

Liberty Youth Ranch

Director of Programs

Job Description

Location: Bonita Springs, Florida

Division/Department: Residential Care

Position Type: Full-Time, Exempt

Reports To: President & Chief Executive Officer

Work Location: In Person

Salary Range: \$90,000 - \$110,000/annually

Benefits: Health, Dental, Vision, 401K. 2 Weeks' Vacation, 1 Week of Sick Leave

About Liberty Youth Ranch

Liberty Youth Ranch (LYR) is a Christ-centered nonprofit organization dedicated to providing vulnerable children with a loving, stable home and the opportunity to build a successful future.

Established in Bonita Springs, Florida in 2003, Liberty Youth Ranch provides residential care for boys and girls in need of a safe, nurturing, and family-centered environment. The Ranch serves children holistically, addressing their physical, educational, emotional, social, and spiritual needs while helping them develop the skills, relationships, character, and confidence necessary for long-term independence and success.

Liberty Youth Ranch operates a 156-acre campus in Bonita Springs and provides children with a peaceful, stable environment where they can experience family, faith, hope, healing, and opportunity. LYR is privately funded and has maintained a strong commitment to responsible financial stewardship, balanced budgets, and debt-free operations.

LYR also operates the Liberty Youth Ranch Upscale Shop, a social enterprise that generates financial support for the ongoing operating costs of the Ranch while providing an additional connection between Liberty Youth Ranch and the surrounding community.

At the center of Liberty Youth Ranch is an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and the belief that every child possesses God-given uniqueness, dignity, and inherent worth.

Position Overview

Liberty Youth Ranch is seeking an experienced, compassionate, highly capable **Director of Programs** to provide senior leadership for the organization's residential child-care program.

Reporting directly to the President & CEO, the Director of Programs is responsible for the leadership, quality, effectiveness, safety, compliance, development, and continuous improvement of Liberty Youth Ranch's residential care program.

The Director will ensure that every child entrusted to Liberty Youth Ranch receives coordinated, individualized, Christ-centered care consistent with the mission, values, policies, standards, and philosophy of the organization.

The Director of Programs will provide leadership for Houseparents, counseling and therapeutic services, admissions and intake, individualized care and treatment planning, program staffing, child records and documentation, staff and Houseparent development, program compliance, child safeguarding, referral relationships, program outcomes, transitions, and continuous program improvement.

This individual will serve as a key member of Liberty Youth Ranch's senior leadership team and will work collaboratively with the President & CEO, Director of Operations, Director of Facilities, counselors, Houseparents, administrative personnel, schools, healthcare providers, families, referral sources, volunteers, and outside professionals.

The Director of Programs will focus primarily on the children, people, services, systems, and outcomes associated with Liberty Youth Ranch's residential program. Facilities, maintenance, grounds, and infrastructure are the responsibility of the Director of Facilities, while broader administrative and organizational operations are coordinated through the Director of Operations.

The successful candidate will understand that this position represents both a significant professional responsibility and a Christian ministry calling. The Director will help ensure that Liberty Youth Ranch provides an exceptional environment in which vulnerable children can experience stability, safety, family, faith, healing, growth, and hope for the future.

Residential Program Leadership

The Director of Programs will provide overall leadership for the quality and effectiveness of Liberty Youth Ranch's residential care program.

The Director will ensure that the organization's philosophy of care is consistently understood and implemented throughout each residential home and across all aspects of the children's experience.

The Director will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of residential programming and identify opportunities to strengthen services, systems, practices, training, communication, and outcomes.

This individual will ensure appropriate coordination among Houseparents, counselors, schools, healthcare providers, families, referral sources, and other professionals involved in each child's care.

The Director will promote consistency across residential homes while recognizing the individual needs, backgrounds, abilities, personalities, and circumstances of each child.

The Director will work closely with the President & CEO and leadership team to evaluate current programs, identify emerging needs, establish program priorities, and develop initiatives that strengthen Liberty Youth Ranch's ability to serve children and families.

Individualized Care & Treatment Planning

The Director of Programs will ensure that every child receives thoughtful, individualized, coordinated care based upon his or her needs, circumstances, strengths, challenges, goals, and developmental stage.

The Director will oversee the development, implementation, review, and appropriate documentation of individual treatment and care plans.

The Director will ensure that required assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, reviews, incident documentation, educational information, healthcare information, and other appropriate records are completed accurately and maintained according to organizational and applicable regulatory requirements.

The Director will coordinate regular case reviews to evaluate each child's progress and identify changes or additional support that may be needed.

The Director will promote communication and collaboration among the adults responsible for each child's care so that Houseparents, counselors, educators, healthcare professionals, and other appropriate individuals are working toward consistent goals.

Counseling Services

The Director of Programs will provide programmatic oversight for the counseling services if needed to children at Liberty Youth Ranch.

The Director will ensure that counseling services are appropriately integrated into each child's overall plan of care and coordinated with the child's residential, educational, social, behavioral, developmental, and spiritual needs.

The Director will work with counseling professionals to evaluate the effectiveness of services and identify opportunities to strengthen support for children and Houseparents.

The Director will remain informed regarding effective practices in residential childcare, trauma-responsive care, youth development, family support, and related areas while ensuring that programs remain consistent with Liberty Youth Ranch's Christian mission and philosophy of care.

Houseparent Leadership & Development

Houseparents play a central role in the Liberty Youth Ranch model. The Director of Programs will provide leadership, support, development, and accountability to ensure that Houseparents are equipped to provide children with a safe, stable, nurturing, structured, and Christ-centered family environment.

The Director will participate in the recruitment and selection of Houseparents in collaboration with organizational leadership and appropriate administrative personnel.

The Director will oversee Houseparent onboarding, orientation, ongoing training, coaching, development, and performance management.

The Director will establish regular communication with Houseparents and create opportunities for Houseparents to raise concerns, discuss children's needs, receive support, and strengthen their effectiveness.

The Director will ensure that Houseparents receive required annual training as well as ongoing development in areas such as child development, trauma-responsive care, communication, behavior management, conflict resolution, safeguarding, emergency procedures, organizational policies, documentation, and other areas relevant to residential care.

The Director will work proactively to strengthen Houseparent retention, morale, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

The Director will coordinate appropriate staffing and relief coverage systems so that residential homes maintain required supervision and continuity of care.

While the Director of Programs may assist directly during an unusual emergency or significant staffing situation, the Director and the Director's spouse will not serve as the routine substitute staffing model for Houseparent days off, vacations, illnesses, or vacancies.

Admissions, Referrals & Intake

The Director of Programs will oversee Liberty Youth Ranch's child referral, screening, admissions, intake, and placement processes.

The Director will ensure that prospective placements are evaluated carefully and consistently based upon Liberty Youth Ranch's established admissions criteria, program capabilities, mission, available resources, and the needs and safety of both the prospective child and children currently residing at the Ranch.

The Director will coordinate the collection and review of appropriate educational, medical, psychological, behavioral, legal, family, and treatment information necessary to make informed admissions decisions.

The Director will participate in or oversee admissions interviews and ensure appropriate communication with parents, guardians, referring professionals, and other relevant parties.

The Director will cultivate and maintain a healthy referral pipeline and appropriate waiting list consistent with organizational needs.

The Director will develop and maintain productive relationships with potential referral sources, including schools, guidance counselors, churches, pastors, therapists, social-

service professionals, community organizations, families, and other individuals and organizations serving children.

The Director will work toward appropriate program occupancy goals established by organizational leadership while ensuring that admissions decisions are never driven solely by occupancy. The appropriateness of the placement, Liberty Youth Ranch's ability to serve the child effectively, and the safety and well-being of current residents will remain primary considerations.

Child Safeguarding & Protection

The Director of Programs will provide leadership in maintaining a culture in which the safety, dignity, rights, and well-being of every child are paramount.

The Director will ensure that employees, Houseparents, volunteers, and other appropriate individuals understand and consistently follow Liberty Youth Ranch's child protection and safeguarding policies.

The Director will ensure compliance with applicable mandatory reporting requirements and organizational procedures regarding suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, inappropriate conduct, boundary violations, and other child-safety concerns.

The Director will promote appropriate professional and relational boundaries between children and employees, volunteers, Houseparents, visitors, and others interacting with residents.

The Director will review significant child-related incidents, identify patterns or areas of concern, recommend corrective actions when appropriate, and immediately communicate serious matters to the President & CEO and other appropriate authorities consistent with applicable requirements.

The Director will continually evaluate safeguarding practices and recommend improvements designed to strengthen the protection of children.

Program Compliance & Quality Assurance

The Director of Programs will ensure that Liberty Youth Ranch's residential program operates consistently with applicable licensing standards, organizational policies, regulatory requirements, and established standards of care.

The Director will oversee preparation for program-related licensing inspections, reviews, audits, and other applicable compliance activities.

The Director will ensure that required child records, treatment documentation, incident reports, training records, and other program documentation are accurate, complete, current, confidential, and appropriately maintained.

The Director will regularly review program policies and procedures and recommend revisions when necessary.

The Director will ensure that Houseparents, counselors, employees, and volunteers receive required training regarding policies, safety, child protection, confidentiality, documentation, licensing requirements, emergency procedures, and other program standards.

The Director will promptly communicate significant compliance concerns to the President & CEO and develop appropriate corrective action plans when necessary.

Program Outcomes & Continuous Improvement

The Director of Programs will establish and maintain meaningful systems for measuring the effectiveness and impact of Liberty Youth Ranch's residential program.

The Director will collect, analyze, and report appropriate program data to evaluate child progress, program quality, operational effectiveness, and organizational impact.

Measures may include educational progress, behavioral and emotional development, stability, interpersonal relationships, life-skills development, placement stability, successful transitions, program completion, Houseparent stability, admissions and occupancy, and other appropriate indicators.

The Director will use program data, staff feedback, child outcomes, incident trends, compliance findings, and professional judgment to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

The Director will periodically provide the President & CEO with clear reports regarding program performance, emerging needs, significant risks, child outcomes, staffing concerns, and recommended program improvements.

The Director will also help organizational leadership appropriately communicate program impact to the Board, donors, foundations, churches, community partners, and other stakeholders while maintaining all required confidentiality regarding individual children.

Education, Life Skills & Child Development

The Director of Programs will help ensure that each child receives appropriate support for academic achievement, personal development, life skills, healthy relationships, and preparation for adulthood.

The Director will work with Houseparents, schools, educators, tutors, counselors, and other appropriate resources to address educational needs and academic challenges.

The Director will ensure that children have appropriate opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, recreation, church involvement, community activities, service opportunities, and other experiences that contribute to healthy development.

The Director will support the development of age-appropriate life skills including personal responsibility, household responsibilities, financial literacy, decision-making, communication, work ethic, relationship skills, and preparation for independent adulthood.

When Ranch chores, agriculture, animal care, grounds activities, or other work-related experiences are incorporated into children's programming, the Director of Programs will oversee the developmental and programmatic purpose of those activities. The Director of Facilities will retain responsibility for determining appropriate facilities practices, equipment requirements, and related safety considerations.

Transition, Independent Living & Aftercare

The Director of Programs will ensure that children and young adults receive thoughtful preparation for transitions from Liberty Youth Ranch.

Transition planning should begin well before a child's anticipated departure and should reflect the child's age, developmental needs, family circumstances, education, employment goals, relationships, resources, and level of independence.

For youth approaching adulthood, the Director will help ensure appropriate preparation for college, vocational education, employment, military service, independent living, financial responsibility, transportation, housing, healthy relationships, and community involvement.

The Director will work with Houseparents, counselors, families, schools, community partners, and other appropriate resources to develop transition plans designed to promote stability and long-term success.

The Director will also help develop appropriate methods for maintaining relationships with and evaluating longer-term outcomes for former residents when consistent with organizational policy and the individual's circumstances.

Emergency & Crisis Response

Because Liberty Youth Ranch provides residential care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the Director of Programs will play a significant leadership role in child-related emergency and crisis response.

The Director will participate in an established leadership on-call structure and will be available to respond appropriately to significant child-care, behavioral, staffing, safeguarding, or program emergencies.

The Director will ensure that Houseparents and program staff understand procedures involving missing or runaway children, medical emergencies, behavioral crises, severe weather, evacuation, emergency relocation, medication needs, child accountability, family or guardian communication, and continuity of care.

The Director will work collaboratively with the Director of Operations and Director of Facilities regarding organization-wide emergency planning. The Director of Programs will maintain primary responsibility for the programmatic and child-care response during emergencies.

Program Staff & Volunteer Leadership

The Director of Programs will supervise assigned program personnel, which may include counselors, Houseparents, residential support personnel, and child-care volunteers.

The Director will participate in recruiting, interviewing, selecting, onboarding, developing, evaluating, and, when necessary and in accordance with organizational policies, disciplining or recommending termination of program employees.

The Director will establish clear expectations and provide regular coaching, communication, feedback, and accountability.

Formal performance evaluations will be completed according to Liberty Youth Ranch policies and established timelines.

The Director will help create a healthy program culture characterized by teamwork, communication, professionalism, compassion, accountability, consistency, mutual respect, and commitment to the mission.

The Director will oversee the appropriate recruitment, screening, training, assignment, supervision, and evaluation of child-care volunteers in coordination with organizational policies and administrative processes.

Collaboration With Organizational Leadership

The Director of Programs will serve as a member of Liberty Youth Ranch's senior leadership team and work collaboratively with the President & CEO, Director of Operations, Director of Facilities, and other organizational leaders.

The Director of Programs will maintain primary leadership responsibility for residential programming, children, Houseparents, counseling and therapeutic coordination, admissions, program staffing, program compliance, child safeguarding, and program outcomes.

The Director of Operations will provide leadership for organization-wide administrative and operational systems, while the Director of Facilities will provide leadership for buildings, grounds, maintenance, equipment, infrastructure, and facilities operations.

The three leadership functions will work collaboratively when responsibilities intersect while maintaining clear accountability within their respective areas.

The Director of Programs will participate in organizational strategic planning and provide the President & CEO with insight regarding program needs, opportunities, risks, staffing, capacity, and future development.

Community & External Relationships

The Director of Programs will represent Liberty Youth Ranch professionally and effectively with families, referral sources, schools, churches, community organizations, professionals, and other external partners.

The Director may periodically participate in presentations, community events, church gatherings, donor events, tours, or other activities that communicate Liberty Youth Ranch's mission and program.

The Director will be able to explain the Liberty Youth Ranch model clearly and compellingly while maintaining appropriate confidentiality regarding the children and families served.

Initial Priorities

During the first 3 to 6 months, the Director of Programs will develop a thorough understanding of Liberty Youth Ranch's children, Houseparents, residential homes, counseling services, admissions process, policies, organizational culture, referral network, compliance requirements, and philosophy of care.

The Director will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the existing residential program and identify opportunities to strengthen program quality, consistency, communication, documentation, training, staffing, safeguarding, and outcomes.

The Director will evaluate Houseparent recruitment, onboarding, training, support, performance management, relief coverage, and retention practices and develop recommendations for strengthening the long-term sustainability of the Houseparent model.

The Director will review the admissions and referral process, evaluate the referral pipeline, and develop strategies for maintaining appropriate program occupancy while protecting the quality and appropriateness of placements.

The Director will review treatment and care planning, case review practices, child records, progress documentation, incident reporting, and related systems.

The Director will evaluate current child safeguarding policies and practices and recommend improvements where appropriate.

The Director will assess compliance readiness and establish systems that promote consistent adherence to applicable standards and requirements.

The Director will develop or strengthen meaningful program outcome measures and establish regular reporting to the President & CEO.

The Director will evaluate transition, independent living, and aftercare practices and recommend opportunities to better prepare older youth for successful adulthood.

The Director will identify additional opportunities to strengthen Liberty Youth Ranch's residential model while preserving the family-centered, Christ-centered philosophy that distinguishes the organization.

Measures of Success

Success in this position will ultimately be measured by the quality of care and developmental progress experienced by the children entrusted to Liberty Youth Ranch.

Children will experience a safe, stable, nurturing, structured, and Christ-centered residential environment.

Houseparents will be well selected, trained, supported, developed, and held accountable, and Liberty Youth Ranch will maintain strong Houseparent stability and retention.

Individual care and treatment plans will be thoughtful, current, coordinated, measurable, and consistently implemented.

Program documentation will be accurate, complete, timely, confidential, and compliant with applicable requirements.

The residential program will maintain strong readiness for licensing inspections and other applicable reviews.

Child safeguarding practices will be clearly understood, consistently implemented, and regularly evaluated.

Admissions decisions will be thoughtful and mission-aligned, and the Ranch will maintain healthy referral relationships and appropriate occupancy.

Program outcomes will be meaningfully measured and used to improve services.

Children approaching adulthood will receive appropriate preparation for successful transitions and independent living.

Program employees will understand their responsibilities, receive appropriate development and feedback, and operate within a culture of communication, accountability, compassion, professionalism, and teamwork.

The President & CEO will have clear visibility into program performance, risks, needs, outcomes, and opportunities for improvement.

Required Qualifications

Candidates should possess significant progressively responsible experience working with children and youth in residential care, children's services, social services, counseling, youth development, education, ministry, or a closely related environment.

The successful candidate should demonstrate significant supervisory and leadership experience, including experience leading professionals, caregivers, or multidisciplinary teams.

Candidates must demonstrate an understanding of child development, residential care, behavior management, family systems, trauma and adversity, safeguarding, professional boundaries, and the needs of vulnerable children.

The successful candidate should possess experience with individualized care or treatment planning, documentation, case management, program compliance, quality assurance, staff development, and program evaluation.

Candidates must demonstrate strong judgment, emotional intelligence, organizational ability, conflict-resolution skills, written and verbal communication, and the ability to remain calm and effective during challenging situations.

The successful candidate must be capable of managing multiple priorities while maintaining careful attention to children, people, documentation, deadlines, compliance requirements, and organizational responsibilities.

The Director must be able to handle highly sensitive and confidential information with appropriate discretion.

Candidates must possess a valid driver's license and successfully complete all background screening, drug screening, driving record review, reference checks, and other employment requirements established by Liberty Youth Ranch and applicable regulations.

Preferred Qualifications

A master's degree in social work, counseling, psychology, human services, ministry, nonprofit leadership, education, or a related discipline is strongly preferred. Liberty Youth Ranch may require specific educational or professional credentials where necessary to satisfy applicable licensing or regulatory requirements.

Professional licensure or credentialing in counseling, social work, psychology, or another relevant human-services discipline is highly desirable.

Seven to ten or more years of progressively responsible experience serving children, youth, or families is preferred, including meaningful leadership experience.

Previous experience in residential childcare, children's homes, youth residential programs, foster care, child welfare, or another 24-hour care environment is strongly preferred.

Experience working within a Christian ministry or other faith-based organization is highly desirable.

Experience with Houseparent or residential caregiver models, admissions and intake, licensing, program evaluation, outcome measurement, staff training, and organizational leadership is beneficial.

Christian Faith & Mission Alignment

Liberty Youth Ranch is a Christ-centered ministry. The Director of Programs must personally support and actively advance the Christian mission, values, and culture of Liberty Youth Ranch.

The successful candidate will demonstrate an active Christian faith and regular participation in a local Christian church.

The Director will understand that the care of children entrusted to Liberty Youth Ranch is both a professional responsibility and a sacred responsibility.

The Director will model integrity, humility, compassion, patience, stewardship, accountability, wisdom, respect, and Christ-centered leadership.

The Director will support Liberty Youth Ranch's commitment to providing children with a family environment in which Christian faith and spiritual formation are integrated naturally into daily life.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal Director of Programs is an experienced leader who combines genuine compassion for children with the maturity and discipline necessary to lead a complex residential program.

This individual is deeply relational but understands that effective care also requires structure, boundaries, consistency, accountability, documentation, and measurable outcomes.

The successful candidate understands children who have experienced instability, adversity, family disruption, trauma, or significant life challenges and approaches them with compassion, patience, wisdom, and appropriate expectations.

The ideal candidate is an excellent developer of people who enjoys supporting and strengthening Houseparents, counselors, staff, and volunteers.

This person remains calm during difficult situations, exercises sound judgment, communicates clearly, addresses problems directly and appropriately, and does not avoid difficult conversations.

The Director will be both compassionate and accountable, both relational and organized, and both mission-driven and committed to professional excellence.

Above all, the ideal candidate will wake up each day focused on a central responsibility: ensuring that Liberty Youth Ranch provides exceptional, safe, Christ-centered care that genuinely changes the trajectory of children's lives.

Schedule & Work Environment

This is a full-time, exempt, in-person leadership position based at Liberty Youth Ranch's campus in Bonita Springs, Florida.

The normal work schedule is generally Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Because Liberty Youth Ranch provides residential care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the Director of Programs will participate in an established leadership on-call structure and must be available periodically outside normal business hours to respond to significant child-care or program emergencies.

The position requires regular interaction throughout the residential campus and with children, Houseparents, employees, families, volunteers, and outside professionals.

The Director must be able to perform the essential functions of the position. Any specific physical requirements associated with direct child-care responsibilities, emergency response, or approved recreational activities should be established by Liberty Youth Ranch based upon the actual essential functions of the position and applicable requirements.

Employment Requirements

Employment is contingent upon successful completion of Liberty Youth Ranch's required background screening, drug screening, driving record review, reference checks, and other applicable employment or regulatory requirements.

The Director of Programs will participate in regular performance evaluations conducted by the President & Chief Executive Officer.

The Director will perform other reasonable program leadership responsibilities assigned by the President & CEO that are consistent with the overall purpose and seniority of the position.