



Position Specification

Freedom House
President

Our Client

Freedom House is a nonpartisan, international nonprofit organization dedicated to the expansion and defense of freedom and the creation of a world where all are free.

Founded in 1941, with Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie serving as the honorary co-chairs, Freedom House's earliest mission was to mobilize policymakers and the largely isolationist American public to engage in the fight against Nazi Germany and the fascist threat to US security and democratic values. During the Cold War and its aftermath, Freedom House's work has been grounded in the core conviction that all people should be free. Since its founding, Freedom House has established itself as the leading nonpartisan American organization devoted to the support and defense of freedom around the world.

Freedom House's diverse initiatives, informing the world about threats to democracy, mobilizing leaders to counter those threats, and providing assistance to a vast network of activists and organizations fighting for democracy and human rights, are of ever greater global significance and prominence. According to Freedom House's flagship annual report, *Freedom in the World*, the most widely read and cited research of its kind, global freedom declined for the 18th consecutive year in 2023. Today, the international forces of authoritarian repression are ever more aggressively mounting, and often coordinating, multi-faceted assaults on free and democratic societies. The mission of Freedom House has in turn acquired increasing urgency.

Freedom House's nonpartisan research on the state of global freedom and its programmatic work around the world informs its advocacy for policies that strengthen democracy and human rights. Freedom House works to connect defenders of democracy with policymakers, so they hear firsthand from people around the world. As a leading provider of emergency assistance to at-risk human rights defenders globally, Freedom House works with thousands of activists, organizations, and victims of religious persecution to ensure that their important work continues unabated, despite often taking place in the most challenging environments.

Freedom House is overseen by a Board of Trustees from across the political spectrum, and from all sectors of society. It includes academic experts, former government leaders and diplomats, business and nonprofit leaders, and human rights defenders. Co-chaired by Jane Harman, who served in Congress for nine terms, and former senior US government official Wendell L. Willkie II, who served in the executive branch of two administrations, in addition to being a key business leader, the board shares a steadfast commitment to the belief that the promotion of democracy is essential to achieve peace, prosperity and freedom around the world. The Executive Board, a subset of the Board of Trustees, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution's leadership, integrity, and financial health. The members of the Board of Trustees have historically been drawn from a bipartisan group of leading pro-democracy voices and have included prominent leaders such as: Bayard Rustin, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Max Kampelman, Malcolm Forbes Jr., Fiorello La Guardia, Ralph Bunche, Anthony Lake, Peggy Noonan, and Andrew Young, among many others.

Freedom House has a total budget of \$100 million and more than 300 employees across the globe who are typically on the front lines in the struggle to advance the ideals of free societies. The organization's history, reputation, and dedication to a nonpartisan mission continues to guide its future.

The Role

Based in Washington, D.C. with a dozen field offices around the world, the President reports to the Executive Board, and works closely with the Board of Trustees. The President has responsibility and accountability for the strategic, programmatic, financial, and management operations of the organization.

Specifically, the President will:

- Embody the organization's nonpartisan history as it strategically confronts the key threats to freedom around the world;
- Provide inspirational organizational management and visionary leadership;
- Maintain a culture of scholarly excellence and intellectual vibrancy across the institution's research, advocacy, and programmatic areas;
- Strengthen collaboration among and between research, advocacy, and operational departments;
- Grow the institution's reach and impact through its research, programming, engagement with audiences, including media and government;
- Collaborate with the executive leadership team and the board to achieve unity of purpose;
- Diversify the organization's financial support by cultivating and stewarding private philanthropy as well as public funding;
- Maintain and build upon Freedom House's legacy as a leading voice on expanding and defending freedom globally; and
- Ensure that the organization is transparent, aligned with the stated mission, values, and vision, and led by dedicated, diverse, and creative staff.

Candidate Profile

The next President of Freedom House will be an inspirational leader who will have the demonstrated ability to earn the respect of policymakers, experts and leaders in civil society across the political spectrum. The President will possess an intellectual depth, practical experience, and demonstrated management capability to ensure Freedom House's ability to continue to produce the highest quality research, policy recommendations, programmatic work that will expand and defend freedom globally.

While no candidate will possess all key attributes, the following capacities and qualities will contribute to success in the role:

Visionary Leadership: The President will be able to define and lead an inspiring vision for the organization. The ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker, able to confront current challenges and those that will emerge over the next decade. They will be open to innovative ideas, leading during a period of growth and change, transparency in decision making, and collaboration with a broad array of internal and external stakeholders. A tolerance for ambiguity and an ability to work through challenges is important as well as a demonstrated willingness to examine past practices and recalibrate if necessary.

Credibility and Commitment to the Mission: The candidate will have the capacity and commitment to exemplify Freedom House's mission to expand and defend freedom globally. The ideal candidate is committed to upholding Freedom House's nonpartisan reputation and has an established record working in a bipartisan fashion. The next President will need to be credible across the full range of Freedom House's global and domestic areas of work, and have a strong, well-informed grasp of global political, economic, and cultural issues.

Beyond Partisanship: The right candidate for the presidency will bring an unwavering commitment to its mission but also be able to think through difficult issues based on the merits, independent of partisanship and the loudest voices. The established reputation of any candidate must be able to maintain Freedom House's legacy of trust, non-partisanship, and the integrity of its mission to defend and expand freedom globally.

Fundraising: A strong candidate will be strongly committed to raising public and private financial resources, as well as an understanding of the importance of managing a development office, including donor cultivation and stewardship. They should have experience making direct requests to donors for resources, while also maintaining a reputation for protecting organizational independence.

Galvanizing Communications and Influence: Strong candidates will be able to convey a sense of excitement and purpose about the institution. A strong candidate will be a highly effective communicator, before larger audiences and in private settings, both internally and externally. This individual will have a level of comfort with reaching reach diverse audiences around the globe using an array of media. She or he will possess an ability to inspire trust through compelling influence, galvanizing connections, and interpersonal charisma.

Strategic Acumen and Judgement: The next President must bring a powerful sense of personal and professional integrity and ethics. This individual will possess the ability to make clear and timely decisions and to set limits even in the face of resistance. One should be a capable listener, and a confident and selfless leader with the ability to build consensus and create networks and teams to accomplish objectives. One should be able to bridge political divides while being anchored in enduring, principles of democracy.

Management and Organizational Leadership: A strong candidate will have relevant experience in managing people, organizations, and a variety of stakeholders, including staff, a Board of Trustees, elected officials, policymakers, and the donor community. An inclusive and transparent leader, the President will be solutions-driven, collegial, and pay attention to organizational culture and morale. The future President will bring a demonstrated ability to recruit, motivate, and retain professional staff, and a record of effective delegation, ensuring accountability, and allocating resources to achieve results.

Emotional Intelligence: The President must have an unquestioned commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, displaying a global understanding and sensitivities. This leader will clearly be capable of translating an organization's values into specific strategies and actions, and a commitment to acting ethically to safeguard open inquiry and freedom of expression.

Contact

For more information, to submit recommendations, or if you are interested in applying to this position, please direct inquiries to: FreedomHouse@RussellReynolds.com