



Job Description **PRESIDENT & CEO**

Lead the Future of Retail Advocacy in Washington State

The Washington Retail Association (WR) is seeking a dynamic and strategic leader to serve as its next President & CEO, a rare and exciting opportunity to guide one of the most respected trade associations on the West Coast into its next era of impact, innovation, and growth.

Retail is undergoing transformational change. From evolving consumer expectations and technological advances to regulatory complexity, supply chain volatility, and the rising challenge of organized retail crime, today's retail leaders face more complexity than ever before. As the voice for over 3,500 storefronts across the state, WR stands at the forefront of these challenges, delivering bold advocacy, trusted expertise, and a united voice for retailers of all sizes and sectors.

The retail industry plays a vital role in Washington's economy, generating \$226 billion in gross taxable income and accounting for 41% of the state's total sales tax revenue. Nearly 400,000 jobs across the state are provided by the industry, making it the second-largest private sector employer. One in four jobs in Washington is supported by retail, and 93% of retailers in the state have fewer than 50 employees, highlighting the importance of small businesses in the sector.

Position Overview

The Association is committed to advocacy, member services, and industry growth as it represents retailers of all sizes and sectors across the state. The President/CEO position is the visionary leader responsible for driving the Association's strategic direction and operational excellence. Based in Washington State, they work collaboratively with the Board of Directors, staff, and member organizations to enhance the association's impact, influence, and value to its members.

Creating and maintaining partnerships with national and state retail associations, task forces, and interest groups is critical for the effectiveness of this position.

Reports to: WR Board of Directors

Supervisory Responsibility

The President/CEO position has four direct reports, two of whom serve on the executive team. Five contract positions report directly to the President/CEO and the executive team, respectively.

- The Policy and Government Affairs (PGA) team reviews every legislative bill and state regulation through a retail-focused lens, supporting beneficial legislation while navigating potential challenges. The team represents members' interests during the legislative session and engages year-round with agencies and interest groups, covering local, state, and federal issues.
- Brown & Brown functions as the Retro 3rd Party Administrator for Retail Association Service Inc., a for-profit subsidiary formed in 2007, that offers members access to business resources, safety resources, and group enrollment in the Retrospective Rating (Retro) Program. This safety incentive program, provided through Labor and Industries, is a valuable membership benefit.

Washington Retail Foundation was established in 2021 as a 501(c) (3) to promote education and career pathways in support of the retail industry. September has been designated as Careers In Retail Month, as proclaimed by the office of the Governor to issue a signed proclamation.

Qualifications

- Proven executive leadership experience, preferably within a trade association or related industry.
- Proven accomplishments in policy development, direct lobbying experience, and political action committees. Legislative experience is strongly preferred.
- Ability to transform an organization to meet future business and membership objectives.
- Strong understanding of the retail industry and its challenges.
- Exceptional strategic thinking, communication, and advocacy skills.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Financial acumen and experience managing budgets
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- Proven voice of a retail organization in and outside Washington
- Not a remote position.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- **Organizational and Business Transformation:** Drive the strategic, structural, and cultural evolution of the Association to serve its members better, respond to industry disruptions, and lead with resilience and innovation.
- **Innovation and Growth:** Identify emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities within the retail industry. Develop strategies to address these and drive sustainable growth for the association and its members.
- **Board Collaboration:** To facilitate effective governance and decision-making processes, work closely with the Board of Directors to gather feedback, provide updates, and gain insights.
- **Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships with national, state, and regional retail associations to enhance collaboration, share best practices, and strengthen the retail industry's collective voice.
- **Public Relations:** Represent and promote its mission and achievements through various media channels, public speaking engagements, and events.

Legislative Representation

- **Policy Development:** Shape, promote, and defend public policies to support the health and growth of Washington's retail sector.
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Represent the interests of the retail industry to government officials, regulatory bodies, and other key stakeholders. Advocate and serve as an active lobbyist for policies and initiatives that benefit members.
- **PAC Fundraising and Development:** Identify and secure funding opportunities to support the association's programs and initiatives. Cultivate relationships with sponsors, donors, and partners.
- **Task Forces and Interest Groups:** Participate in task forces and interest groups, internal and external to Washington, which impact the membership, such as the Washington Organized Retail Crime Association and the Vibrant Communities Initiative.

Membership Development

- **Diversification:** Increase in diversification of membership.
- **Relationships:** Foster strong relationships with current and prospective members by providing relevant and valuable services, resources, and networking opportunities.

Team Leadership and Management

- **Leadership:** Inspire and mentor the association's staff, fostering a positive and inclusive work environment. Demonstrate strong leadership and provide clear direction to achieve organizational goals.

- **Team Development:** Support professional growth and development of team members through coaching, training, and performance management.
- **Operational Management:** Oversee day-to-day operations, including fiscal management, human resources, and program development. Ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Collaboration:** Promote a collaborative culture within the association, encouraging teamwork and open communication among staff.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensure the effective allocation of resources, including human, financial, and technological, to support the association's initiatives and goals.

Successful Candidate

- Demonstrated experience setting legislative priorities and other leading focus areas.
- Accomplished relationships with decision makers, lawmakers, and testified at hearings and task forces.
- Demonstrated advocacy skills and accomplishments.
- Proven positive strategic impact on securing funding, amending bills, or stopping harmful proposals.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have progressive experience in executive leadership roles, with a strong record of hands-on management. A bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree is desirable. Demonstrated experience in financial management is essential, with a strong preference for candidates who have successfully overseen budgets and balance sheets in the range of \$2–\$5 million or more. The candidate must possess the financial acumen to ensure compliance, manage risk, and drive performance across multi-faceted financial operations.

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation: Competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience.

