



Seeks President and CEO

About Defend Our Health

[Defend Our Health \(DEFEND\)](#) is a public health and social justice nonprofit that works to create a world where all people are thriving, with equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate-friendly. DEFEND applies the best science and grassroots power in strategic campaigns that persuade decision-makers in government and industry to advance solutions.

DEFEND believes that deeper organizing and longer-term campaigns are needed to achieve system change, with a strategic focus on protecting the most vulnerable in our society who often bear the heaviest burden. DEFEND uniquely combines several approaches that have been proven to work:

- **Run strategic issue campaigns.** DEFEND identifies points of leverage, vulnerable markets, and targets of opportunity. DEFEND plans winning campaigns that persuade policymakers in government and industry to make the right decisions. An inside-outside strategy balances direct advocacy with public campaigning. DEFEND plays leaders off of laggards, challenging those in power in a race to the top to adopt best practices. Short-term gains are designed to build toward major long-term wins.
- **Develop grassroots leadership.** DEFEND educates so as to organize, using the best available science to raise awareness about who's most impacted and what practical solutions are available. DEFEND trains and develops grassroots leaders to speak for themselves as voices for change and cultivates champions inside government and industry to lead from within. DEFEND also builds multiracial coalitions and strategic partnerships, all with the aim of building power to change the system.
- **Work at both the state level and nationally.** States remain the laboratories of democracy in the United States. DEFEND co-founded a national coalition that has advanced new laws in some forty states and has advocated many first-in-the-nation policies in its home state of Maine. But all Americans deserve equal protection. That's why DEFEND has led national campaigns to force Congress to act and to persuade major corporate brands to slash their use of toxic chemicals and petrochemical plastics.

DEFEND deploys thirteen staff members who operate in a hybrid in-person/virtual manner with a physical office located in Portland, Maine, and with staff currently working from eight states. DEFEND's annual operating budget is more than \$2 million and is primarily funded through foundation grants, individual contributions, with some other income. DEFEND, a 501(c)(3) organization, is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of professionals and community leaders that focuses on all program, finances and strategic planning. DEFEND also partners with Defend Our Health Action, a 501(c)(4) organization with a grassroots board that supports Maine-based policy advocacy and relies on the same staff as DEFEND.

About the Transition

DEFEND's current President and CEO, Mike Belliveau, has advanced public health, environmental justice, and clean production for forty years. He has led chemical policy reform campaigns that set national precedents. Mike founded DEFEND in 2002 (formerly as the Environmental Health Strategy Center) and has served as its only President and CEO. As Mike moves to the next stage in his career, the Board of Directors is recruiting its first external President and CEO to succeed Mike, who will remain on staff as Founder and Senior Strategist. In his new role, Mike will develop and direct national programs on plastics and climate, retain significant

fundraising responsibility, and advise and assist the President and CEO as requested. Mike will report to the President and CEO, as will all other senior staff at the organization. The President and CEO will report directly to the Board of Directors.

Opportunity Going Forward

The President and CEO will have the opportunity to lead a transformative, science-based, creative, and collaborative environmental health and justice nonprofit which has had significant [victories](#) in Maine and nationally, with a growing leadership reputation. High priorities for the President and CEO include:

- Navigating the transition from a founding leader, ensuring that existing and strong relationships with partners, coalitions, legislators, collaborations, funders and donors are maintained and grown.
- Working collaboratively with the Founder and Senior Strategist and the Board of Directors to transition leadership effectively and efficiently.
- Building camaraderie with and leading, empowering, and delegating responsibility to a team of highly skilled, experienced, mission-driven staff professionals to grow DEFEND's capacity, while also improving its human resources practices.
- Leading DEFEND's boards and staff through strategic planning and program planning to align capacity to strategy, ultimately to ensure that DEFEND continues to achieve outsized victories in an increasingly competitive, yet underfunded, sector.
- Evaluating and evolving DEFEND's structure, reporting relationships, policies, and procedures to accomplish its goals.
- Advocating steadfastly on behalf of DEFEND to achieve its policy agenda in Maine and nationally through persuasion of both public and corporate officials.
- Maintaining and building relationships with partners, coalition partners, corporate entities, political decision makers and donors, so DEFEND continues to work within a strong network of support.
- Directing DEFEND's fundraising program with the goal of meeting budget goals, building cash reserves, and diversifying funding sources to achieve long-term financial sustainability.
- Leading strategic communications, branding and marketing that boosts program and fundraising success while expanding DEFEND's public profile in Maine and nationally.
- Expanding board member engagement and contributions to supplement institutional capacity.

Profile of the Ideal Candidate

Credentials:

- A minimum of five years of senior leadership or equivalent experience.

Skills and Qualities:

Strategic, Visionary, and Impassioned Executive Leader

- Knowledge of and a deep passion for and commitment to eliminating public health disparities and promoting environmental and social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
- Able to define a cohesive strategy and develop and execute annual plans to implement that strategy for a nonprofit with state and national ambitions.
- Skilled at defining and implementing organizational structure, policies, procedures, and processes to maximize capacity and deliver on a mission.
- Well-honed critical thinking skills and the ability to multi-task.
- Skilled at board governance with the ability to maximize board members' contributions.

Politically Savvy Advocate and Coalition Builder with Strong Communication Skills

- Dogged and confident networker able to build strong and lasting relationships with political leaders, agency heads, coalition partners, corporate entities, funders, donors, etc.

- Effective advocate and issue campaigner with the ability to craft and move DEFEND’s policy agenda to achieve legislative, regulatory and corporate policy change.
- An inclusive and patient collaborator who is an active listener able to lead and/or contribute to aligned coalitions, networks, alliances and strategic partnerships.
- Strategic communicator able to frame issues, amplify messages, and persuade listeners and readers on the way things should be and how we must get there.
- Able to understand, distill, and articulate technical and scientific information related to environmental health to diverse audiences who have varying levels of expertise and knowledge.

Fundraiser and Fiscal Manager

- A fundraiser who can develop and execute a comprehensive revenue plan that relies on diverse income streams such as foundation and government grants, private donations, and corporate gifts.
- Able to effectively utilize professional fundraising staff, board members, and partners to maximize DEFEND’s revenue potential.
- Adept at donor stewardship and cultivation, and grants development and reporting.
- Prior experience leading and funding an organization of similar or larger size and scale.
- Skilled at financial management including developing and managing budgets, and analyzing and reporting on financial health.

Empowering Leader of People and Culture

- Experience hiring, onboarding, overseeing, motivating, and developing professional staff.
- Able to create a work culture that is personable, inclusive, equitable, and collaborative across all teams.
- Committed to delegating responsibility and empowering employees to maximize the collective potential of DEFEND’s staff and expand the organization’s capacity.
- Skilled listener who graciously and willingly considers opinions and makes informed decisions in a transparent manner.

Compensation and Benefits:

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a starting salary range of \$125,000 to \$150,000 commensurate with experience and qualifications. DEFEND also offers a strong benefits package which includes medical, dental and vision insurance (100% paid by DEFEND for an individual plan), group life and disability, a 3% to 5% retirement match, family leave, and significant paid time off. DEFEND is currently operating in a hybrid in-person/virtual manner that allows for a flexible work schedule and remote work.

Application Process and Additional Information

DEFEND is an equal opportunity employer and views diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence as vital guiding principles in its work. DEFEND welcomes and encourages applications from people of color, Indigenous persons, members of the LGBTQ+ community, persons with disabilities and others who may contribute to the diversity of the organization and reflect the diversity of the communities served.

Candidate must include a resume and a cover letter that describes how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of DEFEND. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>. This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant, John Tarvin. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to John at: jtarkin@eostransitions.com.