



VOICE OF WITNESS 

Amplifying the voices
of people impacted by—and
fighting against—injustice

Voice of Witness (VOW)

Executive Director

Remote, USA



Background

Voice of Witness (VOW) is an oral history nonprofit that advances human rights by amplifying the voices of people impacted by—and fighting against—injustice.

VOW's work is driven by the transformative power of the story, and by a strong belief that social justice cannot be achieved without deep listening and learning from those marginalized by systems of oppression. Through our programming, we work with communities to ensure that:

- voices of marginalized and silenced communities are centered in narrative contexts (education, media, movements, and policymaking);
- students and communities have the tools and training to tell their own stories through oral history;
- storytelling practitioners and institutions use ethics-driven methodologies to gather narratives.

The [VOW Book Series](#) depicts human rights issues through the edited oral histories of people, VOW narrators, who are most deeply impacted and at the heart of solutions to address injustice. The series explores issues of race-, gender-, and class-based inequity through the lenses of personal narrative.

The [VOW Education Program](#) brings unheard stories and our ethical oral history methodology to classrooms and organizations across the US, connecting students, educators, and advocates with training and tools for storytelling in order to advance social change.

Through our [partnerships](#) and [consulting](#), VOW offers expert storytelling and program support to nonprofits, activists, schools, foundations, and more. These customized projects and workshops use VOW's award-winning approach to promote empathy, build relationships, and amplify community voices.

VOW's History

Voice of Witness was cofounded by author and educator Mimi Lok, author Dave Eggers, and physician Lola Vollen. Eggers and Vollen established the VOW oral history book series in 2005. In 2008, Lok transitioned Voice of Witness to a 501(c)(3) organization and established its education program.

Since then, Voice of Witness has amplified the voices of hundreds of individuals impacted by human rights crises around the world, including wrongfully convicted Americans, undocumented immigrants, agricultural workers, Indigenous peoples, communities displaced from public housing, and many more.



Through our education program and partnerships, VOW has served tens of thousands of students, educators, storytellers, and activists across the US and globally. Our ethics-driven oral history methodology has been used to train a broad range of advocates for human rights and dignity, including journalists, attorneys, activists, writers, teachers, and medical professionals.

VOW's Vision Plan

VOW's strategic vision planning process took place over nine months and involved Voice of Witness staff, board, and our extended community. By August 2022, we had created a strategic vision and implementation plan to chart our growth and goals for the next four years. We took a deep look at our programs, operations, and culture, and identified areas where we can further embody our values internally as well as externally. We also committed to going deeper with our community-led approach in order to make a greater impact through ethics-driven oral history storytelling.

Access the [Vision Plan](#), view our [Ethical Storytelling Principles](#), and read our [Racial Equity Statement](#).

VOW's Values

- Empathy & Compassion
- Equity & Dignity
- Integrity
- Critical thinking & Inquiry
- Collaboration
- Literary Merit
- Wholeness

Position

Voice of Witness is seeking an Executive Director to lead the organization into its next phase of growth and impact. Reporting to the Board of Directors, this person will have oversight of a 1M budget, and provide inspirational leadership to a dedicated team of 8 staff. The next Executive Director will lead the implementation of VOW's strategic plan, continuing an ambitious agenda of using storytelling as a tool in the broader ecosystem of human rights and social justice advocacy, creating opportunities with communities to heal and strengthen through the oral history process, and forging space for these voices to be heard as a part of efforts to dismantle systems of oppression.

Responsibilities

Strategy

- Develop and maintain knowledge of the issues, trends, and stakeholders in the intersecting fields at the center of VOW's work (human rights, oral history, education, and social justice).
- In partnership with the VOW staff and Board of Directors, lead the implementation of VOW's strategic plan.
- Continue to shepherd innovation in VOW's programming, providing strategic guidance on ways VOW can amplify narrator voices and expand programs to reach wider audiences, in service of its mission and values.
- Ensure that VOW's vision and values are expressed in every aspect of the organization, including its culture, personnel, and programs.
- Build and nurture strong relationships with all board members; support the board in the identification and recruitment of board members with an emphasis on increasing diversity of skillsets and experiences.
- Ensure ongoing programmatic excellence, through program evaluation, and consistent quality communications to all key stakeholders.

Fundraising

- Partner with the Development Team to develop and implement an annual development plan that includes diversified revenue streams, supports sustainable growth, and increases programmatic impact.
- Serve as the primary fundraiser for VOW, working closely with the Board of Directors.
- Steward relationships with key donors and funders and engage the Board in fund development opportunities.
- Ensure that the flow of funds permits VOW to make continuous progress toward the achievement of its mission and is allocated properly to support present needs and future opportunities.
- Provide strategic guidance on branding, messaging, and marketing strategies to raise awareness of VOW's mission and increase support from major donors, foundations, and government agencies.

Partnerships & External Affairs

- Continue to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with key VOW stakeholders, including but not limited to narrators, partner organizations, education institutions, oral historians, and funders.

- Serve as the external face and lead spokesperson of VOW to the media, donors, and community members; seek opportunities for VOW to increase mission visibility, and deepen its impact on a national scale.

Leadership & People Management

- Serve as a coach and mentor, providing empathetic, supportive, and inspirational leadership to the VOW staff.
- Uphold a shared leadership model predicated on consensus-based decision making; ensure that these values are reflected in all internal systems and processes.
- Maintain a relational, collaborative, and supportive workplace culture that centers wellbeing and care for its team.

Finance & Operations

- Assume ultimate oversight and responsibility for the effective management of staff and infrastructure including optimizing policies, practices and systems required to manage financial resources and the growing operating budget, and ensuring clarity and consistency in roles, structures and processes.
- Ensure compliance with personnel policies and federal, state and local regulations.
- In partnership with the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors, oversee the organization's financial status, including developing long and short-range financial plans, monitoring the budget, and ensuring sound financial controls are in place; set appropriate financial priorities to ensure the organization is operating in a manner that supports programmatic and staff needs.
- Demonstrate thoughtful business acumen to maintain a financially sound and growing organization.
- Ensure clarity and consistency throughout the organization's strategy, operational methods, and data collection processes to support the continued development and management of a professional and efficient organization.

Qualifications

- At least 5 years of executive nonprofit leadership experience in adjacent sectors, including but not limited to: art, human rights, social justice, and/or education.
- A proven track record of successful fundraising, including but not limited to: cultivating and maintaining relationships with major donors including high-net-worth individuals and foundations; managing government grants and restricted project funds.
- Have strong interpersonal and communication skills; the ability to build relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

- Facility with collaborative problem-solving processes.
- Experience overseeing financial management and resource allocation to support a growing organization.
- An entrepreneurial spirit and creative mindset.
- Experience serving as a spokesperson and galvanizing support for a mission.
- Cultural competency and principled alignment with VOW's values.
- A highly relational and community-oriented leader with the ability to instill trust and build authentic relationships with a variety of stakeholders.
- Excellent people-management skills and demonstrated experience building and leading teams; a commitment to upholding shared leadership and consensus driven nonprofit organization management models.

Salary

This is an outstanding opportunity for a leader to join a highly respected organization. Voice of Witness is prepared to offer a very attractive compensation package, including a competitive base salary of \$125,000 as well as:

- Medical insurance (employer-covered up to 100% on limited group plan or medical subsidy)
- Dental (employer-covered 100% on limited group plan)
- Vision (employer-covered 100% on limited group plan)
- Employee life insurance and 401k plan
- Paid sick leave (14 days)
- Paid vacation (16 days, annual increases through 2–4 years of employment)
- Paid holidays (12 days per year, fixed)
- Paid wellness days (12 days, last Monday of each month)
- Flexible work environment (work from home/remote work opportunities)
- Professional development opportunities
- Sabbatical program

Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

With a staff and board that is committed to human rights storytelling and advocacy rooted in equity and empathy, a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds is crucial to our ability to pursue our mission. We are committed to building an inclusive environment for people of all backgrounds. Candidates who identify as being from marginalized groups and/or have nontraditional career paths are strongly encouraged to apply. We enthusiastically welcome

all applicants, no matter your race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, immigration status, religion, age, or abilities.

This position description is based upon material provided by Voice of Witness (VOW), an equal opportunity employer.

To apply for this position, please click [HERE](#).

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