

employment opportunity

# Executive Director of



***Putting Madison, Wisconsin  
on the national map for  
entrepreneurship and innovation***

presented exclusively by

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Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

# StartingBlock Madison is hiring an Executive Director

*Peter Gray Executive Search is StartingBlock Madison's exclusively retained partner for this executive search*

## about StartingBlock Madison

[StartingBlock Madison](#) is Wisconsin's largest community of entrepreneurs, startups, investors, accelerators, and entrepreneur support organizations.

The StartingBlock [story](#) begins in 2012, when a group of Madison's young entrepreneurs joined forces with tech and civic leaders to bring together in a single location the critical components that local entrepreneurs need to start and grow businesses, create jobs and stimulate the regional economy.

Fast forward a decade ...



Photo: [Michelle Stocker](#). All images courtesy of StartingBlock Madison, except where noted

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

StartingBlock is now Madison, Wisconsin's hub for entrepreneurship and innovation, a 501c3 nonprofit offering:

- A 50,000 square foot collaborative community home for startups and entrepreneurs in downtown Madison.
- A flexible [range](#) of coworking memberships and commercial office space.
- A lively café and other first-rate business [amenities](#).
- A busy [calendar](#) of engaging programs.



StartingBlock partners include [Capital Entrepreneurs](#), [Doyenne Group](#), [gener8tor](#), and [Bunker Labs](#).

Since opening its doors in 2018, StartingBlock has housed 70+ startups that have raised over \$42 million in funding. Current member startups include [AirDeck](#), [eCIO](#), [Filament Games](#), [Hardin Design & Development](#), [Pop-Dot](#), [RedFox AI](#), [RehabPath](#), and [Stanford Digital](#).

## StartingBlock Madison's mission

*To create the meaningful intersections that cultivate entrepreneurs,  
grow successful companies, drive innovation,  
and build a startup community that gives back.*

## about the position

StartingBlock Madison is seeking a fearless Executive Director ready to lead one of the strongest, most founder-friendly, most impactful startup communities in the nation. (See [press release](#))

StartingBlock needs a consummate relationship-builder, connector, and collaborator to be an “ambassador in chief” for StartingBlock and the entire Madison startup ecosystem on the local, regional, and national levels. The Executive Director will manage StartingBlock’s commercial office facilities and ensure the continued evolution (and post-Covid reinvention!) of StartingBlock’s programs, offerings, community, and brand positioning.

Reporting to the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director has overall management and fiscal responsibility for the team, programs and operations of StartingBlock Madison. The organization’s budget of roughly \$1 million anticipates a team of 3-4 employees, which the incoming Executive Director will have a significant opportunity to build.



### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Be engaged across all aspects of StartingBlock Madison’s day-to-day operations.
- Be the primary advocate for and promoter of the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Be an energetic community builder who brings people and activation into the StartingBlock community.
- Be an energetic connector and resource to entrepreneurs in and adjacent to the StartingBlock community.

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

- Support founder development in conjunction with regional stakeholders and founder development organizations leading to an excellent pipeline of innovation within the Madison region.
- Represent StartingBlock Madison in public and private engagements and advocate for membership, startup founders, and partner organizations/activities.
- Develop and execute a plan that engages the StartingBlock Board, members, investors, sponsors, partners, local government, and leadership team in fundraising activities to sustain the activities of StartingBlock Madison.
- Be present regularly at the StartingBlock office and ensure consistent staffing to support members.
- Develop and execute a winning communication strategy that builds the StartingBlock Madison brand, and encourages startups, founders, investment partners and other stakeholders to participate in new business creation and acceleration in the Madison, Wisconsin region.



- Lead and develop StartingBlock Madison staff; maintain staff development plans for the organization, and cultivate talent for future hire, volunteering, and mentoring opportunities.
- Build partnerships with traditional and nontraditional stakeholders to ensure that StartingBlock Madison remains not just relevant, but at the forefront of thought leadership.
- Integrate all operational plans (marketing, membership, fundraising etc.) whenever possible to leverage local, state and federal opportunities for mindshare and funding.
- Act as commercial property manager to the StartingBlock members and tenants.
- Manage the annual budget and execute the financial plan for the organization.
- Conduct Board meetings and assure accurate reporting of StartingBlock Madison's impact.

## experience sought

This is a highly multidisciplinary position that requires a rare blend of experience and leadership talent. So the StartingBlock Madison Board recognizes that its next leader may not have every dimension of desired experience listed below. Above all, StartingBlock Madison needs an Executive Director who understands the needs of startup founders, and who can foster an extraordinarily rich environment for them. A visionary leader with the passion and energy to build something exciting.

The StartingBlock Madison Board is looking for an Executive Director with some combination of:

- **Passion and background in entrepreneurship**
  - Someone who has run a small business or worked for a startup in the early and/or growth stages.
  - Someone with an understanding of startup founders and the impact of new business creation.
  - Experience as a high-growth startup founder preferred.

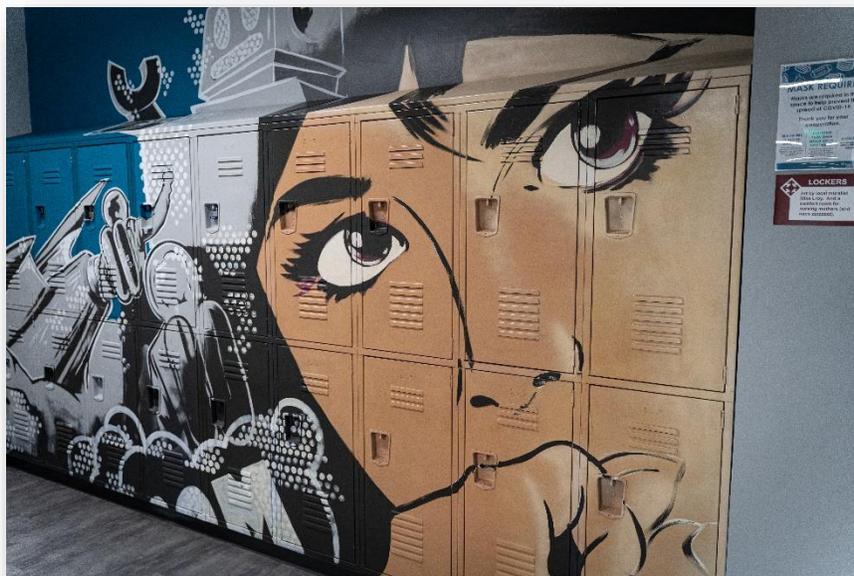


- **Fundraising experience** that may include
  - Venture capital and private equity fundraising.
  - Private donor relations and fundraising campaigns.
  - Experience securing and managing grants.
  - Experience leveraging local, state, and federal programs.

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

- **Commercial real estate management experience that may include**

- Office lease sales and onboarding of tenants.
- Configuring office space to maximize occupancy and profitability.
- Day-to-day property management to ensure smooth operations and deliver a great experience to commercial tenants.



- **Business management experience that may include**

- Financial and budget management experience.
- People management experience encompassing day-to-day team leadership, conflict resolution, motivation and mentorship.
- Human resources experience encompassing employee performance reviews, recruiting, hiring and termination.

- **Public speaking and public relations experience** to be an ambassador for StartingBlock and for Madison's entrepreneurial ecosystem in the community and in the media.

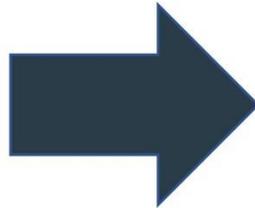
- Familiarity with **nonprofit governance** for successful engagement with a nonprofit Board of Directors.

## personal qualities sought

- A humble, hungry, accountable and smart leader with a serve-first attitude, trustworthiness, personal integrity and honesty.
- A self-starter with unfailingly positive attitude, high energy, creativity, and a strong work ethic that emphasizes follow-through.
- A flexible and adaptable leader, with an ability to inspire and motivate others to act.
- A visionary leader with an ability to focus on both big picture strategy and hands-on implementation.
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills and comfort with public speaking.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse communities of donors, board leaders, community leaders, managers and employees.
- Flexibility to work evening and weekend hours when necessary, and to travel to meetings with Board members, donors, community leaders and other interested parties and organizations.

### StartingBlock's culture is ...

- **Bold** – innovative and risk-taking
- **Accountable** – results-focused with strong performance culture
- **People-oriented** – supportive and fair
- **Team-oriented** – cooperative and collaborative



### So StartingBlock needs a leader who is ...

- **Fearless and action-oriented** – enjoys taking on bold challenges, even if they might fail
- **Adaptable and flexible** – enjoys doing work that requires frequent shifts in direction
- **Innovative** – prefers working in unconventional ways or on tasks that require creativity
- **People-oriented** – enjoys interacting with people and guiding group projects

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

## job location: Madison, Wisconsin

StartingBlock Madison serves the metro Madison, Wisconsin region, with its [office](#) located in downtown Madison.

Due to the place-based nature of the work, this is an onsite position whose responsibilities cannot be fulfilled remotely. So the Executive Director is expected to reside in the Madison metro area, and to commute to the StartingBlock office daily.

This is a national search, and StartingBlock is ready to offer financial assistance for relocation.

### TO MADISON BY CAR:

From Milwaukee: 79 miles, 1½ hours

From Dubuque: 91 miles, 1¾ hours

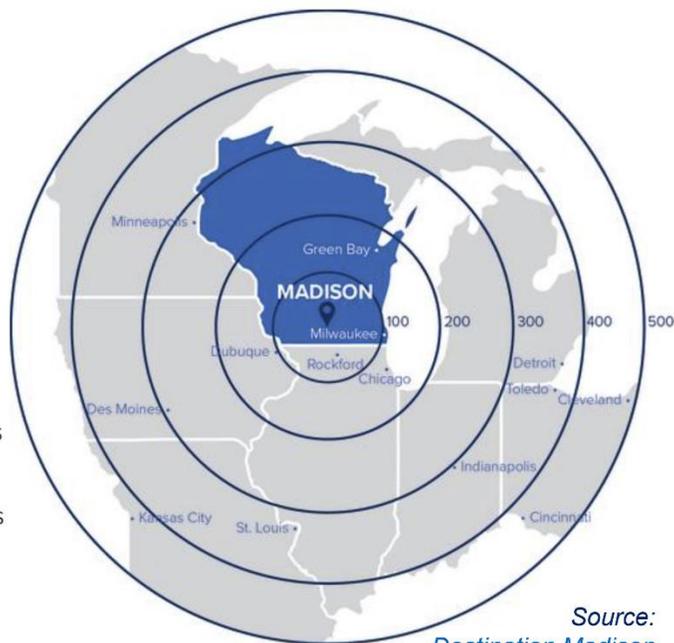
From Chicago: 147 miles, 2½ hours

From Green Bay: 140 miles, 2½ hours

From Minneapolis: 273 miles, 4½ hours

From Des Moines: 292 miles, 4¾ hours

From St. Louis: 359 miles, 5½ hours



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## about Madison, Wisconsin

Madison, Wisconsin is a vibrant city of over 250,000 residents. Its Dane County metro area is home to over 550,000 residents, making it Wisconsin's second largest metro, after Milwaukee.

Madison is the capital of Wisconsin, a world-class [research & technology university](#) city, and a thriving creative-class hub.



Nestled on a chain of scenic lakes, the Madison region has been home to the [Ho-Chunk nation](#) for over 11,000 years. Its Ho-Chunk name is [Dejope](#), meaning “Four Lakes.” The region has the world's largest concentration of [Indian effigy mounds](#). There are [dozens](#) on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus alone.

Madison is consistently named a [best place to live](#) in US nationwide rankings and surveys. Madison earns accolades for its [green](#) & [healthy](#) lifestyle, its [gender parity at work](#), its [educational attainment](#), its [family-friendliness](#), its [sports](#), its great [beer](#) scene, even its [happiness](#). (See Madison [rankings](#), [fun facts](#), and [things to do](#))

Madison's local economy and job market are among the strongest in the US. Dane County (metro Madison) had just [2.2% unemployment in May 2022](#). (Compare to unemployment rates of [2.9% statewide](#) and [3.6% nationwide](#)). National and global companies headquartered in metro Madison include [Epic Systems](#), [American Family Insurance](#), [Exact Sciences](#), [Lands End](#), [CUNA Mutual](#), [Promega](#), [ETC](#), and [Sub-Zero](#).

Madison has a vibrant nonprofit sector. Locals like to say Madison has the most nonprofits per capita of any US city. (Don't tell them [this report](#) ranks Madison #2!)

With a median home cost of \$328,700, Madison offers a lower [cost of living](#) than many desirable metros.

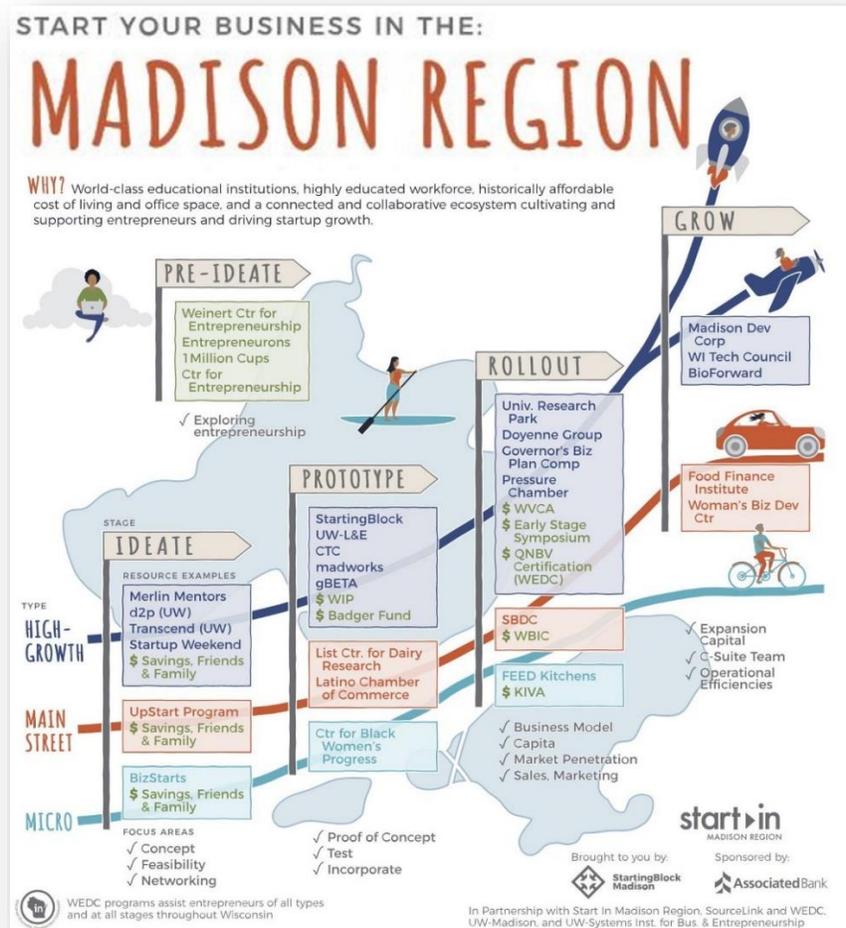
Madison's racial and ethnic [demographics](#): 73% non-Hispanic White, 9% Asian, 7% Black, 7% Hispanic, 6% other.

Business and civic organizations active in Madison include [Downtown Madison Inc.](#), the [Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Madison Black Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County](#), the [Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce](#), and the [Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce](#).

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

## about the Madison startup & entrepreneurial ecosystem

Madison is gaining increasing recognition as [one of America's top rising startup hubs](#).



Madison's startup rankings include:

- [#1 untapped city for startups](#)
- [#7 Midwest startup city](#)
- [#12 in the US and #14 in the world for venture capital deals per capita](#)

Madison's assets include a well educated talent pool, low costs of doing business, and a world-class research & technology feeder university.

Employment Opportunity: Executive Director at [StartingBlock Madison](#)

## compensation and benefits

StartingBlock Madison's Executive Director position has a salary of \$100,000.

StartingBlock Madison employee benefits include employer-subsidized group health plan; dental and vision plans; short- and long-term disability insurance; and life insurance.



## interested?

Please **apply confidentially**: [bit.ly/SBM-apply](https://bit.ly/SBM-apply)

The position is open until filled. It was announced on July 18, 2022. Rather than setting an application deadline, we are considering applications and holding interviews on a rolling basis. Our goal is to fill this position by mid-November. For best consideration, those interested are encouraged to apply promptly; and to complete the optional questions in the application, in lieu of a cover letter.

StartingBlock Madison has exclusively retained [Peter Gray Executive Search](#) to conduct the search for its new Executive Director. Peter Gray Executive Search is a social impact executive search firm, and StartingBlock Madison member, in Madison, Wisconsin.

StartingBlock Madison and Peter Gray Executive Search are equal opportunity employers, committed to attracting candidates representing a diverse range of backgrounds. We promote excellence through diversity and encourage all qualified individuals to apply.

## about peter gray executive search



**Peter Gray** (he/him) is a recovering Wall Street recruiter who now recruits social impact leaders and fight bias in hiring.

As founder and CEO of [Peter Gray Executive Search](#), he guides nonprofit organizations and social impact employers through [leadership succession](#) and other [strategic hiring](#). He also [trains](#) employers on diversifying hiring outcomes, and [coaches](#) individuals on overcoming bias in job search and career advancement.

Peter began his career in executive search at Korn Ferry in New York City. He gives back as a volunteer adviser, fundraiser, and board member for nonprofit and civic organizations. He chairs the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County's [Move4BGC](#) campaign, which has raised over \$8 million for youth development.

Peter holds a BA from Harvard University, and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

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