RENEWABLE NORTHWEST

Executive Director

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Renewable Northwest (RNW) is a member-based clean energy advocacy organization working across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana, bringing together renewable developers, storage companies, large clean energy buyers, and environmental and consumer advocates.

With strong clean energy mandates in place and demand for power rising, the region's challenge now is turning those commitments into projects that get built. That work happens in utility commission proceedings, state legislatures, regional market forums, and county land-use hearings and RNW has been in those rooms for more than thirty years. Its next Executive Director will help lead that work alongside an expert team, members, and partners, in alignment with RNW's recently revised strategic plan.

The right leader will bring genuine grounding in the renewable energy sector; the ability to build trust among developers, advocates, utilities, and policymakers whose priorities don't always align; a track record of developing strong leaders and leading with and through them; and the strategic judgment to decide where RNW leads, where it partners, and what it sets aside.

APPLY NOW

REFER SOMEONE

POSTING DATE

October 30, 2026. Applications received by November 24, 2026 will be given full consideration. Early applications are strongly encouraged.

TIMELINE

Initial interviews will begin in December with subsequent interviews conducted in January and early February. Ideal start date in March 2027.

LOCATION

The Executive Director is expected to live in the Northwest within easy reach of RNW's primary location in Portland or the secondary base in Seattle. Candidates willing to relocate are encouraged to apply.

SALARY

$190,000 – $220,000

ABOUT RENEWABLE NORTHWEST

Mission: To strengthen and expand clean energy infrastructure for the Northwest

Vision: A Northwest powered by clean energy

Values: Drive, trust, adaptability, collaboration, belonging

Renewable Northwest began in 1994 as a project of the NW Energy Coalition and has grown into an independent 501(c)(3) with a membership of roughly 100 organizations. RNW has a staff of 12 working across its four-state footprint, an office in Portland, and an annual budget of approximately $3.1 million, supported primarily by membership dues and foundation grants. In 2025, RNW established an affiliated 501(c)(4) to support lobbying in discrete situations. The ED oversees both 501(c)(3) and 501(4) arms of RNW.

HOW RNW WORKS

POLICY

Legislative and administrative advocacy in four states to establish, implement, and defend policies that drive new clean energy investment. For example, in 2025, RNW worked with labor, business, and environmental partners to defeat bills that would have restricted wind development in Montana and to pass legislation on grid-enhancing technologies and transmission permitting in Oregon.

REGULATORY ADVOCACY

Engagement in utility resource planning, procurement, and rate proceedings before public utility commissions, grounded in legal, economic, and technical analysis. Recent work in utility procurements helped open them to emerging storage technologies and to bids using conditional firm transmission.

MARKETS

Participation in the design and governance of Western electricity markets and resource adequacy programs, including seats on market committees. RNW holds voting seats on Markets+ committees and serves as the public interest sector liaison at the CAISO Regional Issues Forum.

TRANSMISSION

Advocacy for regional and interregional transmission planning, permitting, and cost allocation, working with the Bonneville Power Administration, utilities, and regional planning bodies. When a key 500 kV line in Idaho faced renewed opposition, RNW mobilized ratepayers to speak in support ahead of its approval by the state's utility commission.

SITING & PERMITTING

Work with counties, state agencies, and local communities toward predictable, reasonable pathways for responsibly sited projects. In Idaho's Ada County, RNW helped organize developers and local partners who engaged more than 800 residents, as the county moved from a possible solar ban to an ordinance allowing utility-scale solar in appropriate areas.

WHERE THE WORK IS HEADED

From commitments to construction

Oregon and Washington have strong clean energy mandates, many of which RNW and its partners helped secure. The work now is delivering on them: siting and permitting, transmission, local acceptance, and procurement that keeps pace with need.

Rising demand and a shifting federal landscape

Load growth driven in part by data centers, the expiration of federal tax credits, and growing affordability concerns are reshaping the economics and politics of the region's energy choices. Clear, fact-based advocacy grounded in reliability and affordability is increasingly central to the work.

Four states, four distinct contexts

Oregon and Washington are focused on implementing ambitious laws. Idaho and Montana hold much of the region's untapped renewable potential, and there the case for clean energy is made in terms of economic development, reliability, and local benefit. RNW has invested in growing its work and relationships in all four states.

A broader base of support

Durable progress depends on constituencies beyond clean energy's traditional allies, including labor, business, local governments, Tribal governments, economic development organizations, and utilities, and on trust with the rural communities where projects will be built.

THE TEAM

RNW's staff are smart, deeply knowledgeable, and committed to the mission, with technical expertise that members, utilities, and agencies rely on. RNW has long been a place where future industry leaders build their careers. The culture is built on trust and ownership: people are respected for their expertise, recognized for their contributions, and genuinely encouraged to take time off. Staff work across the four states and value the time they spend together in person.

The Executive Director leads a leadership team of four directors (Operations; Communications and Outreach; Policy and Legislative Affairs; and Regulatory Affairs) and works with dedicated staff on development efforts.

RNW's 15-member Board of Directors brings deep expertise from across clean energy development, law, policy, technical analysis, and advocacy, and its composition reflects the breadth of RNW's coalition.

THE ROLE

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for RNW's strategic direction, external leadership, financial sustainability, and organizational health for both the 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) arms of the organization.

Strategy and focus

Lead implementation of the 2027–2029 strategic plan. Make disciplined decisions about where RNW engages across issues, venues, and states, and align staffing and resources with those choices.

Coalition and member leadership

Steward relationships across RNW's diverse membership, create meaningful opportunities for member input, and hold the coalition together through difficult choices, taking clear positions when consensus isn't available.

External leadership and influence

Represent RNW with utilities, commissions, legislators, governors' offices, BPA, counties, Tribal governments, partner organizations, and media across all four states. Build personal credibility and relationships in the venues where consequential decisions are made.

Revenue and financial stewardship

Lead RNW's membership strategy, retaining and growing a membership that provides the majority of RNW's revenue; personally hold key member and funder relationships; work with development staff to build a more diversified, durable revenue base, including membership dues, foundation support and fundraising for project-based support; and make realistic decisions about capacity and growth.

Team leadership

Lead and develop the director-level leadership team, strengthen communication and collaboration across teams and states, and sustain the culture of trust and ownership staff value while providing clear direction.

Board partnership

Work with both the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) boards on governance, strategy, and fundraising.

WHAT YOU'LL BRING

RNW is looking for a leader who combines credibility in the renewable energy sector with a commitment to developing the people around them. Strong candidates will bring different combinations of the experience described below. Prior executive director experience is not required. Candidates may come from renewable energy development, utilities, regulatory or legal practice, policy advocacy, government, consulting, philanthropy, or other senior leadership roles.

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Renewable energy sector knowledge and credibility

A strong understanding of how policy, regulation, markets, and project development interact, and the standing to earn the confidence of members, utilities, policymakers, and advocates. The Executive Director doesn't need to be RNW's foremost expert on every issue, since staff and members bring that depth, but must understand the field well enough to make sound calls and draw on that expertise. Experience in project development, permitting, procurement, or project finance is a strong plus.

Coalition building across differing interests

Experience building trust and partnerships among stakeholders whose priorities don't always align, ideally across nonprofit and for-profit sectors and across political differences, along with a track record of influencing policy or regulatory outcomes and adapting to different political environments.

Executive-level strategic leadership

The ability to read a crowded, changing landscape, identify where an organization can contribute most, and translate strategy into achievable priorities and resource decisions.

Leadership through a leadership team

Demonstrated success leading and developing managers, building cohesive teams aligned to clear priorities, and giving clear direction while preserving staff autonomy.

Also Valued Experience

These strengths will help the next Executive Director build momentum quickly, and RNW welcomes candidates who bring some or all of them.

Revenue development and financial stewardship. Experience cultivating funders and diversifying revenue in uncertain conditions, and making sound decisions about capacity and growth.

Northwest relationships. Established relationships with policymakers, utilities, industry, and advocates across the region, or a demonstrated ability to build credibility and trust quickly in a new landscape.

Organizational leadership. Experience with nonprofit operations and working in partnership with a board of directors. Familiarity with organizations that operate both a 501(c)(3) and a companion 501(c)(4), including how the two are governed and work together, is a plus.

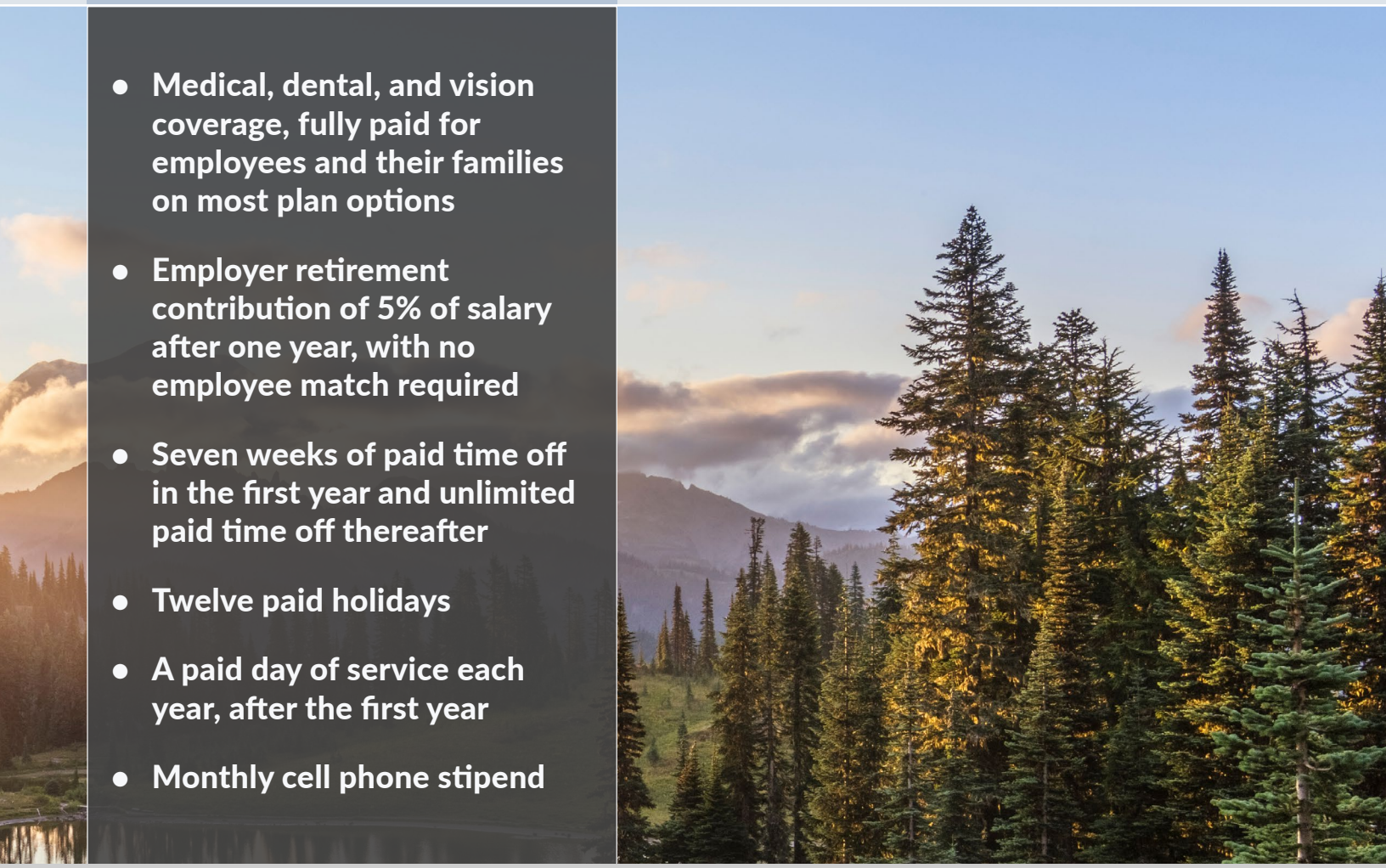
Inclusive leadership and community trust. A commitment to inclusive workplace practices, and to building and sustaining relationships with the rural and Tribal communities where clean energy will be built.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This is a full-time, salaried position with a starting salary range of $190,000 – $220,000, depending on qualifications and experience.

Benefits include:

- Medical, dental, and vision coverage, fully paid for employees and their families on most plan options
- Employer retirement contribution of 5% of salary after one year, with no employee match required
- Seven weeks of paid time off in the first year and unlimited paid time off thereafter
- Twelve paid holidays
- A paid day of service each year, after the first year
- Monthly cell phone stipend



LOCATION AND TRAVEL

The Executive Director is expected to live in the Northwest within easy reach of RNW's primary location in Portland or the secondary base in Seattle. Candidates willing to relocate are encouraged to apply.

The majority of RNW's staff, membership, and decision-making are concentrated around RNW's downtown Portland office. Staff work in a hybrid of in-person and remotely in Portland and remotely in the Seattle area and Boise, Idaho with an all-hands gathering once a quarter. The ED is expected to facilitate and attend these gatherings. The role also involves regular travel across the four-state region, including in-person time with remote staff and attendance at member meetings, legislative sessions, and key proceedings.

HOW TO APPLY

Online applications only, please. No email or paper submissions. You will be asked to upload a cover letter and resume. In your cover letter, please describe how your experience, interests, and values fit with Renewable Northwest's mission and the opportunity described here.

Search Timeline:

Applications received by November 24, 2026 will receive full consideration; early applications are encouraged. All applicants will receive an email confirmation. Interviewing is anticipated to begin in December with additional rounds in January and early February. A hiring decision expected by mid-February. The desired start date is March 2027.

Questions regarding this opportunity are welcomed and can be directed to:

Julie Edsforth, julie@cloversearchworks.com

APPLY HERE: https://cloversearchworks.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0znle

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Renewable Northwest values a diverse workplace and strongly encourages people from diverse backgrounds to apply for this position, including people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, people with lived experience, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Renewable Northwest is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants will not be discriminated against based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

CLOVER SEARCH WORKS

Clover Search Works facilitates leadership searches for nonprofit organizations whose missions strengthen communities. Clover is honored to be partnering with Renewable Northwest in this search.