that. We are excited for what's ahead and for a new Executive Director to join this talented, diverse, passionate, and fun group of dedicated leaders.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our next Executive Director will join a dynamic and passionate team who are ready to take Sage to the next level on behalf of the communities we care about. We commit to join with you in tackling these exciting challenges ahead.

Vision and Leadership

The Executive Director will bring vision and leadership to how Sage continues to organize toward a living economy. This means working closely with staff, board, and coalition partners to bring vision and analysis to power building, participatory research, and potential campaigns that advance Sage's goals and those of the communities to whom we are accountable. They will bring clarity and direction to Sage's work that balances people and values centered approaches and moves toward real wins. This includes emerging c4 opportunities and charting a balance between coalition work, organizing, and electoral/political strategies. Finally, the Executive Director will center a core belief in the power of democracy and the need for racial justice for our communities to thrive.

External Partnerships

The Executive Director will continue to strengthen the organization's relationships, building and strengthening coalitions that lead movements and policy change towards a more just economy. The ED will build a diversity of relationships from community level leaders to policymakers and elected officials, and communicate and share the important work of Sage's partners and coalitions. They will be a strong

advocate, passionate spokesperson, and connector of people, opportunities, and power in advance of the mission.

Fundraising & Resource Development

The Executive Director will build on Sage's strong relationships with existing funders and work to identify new areas of support. They will continue to diversify the organization's resource base including a shift away from government funds and toward a resourcing model that includes more general operating support dollars and support for Sage's growing c4 in order to increase efforts to make political change at the local and state levels. Working closely with the Development Director, the ED will incorporate emerging funding models that are community driven and values aligned.

Organizational Management

The Executive Director will work closely with the Deputy Director and dedicated staff to continue to develop a thriving and healthy workplace. They will support and nurture a leaderful organization where staff perspectives are honored, and the collective focus is on our shared vision. In partnership, the ED will further develop strategic and operational planning to bring focus and clarity to our work and how Sage can be most powerful. They will manage a staff of 19 and budget of \$2M+.

Board Governance

The new Executive Director will work closely with the board chairs of Puget Sound Sage (c3) and Sage Leaders (c4) to identify opportunities for continued expansion and strengthening of the Boards of Directors. They will support the engagement, recruitment, and onboarding of board members as active thought partners and key advisors working together to utilize the collective wisdom of the board to support the strategic direction and health of Sage. In partnership with the board, the Executive Director will define and support effective governance practices.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Sage seeks a leader who is deeply committed to the organization's mission and values and is grounded by a deep commitment to building BIPOC community power and influence. While no one candidate will possess all the qualifications enumerated below, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

Mission, Vision, & Values

- Deep commitment to developing community power, racial justice, and deep democracy nurtured through professional and lived experience; passion for what is possible when people are organized around a set of shared values and outcomes.
- Strong understanding of movements to develop community-centered political power with and in communities of color and historically under-resourced communities; familiarity with the Just Transition framework.

Organizing and Coalition Building

- Previous experience working for or collaborating with community-based organizations, labor unions, and coalitions working toward lasting political change.
- Sophisticated experience leading organizing and advocacy work centering racial equity with other systems of oppression and employing collective impact, base-building and leadership development strategies.

- Strong and authentic relationship building skills; comfort working across a diversity of groups and interests; ability to both find common ground and speak truth to power as the moment calls.
- Outstanding facilitation, and communication skills; deep values orientation and belief that BIPOC communities hold the wisdom and solutions necessary to advance lasting change.

Leadership & Management

- Demonstrated success raising funds and increasing investment from a range of funders, including local and regional foundations, labor unions, individuals, and community.
- Experience managing and collaborating with highly talented and diverse teams; successful experience overseeing budgets and staff of similar complexity. Familiarity with the operations of a jointly operated c3/c4 organization is nice to have, but not required and can be taught on the job.
- Inclusive and collaborative leadership style that leverages the knowledge, diversity, and expertise of staff, communities, and organizational partners; genuine collaborator paired with the ability to move others without exerting hierarchical power is essential.
- Understanding of the importance a representative and governing board has in advancing an organization's work; organizing skill to leverage a deeply committed group of people's skills on behalf of a larger vision and mission; previous experience engaging with or on a board is desired but not required.
- Excellent spoken and written communications skills; ability to call attention to important issues when the moment requires and the humility and maturity to share the spotlight with others.
- Sense of humor and deep passion required for important work and the creativity and human-centered approach that focuses on the big vision, charts a path forward, weathers the storm, and celebrates the win with all those who shared in the journey.

TO APPLY

More information about **Puget Sound Sage** and **Sage Leaders ("Sage")** may be found at: <https://www.pugetsoundsage.org/> and <https://www.sageleaders.org/>.

This search is being led by [Carolyn Ho](#) and [Catherine Seneviratne](#) of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [candidate portal](#).

Compensation transparency: Sage believes in salary transparency and equity across the organization. The salary range for this position is between \$90,000-110,000. Sage offers a strong benefits package including family health benefits, life and disability insurance, retirement contribution of 7% of salary, generous vacation and personal time, and fully covered local transit pass. Sage also participates in Washington's Paid Family Leave state benefit.

Puget Sound Sage is committed to hiring and advancing personnel with an explicit regard to advance women, black people, indigenous people, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQIA people, and other people from traditionally underrepresented communities. Further, we are committed to working with allied organizations which do the same.