Dwelling Place
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Position Profile:
Chief Executive Officer

Background

Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids Nonprofit Housing Corporation (Dwelling Place) celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2020 as one of the largest and most effective community development corporations in the state of Michigan. The organization owns and manages more than 1,400 affordable housing units across West Michigan with over 70 staff. Dwelling Place also partners with other CDCs in 5 large affordable housing projects (1,500 units) spread across the state of Michigan.

From its humble neighborhood origins in downtown Grand Rapids, to its current multi-county presence, Dwelling Place has been a force for change in meeting a wide array of affordable housing and support services needs, and as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization. Extending from the Heartside Neighborhood of Grand Rapids, where Dwelling Place was founded, the organization has several other properties throughout Grand Rapids & Kent County, and has properties and provides services in Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and Ottawa Counties. Its portfolio of housing incorporates LIHTC, HUD, FHLB, Rural Development and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) financed developments serving low income seniors, domestic violence survivors, artists, working families, disabled, and formerly homeless households. Its commercial portfolio of 40+ spaces include 2 bank branches, a soup kitchen, 3 food venues, 2 yoga studios, an insurance company and a myriad of other retail, nonprofit and arts related businesses.

Dwelling Place has been the recipient of numerous local, regional, state and national awards including the coveted Charles Edson Tax Credit Award at Verne Barry Place as the best Urban LIHTC Project in the United States and the prestigious Guvvy Award at Martineau Apartments, an artist community, as the Best Business Initiative in Support of the Arts. It has received many other state and local awards for historic preservation, urban planning and community collaboration.

Dennis Sturtevant, the outgoing CEO who has provided outstanding leadership for the organization for the past 31 years, has recently announced his retirement effective July 31, 2021, and Dwelling Place is now seeking a collaborative Chief Executive Officer to lead the organization on a continued growth trajectory. The new CEO’s charge is to build on the organization’s excellent brand and track record, by leveraging its high-caliber staff, programs and partnerships to continue its growth to serve more residents.
The Organization & Programs

Dwelling Place believes there can be beauty and power in the place we call home, and that everyone deserves such a home, which can evoke a sense of pride and place where respite, restoration, and personal growth can flourish. This is what informs the mission of Dwelling Place and what motivates the organization to create affordable housing communities across West Michigan. Dwelling Place creates homes where residents feel cared for, respected, and uplifted. It is what inspires Dwelling Place to revitalize neighborhoods: the places where people live, work, and play. Following is a summary of the organization’s programs and accomplishments.

Affordable Housing

Everyone deserves a place to call home, a place to rest and relax, a place to express themselves, a place that they can afford. Dwelling Place makes this a reality by creating living spaces with function, beauty, and dignity in mind. For many, the affordable housing Dwelling Place creates provides access to opportunity because of the locations and cost for the housing. For others, who live with mental illness, face addiction, or have experienced homelessness, Dwelling Place's housing can make a life-or-death difference. Housing is crucial to the overall stability of a person’s life. Dwelling Place owns and provides services for over 1,400 affordable housing units within 36 Housing Communities.

Dwelling Place has earned a reputation for its innovation and leadership in collaborations and joint ventures with many other housing providers such as Genesis Nonprofit Housing Corporation, LINC Up, Community Encompass, Habitat for Humanity Michigan and the Grand Rapids Housing Commission, to name just a few.

In 2020, Dwelling Place launched the Dwelling Place Regional Community Land Trust (DPCLT) as a new line of business to focus on the creation of 150 plus permanently affordable home ownership units over the next 7 years. With local, state and national grant support, this startup effort is leading to a broader interest in shared equity housing from state and local government and other community development corporations across the state.

Support Services

Dwelling Place provides personalized care by connecting residents to programs and resources that can transform their lives. Dwelling Place walks alongside residents, supporting their journeys to housing stability, self-sufficiency, and self-fulfillment, and to navigate behavioral and physical health systems or connect them to health clinics, cooking classes, wellness programs, leadership classes, and events that can enrich their lives. Permanent Supportive Housing communities provide homes for persons who were recently homeless, are fleeing domestic violence, or who have disabilities or a mental health condition or substance abuse addiction. Community partners come together to provide funding and staff support to support residents at these communities. Dwelling Place works hand-in-hand with many community organizations to support the 300 plus individuals and families living in our Permanent Supportive Housing. It is crucial that people live in a comfortable environment that enhances their quality of life.

Neighborhood Revitalization

Dwelling Place goes beyond housing to create thriving neighborhoods and communities where people can live, work, and grow, working with residents and other community partners to transform neighborhoods into vibrant communities where business and people thrive. Dwelling Place owns over 100,000 sq. ft. of commercial space which includes live/work space for small businesses.
The Position and Key Priorities

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO has overall responsibility for leading and managing an operation of over 700 employees and a $10,000,000 budget, providing services to over 2,500 families, and managing a portfolio of over $120,000,000 in assets. The CEO works collaboratively with a dedicated Board of Directors to establish Dwelling Place’s long-range strategic plan, and works with other senior managers in formulating and ensuring effective implementation to achieve planning goals. The CEO has seven direct reports: a COO, CFO, Director of Facilities Management, Co-Directors of Community Building & Engagement, Director of Housing & Community Development and a Director of Support Services.

Since 2015, Dwelling Place has been an affiliate of NeighborWorks America, a national network of more than 240 similar community development organizations. As a NeighborWorks organization, Dwelling Place operates locally, while thinking and participating nationally, and gaining access to financial resources, training opportunities and the experience of hundreds of colleagues around the country. Among its NeighborWorks peers nationally, Dwelling Place remains in the top quartile for the financial strength in its balance sheet with investments and liquid assets that allow it to offer a plethora of amenities to residents, ranging from case management services to community gardening, financial coaching and leadership development programs. For example, during this past year, a Dwelling Place capital campaign for 5 new housing projects netted nearly $3,000,000 in philanthropic gifts, sharply reducing the need for developer fees to defray financing gaps.

The new CEO will be expected to get to know the organization and its complexity, and build strong working relationships with the staff and the community in the early months of the job, to be able to leverage the organization’s strong community support and institutional capabilities in addressing the following key priorities for their first 18-24 months:

1. **Continue growth of the Real Estate Development portfolio by developing over 100 new units per year** within its 15 county Neighborworks jurisdiction.
   a. Participate in Neighborworks Real Estate Growth Cohort
   b. Maintain and expand level of support services
   c. Continue to grow staffing and workspace capacity to support growth in real estate development portfolio

2. **Continue development of the new Community Land Trust Program** to provide greater opportunities for home ownership, and expansion of Dwelling Place’s geographical service area.

3. **Staff Development and Support**: To fully support Dwelling Place’s culture and growth, analyze and consider the following changes:
   - Develop a succession plan for senior staff and board members
   - Increase Dwelling Place investment in staff training.
   - Share more operational leadership responsibility among senior staff, empowering a greater number of senior staff with a larger role in decision-making.

4. **Increase Community Awareness** by developing and implementing an annual plan that includes a schedule of events and activities, resource and staffing requirements to strengthen Dwelling Place’s brand. Be personally active and visible in leadership roles within the local and regional community.
   - Analyze and consider adding staff in key support positions to improve productivity.

5. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**: Increase emphasis on, and accelerate the implementation plan to foster greater diversity, equity and inclusion within Dwelling Place’s board, staff, programs and policies.

6. **Pursue additional fund development strategies**, and expand responsibility for that work beyond the CEO position. Allocate a portion of additional philanthropic contributions to sustain and expand support services.
Dwelling Place’s complete Strategic Plan can be found here.

The outgoing CEO, has, for 31 years, played a strong leadership role in all aspects of organizational leadership, including but not limited to formulating strategic direction, focusing on external relations with funders and partner organizations, and providing significant guidance for DP’s lines of business. These priorities may spread across a broader range of organizational leaders as the new CEO acclimates and assesses leadership roles.

Experience and Attributes

Ideal candidates for this position will be passionate about Dwelling Place’s mission, and compassionate and empathetic toward Dwelling Place’s residents and community members. They also will have significant experience with real estate development, community development and affordable housing, and be visionary and strategic leaders and collaborative team builders. A reflective and listening style of communication and a high level of integrity and ethics are also desired. Essential qualifications include:

- Bachelor’s degree in public, non-profit or business management, plus ten years progressively responsible experience in organizational leadership. Minimum of 5 years in a senior leadership position required. Educational qualifications may be waived depending on work history.
- Senior leadership experience in community development or housing development, and related budgeting and fiscal management.
- Demonstrated leadership skills in inspiring, empowering, and developing current and future staff to achieve strategic organizational goals.
- Proven track record in non-profit people management, including fostering a collaborative culture, delegation, and developing and empowering a team and individual leaders.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, in individual and group settings.
- Experience with supportive services and compliance.
- An entrepreneurial spirit and approach to be able to lead Dwelling Place’s growth to best implement its mission. Experience in short- and long-range planning.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in inspiring support, confidence and building relationships among a diverse group of partners, community stakeholders and funders.

Requirements

- Valid driver’s license, safe driving record, current vehicle insurance and the ability to use a personal vehicle, or have ready access to other reliable transportation to make work-related travel possible.
- Willingness to travel within Michigan and out of state.
- Must be able to pass criminal and credit background check.

Working Conditions

Work is performed typically in office environments and a variety of settings and among diverse stakeholders and audiences. Significant time spent sitting in meetings, at a computer screen for extended periods and speaking before large audiences. Frequent use of phones to communicate with stakeholders. Frequently works outside normal working hours and will travel due to work performed with stakeholders in the community. Require occasional travel out of town and out of state.

Compensation

$190,000 to $225,000 commensurate with experience. Benefits include medical, dental and vision coverage for yourself and family members, matching 403b retirement plan, flexible spending account, life insurance and long term disability insurance, and generous vacation time.
Application Process
Email resume, cover letter and salary requirements to: execsearchdp@thirdsectorcompany.com
(E-mail applications with cover letters are required.)

Dwelling Place is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer and values diversity and its role
in building a more inclusive culture and, ultimately, a more capable organization. Dwelling Place
embraces diversity and equal opportunity in a serious way. We are committed to building a team that
represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. The more inclusive we are, the better
our work will be.