



Athens, Georgia

Executive Director Leadership Profile



The Opportunity

Downtown Ministries is seeking an accomplished and missional leader to serve in the role of Executive Director. As the senior executive leader for the organization, the Executive Director provides leadership to the various ministries of the organization and ensures the organization maintains fidelity to the vision and mission endorsed and adopted by the Board of Directors. Downtown Ministries has been a positive presence in the community for over 20 years, working toward the vision that the youth of Athens grow into the godly men and women who help our city and its people flourish.

Athens, Georgia is a unique community that has a world-class higher education institution and a vibrant and well-known music scene that exists side-by-side with deep poverty and dramatic income inequality. With the high levels of poverty come many opportunities for kingdom focused ministry to meet tangible needs of investment in people, and since its start in 2003, Downtown Ministries has developed a wide scope of ministry offerings that primarily invest in the next generation. As a youth focused organization, Downtown Ministries is partnering with our community to develop the next generation of godly leaders for our city. This is done through various ministries under the departments of Downtown Sports, Downtown Academy, and Downtown Life.

The Executive Director role at Downtown Ministries is a great opportunity for a cross-cultural, kingdom-minded leader who carries a deep conviction of God's care for those in need. The next leader for Downtown Ministries will need faith and confidence in God's call as he/she leads the organization into its next season of ministry effectiveness, which will require building strong partnerships, energizing and mobilizing the team for the challenging work among the poor, and trusting in God's provision for the work He intends to do in the city.

God has demonstrated his faithfulness to the city of Athens and Downtown Ministries for over 20 years, and we believe His commitment to this community will not fail in the years ahead. The next Executive Director will have the opportunity to serve on the front lines of ministry in this unique community, working to develop the current generation of youth in Athens into the next generation of leaders that will help this city and its people flourish.

An Overview: Downtown Ministries

History

Downtown Ministries has been working in Athens, Georgia since 2003, with a focus on gospel-centered youth development. The earliest days of the organization provided sports programs for under-served youth. With a strong response from the community, the organization quickly grew into a year-round, comprehensive sports program for elementary-aged students.

As the growth of the sports programs continued, the impact of generational poverty led the organization to start a school to give children in the community a Christ-centered private school option that would focus on both academic excellence and spiritual formation. Downtown Academy's first class was started in 2013, and today it is an accredited K-5 elementary school that is currently in its 11th year of operation.

In January 2020, Downtown Ministries assumed leadership responsibility of Our Daily Bread Community Kitchen (ODB), a local collaborative effort that has provided meals to those in need for the past 34 years. Through this program, we address basic needs by providing greater food security to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Today, Downtown Ministries is one of the larger non-profit organizations in Athens with an annual budget of \$1.3 million and a team of 20+ full-time and part-time staff working together to serve the community.



Vision, Mission, Core Values

Downtown Ministries has a clear vision for the future, an understanding of its mission in the community, and set of core values that inform all its work. The following summary is a product of over a year of work in 2022 to examine and articulate the organization's purpose and priorities for the future.

Vision

The children of Athens grow into the godly men and women who help our city and its people flourish.

Mission

We partner with our community to develop the next generation of godly leaders

Our Assignments in each area of Downtown Ministries

Downtown Ministries - *We seek the welfare of our city by investing in the youth of our city. (Jeremiah 29:7-11)*

Downtown Academy - *We partner with families to educate the next generation of leaders*

Downtown Sports - *We partner with our community to develop the next generation of leaders on and off the field*

Downtown Life - *We create volunteer opportunities that connect the local body of Christ to work that advances God's kingdom*

Our Values - the things that inform HOW we are pursuing our assignments from God

Partnership - Community - Development - Kingdom

Partnership - We believe that the greatest results and progress come from connection and cooperation across a wide range of partners. We unashamedly and actively seek the help of others to accomplish our mission.

Community - We build authentic relationships throughout the organization and throughout the local community. Internally, our fellowship is grounded in the mission God has given us. Externally, our fellowship is grounded in genuine love for one another.

Development – We want everyone to grow and improve, and this is especially important for the youth in our community. Therefore, we work to support each person's growth and development, helping them achieve their God-given potential with dignity.

Kingdom - We believe God is at work and is building His kingdom through our ministry. We serve God by serving others, and we look to him for direction and for the ultimate results and impact from our efforts.

Organizational Scope and Impact

Downtown Ministries has three primary avenues of ministry. Through these different avenues of ministry, we are engaging both children and their parents to reach them with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to equip them for life and service in His kingdom.

Downtown Sports – Downtown Academy – Downtown Life

Downtown Sports

Downtown Sports was our first work in the community, with youth football being the first program offered in 2003. Due to the faithfulness of our early staff and volunteers, families saw that their children were loved and encouraged, and multiple teams, ages, and sports followed. Today Downtown Sports serves 150+ children year-round through football, cheerleading, basketball, and golf programs. Through Downtown Sports, we are seeking to develop children into leaders on and off the field.

Downtown Academy

Downtown Academy was established in 2013 as an extension of Downtown Ministries, a nonprofit organization that has been working in the Athens area since 2003. In its tenth year as a school, Downtown Academy is looking to build on its first decade in operation in order to best position the school for long-term effectiveness as an educational institution.

The vision for Downtown Ministries and Downtown Academy is that the children of Athens grow into the men and women who help our city and its people flourish. From the start, Downtown Academy has had a heart to provide an excellent educational foundation for the underserved in the community. Believing that an excellent, Christ-centered education is an important tool for preparing students for future success, founders of the school wanted to create a place for a private, Christ-centered education that is financially accessible to everyone. Over its history, Downtown Academy has offered approximately \$3 million in scholarships to local students and families.



In pursuit of its vision, Downtown Academy partners with families to equip the next generation of leaders. Equipping students as leaders requires investment in both their academic and their spiritual growth. As such, Downtown Academy offers a curriculum focused on developing and mastering essential skills in an environment that develops them spiritually, as well. In addition to the full school-day, Downtown Academy offers an After School Program that fully aligns with the goals and priorities of the school. With regular Bible instruction and an emphasis on personal growth and development, Downtown Academy seeks to prepare students for future academic success and for success in life.

School Profile

Grades Served	K - 5
School budget 2023-24	\$987,000
Enrollment 2023-24	49 students
Student/Teacher Ratio – 2023-24	9.5:1

Learn more at downtownacademy.org

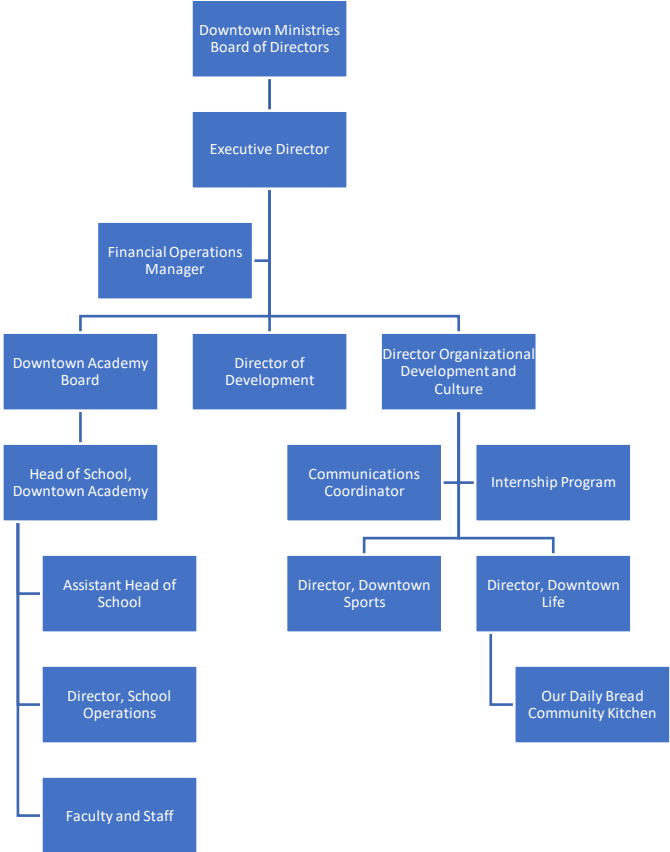
Downtown Life and Our Daily Bread Community Kitchen

A multitude of volunteers is required to fulfill our vision and mission. Downtown Life is the arm of our ministry that helps us create volunteer opportunities that connect the local body of Christ to work that advances God’s kingdom. Through a robust internship program and various volunteer engagement efforts, Downtown Life helps the ministry connect with its volunteers and other partnerships that energize and support the ministry.

Our Daily Bread (ODB) Community Kitchen is one of the most volunteer-intensive parts of the organization. Providing healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch meals Monday through Friday to anyone who needs a meal, ODB provides 40,000 - 50,000 meals each year to men, women and children in need in our community. ODB programs also offer a gateway to other transformational services for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Partnering with more than 70 volunteer groups, Our Daily Bread has served guests in Athens, Georgia since 1989. ODB is a critical program that helps us build bridges to secure a better future for our guests, while also serving as an important tool for enabling volunteers to make relational connections with people from different life circumstances.

The Role of the Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to the Downtown Ministries Board and leads a diverse and creative team that serves all areas of the ministry. The following chart provides an overview of the organization and its reporting/accountability structure.



With an annual budget of \$1.3 million, Downtown Ministries is one of the larger nonprofit organizations in our community and employs a team of 20+ full-time and part-time employees. The Executive Director is expected to provide leadership to the entire organization, building and leading a team that staffs the entire scope of the ministry. As the senior leader for the organization, the Executive Director will set the pace for the organization through the following key responsibilities:

- Plans and oversees the administrative operations of the organization, ensuring strong fiscal stewardship and strategic management of the organization’s financial resources.

- Identifies, develops, and cultivates partnerships across the community, to include other nonprofit organizations, the University of Georgia, local churches, public and private school organizations. In addition, the Executive Director builds and supports a culture that fosters shared leadership opportunities and effective partnerships with parents, families, volunteers, and other community stakeholders.
- Provides strategic advice and oversight to all direct reports, building a collaborative organizational culture that builds and sustains capacity to serve the community.
- Serves as President of the school board for Downtown Academy, ensuring oversight of the strategic direction for the school and ensuring the school meets and exceeds all accreditation standards and delivers on the promise of an excellent education for all students.
- Provides effective communication and reporting to the Downtown Ministries Board, keeping them informed of strategic and organizational issues, while supporting them in exercising their fiduciary responsibilities in their oversight of the organization.
- Assists the board in the recruiting, evaluation, and onboarding of new board members.
- Oversees the fundraising for the organization, working closely with the Director of Development to identify and secure the resources needed to fund the operations of the ministry.
- Recruits and retains a high-quality team of leaders and administrative/support staff who operate from a genuine heart of love for the work and are effective in developing leaders through all aspects of the ministry.
- Demonstrates a robust faith and persistent humility that constantly seeks God's leading and recognizes the realities of work with impoverished communities and the challenge of raising funds to support the operations of the organization.
- Fosters a highly collaborative and supportive organizational culture that combines effective ministry operations with spiritual development and encouragement.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Several strategic issues are currently facing Downtown Ministries. The Executive Director will be asked to work with the board to address the following critical issues for the ministry:



- **Grow enrollment at Downtown Academy** - Downtown Academy has the capacity for more students, and we would like to grow the enrollment for the school. The Executive Director will work with the Downtown Academy Board and the Head of School to build stronger connections in the community and continue to invest in a strong school culture that embodies our values and will lead to healthy growth.
- **Facilities** – Downtown Academy has been in its current location on the campus of Redeemer Presbyterian Church since its start in 2013. Current factors could require us to seek a new location in the future. While we don't know when the school will be required to leave its current location, we are preparing for the possibility that the 2024-25 school year could be the last year at the current location.
- **Fundraising** – Downtown Ministries is currently underperforming in raising enough funds for its current level of operations. COVID-funding through the PPP and Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) have filled important gaps, but a fundamental re-engagement of our donor base, along with the development of new donor partners, is critical going forward. A current effort to overhaul our digital communications and story-telling capacity will help, but continued growth in this area will require focused attention and strategic planning/execution to meet our needs in the future.

Personal Qualifications and Qualities

Due to the nature of this work, the successful candidate must have a clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with cross-cultural ministry in an urban setting. This must include a comprehensive understanding of issues related to race and poverty and an appreciation for trauma informed services and care for both youth and their families. In addition, the ideal candidate must possess a level of spiritual maturity and theological awareness that can apply the gospel in these settings and to these issues. On a personal level, the successful candidate will display the spiritual gifts and/or abilities of encouragement, leadership, and administration. Finally, the next Executive Director will personally hold and demonstrate a strong commitment to Downtown Ministries' core values of Community, Partnership, Development, and Kingdom.

In addition, candidates will have the following professional skills and personal characteristics:

Faith and Humility:

- A growing disciple of Jesus Christ whose life clearly manifests the fruit of a vital relationship with God and a love for the gospel.
- A clear understanding and personal application of the gospel, and a practical understanding of its implications for organizational leadership and the vision/mission for the organization.
- Demonstrated experience of trusting God for the strength, guidance, and provision needed for a faith-based ministry to those in need.
- Gospel-based humility that has confidence in God's promises and commitment to build His kingdom and is committed to service to God's glory, not personal gain or glory.
- A vibrant prayer life, a sincere love for all of God's people, generosity with his/her possessions and talents, and a teachable spirit.
- Willingness to humbly serve under the leadership and direction of the DTM Board.
- Ability to affirm the [DTM statement of faith](#).

Leadership and Vision:

- Capability to maintain a clear focus on the future vision for the ministry and to develop and implement strategy consistent with the ministry's needs and best practices.
- Leadership skills that communicate confidence and compassion and help the team work together toward the common goals for Athens youth and their families.
- Problem solver who is energized by the challenges and opportunities of gospel ministry among those in need, with a special emphasis on youth.
- A commitment to building a diverse leadership team and an environment that seeks and encourages a diverse range of voices and perspectives to be included in the operations and ongoing evaluation of the ministry.

- Ability to build and maintain an organizational culture that is positive, hopeful, collaborative, and centered on the vision, mission, and values of the organization.

Executive Leadership

- Ability to effectively lead others and to build a committed team that works together toward the benefit of the community and the goals of the organization.
- Thorough understanding of the imperative of financial management and a commitment to the long-term health of the organization through effective financial planning, accountability, and stewardship.
- An ability to provide effective leadership and support to both the Downtown Ministries Board and the Downtown Academy Board through timely and high quality short- and long-term planning, relevant and timely reporting, and regular communication.
- Effectiveness as a team player and team builder who focuses on the good of the corporate whole and can inspire others to work together to achieve excellence that ultimately honors Christ.

Partnership Development:

- Clear understanding of the benefits of partnership development, both with donors and with volunteers.
- Effectiveness at communicating the vision, mission, and values of the organization that leads to strategic partnerships that build both fundraising and volunteer capacity.
- Ability to identify and develop new partnerships that bring in individuals and partner organizations that join efforts with us to love and serve our community.



Athens, Georgia

Procedure for Candidacy

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Interested candidates should provide a resume and letter of application that addresses the responsibilities and requirements outlined in this profile. These materials should be emailed to the Chair of the Downtown Ministries board, Nolen Wood at EDSearch@downtownministries.org.

Material that cannot be emailed may be sent to:

Downtown Ministries Executive Director Search

Attention: Nolen Wood
250 North Milledge Avenue
Athens, GA 30601