



Vice President of Operations Leadership Opportunity

The Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL) is seeking an experienced operational leader to serve as its next Vice President of Operations. This is a senior executive role within a respected, independent humane organization known for the quality of its animal care, the integrity of its humane investigations, and its commitment to helping pets and families stay together.

Reporting to the President & CEO and serving as a key member of the executive leadership team, the Vice President of Operations will provide leadership across many of the areas at the heart of APL's mission: shelter operations, veterinary services, humane law enforcement, community programs, facilities, and information technology.



The next Vice President of Operations will join a strong, experienced team and help APL continue to strengthen the systems, people, and practices behind exceptional animal care, effective humane law enforcement, and responsive services for pets and the people who care for them.





Are You an Ideal Candidate?

Experienced Animal Welfare Leader: You understand the complexity of sheltering and animal welfare operations. You bring strong shelter operations and field service experience, whether through animal control, humane law enforcement, cruelty response, or related work. You have the judgment to balance animal care, people, resources, regulatory requirements, and community needs.

Strategic Operator: You can see the whole organization while staying connected to what is happening on the ground. You translate strategy into clear priorities, systems, and practices that help teams perform well.

Developer of People and Teams: You build capable leaders, set clear expectations, support their growth, and create accountability. You know when to stay close to an issue and when to give talented people room to lead.

Data-Informed and Improvement-Minded: You use operational, financial, and program data to understand performance, identify trends, and improve results. You are curious about better ways of working and can lead change without losing sight of the people doing the work.

Steady and Collaborative Executive: You bring sound judgment, emotional intelligence, and credibility. You work well across functions, communicate clearly, and remain steady in a fast-paced environment.



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.

Mission-Driven and Compassionate: You care about animals and the people connected to them. Your leadership reflects integrity, empathy, professionalism, and 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. It 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 \$13.5 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 Annual Impact Highlights



**25,900+ ANIMALS ASSISTED
EACH YEAR**



**153,800 VOLUNTEER HOURS
ANNUALLY**



**110 EMPLOYEES AND 1,500 ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS**



**1,850 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 leadership team is experienced and highly capable, offering deep institutional knowledge and a strong foundation for the next Vice President of Operations.

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.

High Standards and Strong Commitment to the Work

APL holds high standards for animal welfare, client service, safety, compliance, and operational effectiveness. Leaders are expected to bring strong judgment and consistency while keeping compassion at the center of the work.

This is an environment where details matter, the work changes quickly, and leaders need to be comfortable making decisions, solving problems, and helping teams stay focused amid competing priorities.

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 develop others, communicate clearly, and create the conditions for people to do their best work.

Adaptive and Forward-Looking

APL has a strong track record of responding quickly to community needs and emerging opportunities. The next Vice President of Operations will help pair that responsiveness with strong systems, thoughtful planning, measurable goals, and consistent operational practices across the APL's operational areas.





Your Role as Vice President of Operations

As Vice President of Operations, you will provide executive leadership across the operational areas that deliver APL's mission every day.

Reporting to the President & CEO, you will oversee the Director of Shelter Operations, Director of Community Initiatives, Medical Director, Chief Humane Investigator, and Senior Manager of Facilities & IT.

This broad and highly integrated portfolio requires a leader who understands the interdependence of animal care, veterinary medicine, community programs, humane law enforcement, facilities and IT, people, finances, and operational risk. Working closely with the President & CEO and executive leadership team, you will translate organizational priorities into operational plans, strengthen systems and accountability, develop strong leaders, and ensure exceptional care and service. You will:

- Provide executive leadership and oversight across APL's operational functions, including shelter operations, veterinary services, community initiatives, humane law enforcement, and facilities and IT
- Ensure high standards of animal welfare, shelter medicine, disease prevention, enrichment, safety, humane euthanasia, and client service
- Lead operational planning and execution in support of APL's strategic priorities
- Work with department leaders to establish clear goals, KPIs, timelines, and accountability for results
- Use operational, financial, and program data to evaluate performance, identify opportunities, and guide decisions
- Strengthen systems, standard operating procedures, documentation, and consistency across operational areas
- Lead continuous improvement and bring emerging practices and innovations in animal welfare into APL's work where appropriate
- Develop, coach, and support an experienced team of directors and senior leaders
- Partner with Finance on operating and capital budgets, resource allocation, and financial performance
- Oversee regulatory compliance, facilities and IT, workplace safety, security, and operational risk
- Lead preparedness and response to emergencies and operational disruptions
- Represent APL with community partners, government agencies, veterinarians, donors, media, and professional organizations
- Support legislative advocacy and fundraising efforts related to APL programs and services
- Serve as Acting President & CEO when needed

The role calls for someone who can move comfortably between strategic and operational thinking, working at the executive level while staying close enough to the work to help leaders solve problems, evaluate performance, and respond to complex operational and animal welfare issues.

The salary range for this position is \$134,000–\$150,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications.





QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Bachelor's degree strongly desired
- ☐ Minimum of five years of executive leadership experience at a comparable animal shelter or animal welfare organization, or eight or more years of progressively responsible leadership experience with demonstrated success in operations management, organizational leadership, strategic planning, personnel management, financial oversight, and program development, along with the professional and leadership qualities required to step into an executive-level leadership position
- ☐ Nonprofit leadership experience strongly preferred
- ☐ Demonstrated leadership, organizational management, and strategic planning skills
- ☐ Ability to think strategically while effectively managing day-to-day operational priorities
- ☐ Strong financial management, budgeting, and resource allocation skills
- ☐ Excellent analytical, critical thinking, and data-driven decision-making abilities
- ☐ Exceptional leadership, coaching, mentoring, and team development skills
- ☐ Proven ability to lead organizational change and continuous improvement initiatives
- ☐ Outstanding project management, organizational, and time management skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines
- ☐ Excellent written, verbal, interpersonal, presentation, and public speaking skills
- ☐ Ability to build collaborative relationships with employees, volunteers, donors, community partners, government officials, and the public
- ☐ High level of professionalism, integrity, sound judgment, discretion, and emotional intelligence
- ☐ Demonstrated commitment to exceptional animal welfare, outstanding customer service, ethical leadership, and advancing APL's mission
- ☐ Certification through the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement (AAWA) as a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator (CAWA) is desirable
- ☐ Ability to meet operational and organizational scheduling needs, including occasional evenings, weekends, or emergency response when necessary
- ☐ Valid Ohio driver's license with an insurable driving record
- ☐ Fear Free Certification required within six months of hire if not already certified





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.

