

**EXECUTIVE SEARCH**



**Chief Executive Officer**

SEARCH CONDUCTED BY

**STERLING | MARTIN**  
a s s o c i a t e s

## THE OPPORTUNITY

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Irrigation Association (IA) -- the leading membership organization for irrigation equipment and system manufacturers, dealers, distributors, designers, consultants, contractors, and end users -- is seeking a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the organization.

IA is the premiere provider of education and certification programs for companies and individuals, supporting and advocating for the cutting-edge ideas and technology that offer solutions for water management and move agriculture toward sustainable growth. In this era of climate change, IA is tackling the big environmental management issues that are key to human survival. Sustainability, water use efficiency and technological advances will continue to play an increasingly pivotal role in a world that needs to produce more food with fewer resources.

This position will provide the right candidate with the opportunity to think strategically and drive innovation at an organization that was rated a best place to work by the National Association of Manufacturing two years in a row.

The new CEO will work strategically with the organization's governing Board of Directors to ensure the success of the organization's programs, which include individual and organization accreditations, the annual Irrigation Show, and several specialized and virtual conferences. The CEO will hold responsibility for managing and strategically employing resources, volunteers, and staff.

This position is based in the Fairfax, VA area. There will be some flexibility to work virtually, at least part of the time. The CEO will, along with the Board, represent IA at events, trainings, and Board meetings. Travel is required.

## IA: AN OVERVIEW

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IA aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of water resources by advocating for water-use efficiency, supporting improved irrigation technologies, products, and services, and promoting best practices in water-resource planning. This 501(c)(6) organization has an operating budget of \$4.3 million, a staff of 20 and a 15-member Board of Directors.

IA provides value to its members through advocacy, webinars, conferences, and continuing education offerings that cover and promote today's important trends, topics, and industry best practices. IA produces two magazines, *Irrigation Today*, and *Irrigation & Green Industry*, which cover trends, technologies, and issues in irrigation. IA's annual Irrigation Show highlights the latest technology and products, provides industry networking opportunities, and presents relevant irrigation issues and solutions.

# THE CEO ROLE

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The CEO serves as the chief staff executive of the organization and is responsible to the Board of Directors to effectively conduct the organization's affairs. The CEO, working with the board, sets the association's mission, goals, objectives, and related policies. Within this framework and with the resources allocated, the CEO manages the staff, systems, resources, and infrastructure to carry out those activities required to fulfill IA's mission.

Within the limits of the bylaws of the association and policies established by the Board of Directors, the CEO is an *ex-officio* member of the Board. The CEO leads strategic initiatives and builds relationships that will assure the association's long-term growth and sustainability.

## Strategic Priorities for the CEO

The CEO is tasked with addressing the following priorities:

### Advocacy

- Enhance the public visibility of the organization and communicate the benefits of sustainable water solutions.
- Position water management solutions on legislative agendas, regionally and nationally.
- Position IA as a leader in the water management community.
- Advocate for issues that impact water-dependent industries such as agriculture and landscaping.

### Contribute to Member and Organizational Success

- Explore, develop, and maximize partnerships that support collaboration and innovative approaches to IA's development.
- Drive innovation in irrigation technology.
- Identify and secure new and continued funding sources and revenue streams.
- Drive membership growth for the organization.
- Provide value and engagement opportunities for members.

### Maintain and Strengthen Trust

- Establish and maintain strong professional relationships within the water management community.
- Integrate a personal understanding of, respect for, and commitment to the history and values of water management.

## Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for the oversight of the following areas:

## Strategic and Financial Leadership

- Ensure the organization maintains sound organizational plans and that major additions or alterations to operating departments are properly controlled.
- Work with the executive committee to develop the next strategic plan.
- Develop, oversee, and monitor the annual budget.
- Invest the organization's reserves with the advice and consent of the Board and in accordance with established policy.
- Oversee all financial management responsibilities.
- Work with the Finance Committee to ensure a consolidated annual operating budget is recommended to the Board and to assure that all assets are soundly administered, based on an intensive and comprehensive understanding of all aspects of fiscal management for a professional organization of this size and scope.

## Administrative Management

- Plan, lead and oversee day-to-day activities and programs of the organization in accordance with the Board's directives.
- Ensure the organization is in full compliance with all local, state, and federal rules governing program activities.
- Manage risk, including assuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and governing documents.
- Authorize and execute contracts and commitments in accordance with bylaws and policies established by the Board.
- Ensures all funds, physical assets, and other property are properly safeguarded and administered.
- Ensure IA has established objectives and standards of performance for all major key result areas, including marketing, human resources, operating efficiency, innovation, physical and financial resources, public responsibility, ethical behavior, profitability, pricing strategies, and quality of member services.
- Approve performance standards for operations and ensure corrective action is taken when deviation from standards occurs.

## Staff and Volunteer Leadership

- Ensure Board is kept informed of the conditions of the organization's programs and activities, and important factors that influence them.
- Serve as staff to the Officers and members of the Board, anticipating and meeting their needs for materials, information, and the support they might need to fully manage their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure the Board is appropriately represented to members, staff, and other constituency groups.
- Execute the decisions of the Board and its committees in a timely manner, and in accordance with bylaws.
- With the Board, recommend goals that support the organization's mission, and ensure staff and consultants establish objectives that support the organization's goals.
- Provide for the optimum use of personnel and ensure the organization is staffed with competent personnel who are delegated appropriate authority and compensated commensurately.

- Ensure managers are continuously developed professionally so that qualified successors are available for major positions.
- Execute full and exclusive authority to hire, compensate, and terminate staff and consultants within the framework of the approved budget and in accordance with established personnel policies.
- As necessary and helpful, and in consultation with the Board of Directors, appoint consultants.
- Ensure appropriate compensation structures are developed and maintained.

### **Member Services**

- Oversee live and virtual programming, professional resources, administrative support, internal communications, publications, and other direct member services.
- Develop relationships with peer organizations to keep abreast of emerging issues of significance.

### **Communications and Marketing**

- Oversee efforts related to public programming.
- Oversee all communication and outreach efforts including publications, educational materials, website content, and social media.
- Serve as a spokesperson in public and represent the public face of the organization, along with the Board, at events and meetings.
- Maintain and develop positive, effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

## **CANDIDATE PROFILE**

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### **Required Skills, Experience, and Qualifications**

- At least 10 years of executive-level organizational management experience preferred.
- Senior management experience with direct reports, with ability to train, motivate and coach senior staff.
- A background in trade associations is preferred.
- A Bachelor's degree is required. Advanced degree a plus.
- Certified Association Executive (CAE) a plus.
- Demonstrated success growing an organization by developing and implementing a broad array of events, educational offerings, publications, and service.
- Demonstrated success increasing membership and ensuring value for a varied membership base.
- Demonstrated ability to diversify revenue generation or streams.
- Track record of innovation and success as a change manager.
- Skilled at developing and comprehending financial statements.
- General knowledge of databases and Microsoft Office.

### **Personal Qualities**

- A leader with exceptional people and relationship-development skills.
- Collaborative communication style that builds consensus.

- A visionary, creative leader who is passionate about the future of water management and sustainability.
- Technologically savvy.
- A self-starter who is able to function independently.
- Able to flexibly handle, and lead, change.
- Talented at leading, coaching and developing staff.
- Skilled in effective delegation and able to maximize departmental resources.

## COMPENSATION

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A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

## TO APPLY

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To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to <https://jobs.crelate.com/portal/sterlingmartin/job/r3xkwmmzmqniapq7chrtgm3qc>. The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

*Sterling Martin Associates is committed to providing equal opportunity for employees and applicants in all aspects of the employment relationship, without regard to race, religion, color, age, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, political affiliation, status as a protected veteran, status as an individual with a disability, or other applicable legally protected characteristics. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit and business need.*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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