



*Bringing Water Together*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**BOB MURRAY  
& ASSOCIATES**  
Experts In Executive Search



## THE AGENCY & COMMUNITY

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is the nation's largest statewide coalition of public water agencies, representing approximately 470 member agencies that deliver nearly 90 percent of the water used by California's communities, farms, and businesses. Founded in 1910 as a nonprofit organization, ACWA has a long history of leadership and innovation in California water policy, including groundwater management, safe and reliable drinking water, water use efficiency, water recycling, and desalination. Today, the Association is widely recognized as a respected and influential voice for its members in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

ACWA is headquartered in downtown Sacramento, just a few blocks from the State Capitol. As California's sixth-largest city and political center, Sacramento offers a high quality of life, a diverse population, and a strong public-sector employment base, along with continued growth in key industries such as health care, education, agriculture, clean energy, and technology. Situated at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, the region provides abundant outdoor recreation and cultural amenities, with convenient access to destinations including Lake Tahoe, Napa Valley, and San Francisco.

The Association is governed by a 37-member Board of Directors that ensures broad statewide representation from its public agency members. The Board includes the Association's President and Vice President; the Chair and Vice Chair of each of ACWA's 10 Regions; the Chair of each of ACWA's 13 Standing Committees; the immediate Past President; and the Vice President of the ACWA Joint Powers Insurance Authority (ACWA JPIA). This governance structure supports diverse perspectives and fosters collaborative leadership across California's water community.

## BRINGING WATER TOGETHER

**Our Mission:** ACWA provides comprehensive leadership, advocacy and education to serve California public water agencies' infrastructure and other water management needs to ensure high quality, sustainable and reliable water supplies in an environmentally, socially and fiscally responsible manner.

**Our Vision:** ACWA envisions a California that values and invests in water as an essential and plentiful resource that is managed efficiently and sustainably—from headwaters to the ocean—to meet all of California's present and future needs.



# THE POSITION

The Executive Director oversees an annual budget of approximately \$11 million and provides leadership to nine direct and approximately 40 indirect staff. Working in close partnership with a 37-member Board of Directors, the Executive Director leads ACWA across three core areas: advancing state and federal advocacy to shape policy and support member interests; managing the organization's internal operations and financial health; and fostering strong, consistent engagement with a diverse membership representing agencies of all sizes through outreach and promotion of ACWA's services and value. Primary duties include but are not limited to:

- **Lead ACWA across three core areas:**
  - Advocate on behalf on ACWA's membership at the state, federal and regional level to solve and advance critical water policy issues.
  - Manage internal operations,
  - Build consistent engagement with a complex and varied membership group through outreach and promotion of ACWA's services, mission and values.
- **Partner with the Board** to translate and execute the Strategic Plan and organizational goals, and track key performance indicators (KPIs), ensuring alignment across the team to drive operational excellence and results.
- **Cultivate strong relationships** with policymakers and promote the Association's positions on critical water policy and management issues.
- **Represent the organization** as ACWA's chief executive, public voice and face of the Association, positioning ACWA as the leader in water policy and related issues.
- **Serve as ACWA's primary representative**, building coalitions and consensus, strengthening relationships across the public and political spectrum, and uniting a diverse membership around the shared goal of safe, reliable, and affordable water for California.
- **Lead a dedicated and mission-driven workforce**, fostering a collaborative culture grounded in service, integrity, and teamwork across all departments and staff.
- **Effectively manage** and streamline Association's budget, oversee staff, and ensure the effective, economical, fiscally prudent, efficient delivery of programs, services, and strategic initiatives.
- **Bring visibility, cohesion, and trusted leadership** to an organization at the forefront of advancing water reliability and influencing California's long-term water strategy.





## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Education:** Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in political science, business management, organization leadership, a technical field related to natural resources or the environment or a related field.

**Experience:** 5-10 years of executive or senior administrative and management experience in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising varied programs, including five (5) years in a water and/or environmental policy environment or non-profit advocacy association. Experience managing and interacting with a Board of Directors or similar policy body.

## DESIRED

**Education:** An advanced degree, ideally an MBA, MPA, or MPP, is preferred but not required.

**Experience:** Strong operational experience or the equivalent level of leadership is preferred.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT.** The incoming Executive Director will primarily work out of ACWA's headquarters in Sacramento, California. They will be expected to travel regularly, within reason, to visit members, and represent the Association at conferences, meetings, advocacy events, and legislative and regulatory engagements across California and Washington, D.C.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a **strong, strategic, and politically astute executive** with gravitas and a deep understanding of California water policy, governance, and administration. This individual brings extensive experience leading complex organizations, preferably nonprofit advocacy associations, and working effectively with elected officials and boards of directors to advance policy priorities with clarity and conviction. A **persuasive and effective communicator**, both internally and externally, the successful candidate excels at translating strategic vision into operational results, overseeing complex budgets and non-dues revenue generation strategies, and clearly articulating the value of ACWA to its members, elected officials, policymakers, other partners and the public. Equally important is a **demonstrated commitment to customer service**, constituent engagement, and responsiveness to evolving member needs. The ideal leader is a mentor who **invests in staff development, fosters an inclusive, high-performing culture**, inspires, empowers and motivates team members at all levels to conduct its core functions and implement Board policies and initiatives effectively.

Success in this role requires the ability to navigate complex political environments and member dynamics with diplomacy, unify diverse member agencies around shared goals, including those with differing or competing interests, while engaging consistently and equitably with agencies of all sizes and serving as ACWA's primary representative with credibility, presence, and political acumen.

# COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for this position is: **\$304,461-\$415,300** dependent on qualifications. ACWA offers a generous and competitive benefits package that can be viewed here:

**BENEFITS**

## TO APPLY

**If you are interested in this outstanding opportunity,  
please apply online at:**

**[www.bobmurrayassoc.com](http://www.bobmurrayassoc.com)**

**Filing Deadline:**

**March 8, 2026**

Following the closing date, resumes will be screened according to the qualifications outlined above. The most qualified candidates will be invited to personal interviews with Bob Murray & Associates.

A select group of candidates will be asked to provide references once it is anticipated that they may be recommended as finalists. References will be contacted only following candidate approval. Finalist interviews will be held with the Association of California Water Agencies.

Candidates will be advised of the status of the recruitment following selection of the Executive Director.

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call:**

**Ms. Valerie Phillips**

**(916) 784-9080**



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