



NORTHWEST MARITIME CENTER

Port Townsend, Washington

JOB DESCRIPTION: Chief Operating Officer

The Northwest Maritime Center is seeking a Chief Operating Officer to lead day-to-day management, interdepartmental communication, and coordination and organizational development efforts during a phase of rapid program and business growth. Yes, growth during a pandemic. The COO will work side-by-side with the Executive Director, senior staff, and the board of directors to shape and manage the success of this established and growing organization.

WHY YOU WANT TO WORK HERE

“There are rare moments when organizations have the combination of a talented and motivated staff, a powerful board, a healthy and productive work culture, and are executing well on existing programs but still innovating and looking for the next step—we’re in that moment, and it’s exciting.” At least that’s what we were saying in January of 2020, and it looks like we will be there again sooner than we anticipated.

Like all organizations, the current pandemic has had significant impacts on our organization and our ability to serve our community. We shifted activities and made some hard choices but did so to preserve the resources that would enable us to rebuild when public health allowed us to return to normal service levels.

Our crystal ball isn’t any clearer than yours, but we have a reasonable expectation that given the investments into opportunities that we have made since March, in a little over a year will have grown beyond our pre-pandemic size by roughly 20%. Hiring a COO is a key part of that rebuilding, and we want you if you have the skills and are excited to be part of the team that uses this moment to not just survive, but scale.

The NWMC is dynamic, growing, making a difference in our community, and taking an increasing role in the region. We serve individual students and program participants, but we also work to help solve community problems like systemic improvements in our public schools, economic development, job training, and working regionally to pair the opportunities in the maritime industry with the need to address systemic oppression in communities of color. Plus, all of the fun stuff like kids’ programs, festivals, and adventure races. Our waterfront campus is vibrant, with a multitude of compelling activities, and all of them done to meet or advance industry best practices. In the words of one of our board members: “We don’t do B work.”

On top of it all, you’d get to work on the water and live in Port Townsend: natural beauty, heritage buildings, arts community, wooden boats, zero traffic jams, and plenty of nature to social distance in. The Northwest Maritime Center’s relative scale to our small town means that the effects of our success can be observed in the success of our community. You’ll be doing meaningful work for the place in which you live, and your efforts will make a tangible difference.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Execution, optimizing, and tuning up the organization as we improve ourselves through significant growth.

Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the COO would be responsible for optimizing the day-to-day management of established NWMC operations. In addition to overall organizational functionality, the COO will have direct oversight of Director level reports for ongoing and established operations, specifically:





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- Administration and work processes
- Port Townsend Campus Operations
- Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival
- Adventure races (Race to Alaska, etc.)
- Programs and education
- HR

The COO need not be a subject matter expert in any of these areas but will need the skills to help department managers continue their success and take it to the next level.

Beyond these more established areas, there are several growth initiatives that currently have primary oversight by the Executive Director. The COO will help inform that development, and, once these areas become mature and established, we anticipate their oversight would transition from the ED to the COO.

Outside of direct management of program managers, the COO will support staff through a more organization-wide role (ensuring performance reviews, trainings, etc.), establishing and updating policies at both board and staff levels, participating in creating the organization's strategic plans, and helping make judgement calls when guidance is needed beyond policies. The COO is the glue that binds the organization together. In the event of a sudden leadership transition, the COO would assume the duties of the ED for at least an interim period.

Strategy, Vision, and Leadership:

- Contribute to the development of NWMC's strategic goals and objectives as well as the overall management of the organization
- Be key player in developing regional expansion projects
- Maintain continuous lines of communication, keeping the Executive Director and senior staff informed and engaged in critical issues

Team Development/Leadership:

- Lead an organizational maturation as we grow. We need to operate at a different level given projected increased scale and scope, but need to retain the culture that made us successful
- Promote a culture of high performance and continuous improvement that values learning, innovation, and a commitment to quality
- Oversee, direct, and organize the work of campus, program, races, and Wooden Boat Festival teams
- Ensure staff members receive timely and appropriate training and development
- Establish and monitor staff performance and development goals, assign accountabilities, set objectives, establish priorities, conduct annual performance appraisals, and administer salary adjustments
- Mentor and develop staff using a supportive and collaborative approach: assign accountabilities; set objectives; establish priorities; and monitor and evaluate results

Operations:

- Create and execute a plan to scale rapidly in the wake of COVID, likely 3x–4x of current size in next 12–18 months as former operations return to pre-COVID levels as new initiatives are set to begin at the same time



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- Continue work to upgrade and implement an appropriate system of policies, standards, and procedures
- Work with the Finance Director, Executive Director, and senior staff to plan, coordinate to execute the annual planning and budgeting process
- Provide analytical support to board and management team including development of internal management reporting capabilities

GENERAL OPERATIONS

While this position's primary responsibility is outlined above, the COO will work as part of the NWMC team to ensure smooth operations for the organization as a whole. This could include providing information to visitors to the Maritime Center and helping out in projects and events that require all-hands-on-deck, to helping tie up a vessel coming into our dock because you happen to be standing there. We all pitch in for the heavy lifting now and then—sometimes this is metaphorical; occasionally we all have to actually help lift something heavy.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

We are a learning organization. As such, the ideal candidate will have sufficient experience in this or similar roles to help the organization learn and grow, provide meaningful feedback to both improve organizational functionality, all while balancing considerations between financial, community, and mission goals.

- 5-10 years' experience in a management role ideally within high-growth organizations
- Experience either as an employee or board member of a nonprofit organization
- Proven track record of success facilitating progressive organizational change and development within a growing organization
- Excellent judgment and creative problem-solving skills
- High comfort with ambiguity/evolving truths—we're filling in the blank parts of the map as we grow, and this role will need to be comfortable making well-reasoned judgement calls with less than perfect information
- Strong mentoring, coaching experience to a team with diverse levels of expertise
- Team player who can multitask
- Superior management skills; ability to influence and engage direct and indirect reports and peers
- Self-reliant, problem solver, results oriented
- Energetic, flexible, collaborative, and proactive; a team leader who can positively impact operations
- Solid written, oral, interpersonal, and presentation skills and the ability to effectively engage with senior management, board of directors, and staff
- Ability to operate as an effective tactical performer as well as strategic thinker
- Authentic passion for our mission

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience operationalizing through Mergers and Acquisitions
- Incredibly competent at all of the above that they would be able to do all of that in their sleep, have a true excitement about the mission and programs of the NWMC, and possess the ability to provide customer service and donor stewardship in a manner that is simultaneously professional and authentic;





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we do a good job but we aren't sterile. To us, customer service isn't the forced smile and "Have a nice day" as people exit the plane, but honoring people enough to be present and human with them.

The Northwest Maritime Center is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes and encourages individuals of all cultures and communities to apply.

Submit resume and cover letter to apply@nwmaritime.org. Include "COO" in the subject line.

Position is FULL-TIME, includes a competitive compensation package with health benefits and paid time off.

LOCATION: Offices are located at 431 Water St., Port Townsend, WA 98368

POSITION TITLE: Chief Operating Officer

REPORTS TO: Executive Director, Jake Beattie

Deadline for applications: open until filled

Organizational Background

The headwaters of the Northwest Maritime Center stem back to the wooden boat renaissance that took place in Port Townsend, Washington in the 1970s. Drawn in by the charm of the town and its location as a jumping off spot for open ocean or inland cruising, a group of traditional craft revivalists sailed into town and created a mecca for wooden boat enthusiasts. Nationally known maritime legends are among the shipwrights and riggers, sail makers and sailors that came to call Port Townsend home. The first Wooden Boat Festival was started as a party amongst this group of romantics.

Forty-four Festivals later (and counting) our focus has grown to encompass both the traditional and contemporary. Built in 2009, our 27,000 square-foot waterfront campus marries the romance of the sea with state-of-the-art technology.

Since humans first ventured onto the water, maritime experiences have been tied to exploration. Today, the NMWC uses maritime experiences to propel people of all ages into explorations of their own.

Our theory of change: Through powerful maritime experiences people gain competency and, as a result, become more confident in their own abilities. That confidence leads to greater engagement in the world around them, and that ability to engage coupled with their increased confidence leads to increased ability and willingness to explore, try new things, embrace the unknown, and be of service to their communities and the world.

Our world needs explorers and innovators; the answers to the problems of tomorrow won't be on a standardized test. There are many ways to instill the confidence needed for exploration; the sea is simply the best teacher we know.

For both its own related clusters of programs and as an incubator and support organization for partner organizations, the NWMC is a hub of marine-related activity designed to create positive change through powerful, value-forming experiences on and around the water. Its organizational backbone supports a number of distinct business units:



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- Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival—in its 45th year, it is the largest Wooden Boat Festival in North America. We also think it's the most fun.
- Wooden Boat Chandlery—Selling gifts, apparel, and outdoor gear across the country.
- Marine Thrift—Providing used gear and materials to boating's scrappy side since 2016.
- Maritime Programs—Youth and adult, vocational, avocational, in-school, summer programs, boat share programs, learning symposiums, navigation lessons, sailing lesson, etc.
- Facility Rentals—long term tenants, event rentals, Boatshop use, boat storage, and ship simulator
- Race to Alaska—Started in 2015, this is a new and nationally recognized engineless boat race up the Inside Passage to Alaska. (r2ak.com)
- SEVENTY48—Our newest event to get people on the water, this is a human-powered boat race between Tacoma and Port Townsend. Seventy miles, 48 hours to complete it.
- *48° North*—The Pacific Northwest's sailing magazine of record since the early 1980s (48North.com), the NWMC has owned and operated the magazine since 2018.
- Salish Sea Expeditions—Since its inception in 1994, Salish Sea Expeditions has engaged over 12,000 middle and high school students in hands-on, vessel-based marine science learning. Salish joined the NWMC family of programs in 2019. (Salish.org)

In addition to our own programs, there are several key external programs that we support:

- Port Townsend School District's Maritime Discovery Schools initiative—We worked with the Port Townsend Schools to create the nation's first place-based school district aligned around a central maritime theme.
- Bremerton School District/West Sound Tech's Port Townsend based skills center located on the NWMC campus: (Port Townsend Maritime Academy)
- Highline School District and the Port of Seattle's initiative to create a new, standalone, Maritime focused high school in the South Park Neighborhood of Seattle. (seattlemaritime.org)
- Youth clubs (Port Townsend Sailing Team, etc.)
- Maritime training schools offering training onsite for professional mariners
- Lesser support and/or facility use for numerous maritime non-profit organizations (Port Townsend Marine Trades, Sound Experience, Rat Island Rowing Club, US Power Squadron, etc.)



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