



position profile

Vice President, Operations

Aquarium of Niagara | Niagara Falls, NY

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Vice President of Operations, Aquarium of Niagara

Our Mission: With our community and partners, we celebrate our natural wonders and inspire people to make a difference for aquatic life.

Our Vision: To be a destination of choice where all are welcome and motivated to join as a driving force for aquatic life.

Our Core Values:

- **Passion:** Our passion for our work keeps us going; it drives us to become even better, exceeding expectations every day.
- **Transparency:** To us, transparency means that all of us share an understanding of our decisions and our actions. We value the trust our organization has placed in us and respect the confidence.
- **Empathy:** Empathy helps us understand others' feelings and emotions. It helps us embrace another's point of view no matter how different our backgrounds or our culture, building stronger bonds and leading to better problem solving.
- **Diversity:** We not only recognize our differences, we value them. We're building a culture of inclusion and believe that our diversity makes us stronger and better.
- **Collaboration:** Collaboration adds value to our work; by working together, we learn from each other and build on our strengths. True collaboration means negotiating, compromising, and most of all valuing another's point of view.



Position Overview

The Aquarium of Niagara (Niagara Falls, NY) is currently seeking qualified candidates to serve as Vice President of Operations. This executive level position will report directly to the President and CEO, with oversight of zoological and veterinary operations, education and conservation programming, as well as facilities, safety and security. The Aquarium is a private not-for-profit organization that welcomes over 200,000 visitors on an annual basis.

The Vice President of Operations will provide leadership over the development of plans, policies and logistics to operate a multi-site campus. The Aquarium of Niagara recently announced an agreement with New York State Parks to fully renovate and operate a 5,000 square foot building that historically served the region as a geological museum. The project, entitled "Great Lakes 360", is fully funded, and is staged to begin construction immediately. Completion is anticipated for spring 2024, and will be distinguished with fifteen living exhibits, a dedicated classroom space, and rooftop event venue. The site's interpretive program will emphasize wildlife native to the Great Lakes and Niagara River region, which will bolster the Aquarium's position as a regional leader in environmental education.

The Vice President of Operations is a newly formed position and will be charged with the seamless integration of Great Lakes 360 into other areas of the campus, including the community entrance plaza "Whirlpool Commons" and the Aquarium's main building. This key leadership position will support the continued growth and advancement of the organization and provide strategic insight and vision that will inform the recent launch of the master planning process.

Supervisory Responsibility

This role oversees the Director of Animal Care, Director of Education and Conservation, Director of Facilities and Construction, and Clinical Veterinarians.

Essential Responsibilities

- Provides strategic leadership and goal setting for a multi-faceted operations department, spanning across the Aquarium of Niagara campus.
- Oversees the selection of department directors and the organization of operating departments.
- Provides oversight and vision for the hiring, coaching, counseling, promotions, development, and training of staff to all areas of responsibility to ensure the quality, culture, and consistency of their teams.
- Advises the President and CEO on logistical, operations, and engagement issues, along with identifying opportunities to support the strategic plan.
- Contributes to organization-wide decision-making and strategic planning.
- Consistently ensures accrediting standards (AZA, AMMPA, IMATA) are met and exceeded; oversees proceedings for reaccreditation.
- Creates and assesses operational statements and operating documents; reads, analyzes, and interprets complex documents.
- Serves as the senior executive over campus operations, ensuring efficient overall operations including scheduling and training of managers on duty.
- Cultivate and provide opportunities for rising talent within the organization.



Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Bachelor's degree or higher in business management, tourism, project management, hospitality, or related field; or equivalent experience – advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a similar role, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Minimum of 7 years of demonstrated leadership experience as a senior manager or director.
- Crisis management experience with a strong safety background.
- Valid New York State driver's license, or ability to acquire one.
- Socially dynamic and confident in large groups with an ability to multi-task, work independently and/or within a team, pays attention to detail and meet deadlines.
- Strong skills using MS Office and other various computer systems.
- Exhibits excellent analytical, decision-making, and problem-solving skills with independence.
- Utilizes excellent verbal/written communication skills using diplomacy and discretion to communicate effectively.
- Experience with non-profit cultural organizations strongly preferred.

Working Conditions

- Potential exposures encountered, such as hazardous materials, loud noise, or weather exposure.
- Essential physical requirements, such as climbing, standing, stooping, or typing.
- Physical effort/lifting, such as sedentary – up to 50 pounds.
- May require working weekends, nights, or be on-call as a regular part of the job.

Western New York Living

The Aquarium of Niagara is located adjacent to the Niagara Falls State Park, less than a mile from the downtown district. The Western New York region, which spans across the Buffalo-Niagara community, offers a unique experience characterized by a blend of vibrant urban centers, picturesque natural landscapes, and a strong sense of community.

Characteristics of Western New York include:

- **Dynamic Culture:** Western New York is home to a rich cultural scene with theaters, art galleries, museums, and music venues, with an array of dining options, from trendy restaurants to local eateries serving famous Buffalo wings and other regional specialties.
- **Affordable Cost of Living:** One of the notable advantages of living in Western New York is the relatively affordable cost of living compared to major metropolitan areas like New York City. Housing, transportation, and daily expenses tend to be more budget-friendly, allowing for a comfortable lifestyle.
- **Natural Beauty:** Western New York boasts breathtaking natural beauty and scenic shorelines. Outdoor enthusiasts will find ample opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing, and camping, both within the cities' proximity and in nearby rural areas.
- **Sports and Recreation:** Sports play a significant role in the region's identity. Western New York is passionate about its sports teams, including the NFL's Buffalo Bills and the NHL's Buffalo Sabres. There are also minor league baseball teams, college sports events, and numerous recreational facilities for various activities, including skiing and snowboarding in the winter.
- **Four Seasons:** Residents of Western New York experience all four distinct seasons. Summers are generally warm and sunny, with plenty of outdoor festivals and events. Fall brings stunning foliage and a chance to enjoy apple picking and pumpkin farms. Winters can be cold, with snowfall providing opportunities for winter sports. Spring brings blossoming flowers and a renewed sense of energy.
- **Strong Community Spirit:** The people of Western New York are known for their friendliness and strong community ties. You'll find numerous local festivals, parades, and events that bring people together. The region also has a reputation for being welcoming and supportive, offering a sense of belonging to newcomers.
- **Education and Healthcare:** Western New York is home to several esteemed educational institutions and also offers quality healthcare facilities, with nationally recognized medical centers and research institutions.

Living in Western New York provides a balanced blend of urban amenities, natural beauty, affordability, and a welcoming community spirit. It's a region that offers a high quality of life and a range of recreational, cultural, and professional opportunities for residents.

Compensation and Benefits

The estimated base salary range for this role is \$95,000–\$105,000 with a generous benefit package. This salary range represents the Aquarium’s good faith and reasonable estimate of the possible salary range.

How to Apply & Contact Information

The Aquarium of Niagara welcomes people from all walks of life into our team and strongly encourage people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, veterans, and people with disabilities to apply.

HR Buffalo is leading the search process. **To express interest in this role please submit your resume and cover letter to administration@aquariumofniagara.org.** Be sure to include Vice President of Operations in the subject line of any correspondences. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Aquarium of Niagara
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