Position Summary

Freedom Education Project Puget Sound (FEPPS) is a nonprofit that provides a rigorous, accredited college program for incarcerated women, transgender, and gender nonconforming people in Washington, and supports pathways to higher education after students return to community from prison. FEPPS provides an Associate of Arts degree accredited by Tacoma Community College and a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree accredited by University of Puget Sound inside the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) in Gig Harbor, WA. A national pioneer in the field of higher education in prison (HEP), the organization emerged between 2008 and 2011 from the energy, collaboration, and leadership of student-advocates inside and faculty/activists outside.

We seek a leader who brings the knowledge, perspective and wisdom of lived experience with navigating carceral systems. Our next Executive Director should be able to: inspire the broad community to participate in and support our mission of justice and transformation; listen, advocate, and innovate amongst a wide range of stakeholders to guide our vision and strategy; deeply and authentically collaborate with our students; lead with compassion and transparency; and effectively manage a nonprofit organization with shifting funding streams and structures. Our next leader will build on a strong foundation as they work with students, administrators, instructors, and funding partners to chart our path in a changing post-pandemic landscape.

FEPPS has expanded its mission over the past decade to support students as they leave prison, continue their education, and build lives outside. As it enters its second decade, FEPPS is an established nonprofit that is recognized and widely-respected in the national HEP community. With graduates and students returning to communities throughout the state and beyond, FEPPS remains deeply committed to centering the collaboration and leadership of our students and community who have been impacted by the carceral system.

We don’t believe in a “perfect” candidate. If you believe you have the experience and skills to be successful in this role, and would be excited to work each day leading FEPPS, please apply!
Organizational Overview

FEPPS provides a rigorous college program for incarcerated women, transgender, and gender nonconforming people inside the Washington Corrections Center for Women, and creates pathways to higher education after students return to community from prison.

It is well-known that the US has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world. Our policing and criminal legal systems are racist, sexist, classist, and punitive; women of color and LGBTQ people are disproportionately affected by all aspects of the criminal legal system. While we must dismantle our racialized and sexist systems of incarceration and punishment as a society, within the systems that we have now, education is the most powerful tool for supporting the well-being of incarcerated individuals and their children, families, and communities, and for reducing recidivism.

FEPPS provides an Associate of Arts degree accredited by Tacoma Community College and a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree accredited by University of Puget Sound. We offer a wide range of credit-bearing classes, as well as academic enrichment and support programming. After students leave prison, we are available to support them with college applications, financial aid, laptops, school supplies, and navigating their new campus. Finally, we also work with alumni and partners to advocate on issues affecting higher education in prison and people returning home from prison. We work in co-leadership with an Advisory Council inside WCCW, and students have input into what we offer. Because we believe in the power of education as a catalyst for social change, our instructors teach in ways that cultivate empowerment, leadership, and activism, while building and sustaining community.

Organizational Snapshot:

Over 300 FEPPS students have completed accredited classes.

Over 140 instructors from 28 different academic, research and community institutions have taught over 200 college and pre-college classes spanning a wide range of disciplines.

In 2020 the BA program began and has an initial cohort of 12 students who are on track to complete their degrees in 2024.

Annual Budget $700K

4-5 FTEs on the staff.

8 Board members, including some organizational founders and several with lived experience of incarceration.

FEPPS is a highly collaborative effort with many stakeholders and an ethos of strong teamwork. We are committed to the fundamental principles of: the inherent humanity, worth, and dignity of all; no individual defined by their actions alone; the radical and transformative potential of education; challenging and dismantling oppressive systems with the most affected people and communities at the core of that work.
Position Opportunities

FEPPS is locally and nationally recognized and respected for our work and successes. Despite the upheaval of COVID, we have a solid foundation. We are re-building in a very changed landscape that brings both exciting challenges and opportunities.

• The long tail of Covid continues to shape programming in the prison and relations with the Department of Corrections.
• For decades, neither Pell financial aid nor Washington state funding could be used for higher education in prison. FEPPS has therefore always been entirely privately funded. With Pell and state funding being reinstated for incarcerated college students, FEPPS faces alterations in how we operate, many of which remain unclear.
• The movement for decarceration and the leadership of formerly incarcerated people are growing nationally and in the state of Washington.

In Spring 2023, FEPPS conducted a strategic inquiry process to inform our path forward. We engaged all FEPPS stakeholders, with primary focus on students and alumni. We identified strong agreement about FEPPS’s values and core commitments, as well as clarity on the opportunities and challenges in our environment. Our next Executive Director will have the opportunity to engage the FEPPS community in strategic questions that will drive and deepen our impact for years to come:

• What does freedom education mean as an intended outcome at this moment in time?
• How can FEPPS be more explicit and intentional about our unwavering commitment to racial equity?

Our next ED will have the opportunity to think creatively, strategically, and relationally, centering our students and their education in shaping the future of FEPPS.

Essential Duties of Position

• **Organizational Mission and Strategy:** lead strategic planning and goal-setting, oversee program implementation, maintain transparent communication and collaboration with stakeholders, and ensure strong program evaluation.
• **Program Development:** work collaboratively with student-leaders, faculty, and institutional partners to develop curriculum, programming, and reentry pathways.
• **Management and Operations:** manage staff through organizational change while strengthening a collaborative culture, oversee human resources, and maintain nonprofit operations.
• **Fiscal Performance and Health:** fundraise and steward financial resources, lead annual budgeting process, and provide fiscal management to ensure financial health.
• **External Relations and Partnerships:** build and maintain relationships critical to FEPPS’ success; maintain institutional partnerships with Department of Corrections, University of Puget Sound, and Tacoma Community College; and represent FEPPS within the community, coalitions, legislative bodies, and national field-building efforts.
• **Governance and Board Relations:** maintain a strong and collaborative relationship with the Board to guide the organization and support continued board development.
Candidate Qualifications

We seek a leader who possesses many of the following qualifications and core competencies, and who is able to identify where they will need to further develop. We don’t believe in a “perfect” candidate and encourage you to apply even if you do not meet all of these qualifications:

- **Mission Alignment & Advocacy:** Deeply passionate about addressing systemic injustices within our incarceration systems, with a strong commitment to the transformative power of education and advocacy for FEPPS students. Lived experience (personally or within one’s family/community) with the Department of Corrections, the criminal justice system, or incarceration. Experience with state legislative processes and/or higher education institutions is a plus.

- **Fundraising:** A skilled and confident fundraiser with grant-writing and donor engagement experience.

- **Leadership & Resilience:** Exceptional leadership skills coupled with resilience, assertiveness, and confidence. Demonstrated ability to deal with adversity and maintain composure under pressure. Ability to inspire and support a diverse team.

- **Relationship-building & Transparency:** Strong, clear communication skills with a commitment to transparency. Capable of firm and honest interactions, ensuring all stakeholders remain well-informed. Ability to build collaborative relationships with students and alumni, Board, donors, and the Department of Corrections. Commitment to working with people from historically marginalized communities in an equitable, inclusive, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive manner.

- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Implements democratic practices and participatory processes, valuing diverse perspectives and fostering an environment of collaborative decision-making.

- **Strategic Problem-Solving:** Problem-solver with the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and the capability to comprehend and navigate complex policy environments, including standing up to authority when necessary.

- **Nonprofit Management Acumen:** Knowledgeable about the operations, legal and fiscal requirements of a 501(c)3 nonprofit, with a solid educational background and commitment to inclusive practices. Strong project management skills in a complex environment.
This is a full-time salaried position requiring willingness to work some evenings and weekends, time spent at WCCW, and occasional travel throughout the state of Washington as well as the country. The expected salary range is between $95,000-$110,000, depending on qualifications and experience.

FEPPS offers medical, dental, and vision insurance through Premera. Paid leave and holidays are generous. FEPPS has offices in both south Seattle and at the Washington Corrections Center for Women in Gig Harbor. Some opportunities for work-from-home exist.

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The US has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world, with policing and criminal legal systems that are racialized, sexist, ableist, classist, and focused on punishment. These systems inflict broad state violence and harm, particularly on communities of color, poor communities, and people with disabilities. They criminalize poverty, mental illness, and addiction. FEPPS is committed to supporting, engaging, and centering the voices and leadership of people who have been directly impacted by these systems, and people from disproportionally-affected communities.

How to Apply

Apply here: https://cloversearchworks.hire.trakstar.com/jobs/fk0vsjn

Online applications only, please no email or paper submissions. You will be asked to upload a cover letter and resume. In your cover letter, please describe as specifically as you can how your experience, interests, and values are a fit with FEPPS’s goals, mission, and vision for the future as described in this announcement.

Applications received by January 26 will be given full consideration; early applications are strongly encouraged! All applications will be acknowledged via an email receipt. Consideration will be given to applications as soon as they are received; phone and in-person interviewing is anticipated to begin in February 2024.

People of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, disabled people, people impacted by incarceration and members of other commonly underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply, even if you don’t meet all of the criteria.

Freedom Education Project Puget Sound does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or creed, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, citizenship, size, weight, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including hiring, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training. Unfortunately, at this time we cannot provide sponsorship for those requiring visas or work permits.

Questions regarding this opportunity are welcomed and can be directed to:

Sarah Cody Roth, Lead Search Consultant, Clover Search Works

Email Sarah  Schedule a Call with Sarah

Clover Search Works is honored to be partnering with FEPPS in this search.