

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **AVANCE-Dallas, Inc.**

#### **THE ORGANIZATION**

AVANCE-Dallas Inc. is a grassroots nonprofit agency that delivers a unique educational program for low-income families. Using a proven mix of early childhood education, parent involvement, and parent educational leadership, the Organization advances children to measurable success in school in spite of extreme economic disadvantage. Three school districts in the Dallas/Fort Worth region host the AVANCE-Dallas program at 33 local elementary schools. The program is funded by over 20 public and private grants, the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, and individual donors. AVANCE-Dallas, Inc. is a mission-driven, results-centered, and highly respected organization serving Hispanic families in the North Texas community, and it represents a family approach to breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that is much needed in our community and the nation.

AVANCE-Dallas transforms communities by *unlocking America's potential*, one parent, one child at a time. Fundamental concepts include:

- *Parents as All-Important First Teachers – Creating an atmosphere of learning & growth within families*
- *Child Development When It Matters Most, Birth to Age 3 – Early stimulation through play, providing tools for success in life*

During its 15-year history, AVANCE-Dallas has achieved a number of significant accomplishments, most notably that it has furthered the education of more than 14,000 Dallas Hispanics since 1996. Today, AVANCE-Dallas provides the Parent-Child program on 33 elementary school campuses with a budget of \$2 million—up from 2 program sites and a start-up budget of \$233,626 in 1996. AVANCE-Dallas advances over 2,000 children and parents annually, and has a history of producing lasting results: AVANCE-Dallas child graduates outperform their Dallas Independent School District (ISD) peers on state standardized assessments, and AVANCE-Dallas parent graduates practice the ideal parenting behaviors early on that lead to their children's educational successes. Parent graduates tend to become parents who are significantly involved in PTAs, Site-Based Decision Making teams, and in classrooms.

AVANCE-Dallas advances its mission through a series of programs and initiatives, including:

- *Parent-Child Education:* This core program employs two-generation, whole family education, acknowledging the parent as the first and most important educator in the child's early life. Through working directly with children and parents at 33 school sites, AVANCE-Dallas instills learning and parenting habits that persist both in the school setting and at home. Over 2,000 children and parents participated in this nine-month program last year.
- *ESL and GED Classes:* Besides helping parents learn to write and speak English, and also prepare for a GED certification, these classes provide a model of educational achievement for children. For those enrolled in these classes, AVANCE-Dallas offers free child-care in an educational setting. In this most recent year, child-care was provided to 100 children while the Organization served 119 parents in ESL classes and 27 in classes preparing for the GED.

- *Baby University*: Now in its third year, AVANCE-Dallas offers an intensified version of the Parent-Child Education program in the Bachman Lake area, where parents and children receive a second year of services, families participate in “family nights”, fathers attend special “fatherhood” programs, and graduates volunteer as “promoters” and take the AVANCE-Dallas educational message door-to-door in the community. Over 160 families were enrolled in the 2010-2011 year.
- *Book Clubs*: Just completing its third year, AVANCE-Dallas Parent-Child Book Clubs offer a 25-week program focused on the activity of reading in the home. Fifteen clubs thrived last year with 147 parents and their children, in school settings in Dallas, Irving and Mesquite.

AVANCE-Dallas is one of 11 chapters of the San Antonio-based parent, Avance ([www.avance.org](http://www.avance.org)) located in the southwestern and western United States. AVANCE-Dallas is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors, with support from the involvement of an Advisory Board of business and community leaders. More than 400 volunteers serve in AVANCE-Dallas initiatives in schools, the community, and at fundraising events. During the academic year the Organization employs 58 staff.

Revenue to support the notable successes of AVANCE-Dallas is raised from a variety of sources. For the current year the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas has awarded the Organization 40% of its \$2 million annual budget; foundation and corporate grants are projected to contribute another 22% and the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) 15%. AVANCE-Dallas is in a solid financial position with no debt and cash on hand that is more than four months of projected operating expenses. The Organization has just moved to expanded new offices co-located with several other prominent nonprofits in West Dallas, less than 10 minutes from downtown.

The performance of students from AVANCE-Dallas programs has demonstrated in a tangible way the value of this early childhood education. 72% of 3- and 4-year old 2010 AVANCE-Dallas participants completing the program exceeded the standards for kindergarten readiness skills, compared to just 5% meeting those standards prior to attending the program. Two and one-half times as many parents were reading to their children at least five days a week after program participation. Longitudinally, AVANCE-Dallas child graduates in DISD schools maintained a 97% attendance rate during the 2010-2011 school year.

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

Lisa Oglesby-Rocha, the founding and widely respected Executive Director of AVANCE-Dallas, is leaving the Organization to pursue a start-up nonprofit opportunity. As a consequence, AVANCE-Dallas seeks a strong professional to serve in the critical and visible role of Executive Director. Reporting to the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director represents AVANCE-Dallas to the community and provides professional leadership for the organization, overseeing day-to-day operations and implementing the strategic plan and policies set by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director develops new resources and partnerships to further AVANCE-Dallas’s mission in the community.

Principal Responsibilities are summarized as follows:

Site Operations – *Ensure effective administration of AVANCE-Dallas operations*

- Align staff with organizational mission, objectives and programs
- Empower staff and encourage their professional and personal development
- Direct & manage staff recruitment, hiring, training, supervision & performance evaluation

Financial Management & Compliance – *Maintain high financial standards & efficient procedures*

- Prepare draft annual budgets to submit to AVANCE-Dallas Board for approval
- Adhere to the Finance and Accounting Standards and Procedures Manual
- Monitor and manage all budgets & assist auditors with annual audit
- Maintain current knowledge of business insurance policies and requirements

Fund Development – *Develop and maintain organization’s revenue streams*

- Implement and oversee annual Dallas fund development plan
- Demonstrate “return on investment” & measurable impact of AVANCE Dallas programs
- Maintain strong relationships with funders & cultivate donors
- Develop new funding streams & develop and/or review grants and funding proposals

Program Services – *Ensure effective operation of all program services*

- Oversee effective implementation of the AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program & all other program services
- Maintain working relationships with partner school districts, campuses and organizations
- Develop any program enhancements or new programs to serve the community consistent with the AVANCE mission
- Ensure quality of programs and measurable accountability to funders
- Adhere to the AVANCE Evaluation Protocols, data collection process & timelines
- Serve as liaison with national office of Avance

Board Relations – *Develop and maintain working relationship with board members*

- Effectively use talents of Board members to further organizational goals
- Provide input to the Board regarding program outcomes, strategic planning and policy development

Community Relations - *Develop & maintain collaborative relationships with community leaders, agencies & organizations to strengthen educational resources for low-income families with young children.*

- Seek out and develop collaborative partnerships on behalf of AVANCE-Dallas
- Represent AVANCE and communicate its mission to diverse audiences
- Work with community partners to develop educational services for Dallas families

Public Relations – *Ensure positive presentation and promotion of AVANCE at all times*

- Serve as official spokesperson for AVANCE-Dallas
- Develop appropriate methods of communication with the public (i.e. newsletters, annual reports, updated website, social media etc)
- Increase visibility of AVANCE-Dallas
- Seek out opportunities for positive publicity for AVANCE-Dallas

Most recently, AVANCE-Dallas has launched several new initiatives for which the new Executive Director will provide leadership, including:

- Sustaining and extending relationships with school districts and community resources in Irving and Garland, where Parent-Child education programs are being launched in schools this Fall. Seek to expand programs in those districts in subsequent years.
- Continuing to grow core programs in adjacent and nearby geographies in the North Texas region.
- Building parent leadership programs (example: book club leaders).
- Overseeing launch of “A Year of Service”, a pilot program training a select group of 50 AVANCE-Dallas parents to be reading tutors in DISD kindergarten and first grade classes.
- Continuing to explore way to build the reach and loyalty of the AVANCE-Dallas alumni network.
- Furthering roll-out of an AVANCE-Dallas organization structure that positions leaders in the four “quadrants” of Dallas to supervise programs and build local community relationships.

### **SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE OVERVIEW**

With broad public recognition of the pioneering initiatives that AVANCE-Dallas has launched and grown, the expansion of its programs to new communities, and the successful physical relocation of its headquarters, the Organization offers a prospective Executive Director an especially compelling growth opportunity. In turn, AVANCE-Dallas seeks a polished and energetic leader with skills to build an enterprise—and someone who possesses great compassion and personal humility. Although a prestigious position, the new Executive Director will be someone with a “Servant/Leader” mentality, who delights in the achievements of clients and staff and is passionate about extending the organization’s mission.

The Executive Director at AVANCE-Dallas is a high visibility position within the community, and the successful candidate will build and support relationships with elected officials, senior nonprofit and community leaders, and community volunteers that will advance the stature of the Organization, build revenue sources and affect the lives of increasing numbers of families.

### **Candidates for this position will possess education and experience including:**

- Undergraduate degree required; Master’s Degree in Education, Social Work, Psychology, Business Administration or a related field is preferred
- Five+ years of progressively responsible experience in senior management/administrative position(s) working for a nonprofit organization or public service agency in the following areas:
  - Program design, development, implementation and evaluation;
  - financial planning, budgeting and control;
  - fundraising and donor development;
  - community/government relations in the field of family support and education;
  - hiring, supervision, training and management of staff;
  - grants research and proposal writing; and
  - public relations.

- Ability to communicate effectively—orally and in writing—in both English and Spanish
- Prior exposure to contract and grant management practices
- Experience developing and overseeing programs that benefit families and young children is desired

**The successful candidate must have the following competencies:**

- Successful leadership of an institution or enterprise, motivating staff and volunteers to achieve common goals (as demonstrated by achieving programmatic, financial management, development, and staff identification and cultivation objectives)
- Ability to set expectations, establish priorities and manage multiple projects in a fast-paced organization
- Experience in program monitoring and outcome measurement
- Financial acumen (demonstrated by having successfully created and managed to budgets, presented financial statements, and made mid-period expense adjustments to meet budgetary goals)
- Outstanding written communication skills—for proposal preparation and communications with donors, and reports—and oral communication skills for individual and group presentations
- Understanding of development processes, and effectiveness asking for support
- Personal leadership and management style that promotes collaboration and accessibility
- Proficiency in MS Office and computer/internet applications

**Desired personal characteristics include:**

- confident communicating and building trust
- affinity for working with diverse communities
- inspirational team builder and team player
- tactful, politically astute and culturally sensitive
- positive attitude
- unquestioned integrity—honors commitments and deals with others in an open and straightforward manner

A finalist candidate for the Executive Director position at AVANCE-Dallas will need to pass a criminal background check as well as a pre-employment drug screen.

Executive Director  
AVANCE-Dallas, Inc.  
Page Six

### **VICTORY SEARCH GROUP PROFILE**

Victory Search Group is a senior level retained executive search firm serving a select group of clients from five offices across the United States. Each of the firm's directors has over 15 years of professional search experience and success identifying, assessing and recruiting senior leadership. Victory Search Group is highly collaborative and focused on customer service; we prize partnering with our clients and are trusted by them for our judgment, integrity and responsiveness.

We follow a detailed five-step search process that places significant emphasis on understanding our client's needs, organizational issues and the critical factors required for success by an outside executive. Our success is simply an intense focus on executing each step of the search process, without cutting any corners, while maintaining a constant dialog with both clients and candidates.

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### **LINKS**

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