



CEO Leadership Opportunity

The Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL) is seeking its next CEO to lead a respected, independent humane organization at a moment of stability, strength, and opportunity. The organization plays a critical role in animal welfare and community well-being across Cleveland and Cuyahoga County and is deeply trusted for the quality of its care, the integrity of its humane investigations, and its commitment to keeping pets and families together.

The next CEO will build on a strong foundation and guide the organization into its next chapter with clarity, steadiness, and purpose.



Are You an Ideal Candidate?

Strategic and Thoughtful Leader: You bring a strategic, systems-level perspective and the ability to set direction while engaging others in the work. You are comfortable navigating complexity and making sound decisions in a mission-driven environment.

Philanthropic and Financially Savvy: You understand the CEO's essential role in fundraising and donor relationships and bring sound financial judgment. You work collaboratively to ensure long-term sustainability in an organization largely supported by philanthropy.

OUR MISSION

To foster compassion and end animal suffering.

OUR VISION

- Animals are valued, treated with dignity and respect, and protected from cruelty and neglect.
- The human-animal bond is cherished and supported.
- Every pet is wanted and receives humane care.

Trusted Public Spokesperson: You communicate with clarity and credibility, serving as a visible ambassador with donors, partners, media, policy makers, and community leaders.

People-Centered Executive: You lead with emotional intelligence, transparency, and respect. You value collaboration, accountability, and the well-being of staff and volunteers, recognizing the tough and emotional work of animal welfare.

Mission-Driven and Grounded: You are motivated by purpose and impact. Your leadership reflects integrity, humility, and a deep respect for the human-animal bond.





About the Cleveland Animal Protective League Trusted. Community-Focused.

Founded in 1913, the Cleveland Animal Protective League is a private nonprofit humane society serving Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. Community-supported and mission-driven, the organization focuses on humane care, protection, and programs that help keep pets with the families who love them, and is widely trusted for the quality and integrity of its work.

The Cleveland APL operates a 39,000-square-foot animal care and resource center in the Tremont neighborhood, its home for more than a century. In recent years, the organization completed a \$13.5 million renovation and expansion, transforming the facility into a modern, mission-aligned space designed around Fear Free principles, improved animal welfare outcomes, staff efficiency, and a welcoming experience for the public.

With an annual operating budget of approximately \$12.5 million, the Cleveland APL operates at a scale that reflects both the breadth of its services and the complexity of its work. The organization provides far more than traditional sheltering through an integrated model that includes:

- Humane animal care and adoptions designed to set both pets and new families up for success
- A robust foster network and deeply engaged volunteer corps
- Shelter-based and community veterinary services, including a low-cost Community Pet Clinic
- Spay/neuter and Trap–Neuter–Return services
- Project CARE, a comprehensive safety-net program focused on keeping pets with their families
- Humane investigations with full police authority, including prosecution support and cross-reporting in cases
- Legislative advocacy at the local and state level

This breadth of work reflects a core belief that animal welfare, human services, and community health are inseparable and effective solutions require compassion, thoughtfulness, and partnership.

Cleveland APL Impact Highlights



21,400+ ANIMALS ASSISTED
EACH YEAR



137,700 VOLUNTEER HOURS
ANNUALLY



110 EMPLOYEES AND **1,355** ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS



2,100+ HUMANE INVESTIGATIONS
CONDUCTED EACH YEAR





The Vibe

APL is serious about its mission and warm in its culture.

People Care Deeply

People care about the animals, about one another, and about doing the work well. The environment is mission-driven, fast-moving, and emotionally demanding, yet collaborative, values-based, and grounded in mutual respect. There is a shared belief that people do their best work when expectations are clear and they feel trusted, supported, and respected. The executive team is long-tenured and highly effective, offering steady leadership, deep institutional knowledge, and a strong foundation of trust.

Excellent, Highly Effective Board

The board is engaged, thoughtful, and realistic. Members understand their governance role and partner productively with the CEO, offering strategic guidance while respecting operational boundaries. The relationship is marked by trust, humor, and high expectations. The board recognizes the emotional and operational demands of animal welfare leadership and is committed to being a steady, supportive partner.

A Culture That Values Voice and Collaboration

Employees are encouraged to bring their perspectives forward, ask questions, and share ideas across teams. Leadership works to balance inclusivity with decisiveness, favoring engagement over edict. Success is driven by collaboration and mutual accountability rather than hierarchy or silos, with continued emphasis on clarity, follow-through, and shared responsibility as the organization grows.

Commitment to Learning, Growth, and Inclusion

APL values diverse experiences, perspectives, and skills, and strives to foster an inclusive environment where people can learn and grow. Continuous improvement is part of the culture, along with a willingness to adapt and evolve in service of the mission. Leaders are expected to bring sound judgment, consistency, and accessibility to their work.



Adaptive and Forward-Looking

APL has a strong track record of responding quickly to community needs and emerging opportunities. The next chapter invites a leader who can complement this adaptability with clear planning rhythms and communication practices, helping a growing organization stay aligned while remaining responsive, compassionate, and grounded.





Your Role as CEO

As CEO, you will be responsible for the overall leadership and direction of APL, working closely with the Board of Directors and executive leadership team to advance the organization's mission, strengthen its impact, and ensure long-term sustainability.



You will inherit a highly capable leadership team, a committed board, and a strong organizational foundation, allowing you to focus on leadership, strategy, and impact from day one. This role is designed for a leader who values partnership, steadiness, and sustainability, and who seeks to make a meaningful, long-term contribution.

You will:

- Lead strategy, operations, and organizational culture
- Serve as the public face of APL with donors, partners, media, and policymakers
- Oversee humane law enforcement and legislative advocacy with credibility and care
- Strengthen fundraising and external relationships
- Support and develop a high-performing leadership team
- Guide the organization through a thoughtful leadership transition and beyond

This role requires sound judgment, emotional intelligence, and the ability to lead through complexity with clarity and confidence.



QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience; advanced degree preferred
- Minimum of five years of executive leadership in a comparable animal welfare organization or complex nonprofit, or eight or more years in a senior executive role demonstrating readiness for a CEO position
- Demonstrated success in fundraising, donor engagement, and revenue strategy
- Strong financial and operational acumen, including experience overseeing complex organizations, teams, and budgets
- Experience working effectively with a governing board
- Exceptional communication skills and executive presence
- Commitment to ethical leadership, integrity, and transparency
- Understanding of humane organization principles and best practices; certification through the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement (AAWA) as a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator (CAWA) certification preferred; shelter experience strongly desired but not required
- Experience with advocacy and oversight of law enforcement or regulatory functions is a plus, particularly in mission-driven or public-facing contexts





Life in Cleveland: A City with Character, Opportunity, and Quality of Life

Cleveland offers a strong quality of life for mission-driven leaders seeking meaningful work alongside a balanced, connected way of living.

Ease of Living

Affordable housing, diverse living options, and manageable commutes support an ease of life that allows leaders to stay engaged both professionally and personally.

Arts, Culture, and Neighborhoods

The city is home to nationally recognized arts and music institutions, professional sports, and distinct neighborhoods such as Tremont and Ohio City that offer character, creativity, and community.

Healthcare, Education, and Civic Institutions

Cleveland is a global hub for healthcare and research, anchored by the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals, with a strong academic presence including Case Western Reserve University.

Parks, Waterfront, and Outdoor Access

Residents enjoy Lake Erie's waterfront and the Cleveland Metroparks system, one of the nation's most extensive urban park networks, offering easy access to nature close to home.

Philanthropy and Community

Cleveland has a deeply rooted civic and philanthropic culture and a collaborative nonprofit community. Many who come for the work stay for the sense of connection and livability.



TO APPLY:

Cleveland Animal Protection League has engaged ADISA to manage this search. Candidates interested in this opportunity should send their detailed resume and cover letter combined into a single PDF to **search@adisagroup.com**. For any inquiries, kindly use the same email address.

