

# CASCADE WATER ALLIANCE: LEAD OUR REGION AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## About Cascade Water Alliance

Cascade Water Alliance (Cascade) is a municipal corporation comprised of seven member agencies working together to ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply for 400,000 residents in King County. Established in 1999, Cascade's members include five cities (Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Tukwila) and two water and sewer districts (Sammamish Plateau Water and Skyway Water & Sewer District). Cascade's mission is to provide safe, clean, and reliable water to our members in a cost-effective and environmentally responsible way through regional leadership and strong relationships.

Cascade is unique among Washington water suppliers in that it serves exclusively as a wholesale supplier. All the water that Cascade delivers to its members is currently purchased from Seattle Public Utilities. In 2009, Cascade purchased Puget Sound Energy's former White River – Lake Tapps Reservoir system as a future source of drinking water. Much of Cascade's work centers on maintaining the system's facilities and infrastructure for future municipal use.

On March 20, 2025, Cascade and Tacoma Public Utilities (Tacoma) signed two historic agreements. These agreements allow Tacoma to provide Cascade with water supply starting in 2041, marking a first step toward transforming the region's approach to drinking water. The partnership between Cascade and Tacoma will enhance regional water supply reliability and resiliency.

To connect Cascade to Tacoma's water system, Cascade has begun planning for the Cascade Supply Program. At approximately \$1.0 billion, the program will be the largest undertaken by Cascade and involves miles of transmission and distribution mains, storage tanks, a chlorination station, and other facilities.

Cascade's small team of water utility professionals, its Board of Directors, and its member agencies pride themselves on their collaborative and innovative approaches to tackling local and regional issues related to drinking water. Cascade's partnership with other utilities, government agencies, tribal governments, and community groups is key to achieving its goal of exemplifying itself as a model for regional cooperation and effective public resource management.

## Join Our Team!

We're a team of professional, seasoned experts who are passionate about high quality, reliable drinking water. We value:

- A productive and collaborative work environment
- Trust and integrity in our actions
- Objective and open communication styles
- Respect for our work-life balance
- A dynamic and fun work environment

## The Opportunity:

As our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), you'll provide overall leadership and strategic direction to Cascade. This is a chance to guide our organization through a period of significant growth and change and make an impact on our region's water future. We're looking for an exceptional leader as well as an experienced executive manager.

## Key Responsibilities:

- **Lead Utility Operations:** Ensure high quality, reliable, cost-effective water service to Cascade's member agencies.
- **Oversee Key Projects:** Oversee the implementation of the wholesale supply contracts with Tacoma, the Cascade Supply Program, and other major projects.
- **Drive Innovation:** Continuously improve our operations and programs.
- **Build Relationships:** Continue to cultivate strong relationships with member agencies, Cascade's supply partners (Seattle and Tacoma), government, tribal, and community stakeholders.
- **Shape Policy:** Foster an environment of trust with the Board of Directors; develop and present policy recommendations to advance Cascade's mission.

- **Oversee Finances:** Oversee Cascade's financial performance and ensure long-term stability.
- **Champion Environmental Stewardship:** Promote sustainable practices in all we do.
- **Lead Our Team:** Foster a positive, engaging, collaborative, empowered, and inclusive work environment.
- **Lead Change:** Advance the organization as long-term staff retire, a new supply contract is implemented, and the Cascade Supply Program is launched.
- **Risk and Regulatory Compliance:** Cultivate strong relationships with regulators, including the Department of Health and Department of Ecology; promote safety, minimize liability, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field (water resources, public administration, engineering, business, etc.); a Master's degree or advanced certification in a related discipline (e.g., MBA, MPA, water management) is highly desirable.
- Minimum of 10 years of professional experience in management roles, particularly within water utilities or public sector organizations.
- At least 5 years in an executive leadership position, including direct oversight of budgets, strategic planning, and operational management.
- Demonstrated experience working directly with elected officials.
- Proven history of facilitating partnerships with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at local, regional, and/or state levels.

#### **The Ideal Candidate:**

- **Leadership and Management:**
  - Strong strategic thinking skills with the ability to anticipate future challenges and opportunities coupled with effective tactical and analytical skills.
  - Effective decision-making skills.
  - Extensive supervisory experience and a track record of mentoring and developing leadership capabilities within diverse teams and empowering staff.
  - Demonstrated success in leading large-scale initiatives, including capital projects, focused on sustainable resource management, innovation, and community engagement.
  - Strong political acumen.
  - Success in leading complex negotiations.
  - Extensive experience in change management.
- **Extensive Water Utility Experience:**
  - Experience with regional drinking water systems and partnerships.
  - Understanding of water systems in the Puget Sound region and state and federal drinking water issues.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:**
  - Strong public speaking and presentation skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a wide range of audiences, including Board members, community groups, and tribal and government officials.
  - Proven ability to navigate and negotiate conflicts effectively while maintaining positive relationships.
  - Ability to build consensus through proactive communication on difficult topics.
- **Financial and Strategic Analysis:**
  - Strong understanding of financial management, including budgeting, rates setting, financial forecasting, and financial reporting.
  - Experience in developing and executing strategic plans that align with organizational mission and community needs.
  - Dedication to financial transparency and accountability.
- **Personal Attributes:**
  - A conviction to uphold high ethical standards, a transparent approach to leadership, and accountability in all aspects of work.
  - Ability to foster a positive work culture through open communication, collaboration, teamwork, inclusion, and effectively managing high-stake situations.

#### **Compensation and Benefits:**

The salary range for this position is \$260,000 - \$380,000 annually, subject to Cascade's Board of Directors' approval. Cascade offers an industry leading package of benefits to employees and their dependents including paid time-off (vacation, sick leave, holidays), insurance (medical, dental, vision, life, disability), retirement plans (401a, 457), and tax advantaged saving options (FSA, HRA Veba, PPO, DCAP). Cascade contributes 7% and employees contribute 4% to their 401a retirement plan. Additionally, as a replacement of the contribution to Social Security, employees contribute 6.2% of their annual salary and Cascade contributes 6.2% up to the Social Security limit established by the Internal Revenue Services to employees' 401a plans.

**To Apply:** Please submit your cover letter and resume to [ceosearch@cascadewater.org](mailto:ceosearch@cascadewater.org) by **Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> by 6:00pm PT**. Your cover letter should not exceed two pages. Additionally, please provide answers to the following prompts (250-500 words, each) with your application materials.

- **Share your experience working directly with elected officials, boards of directors, tribal governments, or other public officials.**
- **Please share your experience with utility infrastructure planning, development, and implementation.**

The review of applications will begin **on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**. No solicitations, please (recruitment agencies, consultants, etc.).