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Executive Search

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CANADIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer

Location: Calgary, Alberta

About CIWA

For more than 40 years, the Canadian Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) has stood with immigrant and refugee women and their families as they build new lives in Canada. Founded in 1982, CIWA is specifically designed around the unique needs, barriers, and strengths of immigrant and refugee women and girls. It is a significant and impactful gender-specific settlement agency in Canada, having strong relationships with its funders, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

We believe that when immigrant women thrive, their families and communities thrive with them. That belief shapes everything we do, from our first conversation with a newcomer to the moment she steps into a leadership role in her new community.

Our Approach

CIWA's work is guided by a simple but powerful theory of change: every woman who walks through our doors is on a journey from settlement to integration to belonging to contribution.

- Settlement — We meet women at their point of need, helping them navigate the practical realities of a new country: housing, language, employment, health, and safety.
- Integration — We help women build the skills, confidence, and connections to fully participate in Canadian life — in the workforce, in their communities, and in the systems around them.
- Belonging — We foster spaces where women feel seen, supported, and rooted — free from isolation and equipped with community and culturally grounded support.
- Contribution — We invest in women's leadership so they can give back — as mentors, employees, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders — shaping the country they now call home.

What We Offer

CIWA delivers programs and services across the province, supporting women and their families at every age and stage of life from newly arrived youth to seniors, from single mothers to entrepreneurs. Our team and community of interpreters collectively speak 120+ languages, ensuring no woman is left without a voice in her own settlement journey. CIWA recognizes that childcare and first-language support can be important enablers of access to services. Childcare is available to eligible clients participating in our language programs, and CIWA works to reduce language barriers by providing first-language support where available.

In 2024–2025, CIWA served 26,772 clients and family members from 139 countries, supported by more than 200 staff (many of them former clients and volunteers) and an annual budget of approximately $16 million.

CIWA is committed to empowering immigrant and refugee women to settle, integrate, belong, and contribute - fully and on their own terms - to the country they now call home. We are proud to be a provincial and national leader in gender-specific, outcome-based settlement services, and prouder still of the tens of thousands of women who have used our programs as a launching point, not just for settling in Canada, but for truly belonging here.

To learn more, visit www.ciwa.org

A Pivotal Moment for CIWA

CIWA enters this leadership transition from a position of strength: a clear and enduring identity, a respected brand, a healthy workplace culture, talented program leaders, and strong data and reporting capabilities. It does so at a time of real change for the settlement sector. Shifts in national immigration levels and policies have reshaped funding across the country. IRCC, CIWA's largest funder, has adjusted its commitments in step with lower immigration targets and moved from five-year to three-year funding agreements, and government sources currently account for close to 90 percent of CIWA's revenue.

The Board is clear about what this moment calls for: focus, financial and commercial discipline, and a sustainable, diversified revenue model that will allow CIWA to serve immigrant women and families for decades to come. The question for CIWA now is where to concentrate its energy and resources for the greatest impact.

CIWA's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan concludes in March 2027, and the incoming CEO will lead the development of the next plan.

The Opportunity

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provides strategic and operational leadership to advance CIWA's mission and long-term sustainability. Reporting to the Board of Directors and leading CIWA's executive leadership team, the CEO translates approved direction into measurable results and ensures that CIWA's people, finances, programs, facilities, and systems remain responsive to evolving client needs.

The CEO is a visible and collaborative leader who inspires trust, exercises sound judgment, demonstrates strong financial stewardship, and delivers meaningful results. Building on CIWA's significant progress in advancing a culture of internal equity, the CEO will sustain and deepen this work through equitable leadership practices, fair and transparent decision-making, and clear organizational accountability.

This is a rare opportunity for a values-driven executive to lead one of Canada's most respected settlement organizations into its next chapter: to build on a strong cultural foundation, reimagine how the organization is structured and resourced, and position CIWA for long-term sustainability and impact. The Board welcomes a fresh perspective and will support the new CEO in taking a thoughtful look at every part of the organization.

Key Priorities

In the first 12 to 18 months, the CEO will focus on:

- **Revenue generation and fund development.** Moving CIWA from a reactive to a strategic, proactive approach to fundraising, diversifying revenue across foundations, corporate partners, individual donors, new government partners, and earned-revenue opportunities, and building the capacity and culture to sustain it.

- **Commercial and financial stewardship.** Bringing sound business judgment to significant commercial matters, including CIWA's long-term facility lease, the future of its physical space, and the sustainability of its childcare investment.
- **Program portfolio review.** Leading a robust assessment of CIWA's programs, to sharpen focus on the areas of greatest impact and mission alignment, and using these insights to shape the next strategic plan.
- **Organizational and leadership assessment.** Evaluating CIWA's structure and leadership capacity to play to people's strengths, and putting succession plans in place.
- **Strategy and Board partnership.** Leading the development of CIWA's next strategic plan in close partnership with an engaged and highly skilled Board, and making full use of the Board's expertise.
- **Culture and connection.** Sustaining CIWA's strong progress on workplace culture, translating the vision clearly at every level of the organization, and being a calm, visible, and reassuring presence for staff through transition.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic leadership and Board partnership

- Partner with the Board to uphold CIWA's mission, shape strategy, and implement approved plans and policies.
- Lead the development of CIWA's next strategic plan, informed by a comprehensive review of the program portfolio, organizational structure, and funding environment.
- Recommend priorities informed by rigorous analysis of opportunities, risks, performance, and resource requirements, and provide the Board with timely, transparent reporting.
- Translate strategy into well-resourced annual and multi-year plans with measurable outcomes, clear accountability, and regular progress reporting.
- Provide consistent organizational direction while adapting thoughtfully to evidence, changing circumstances, and Board guidance.

External relations, advocacy, and public profile

- Represent CIWA with integrity and champion the interests of immigrant and refugee women, girls, and families.
- Cultivate trusted relationships with government, elected officials, funders, corporations, community agencies, educators, service providers, and sector networks.
- Advance CIWA's policy, program, funding, and public-profile objectives through advocacy, sector leadership, communications, media relations, and stakeholder engagement.

- Position CIWA as a national thought leader on the settlement and integration of immigrant women through partnerships, networks, and policy influence.

Organizational and operational management

- Provide strategic oversight of CIWA's operations to ensure that programs, services, systems, and resources remain responsive to client needs, sector developments, and funder expectations.
- Assess and, where needed, redesign the organizational and executive structure so that CIWA is set up to deliver on its priorities, with clear roles, strong bench strength, and deliberate succession planning.
- Provide leadership on facilities and other significant commercial matters, including CIWA's long-term lease and the effective use of its physical space.
- Ensure robust policies, records, confidentiality, risk-management practices, and compliance with legal, safety, privacy, employment, and funding obligations.
- Use outcome measurement, evaluation, and client feedback to strengthen programs, guide resource allocation, support reporting, and foster innovation.
- Lead focused, well-prepared meetings that respect participants' time and conclude with clear decisions, accountable owners, deliverables, and deadlines.
- Monitor commitments, address missed deadlines constructively, remove barriers where appropriate, and ensure follow-through on revised expectations.
- Apply disciplined planning and time management to deploy organizational resources effectively.
- Oversee the preparation of CIWA's annual report and other public-facing materials.

Financial stewardship and fund development

- Provide executive oversight of CIWA's financial health, planning, resource allocation, risk, and long-term sustainability in partnership with the CFO.
- Apply deep financial expertise to ensure a thorough understanding of financial performance, budgeting, cash flow, funding commitments, IRCC policies and requirements, and compliance obligations, ensuring that reports, audits, proposals, and deliverables are accurate and timely.
- Advance sustainable revenue diversification and reduce CIWA's reliance on government funding through government, foundations, corporations, donors, sponsorships, grants, earned-revenue opportunities, and strategic partnerships.
- Build a proactive, strategic fund development culture, and strengthen staff capacity in proposal development, fund development, outcome measurement, and funder compliance.

People leadership and culture

- Maintain a visible and accessible leadership presence on-site, engaging with staff at every level, fostering a culture of trust, equity, inclusion, learning, and shared accountability.
- Build on CIWA's cultural progress, fostering a mindset of possibility rather than scarcity and a workplace where every voice is heard.
- Provide leadership and direction to the executive team, set clear expectations, delegate effectively, recognize and develop leaders, and address challenges and barriers constructively.
- Provide executive oversight for the organization's talent strategy through the HR function including recruitment, onboarding, performance management, professional development, succession planning, evaluation, and personnel-record practices.
- Resolve conflict in a timely manner and with fairness, modelling clear, transparent, and respectful communication.

Qualifications and Experience

- A relevant university degree or an equivalent combination of education, leadership experience, and demonstrated achievement.
- A minimum of ten years of progressive senior leadership experience, including significant executive responsibility, gained in the private, public, or nonprofit sector. Experience working with a volunteer Board is an asset.
- Demonstrated success leading a complex organization or major portfolio with accountability for people, budgets, programs, operations, and strategy.
- Strong business and commercial acumen, including experience with significant commercial decisions such as real estate, leases, or major contract negotiations.
- Knowledge of the settlement or immigrant-serving sector, and experience with IRCC or other government-funded programs, is an asset. Leaders from business and adjacent sectors who bring a fresh perspective are encouraged to apply.
- Demonstrated ability to oversee nonprofit finances, grants, contribution agreements, audits, compliance, strategic planning, evaluation, outcomes, and risk.
- A track record of assessing an organization and leading structural and cultural change with both sensitivity and decisiveness.
- A proven record of success in fundraising, revenue generation, and in cultivating relationships with government, funders, corporations, and community partners.
- Strong political acumen and highly developed advocacy, leadership, communication, conflict-resolution, analytical, and decision-making skills.

- Lived experience of immigration, whether personally or through one's family, and a deep understanding of the journeys of the women and families CIWA serves, is strongly valued.

Leadership Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- A deep commitment to CIWA's mission and to the success of immigrant and refugee women and families.
- A collaborative and accessible leadership style, balanced by timely decision-making, clear direction, and accountable execution.
- Decisiveness and action orientation: the ability to quickly assess the landscape, build a clear plan, make difficult decisions, and stand by them.
- The ability to move fluidly between the strategic and the operational, translating a compelling vision into clear priorities at every level of the organization and driving crisp execution.
- A calm, steady, and empowering presence that builds trust, develops people, and brings energy and reassurance through change.
- Integrity, sound judgment, discretion, fairness, cultural humility, and respect for intersecting identities.
- Initiative, resilience, compassion, curiosity, and a consistent focus on measurable results.

Location and Compensation

This role is based in Calgary, Alberta. CIWA's CEO is a visible, everyday presence in the office and an active member of the Calgary community. Candidates from outside Calgary must be prepared to relocate on commencement of the role. CIWA offers a competitive total rewards package.

Express Your Interest

Email a cover letter and a tailored resume to Shalini Bhatty or Chelsey Howarth at apply@leadersinternational.com, including the job title in the subject line of the email.

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www.leadersinternational.com