

# **Position Specification**

WITF Public Media

Chief Executive Officer

Private and Confidential

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## Our Client

WITF Public Media serves the south-central capital region of Pennsylvania—and the state as a whole—with trusted news and information. Since its founding in 1963, WITF has become a valued source of programs and services that both satisfy and stimulate curiosity for residents in every community in the region. A member-supported public media organization, WITF reaches audiences in 19 counties. As a multimedia organization in the process of becoming a digital-first media entity, WITF informs and interacts with its communities through its TV and FM broadcast channels, website, mobile and social media channels, educational programs, and community events. These include WITF 89.5 & 93.3, WITF TV, the RadioPA Network, [witf.org](http://witf.org), WITF Educational Services, and Media Solutions.

In June 2018, WITF was recognized for the fourth time since 2009 with multiple National Edward R. Murrow Awards – among the most prestigious in broadcast and digital journalism. In total WITF has now received 15 National Murrow Awards for excellence in broadcast and online journalism since 2007, the most in Pennsylvania since then.

The mission of WITF is to strengthen our communities by connecting us to each other and to opportunities for lifelong learning. In serving this mission, WITF values its status as a Pennsylvania-based, nonprofit, member-supported organization, which pursues its mission with integrity and respect. WITF embraces the following core values:

- WITF inspires creativity internally and externally (creativity)
- WITF is a trusted source for information (trustworthiness)
- WITF acts transparently with donors and the community (transparency)
- WITF seeks to provide a personally meaningful experience (personally meaningful)
- WITF values inclusiveness in our content and organization (inclusiveness)

WITF's 2017 operating revenue was approximately \$11M, 51% of which comes from community support (including memberships and contributions). WITF also receives funding from federal and state grants, as well as earned revenue from production services. As a result of two spectrum agreements and a planned giving program, WITF's board-designed and donor restricted endowments total \$30.5 million. WITF has 65 full-time and 35 part-time staff and more than 21,000 members.

## WITF's Multimedia Content

WITF's major content initiatives are distributed statewide via public radio, public television, web and newsletters, and podcasts. *Transforming Health*, a partnership with Capital BlueCross and WellSpan Health, looks at the changing face of health care and health care policy in America and in Central Pennsylvania. *State Impact Pennsylvania* explores the Commonwealth's energy economy in collaboration with WHYY/Philadelphia and WESA and the Allegheny Front in Pittsburgh. *Keystone Crossroads*, developed in partnership with WHYY, WESA and WPSU/State College, explores the stories that affect municipalities of all sizes across the commonwealth.

Pennsylvania Public Radio is WITF's statewide public radio network, serving as the state capital bureau for 7 public radio stations. Reported with all Pennsylvanians in mind, PPR creates in-depth and insightful

journalism on key topics that reverberate from the statehouse: government accountability, public education, changing communities, and criminal justice.

**WITF 89.5 & 93.3**

*Smart Talk* is WITF 89.5's daily, live, interview program featuring conversations with newsmakers and experts in a variety of fields and exploring a wide range of issues, including the economy, politics, health care, education, culture, and the environment.

**WITF TV**

WITF TV is south central Pennsylvania's public television station. Since first going on the air in 1964, WITF TV has been an integral part of the region's media and cultural landscape. The station produces its own unique local programs, including *HealthSmart* and documentaries which regularly receive Mid-Atlantic Emmy nominations and awards. WITF TV also provides access to a wide range of PBS programs, and with the new WITF Passport, members can access to an on-demand library of quality public television programming.

**PA Post**

As part of its strategic goal to transform a multimedia organization into a digital-first and citizen-focused organization, WITF launched *PA Post* in September 2018. The mission of *PA Post* is to connect Pennsylvanians to their state, and each other, with accountability and deep-dive reporting that is multimedia and distributed statewide. *PA Post* delivers legislative, policy and politics reporting through a network of commercial and non-commercial media organizations.

**Radio PA Network**

Radio PA produces and distributes state government news to commercial radio stations statewide, along with a full range of state sports and special programming. Developed in the 1990 as a way to diversify revenues in support of WITF's public service mission, Radio PA is part of a wholly owned for-profit subsidiary.

**Media Solutions**

Media Solutions is WITF's production services company, another initiative designed to diversify revenues and support WITF's mission and services. Media Solutions offers a variety of high-end production services including audio and video recording, satellite uplinking, web development, design, animation, editing and post-production. From a fully-equipped television studio to mobile production trucks, Media Solutions has the equipment and experience to make media easy for clients.

**WITF Educational Services**

Educational services to families, children and educators are a critical component of WITF's ongoing commitment to the communities of central Pennsylvania. Through the *Ready, Set, Go...Kindergarten!* program, WITF helps support families and children in the transition from preschool to kindergarten with an annual event that gives the soon-to-be kindergartners and their families a day full of fun and learning, typically drawing 700-900 family members and kindergartners to the Public Media Center.

With support from community agencies and sponsors, *Ready, Set, Explore* events are community-based family fun dates for children aged 3-8. *Ready, Set, Explore* events teach families to engage their children with meaningful, interesting content in fun, age-appropriate ways. Children's programs on WITF TV like

*Clifford, Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, Curious George, and Sid the Science Kid* offer a safe place for all children to learn and grow in their education journey. *WITF Kids Club* offers children the opportunity to feel like they're a part of those special programs, from seeing their name on the TV screen during the week of their birthday to having exclusive opportunities to meet and greet their favorite PBS Kids characters.

In addition to these established programs, WITF's special projects include an initiative around bullying. *Pushed Around* takes a broad approach to the topic, covering not just bullying in schools, but also online and in the workplace. *Pushed Around* focuses on signs of bullying, approaches to stop bullying, the psychology behind bullying, and personal stories of local people impacted by bullying, among other topics.

*Innovation U* is a new project from WITF which shares stories of how entrepreneurs and these academic incubators are striving to make big ideas come to life. Universities across Pennsylvania offer campus spaces where students and community members connect with fellow entrepreneurs, experienced business people and interested financiers.

## **The Role**

The next President and Chief Executive Officer of WITF Public Media will lead the growth of the organization's reach, relevance, and revenue while delivering on its mission and impact. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the President and CEO will oversee all aspects of the organization's operations and insure its financial sustainability in the midst of a dynamic and constantly changing media landscape.

Providing reliable and trustworthy news and programs is core to WITF's mission. In addition to ensuring that the highest levels of journalism, political reporting, storytelling, community engagement, and education are continually advanced, the President and CEO will help engage the breadth and diversity of central Pennsylvania to further WITF's mission of strengthening communities by forging connections and creating opportunities for lifelong learning. The President and CEO will lead and develop an energized and committed team, and continue to promote an inclusive, creative, entrepreneurial, and results-focused organizational culture. S/he will oversee and act as an effective steward of an operating budget and financial structure reliant upon both public and private support.

As WITF's lead fundraiser, the President and CEO will engage the support, enthusiasm, and trust of existing and new supporters and members. This includes securing continued support from foundations, public entities, corporate donors, and individual funders while also proactively identifying and assessing new sources of revenue for long-term sustainability. Additionally, the President and CEO will play an active role in recruiting new Trustees and insuring a diverse Board composition.

The President and CEO will build and strengthen effective partnerships and alliances with important constituencies, including funders, content partners, relevant policy leaders, and governing entities. These include, but are not limited to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Public Radio, and partners throughout Pennsylvania.

## **Candidate Profile**

WITF seeks an unusually innovative, broad-minded, and strategic leader. S/he must be passionate about the WITF's mission and possess significant business, financial, management, and leadership skills. The successful candidate must have a track record of success leading a complex organization or business, ideally related to media, content development, and/or public engagement. S/he must be able to develop and implement a vision for how WITF can continue reach more people, adapt its delivery platform strategy

as the landscapes of media and technology continue to rapidly evolve, and deepen its impact on the communities served while ensuring financial sustainability for the organization long-term.

The candidate must be a strong and credible advocate and ambassador for WITF, and a superb communicator individually and with large audiences. S/he must be able to navigate effectively the local, regional, and national arenas, and bring the credibility to operate at the highest levels of media, business, government, and philanthropy. The President and CEO must demonstrate political acumen without being overtly ‘political.’

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

**Mission Alignment and Media Knowledge**

- Embraces WITF’s ultimate mission to “strengthen our communities by connecting us to each other and to opportunities for lifelong learning.”
- Brings knowledge and credibility in radio and/or the media industry, preferably within a company/organization that includes both legacy and new media platforms.
- Possesses knowledge and ability to lead WITF successfully in the digital transformation that is changing public radio; an ability to interpret today’s trends to create future opportunities.
- Able to establish credibility with journalists and key stakeholders throughout the state.
- Lives the values and mission of WITF and shares the organization’s unending commitment to creativity, trustworthiness, transparency, inclusivity, and to creating personally meaningful experiences for stakeholders and audience members.

**Strategic Leadership**

- Proven ability to analyze the mission and business drivers of an organization, develop a vision for the future, and lead the team to develop a strategy responsive to a fast-changing, external environment, while respecting the existing culture of the organization and building upon current strengths.
- Demonstrated track record of leading innovation, ideally with distinct experience around digital transformation. Able to inspire the team to explore new ideas for the future. Able to “see around corners” and chart the course for all that lies ahead.
- Possesses excellent judgment. Shows wisdom in making decisions, maintains a balanced perspective and weighs a multiplicity of factors to achieve an optimal outcome.

**Resource Development**

- Proven ability to identify, cultivate, and successfully engage individual donors and institutional funders. Demonstrated success connecting a funder’s interests with organizational goals in a manner that builds long-term support.
- A persuasive, inspiring, and credible proponent of an organization.
- Ideally, has been involved in a campaign or an equivalent funding effort focused on institutional initiatives.

**Relationship Building, Communicating, and Influencing**

- Has experience working with a Board and skilled at leveraging the talents of a committed and supportive Board. Knowledgeable about effective Board practice and governance; has experience helping a Board build consensus and develop strategy.
- Has a proven capacity to develop and maintain strong relationships with a wide-range of important constituencies, partners, and funders; able to leverage those effectively to accomplish WITF's goals.
- Demonstrates an exceptional capacity to communicate and connect with people at all levels. Understands the experiences, values, and motivators of others. Has a transparent, open, and authentic style that brings people together.
- Effectively builds coalitions and is able to accomplish goals through persuasion, networking, and broad influence. Able to inspire trust and respect at the highest levels across multiple sectors and disciplines.
- Confident, yet humble. Is institutionally-minded rather than focused on self. Possesses a sense of humor with the ability to see the lighter side of difficult situations.

**Operational Leadership and Business Acumen**

- Able to engage the team and inspire them to participate as WITF continues to transform for the future. S/he will connect the past with the future while propelling momentum around the acceptance of change in an evolving media landscape.
- Skilled at developing and leading an energized, motivated, collaborative, and committed team.
- Has an eye for talent and is able to develop, retain, and recruit as necessary, top talent across the organization who will bring positive change.
- Manages performance. Translates goals into actionable performance objectives that are easily understood, sets prompt execution standards, and holds teams accountable for agreed-upon results.
- Instills financial literacy and discipline throughout the organization's professional staff and network to protect and enhance fiscal soundness as a way of enabling mission fulfillment.
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond his/her own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organization as a whole.

**Contact**

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search and prospective candidates are invited to contact Russell Reynolds Associates directly. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential. For more information or to apply for the role, please reach out to [WITFCEO@russellreynolds.com](mailto:WITFCEO@russellreynolds.com).