National Civic League

Search for

President, National Civic League



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An opportunity to shape the next chapter of one of America's most enduring civic institutions.

About the National Civic League

Democracy is not only shaped in Washington, DC. It is lived every day in local communities across America: in city halls, neighborhoods, public institutions, and the relationships between residents and the places they call home.

For more than 130 years, the National Civic League (the League) has worked to make democracy more inclusive, participatory, and effective. Founded in 1894 as the National Municipal League, the League emerged from a gathering of civic reformers including Theodore Roosevelt, Louis Brandeis, and Frederick Law Olmsted, who believed that stronger local institutions and more engaged citizens were essential to a thriving democracy.

That conviction has guided more than a century of civic innovation. The League's *Model City Charter* helped shape modern municipal governance, while its landmark *All-America City Award*, established in 1949, has celebrated communities that confront difficult challenges through collaboration, civic engagement, and local ingenuity. Across generations, the League has helped advance new approaches to public participation, community problem-solving, and democratic renewal.

Today, the League continues to connect the ideas, institutions, and people that make democracy work. Its programs and initiatives—including the All-America City Award, Center for Democracy Innovation, Civic Genius, National Civic Review, and Model City Charter—bring together civic leaders, local governments, community organizations, and residents to strengthen civic life and elevate promising practices nationwide.

The League has also entered an important period of organizational evolution. Through its recent mergers with **Local Policy Lab**, which helps local governments embed resident voice into everyday decision-making, and **Spread the Vote**, which works to remove barriers to electoral participation, the League has expanded both its capabilities and its reach. Together, these efforts create opportunities to connect access to democracy with sustained civic participation and more inclusive public institutions.

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the National Civic League operates nationally through a geographically distributed team, a network of Senior Fellows, and a Board of Directors representing diverse civic, governmental, nonprofit, and other institutional perspectives.

At a time of renewed national attention and investment in strengthening American democracy, the League is especially well positioned to elevate a perspective too often missing from the conversation: **local governments and communities are where democracy is most directly experienced and where meaningful civic renewal can take root**. With its remarkable history, relationships, and practical experience, the League has an opportunity to bring that perspective more prominently into national conversations, partnerships, and investments, translating its many strengths into greater relevance, influence, and impact.

Learn more at www.nationalcivicleague.org.

The Opportunity

The National Civic League seeks an accomplished, entrepreneurial, and mission-driven President to lead the organization into its next era of impact.

This is a consequential moment for the organization. With a distinguished legacy, talented and committed staff, longstanding relationships across the civic sector, and a newly expanded portfolio of programs, the League has a powerful foundation from which to grow its relevance and influence. Realizing that potential will require a leader who can pair a compelling vision for the future with the practical experience and discipline to build a stronger, more sustainable organization.

The next President will have an opportunity to shape what the National Civic League becomes in the years ahead: how its programs work together, where it can contribute most meaningfully, how it engages the communities and institutions it serves, and how it builds the financial and organizational capacity to sustain its mission.

The work will be both externally ambitious and internally focused. The President will be expected to cultivate philanthropic support and strategic partnerships, elevate the League's national profile, and communicate a compelling case for the importance of civic engagement and local democracy. Equally important will be the work of bringing greater cohesion to the organization, empowering its people, strengthening collaboration and accountability, and working with the Board to make thoughtful choices about strategic priorities and resources.

Success will require more than inspiration or subject-matter expertise. The League seeks a proven executive who has led people, managed organizational complexity, raised significant resources, and translated strategy into results. The ideal candidate will combine confidence and decisiveness with humility, curiosity, and a genuine commitment to building trust.

This is an opportunity not simply to steward an institution with a remarkable history, but to help define its future—strengthening the organization while expanding its contribution to civic life across the country. The President reports to the organization's Board of Directors and holds overall responsibility for organizational leadership, strategic direction, financial sustainability, external relationships, and mission impact.

The Leadership Mandate

1. Shape a Clear and Compelling Strategic Direction

The National Civic League's breadth of experience and programming is an important asset. Its next President will help ensure that these efforts contribute to a coherent, distinctive, and forward-looking organizational strategy. Working in partnership with the Board and staff, the President will:

- Articulate a compelling vision for the League's next chapter, grounded in its historic mission and responsive to the evolving needs of communities and the broader civic landscape.
- Advance the organization's existing strategic commitments while helping shape its next planning horizon.
- Assess the program portfolio, partnerships, and operating model to identify opportunities for greater alignment, effectiveness, and impact.

- Make disciplined recommendations about where to invest, what to strengthen or reinvent, and where activities may need to evolve or conclude.
- Translate strategic priorities into clear organizational goals, resource decisions, and measurable results.

2. Build Financial Strength and a Sustainable Revenue Model

Financial sustainability and resource development will be central to the President's success. The National Civic League seeks a leader who is both an effective frontline fundraiser and a strategic thinker about how mission-driven organizations generate and sustain revenue. The President will:

- Personally cultivate, solicit, and steward relationships with foundations, individual philanthropists, corporate partners, and other supporters.
- Build a compelling case for philanthropic investment that connects the organization's work to measurable civic and community impact.
- Develop and execute a proactive, multi-year resource development strategy that strengthens fundraising capacity, expands unrestricted support, and builds a durable pipeline of funders and partners.
- Evaluate the strategic and financial potential of the League's various revenue sources—including philanthropy, sponsorships, earned revenue, and membership-related activities—and identify a sustainable mix appropriate to its mission and capacity.
- Partner with the Board to strengthen its participation in fundraising, relationship development, and philanthropic stewardship.
- Ensure that financial plans, programmatic commitments, and organizational capacity remain aligned.

3. Lead a Cohesive, High-Performing Organization

The League's dedicated staff and expanded programmatic expertise provide a strong foundation for the future. The next President will play a critical role in bringing these strengths together within a unified, collaborative organization. This leader will:

- Foster a healthy organizational culture characterized by trust, transparency, shared purpose, mutual respect, and accountability.
- Lead the continued integration of the League's programs and teams, strengthening collaboration while preserving the distinctive capabilities that make each valuable.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, decision-making practices, and performance expectations across the organization.
- Invest in staff development, effective management, and the systems and practices needed to support a geographically distributed workforce.
- Encourage open communication, thoughtful problem-solving, and constructive engagement across roles and functions.
- Navigate organizational change with empathy and steadiness while remaining willing to make difficult decisions when necessary.

The President must be an experienced manager of people, not simply a compelling visionary. The League seeks someone who knows how to build strong teams, empower capable colleagues, address challenges directly, and create the conditions for people to do their best work.

4. Elevate the League's National Voice and Deepen Strategic Partnerships

For more than a century, the League has helped shape conversations about local governance and civic participation. The next President will have an opportunity to renew and amplify that voice for a new generation. As the organization's chief external ambassador, the President will:

- Serve as a visible, credible, and engaging spokesperson for the League and its mission.
- Build and sustain relationships with mayors, local government leaders, civic organizations, philanthropy, national networks, and other influential partners.
- Elevate compelling stories of communities putting democracy into practice, demonstrating how civic engagement strengthens governance and improves people's lives.
- Identify new opportunities for collaboration, convening, and thought leadership that advance the League's mission and distinguish its contribution to the field.
- Strengthen the organization's communications, visibility, and public positioning in ways that attract new partners, funders, and audiences.
- Represent the organization effectively across diverse communities and political environments, maintaining a credible, inclusive, and nonpartisan approach.

5. Strengthen Board Partnership and Organizational Governance

The President will work closely with the organization's national Board of Directors to support sound governance, shared strategic direction, and constructive engagement. This work will require an emotionally intelligent executive who understands governance, can navigate differing perspectives, and is skilled at building consensus without avoiding necessary decisions. Responsibilities will include:

- Establishing a trusted, transparent, and productive partnership with the Board, grounded in clear expectations, regular communication, and mutual accountability.
- Equipping Board members with timely information and meaningful opportunities to contribute their expertise, relationships, and leadership.
- Helping the Board maintain an appropriate focus on strategy, financial stewardship, organizational performance, and long-term sustainability.
- Supporting thoughtful consideration of governance structures and practices as the organization's needs evolve.
- Building confidence and alignment among Board members, staff, and other key stakeholders around the organization's priorities and direction.

6. Ensure Strong Financial and Operational Stewardship

The President will be accountable for ensuring that the League has the financial discipline, operating practices, and organizational infrastructure required to execute its strategy. This includes overseeing annual budgets and multi-year financial planning; strengthening financial reporting, forecasting, and risk management; ensuring effective allocation of resources; and investing appropriately in the systems, technology, and management practices that support organizational performance.

The President will work with staff and the Board to establish a culture of responsible stewardship, clear accountability, continuous improvement, and results.

The Ideal Candidate

The National Civic League seeks an established, mission-driven executive who brings the experience, leadership judgment, and personal qualities needed to guide a complex organization through a period of meaningful opportunity and change. Competitive candidates will bring many of the following qualifications and capabilities:

Proven executive and organizational leadership. Significant experience in senior executive roles, ideally including service as a President, CEO, Executive Director, or comparable leader with substantial responsibility for organizational strategy, people, operations, and financial performance. Candidates should demonstrate a record of leading organizations or major organizational functions through complexity and change.

Demonstrated fundraising success. A strong personal track record of securing philanthropic and institutional support, cultivating enduring funding relationships, and translating mission and strategy into compelling investment opportunities. Experience building diversified revenue strategies and organizational development capacity is particularly valuable.

Strategic judgment and entrepreneurial capacity. The ability to see possibilities, evaluate competing opportunities, make disciplined choices, and turn a compelling vision into an executable strategy. Experience strengthening, repositioning, integrating, or transforming an organization will be especially relevant.

Strong people leadership and change management. Substantial experience managing teams, developing talent, fostering collaboration, setting expectations, and addressing performance. The successful candidate will have demonstrated the ability to lead through change while building trust and maintaining organizational effectiveness.

Credibility in civic engagement and related fields. Meaningful experience, knowledge, or established relationships in civic engagement, democracy, local government, public policy, community development, or closely related areas. Candidates from philanthropy, national nonprofits, associations, public-sector leadership, and other mission-driven settings are encouraged to bring relevant experience. A particular professional background is less important than the ability to engage credibly with the League's mission, partners, and constituencies.

Exceptional relationship-building and communication skills. The ability to inspire confidence among diverse stakeholders, communicate complex ideas with clarity, cultivate high-value partnerships, and represent an organization effectively in public forums and with the media.

Financial and operational acumen. Demonstrated experience overseeing organizational budgets, aligning resources with strategy, interpreting financial information, and establishing the management systems and accountability necessary for strong execution.

Effective Board partnership and governance experience. A track record of working productively with governing boards, navigating complex stakeholder relationships, and fostering sound governance and transparent executive leadership.

Sound judgment and personal integrity. A leadership style grounded in humility, curiosity, emotional intelligence, decisiveness, adaptability, and respect for differing perspectives. The successful candidate will be an attentive listener, a thoughtful collaborator, and a leader willing to take responsibility for difficult decisions.

Above all, the next President will bring an authentic belief in the importance of inclusive civic participation and the ability of communities to shape their own futures. The League recognizes that exceptional leaders bring varied career paths and experiences. Candidates who meet the central leadership requirements and are energized by this opportunity are encouraged to express interest, even if their experience does not align with every qualification described.

Compensation, Benefits, and Location

The anticipated annual base salary for this position is $175,000 - $225,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications and subject to final approval. The National Civic League offers a benefits package that has historically included employer-paid health insurance for the employee, a 403(b) retirement plan with employer matching, paid time off, life and disability insurance, and certain employment-related expense reimbursements. Specific benefits will be confirmed during the search process.

The League is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and operates with a geographically distributed workforce. The President may be based elsewhere in the United States. The role will require national travel to engage staff, Board members, philanthropic supporters, civic partners, and communities. A strong external presence and willingness to travel regularly will be important to success, particularly as the President strengthens existing relationships and develops new ones.

Equal Opportunity and Inclusion

The National Civic League is committed to building an inclusive organization that reflects and respects the communities it serves. The League welcomes candidates with diverse backgrounds, identities, perspectives, and professional experiences and is committed to providing equal employment opportunity.

Search Process and Contact

The National Civic League has retained **Vitric Advisors**, in partnership with **DSG | Koya**, to lead the search for its next President. The engagement is co-led by Daniel Cohn, President & CEO of Vitric Advisors, and Liz Lombard, Managing Associate at DSG | Koya.

DSG | Koya is coordinating application management and correspondence on behalf of the search team. Interested candidates are encouraged to express interest in the role using this link or contact Liz Lombard via email: liz.lombard@dsgco.com. All inquiries and expressions of interest will be handled with discretion and appropriate confidentiality.

Accessibility and accommodations: Vitric Advisors and DSG | Koya are committed to an accessible and inclusive search process. Individuals who need assistance expressing interest online or require reasonable accommodation may contact liz.lombard@dsgco.com. Candidates selected for interviews will receive additional information about requesting accommodations during the interview process.