



National Endowment for Democracy

Chief Operating Officer

2023

The Organization

Organization	The National Endowment for Democracy
Organization Location	Washington, D.C.
Website	https://www.ned.org/
Management Team	https://www.ned.org/about/staff/
Board of Directors	https://www.ned.org/about/board-of-directors/
Organization Overview	<p>The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit grantmaking organization dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. NED serves as America’s leading foundation for freedom, providing support for democratic activists, civil society organizations, and independent media throughout the world, as well as the NED core institutes: the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IR), the Solidarity Center, and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). Through nearly \$300 million in grants annually to 2,000 non-governmental partners who are working for democratic goals in over 100 countries, NED is at the heart of supporting a global infrastructure for democracy.</p> <p>Since its founding in 1983, the Endowment has remained on the leading edge of democratic struggles everywhere, while evolving into a multifaceted institution that is a hub of activity, resources, and intellectual exchange for activists, practitioners, and scholars of democracy the world over.</p> <p>A UNIQUE INSTITUTION</p> <p>NED is a unique institution. The Endowment’s nongovernmental character gives it a flexibility that makes it possible to work in some of the world’s most difficult circumstances, and to respond quickly when there is an opportunity for political change. NED is dedicated to fostering the growth of a wide range of democratic institutions abroad, including political parties, trade unions, free markets, and business organizations, as well as the many elements of a vibrant civil society that ensure human rights, an independent media, and the rule of law.</p> <p>This well-rounded approach responds to the diverse aspects of democracy and has proved both practical and effective throughout NED’s history. Funded largely by the U.S. Congress, the support NED gives to groups abroad sends an important message of solidarity to many democrats who are working for freedom and human rights, often in obscurity and isolation.</p> <p>The Endowment is guided by the belief that freedom is a universal human aspiration that can be realized through the development of democratic institutions, procedures, and values. Democracy cannot be achieved through a single election and need not be based upon the model of the United States or any other particular country. Rather, it evolves according to the needs and traditions of diverse political cultures. By supporting this process, the Endowment helps strengthen the bond between indigenous democratic movements abroad and the people of the United States — a bond based on a common commitment to representative government and freedom as a way of life.</p>

BIPARTISAN AND TRANSPARENT

From its beginning, NED has remained steadfastly bipartisan. Mandated by an Act of Congress and created jointly by Republicans and Democrats, NED is governed by a board balanced between both parties and enjoys Congressional support across the political spectrum. NED operates with a high degree of transparency and accountability reflecting our founders' belief that democracy support overseas should be conducted openly.

Democracy involves the right of the people freely to determine their own destiny. The exercise of this right requires a system that guarantees freedom of expression, belief and association, free and competitive elections, respect for the inalienable rights of individuals and minorities, free communications media, and the rule of law.

Statement of Principles and Objectives, 1984

The Position

Position Title	Chief Operating Officer
Location	Washington, D.C.
Reports To	Damon Wilson , President & CEO
Position Summary	<p>NED is at an incredible juncture of new leadership, significant growth, and tremendous institutional opportunity against the backdrop of rising challenges to democracy around the world. In an environment increasingly hostile to democracy, the NED management team is drawing on the best of the institution's forty-year track record while modernizing and adapting the organization for its next chapter. The President and CEO seeks a Chief Operating Officer (COO) who will serve as a long-term partner in ensuring that NED is fit for purpose for the future.</p> <p>NED's COO serves as the collaborative leader across the senior leadership team, the operational management team, and the institution. The COO provides the leadership, management, and vision necessary to ensure that NED has the proper operational controls, administrative and reporting procedures, and systems in place to achieve the organizational mission in today's fast-paced environment, where we face steep challenges to global democracy and in which NED as an institution is a particular target of anti-democratic state and non-state actors. The COO ensures that NED, as an institution, provides effective oversight of the expenditure of public funds, while at the same time ensuring NED's nimbleness, nurturing its tolerance for risk, and developing and maintaining the relationships of trust on the ground that help make the work so effective.</p> <p>Following rapid growth in budget and staff, a generational change in leadership, and in the midst of a global assault on democracy, the COO will serve as a thought and operational partner to the President and CEO, along with the leadership team, to adapt the institution, shape an organization that more effectively delivers on its mission, and provide overall sound management of a large, publicly-funded institution approaching the size of the Peace Corps.</p> <p>In particular, the COO will continue to build on the work done in recent years to help NED achieve operational excellence and scale NED's systems to meet the demands of a 40-year-old organization that has doubled over the last few years, to a staff of more than 300, an annual operating budget of \$350 million, of which over 83% of its funds goes to supporting</p>

grantees in over 100 countries across the globe. This level of grantmaking means NED is among the top 10 foundations globally.

Reporting to the President, the COO plays a critical role in connecting the infrastructure of NED to its mission. The COO will ensure that NED's Operations teams—which include finance, talent and human resources, information technology and digital transformation, security and travel, and office services and administration—strive for the highest standards in customer support and innovation. The COO is responsible for providing mission and values-based leadership, direction, support, and assistance to all institutional Vice Presidents to optimize operational effectiveness and institutional integration and cohesiveness. The COO also works in close coordination and partnership with the Chief of Staff (CoS).

The COO must have a clear sense of staff needs, be highly communicative and accessible, and remain focused on the vision and humanity of the NED mission. The COO must have the analytical insights to understand strategically how the support structures impact mission. The COO is responsible for deploying, maximizing, and coordinating the NED resources across all entities to achieve the NED's objectives.

This role is expected to ensure strategic alignment across the institution, ensuring internal organizational efforts reinforce NED's strategy of impact in support of democracy. To this end, the COO will oversee the annual strategy and budget process in close cooperation with the CoS and the Chief Financial Officer. The COO will help set the institution's annual goals, help ensure the alignment of the leadership team's goals, and develop a quarterly plan to help track progress toward these goals.

The COO serves as the primary liaison to the NED board's Budget, Audit, and Administration Committee (BAA), ensuring that the BAA is well informed of the organization's financial health, overall risk profile, compliance, and legal matters, along with NED's continued efforts to reward and retain talent. The COO should be comfortable briefing BAA and Board members and leading the Operations team to deliver clear, informative, concise, and data-driven presentations at quarterly board meetings.

The COO will keep the pulse of the organization, providing guidance to leaders across NED on issues ranging from culture and best practices in management to driving institutional and operational support to major NED initiatives, including significant events and convenings. In a unionized workplace, the COO will drive a results-oriented, mission-centric culture of high performance, collegiality, and collaboration among management and the staff union as NED implements the first CBA in its history.

The COO must be able to focus on the details and daily demands, while simultaneously balancing the second and third-order impacts of individual operational decisions on the entire organization. This includes keeping a constant focus on balancing a nimble, flexible approach to supporting NED's partners with mitigating risks to the financial health and reputation of NED.

The COO plays an important role in integrating and connecting dots across the institution and managing and mapping the annual rhythm of work of the institution. As a grantmaking institution, the COO has the opportunity to help streamline internal processes, introduce more prioritization and competition in the allocation of resources, shape new priority areas of programming, and sharpen our focus on impact.

In 2024, NED expects to update its institutional strategy for democratic renewal and the COO is expected to play an important role in this process.

Although the COO primarily functions internally, the COO may assist the President and CEO externally as needed to advance the organization's

Responsibilities

democracy leadership, including the pursuit and evaluation of strategic partnerships and the cultivation of key supporters.

- Serve as a partner to the President and CEO in helping to adapt NED for work in a more complex environment increasingly hostile to democracy by building a durable institution fit for the future
- Possess and promote the leadership, management acumen, and judgement necessary to ensure that the NED staff can fulfill the mission of effectively strengthening democratic institutions around the world
- Provide the strategic and operational direction necessary to develop and achieve continued excellence in operations, progress on a digital-first approach to systems, and first-rate customer service to NED's stakeholders
- Oversee the annual strategy and budget process, and develop and oversee a quarterly implementation plan to ensure progress toward annual goals across the institution
- Guide staff in implementing all organizational policies, procedures, and best practices; identify gaps in policies or those that need updating, then drive cross-department efforts to draft and implement policy solutions
- Develop the strategies to meet the identified financial and capital needs of NED and ensure that financial conditions and requirements are clearly communicated to all staff
- Establish policies, procedures, systems, and internal staff management functions across departments and ensure compliance and accountability
- Oversee all operational and financial matters, including providing leadership monitoring and training, assigning responsibilities, reviewing work processes and products, and implementing corrective actions when necessary
- Lead the institution's efforts on talent and culture; foster a culture that rewards high performance and a healthy relationship between NED's management and its union
- Support NED events and convenings, board meetings and trips, fundraising, and other public engagement activities from an operational perspective

The Person

NED's next Chief Operating Officer will be an experienced operational leader who can be a strategic partner to the President in implementing the organization's strategy throughout the organization through technology, talent, culture, governance, and operational effectiveness. They will be a culture builder, fostering trust and collaboration among teams, breaking down siloes, and enhancing systems and processes that build transparency, communications, and efficacy. They should have a track record of leading and managing complex organizations. They should be an action-oriented, bipartisan leader with a passion for NED's mission, sound political judgment, and an understanding of their essential role in defending and strengthening democracy efforts worldwide.

Pivotal Experience & Expertise

Senior Operational Leadership: 15+ years of leadership experience with demonstrated executive management experience in nonprofit, public, or private institutions. A successful track record of delivering ambitious results, leading talent and culture efforts, and ensuring strong financial management and forecasting. Experience working as part of an executive team and interacting at the board level. Track record of refining and implementing organizational strategies and initiatives.

Change Management Leadership: A demonstrated history of helping to lead organizations through change, including significant operational improvements and the ability to lead change management efforts. Proven experience designing organizational policies and operational frameworks, elevating business processes, and driving implementation and adherence in alignment with broader organizational strategy. Creates a compelling vision and culture across the organization.

Sector Acumen: Passion for the mission of NED is required and an understanding of democracy support and the work of NED. Familiarity with the political context within which NED is funded and operates, including the federal funding process and regulations governing recipients of federal funds. Brings an awareness of geopolitical dynamics and trends.

Team Leadership: Significant experience leading teams across a diverse portfolio, including demonstrated experience and exposure to matters involving Human Resources, Information Technology, and Finance matters. Fosters a respectful, nimble, empowered, results-oriented, and collaborative working environment.

Culture Fit & Impact

Mission-Driven: Commitment and passion for NED's nonpartisan work in growing and strengthening democratic institutions around the world. Knowledge of democracy support work, grantmaking, and international affairs is helpful.

Collaboration and Trust: Builds relationships and teams by building and maintaining honesty, trust, and integrity. Has the ability to be an effective collaborator within the global organization and serves as a champion for greater transparency and collaboration between and among internal teams.

Commitment to Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Comfort working in a global, culturally aware context and fostering an organizational culture that supports and promotes cross-cultural engagement and inclusion.

To Apply

Review of candidates will begin immediately. Applications (cover letter or resume), inquiries, and nominations can be sent to: NEDcoo@heidrick.com.

EEO Statement

NED is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristics covered by applicable law. NED is committed to working with and providing reasonable accommodation for all qualified individuals and bases all employment decisions on qualifications, merit, and business need. NED believes that diversity and inclusion amongst our team members are critical to our success as an organization operating globally and seeks to recruit, develop, and retain the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool.

Engagement Team

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