

Position Profile

***On behalf of our client, Great Plains Institute,
CohenTaylor Executive Search Services
is conducting a retained executive search for its***

Chief Operating Officer



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

Better Energy. Better World.

Great Plains Institute

Fast Facts

- 20-year old 501(c)3 nonpartisan, nonprofit
- National organization based in Minneapolis, with a staff of 30, including staff in NY, IL and ND
- Budget has grown 3X in past five years to \$5 million, suggesting GPI's growing reach & impact
- Funded by many of the nation's top philanthropies
- Rated in top 15% nationally by Charity Navigator, the largest NGO evaluator in the country
- 20-year track record of brokering durable low-carbon energy solutions among disparate interests
- Trusted by industry, government, academia and the NGO community
- GPI has become one of the premier energy institutions in the country, implementing the most promising energy policies, technologies and practices

To learn more, click [here](#) to watch an overview of the organization, or visit the [Great Plains Institute website](#)

MISSION

Transforming the energy system to benefit the economy and the environment.



The Great Plains Institute (GPI) is singularly focused on transforming the energy system because—like a growing number of companies, cities, states and nations—they believe that powering our economy with increasingly clean, low and zero carbon energy is essential.

The barriers to transforming the energy system are often political and institutional as much or more than economic or technical.... which is why GPI is so superbly positioned for greater impact.

GPI combines a unique consensus-building approach, expert knowledge, research and analysis, and local action to find and implement lasting energy solutions that bridge political, economic, geographic, and cultural lines.

GPI has built a reputation for bringing together three skills that are rarely found in one organization:

- Nationally-recognized energy policy and technology expertise
- A nuanced understanding of the commercial, local, and political realities that shape the energy sector
- Well-honed facilitation, group process, consensus-building and advocacy techniques

Together, this skill set produces results in nearly any economic and political environment and offers an important antidote to today's often fractured public discourse.

When GPI is successful, their work strengthens communities and provides greater economic opportunity through creation of higher paying jobs, expands the nation's industrial base, and leads to greater domestic energy independence while eliminating carbon emissions.

CORE VALUES

The following values reflect what guides the work of the Great Plains Institute:

- **Collaboration.** Create opportunities for different interests to work together to find shared solutions that result in more beneficial and durable outcomes. Meet people where they are regardless of political affiliation or background.
- **Objectivity.** Bring to the work a dedication to scientific and technical rigor and open inquiry that enables this work to incorporate and adapt to new information and perspectives.
- **Participation.** Involve in the work and organization the communities and interests affected by and engaged in the transformation of our energy system.
- **Pragmatism.** Focus on results and approach every challenge with a commitment to solve it. Avoid ideology and partisanship in seeking the best solutions to achieve the mission.
- **Shared Leadership.** Support and amplify leadership in its many forms—both inside and outside of GPI—in order to make the greatest impact.



PROGRAM AREAS



Carbon Management. GPI is leading regional and national efforts on carbon capture, storage, and utilization. They bring together government, industry, labor, and NGOs to achieve the economic, employment, and environmental benefits of deploying carbon management technologies critical to reaching mid-century decarbonization goals.



Transportation and Fuels. By creating fuels from renewable sources, electrifying the transportation system, and switching to other low- or carbon-negative fuels, these changes can reduce emissions by 50-90 percent while also cutting the cost per mile.



Communities. Cities and communities are critical to creating a better energy system because collectively they are big enough to matter and small enough to make changes quickly. GPI's programs are designed to assist communities in different ways with all the elements needed to drive change.



Efficiency. More than 50 percent of the energy produced in the United States is wasted somewhere along the line, from production and distribution to consumption. GPI's goal is to maximize economy-wide investment in energy efficiency.



Electricity. GPI is working to decarbonize the electricity sector by midcentury through transformative system change to energy markets and infrastructure, utility regulation, and by aligning financial incentives with this goal.

THE ROLE

Increasing demand for GPI's unique blend of energy expertise and consensus-oriented solutions has driven rapid growth in the past five years. At this new inflection point, GPI needs an experienced leader to build out the organization's internal capacity and functions to match their external ambitions for mission success. This need has driven the creation of the COO role.

GPI seeks an experienced and dynamic Chief Operating Officer (COO) to help chart the organization's evolution and next phases of growth and impact. The COO will act as a strategic partner to the CEO, and as the internal leader of the organization, allowing the CEO to focus externally.

The Chief Operating Officer will report to the President/CEO and be integral to the future development of GPI, focusing on organizational infrastructure, systems, operations and culture to support GPI's strategic plan. The COO will be responsible for developing the overall strategy and operational implementation of key internal functions. They will lead, manage and work to optimize these internal operations, including GPI's annual planning and budgeting cycle, finance, revenue generation from all sources, communications, HR, information technology and management, and program evaluation.

The COO's central goal will be to continue the build out of GPI's internal capacity and infrastructure to support its growing impact while guiding GPI's operational needs; bringing expert management and excellence to all its functions.

Reporting Relationships

The GPI COO will have 4 direct reports and a total span of control of 7. Direct reports will include:

- Finance Manager
- Accountant
- Development Manager
- Communications Director

Key Responsibilities:

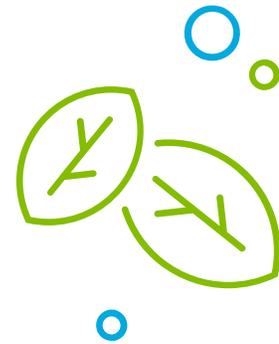
Leadership and Strategy

- Serve as a critical partner to the CEO, including advising on all programs.

- In partnership with the CEO, lead and enhance strategic planning and budgeting processes, oversee work plan development, and work with the rest of the Management Team to develop and implement a global revenue plan that enables GPI to carry out its strategy.
- Ensure that all functions at GPI align with GPI's mission, policies and strategic priorities.
- Serve alongside the CEO as one of the principal liaisons with the Board of Directors. Present to the Board and Executive Committees at their regular meetings, serve on the Fundraising and Communications Committee.
- Provide continuity in the event of turnover in senior staff, including the CEO.
- Continue to build a culture of accountability, breaking down silos, as necessary, across the organization.

Management and Staff Development

- Provide a strong day-to-day leadership presence for all staff and establish internal policies and practices that lead to accountability and excellence in all GPI does.
- Serve as a member of the Senior Management Team and work with the CEO to create priorities for those meetings.
- Organize regular all-staff meetings to ensure consistent communication.
- Help ensure that GPI's culture continues to attract a wide diversity of talent and that we have policies and cultural norms that make GPI welcoming to that diversity.
- Promote a culture of high performance and continuous improvement that values learning and a commitment to excellence. Mentor and develop staff using a supportive and collaborative approach.



Operations

- Establish and execute organizational priorities on a short-term and long-term basis.
- Lead and coordinate GPI's annual strategy review, planning and budgeting cycle.
- Troubleshoot and provide strategic direction to address departmental and organizational challenges.
- Oversee development and communications.
- Oversee the HR function including a focus on attracting and retaining diverse talent, onboarding, training, professional development, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and performance evaluation.
- Participate in HR decisions regarding senior staff; approve salaries and participate in key hires and terminations.
- Monitor staff workloads and resource needs across programs and functions to ensure that they have the resources they need, staff resources are efficiently utilized, project needs are met, and problems in staffing are addressed in a timely manner. Recommend to CEO staff reassignments or other changes as warranted.
- Take the lead (working with the CEO and Management Team) to develop and implement an organization-wide plan for project evaluation, including identification of project best practices, success stories, and lessons learned.
- Assess current finance and accounting processes and tools, identifying and implementing process improvements where needed.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

GPI's new Chief Operating Officer must embrace and reflect GPI's core values and have a passion for its mission. The COO should bring significant leadership experience and expertise and have a demonstrated ability to both lead and build the capabilities of a driven, bright and diverse team of professionals.

While no one candidate will have all the criteria enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- **Results-proven track record:** Proven experience as a COO or relevant role. Evidence of exceeding goals and the ability to consistently make good decisions through a combination of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment; high level of business acumen; the ability to balance the ambitions of GPI's work with the realities of a budget; and problem solving, project management and creative resourcefulness.
- **Strategic Vision and Agility:** The ability to think strategically, anticipate future needs, trends and consequences, and incorporate them into GPI's organizational planning.
- **Capacity-Building:** The ability to effectively build organizational and staff capacity and diversity, recruit top talent, and establish processes that ensure the organization runs smoothly.
- **Leadership and Organization:** Exceptional capacity for managing and leading people; a team-builder who has experience in scaling up organizations; ability to connect staff both on an individual level and in large groups; capacity to enforce accountability, develop and empower high-performing leaders, cultivate entrepreneurship, and learn the strengths and weaknesses of the team so as to put people in a position to succeed.
- **Action Orientation:** Enjoys working hard and looks for challenges; ability to act and react as necessary, even if limited information is available; not afraid to take charge of a situation; can overcome resistance to leadership and take unpopular stands when necessary.
- **General Management:** Thorough understanding and broad experience with the full range of nonprofit functions and systems, including strategic development and planning, budgeting, business analysis, finance, information systems, human resources, fundraising, and communications.
- **Communication Skills:** Excellent verbal, written, analytical and problem-solving skills; Ability to effectively present information to staff colleagues, funders (and potential funders), board members, and public groups; ability to effectively communicate with a wide variety of individuals both internally and externally; able to keep privileged information confidential; Must always represent GPI in a professional manner. Experience with board governance is a plus.
- **Relevant Educational Background and Experience:** Undergraduate degree required (advanced degree in relevant field preferred).
- **Previous Experience:** 5+ years in a similar leadership role. An understanding of the energy sector is useful but not necessary.

For more information or to send your credentials, please email info@cohentaylor.com

All inquiries will remain confidential.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Protected Veterans/Individuals with Disabilities

The contractor will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions cannot disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge, (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or (c) consistent with the contractor's legal duty to furnish information.