

The Opportunity

For more than two decades, the [Merage Jewish Community Center of Orange County](#) (Merage JCC) has been a cornerstone of Jewish life, culture, health, and education in Irvine and throughout Orange County. Located on the state-of-the-art Samueli Jewish Campus, the Merage JCC is widely recognized as a flagship organization within the North American JCC movement.

The Merage Jewish Community Center (JCC) seeks an inspiring, strategic, and entrepreneurial Chief Executive Officer to lead a thriving, membership-based organization into its next era of impact and growth. Reporting to the Chair of the Board and accountable to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, the CEO will lead an organization with an \$18 million operating budget and more than 250 staff members, including a C-suite leadership team. The successful candidate will bring demonstrated executive leadership experience, exceptional financial and business acumen, a strong track record of fundraising and resource development, and a deep commitment to contemporary Jewish life.

The CEO will lead a complex, multifaceted organization with significant programmatic and physical assets, balancing mission, community impact, financial sustainability, membership growth, and operational excellence.

The Merage JCC

Rooted in a rich history and evolving from local grassroots initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s, the Merage JCC opened its flagship Irvine facility in 2004. Today, its 220,000-square-foot campus provides a safe, welcoming, and vibrant environment centered on family, health, tradition, and lifelong learning.

Key offerings include:

- Health & Fitness Complex: State-of-the-art fitness facilities, gymnasium, and Jr. Olympic swimming pool serving a robust membership base.
- Early Childhood & Youth: Licensed preschool, toddler care, teen lounge, summer camps, and Sunrise Day Camp – Orange County, serving children with cancer and their siblings in partnership with the international Sunrise Association.
- Arts, Culture & Senior Life: Professional theater, auditorium with banquet space, café, teaching kitchen, adult education centers, active senior center, and the Holocaust Education Center & Memorial Garden.

The Community:

Located in Irvine, Orange County, the Merage JCC serves a dynamic and growing Jewish community within one of Southern California's most highly regarded master-planned communities. The region offers top-tier public schools, safety, and many corporate headquarters, is a major focal point for the region's growing Jewish community. Grounded by institutions such as the Samueli Jewish Campus, the Merage JCC and a broad spectrum of congregations ranging from Reform and Conservative to vibrant Orthodox and Chabad communities, Irvine provides a cohesive network of day schools, kosher amenities, and civic programming. This community reflects the character of Orange County itself: a blend of modern suburban convenience, deep cultural engagement, and an emphasis on family-centered community life.



The CEO Position

Visionary Leadership & Cultural Alignment

The Chief Executive Officer will serve as a unifying, forward-thinking leader responsible for shaping the strategic trajectory of the JCC while honoring its rich heritage. Navigating the evolving dynamics of the community, the CEO will bridge legacy stakeholders and emerging generations, creating an inclusive ecosystem that reflects the full spectrum of community life.

Internally, the CEO will cultivate a high-trust, transparent, collaborative culture and align the organization around shared goals, accountability, and measurable results. The CEO will authentically integrate Jewish values, warmth, and spirit into the organization's culture and public presence.

Strategic Business Management & Financial Stewardship

The CEO will provide executive oversight of an \$18 million operating budget, ensuring strong financial performance, and disciplined resource allocation, and long-term sustainability.

The CEO will evaluate programs and business lines through both mission and financial lenses, identify opportunities for growth and innovation, and ensure the JCC remains responsive to changing demographics, market conditions, and community needs.

Financial Resource Development & Philanthropic Engagement

As the primary dynamic spokesperson and visible face of the institution, the CEO will play a leading role in fundraising and relationship development. Working closely with the development team and lay leadership, the CEO will cultivate major donors, foundations, corporate and community partners, and other philanthropic stakeholders to secure resources for current operations, strategic initiatives, and long-term sustainability.

Staff Management, Operations & Institutional Excellence

The CEO will lead and mentor a talented C-suite team and provide strategic direction to an organization of approximately 250 employees. The CEO will promote professional development, accountability, innovation, and collaboration while ensuring an exceptional member experience and a safe, welcoming environment.

Membership Strategy & Community Partnerships

The CEO will develop strategies for sustainable membership growth, engagement, and retention, responding to demographic and economic trends affecting families and the broader community.

The CEO will also strengthen relationships with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, government agencies, community leaders, and global Jewish partners, positioning the Merage JCC as an essential center of community life.

Responsibilities:

- Articulate and communicate a compelling vision for the Merage JCC and serve as its principal spokesperson and ambassador.
- Partner effectively with the Board Chair, Board of Directors, and committees on governance, strategic planning, and organizational priorities.
- Recruit, hire, supervise, and, when necessary, terminate key staff positions.
- Foster a culture of professional growth, leadership development, accountability, and succession planning.
- Partner with the Senior Director of Development, lead donor cultivation, and solicitation efforts to secure major gifts and support for the JCC.
- Partner with the CFO to ensure sound financial practices, budget preparation (including oversight of multi-million-dollar operating budgets), and human resources management.
- Support diverse, inclusive, and mission-aligned programs, including camp operations, preschool/early childhood education, Jewish life initiatives, fitness, sports, and community enrichment rooted in Jewish values.
- Partner with the CPO to drive growth and engagement through outreach, branding, CRM upgrades, digital enhancements, and innovative member retention strategies.
- Partner with the COO to maintain a safe environment through partnerships with law enforcement, proactive risk mitigation, crisis response planning; and oversee the maintenance, strategic use, and capital improvements of physical resources
- Oversee the development and implementation of long-term strategic plans, including capital and organizational resilience planning.
- Ensure the continued strength and innovation of programs spanning early childhood, youth and camp, Jewish life, fitness and sports, arts and culture, senior services, and community enrichment.
- Identify emerging community needs and opportunities to translate them into strategic program and business initiatives.
- Build strong relationships with Jewish and broad community organizations, government entities, philanthropic partners, and global Jewish institutions.

Qualifications

- Executive Leadership: 8+ years of proven success leading complex nonprofit or communal organizations, with direct experience managing multiple programmatic business lines and large-scale facilities.
- Strategic & Business Acumen: Demonstrated success developing and executing long-term strategy across multiple programs, business lines, and/or large-scale facilities.
- Financial Leadership: Strong experience overseeing significant operating budgets, financial performance, resource allocation, and organizational sustainability.
- Fundraising: A successful track record of major-gift fundraising, donor cultivation, capital campaigns, and philanthropic relationship development.
- Board Relations: Experience partnering effectively with a Board of Directors and volunteer leadership on governance, strategy, and organizational development.
- Connection to Judaism and Israel: Personal and/or professional connection to Jewish values, traditions, diversity of Jewish identities, customs, celebrations, and the State of Israel; passion for Jewish continuity, global partnerships, and addressing antisemitism.
- Community Leadership: Ability to represent the organization in the Jewish and broader community with credibility, warmth, and advocacy.

Qualifications (continued):

- Transparency & Integrity: Strong ethical standards and openness in communication and decision-making.
- People Leadership: Experience recruiting, developing, motivating, and retaining talent professionals; building collaborative, empowered teams; and fostering professional development, mentorship, and succession planning.
- Communication Skills: Exceptional written, verbal, interpersonal, and public-facing communication skills, with an understanding of marketing, digital engagement, and public relations.
- Organizational Culture: Ability to foster a positive, mission-driven organizational culture, with a track record of innovation in member engagement, program delivery, and responsiveness to changing community needs.
- Operational Excellence: Experience overseeing complex operations, facilities, human resources, risk management, and organizational infrastructure.
- Education: Advanced degree in Jewish Professional Studies, nonprofit management, business, or a related field preferred.

Benefits:

Merage JCC offers a comprehensive benefits package which includes a PTO program, paid state and Jewish holidays, health insurance as well as additional benefits coverage for this role.

The Merage JCC provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.