



President & Chief Executive Officer

DAKOTA BOYS AND GIRLS RANCH | POSITION DESCRIPTION AND BLUEPRINT

The Boards of Directors of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch are seeking qualified and initiative-taking candidates for the organization's next President/CEO.

STRATEGIC MINISTRY CONTEXT

For more than 70 years, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (the Ranch) has walked alongside children and teens who have faced trauma, mental health struggles, and educational challenges. The Ranch provides Christ-centered care, psychiatric treatment, specialized education, and community support, helping young people heal, learn, and discover their God-given potential. The Ranch is a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, an Affiliated Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a Partner Ministry of the North American Lutheran Church, and a Mission Partner of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

The Ranch currently provides adolescent residential treatment in Minot, Bismarck, and Fargo. It also provides fully accredited, holistic education through its Dakota Memorial School at its three locations. In addition, the Ranch operates eight thrift stores throughout North Dakota and Minnesota that provide employment and directly help children and families by supporting the Ranch mission.

The Ranch is a family of three nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporations: Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch provides residential treatment and educational programming. Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation owns the facilities, operates the fundraising arm of the agency, operates thrift stores to support the programs of the Ranch, and provides the Spiritual Life component of the Ranch's programming. Dakota Family Services is an outpatient mental health clinic that provides psychiatric care and medication management for the children in the Ranch's care, as well as psychiatric care, medication management, and therapy for the general public. The three boards work collaboratively with the CEO to guide the Ranch with vision, compassion, and a commitment to sustainable excellence.



For the past eleven years, the Ranch has been blessed by the leadership of its President/CEO, Joy Ryan. Joy has had a significant positive impact on the success of the Ranch. With Joy's planned retirement in March 2027, the Ranch is approaching a significant leadership transition.

LEADERSHIP SCOPE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

As the leader of the organization, the President/CEO is accountable for the Ranch's overall performance, ensuring it aligns with the mission, vision, and expected outcomes established by the boards of directors.

In addition to guiding strategy and fulfilling the mission, the President/CEO provides comprehensive leadership across the organization, ensuring strong alignment between culture, people, operations, and outcomes. This includes actively developing and supporting an engaged and effective Board, fostering a culture of purpose, caring, learning, and accountability, and leading a high-performing executive team across multiple service lines and locations.

The President/CEO is responsible for advancing organizational excellence through high-quality program delivery, continuous improvement, and strong operational infrastructure. This role requires an understanding of complex service environments, including behavioral health and residential care, and the ability to ensure consistent, effective, and mission-aligned services.



The President/CEO also leads the development and execution of integrated revenue strategies, including fundraising, marketing, government relations, and other external partnerships while strengthening internal communication, cross-functional collaboration, and data-informed decision-making to support long-term sustainability and growth.

KEY MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The opportunities and challenges below reflect the key issues the Ranch is addressing now and will continue addressing over the next three to five years.



Financial Stability and Growth

Achieve greater financial stability through new and enhanced revenue streams. Create a more mixed revenue model, programmatically and through an enhanced fundraising strategy. The Ranch aims to strengthen its financial position to support its current mission and expand into new ministry opportunities.



Successfully Navigate the Current Uncertain Operating Climate

Successfully navigate today's uncertain political and economic environment by continuing careful stewardship of existing resources, reimagining how services are delivered, and creating new opportunities to serve.



Strategic Partnerships

Continue to form and strengthen strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including the State of North Dakota, the federal government, nonprofit organizations, local communities, and congregations.



Provider of Choice

Be the provider of choice in North Dakota and potentially beyond by creating outstanding relationships, providing quality services, and demonstrating positive outcomes.

ANTICIPATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Under the leadership of its next President/CEO, the Ranch will:

- Expand its partnerships and reach.
- Enhance its financial stability.
- Further diversify its funding streams.
- Be the provider of choice, grow, and demonstrate positive program outcomes.
- Maintain and enhance a robust fundraising strategy.
- Effectively manage data and resources.
- Lead the industry in providing exceptional mental health care for children, fully integrating faith-based support.



CULTURAL FIT AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

The successful candidate will bring to the role a commitment to the mission and ministry of the Ranch and a faith-inspired leadership philosophy. To be successful, the boards and leadership team believe the next CEO will need to excel in these areas:



Business Performance Driver

Consistently and effectively achieve the agreed-upon organizational goals and objectives, leading to positive outcomes and results for the Ranch.



Change Orchestrator

Strategically coordinate and facilitate organizational change, ensuring that initiatives align, resources are used effectively, and the change process is smooth and impactful.



Inspirational Strategist

Understand the internal and external forces necessary to create a sustainable advantage for the Ranch. Survey the marketplace and determine where to focus future resources and energy. Work in partnership with the boards of directors to determine what the Ranch can become and inspire others to be part of the future.



Visionary

Inspire a team and the boards of directors to work toward a shared vision and goal for the future. Innovative, imaginative, excellent communicator, and ability to think beyond the present.



Fundraiser

Effectively build relationships, increase awareness, and create a community of supporters to increase funding for the Ranch.



Organizational Builder

Create a strong, thriving organization by fostering a positive culture, developing talent, and establishing clear goals and strategies.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core competencies being sought by the Ranch boards of directors include a deep Christian faith, ability to build trust, demonstrated resilience, communication savvy, emotional intelligence, courageous leadership, effective data acumen and resource management, and the ability to effectively craft and lead a team.

MOTIVATIONAL FIT

The successful candidate will be grounded in Christian faith and motivated by the joy of living out a vocational calling to serve North Dakota's most vulnerable children. This individual takes initiative, embraces a growth mindset, and works effectively across cultural boundaries.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- ☑ Considerable experience as a leader of a large, complex organization, preferably in social services.
- ☑ A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- ☑ The ability and willingness to travel.
- ☑ Willingness to provide digital fingerprints for screening and pass state and federal background checks.
- ☑ A willingness to live in North Dakota and/or spend a significant amount of time traveling throughout the state.
- ☑ An understanding of and commitment to leading a Lutheran, faith-based, social services organization.

Preferred:

- ☑ Extensive knowledge of, and experience working in, social services in North Dakota and at the federal level.
- ☑ An advanced degree or a minimum of eight years of related significant professional experience.
- ☑ Experience in fundraising, sales, or advancing organizational growth through revenue development.
- ☑ Experience in a senior leadership or board role in a faith-based social service organization.



ACCOUNTABILITY, SALARY, AND BENEFITS

The President/CEO is accountable to the Ranch's boards of directors. The boards establish a competitive compensation package for the President/CEO which will be determined based on experience and will meet the requirements defined by the Internal Revenue Service.

TO APPLY

Submit an updated Resume/CV and a cover letter explaining your interest in the position and your qualifications. Email your Resume/CV and cover letter to:

Jennifer Quast Johnsrud

Chair, Search Committee

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Boards of Directors

BoardChair@dakotaranch.org

Application deadline: September 15, 2026

The first round of interviews is anticipated to occur via Zoom in September 2026.