

NATIONAL SEARCH PROSPECTUS

Vice President, Finance and Administration



The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE, pronounced “wit-chee”) seeks a dynamic, effective, and forward-thinking leader to join its senior leadership team as its next Vice President, Finance and Administration (VPFA).

Reporting to the President, the VPFA of WICHE is responsible for overseeing the financial health and sustainability of the organization, ensuring effective management of its nearly \$19.5 million annual operating budget. This includes strategic financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, and ensuring compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements. Additionally, the VPFA manages the distribution of over \$14.8 million in Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) fees, ensuring the timely and accurate transfer of funds from participating states and territories to institutions supporting students in high-demand health fields. Through careful stewardship of resources, the VPFA plays a critical role in supporting WICHE’s mission to improve access to higher education and workforce development across the Western region.

The VPFA has overall responsibility for all accounting functions, grant and contract administration and budget monitoring, and all audit processes and procedures. During meetings of WICHE’s governing body, the Commission, the VPFA presents the status of the overall budget and financial picture, ensuring that WICHE Commissioners are informed about WICHE’s financial health. The VPFA is responsible for daily operations and all aspects of the WICHE accounting data processing system, payroll, cash receipts, accounts payable, accounts receivable, supply/physical facilities management, equipment depreciation, and grant expenditure reports and invoicing. The VPFA supervises a small but mighty team of accounting staff, currently consisting of an Accountant I and Accounting Specialist and is ultimately responsible for their performance.

Accounting Operations:

The VPFA maintains complete responsibility for the WICHE accounting and payroll systems, which requires comprehensive knowledge and control of all accounts, revenues expected and received, purchases and payments issued, transactions within WICHE. The VPFA interprets for staff all WICHE accounting policies and procedures; implements new accounting procedures when necessary; and oversees preparation of payroll using ADP, which includes calculating and overseeing the retirement plan tax shelter limits for staff; flexible benefit and health/dental payroll deductions; and taxable life insurance costs for staff as well as ensuring the accurate and timely income tax and FICA withholding payments. The VPFA also maintains the inventory and depreciation schedule for all furniture and equipment.

The VPFA works collaboratively with WICHE staff to determine how to handle unique accounting transactions as they arise; does monthly entries for cash flow, interest income,

and miscellaneous adjustments; books any receivables and monitors receipts; oversees all month-end transactions to assure validity and accuracy; conducts monthly analysis of internal accounts and prepares related adjusting journal entries; and balances all WICHE clearing accounts monthly.



Audit Preparation:

The VPFA is responsible for overseeing WICHE's annual financial audit, working closely with the external auditing firm selected by the WICHE Audit Committee. This includes preparing key financial documents such as the grant and contract receivable and deferred revenue chart for auditor confirmations, making necessary accrual adjustments for the fiscal year, and ensuring employee benefits expenses are accurately recorded. The VPFA also manages closing entries, depreciation, and adjustments for furniture, equipment, indirect costs, and final grant and contract balances. Additionally, they prepare the final grant and contract receivable analysis, the schedule of interest and investments, and the trial balance for auditors. Throughout the audit process, the VPFA works directly with auditors, answering questions and providing required year-end schedules.

Grant and Contract Administration:

The VPFA supports staff responsible for budgeting grant and contract proposals and ensures that all new grants and contracts are set up correctly. They review agreements, assign account numbers, and record revenue and budgets. The VPFA also is responsible for periodic financial reporting for granting agencies and the follow-up for receipts of payments as well as grants and contract billings. Additionally, they handle cash request

draws from the federal government as needed, making sure funds are received and properly accounted for.

Miscellaneous:

The VPFA monitors accounts receivable and all grant and contracts receivables; assists with the prepare file tax form 990 each year for WICHE; and other duties and responsibilities deemed necessary to enable the efficient and effective functioning of WICHE accounting activities and services.

Travel:

The VPFA travels to WICHE Commission meetings twice per year and attends Executive Committee meetings. In addition, there may be travel to professional conferences as needed.

Required Qualifications

- At least 10 years of increasingly responsible fiscal management and leadership roles in a complex organizational structure, preferably in higher education or government.
- Demonstrated management experience in leading effective finance operations with a significant budget funded by a wide range of grants and contracts.
- A bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., business administration, public administration, accounting, finance) from an accredited college or university.
- Demonstrated experience in human resources leadership, including talent management, employee relations, organizational development, and ensuring compliance with employment laws and institutional policies.
- Exceptional management, interpersonal, and communication skills, which include managing change effectively, handling complex financial and administrative operations, and developing and maintaining effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders through outstanding oral and written communication.



- Demonstrated engagement in innovative problem-solving and ability to leverage limited resources for impactful results
- Demonstrated ability of exercising good, fair judgment in decision making.
- High level of competence in Microsoft Office 365 software, including MS Excel.

Preferred Qualifications

- A master's degree in an appropriate discipline (e.g., business administration, public administration, accounting, finance) from an accredited college or university.
- Certified Public Accountant.
- Extensive experience in higher education finance and administration as a senior financial officer.
- Experience with AccuFund, WICHE's financial management system.
- Experience in a state agency, higher education institution, nonprofit, or research organization funded in part by a wide range of grants and contracts.

Desired Leadership Skills and Attributes

Strategic Leadership:

- Demonstrates strategic thinking with the ability to align financial and administrative functions to support WICHE's mission, vision, and long-term goals.
- Capable of anticipating trends and positioning the organization proactively for financial sustainability and growth.

Fiscal Stewardship and Expertise:

- Deep understanding of budgeting, financial reporting, investments, risk management, and regulatory compliance in a multi-state or public-sector environment.



- Proven track record of resource optimization and financial innovation while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership:

- Builds trust-based relationships across WICHE units, partner institutions, and the Commission.
- Fosters a culture of collaboration, respect, and shared purpose, both within finance/administration and the broader organization.

Integrity and Ethical Judgment:

- Operates with the highest levels of integrity and professionalism.
- Makes decisions guided by ethics, data, and the best interest of WICHE and its stakeholders.

Change Management and Adaptability:

- Able to lead through change in a dynamic environment, including shifting public policy landscapes and evolving higher education finance models.
- Encourages innovation while ensuring operational excellence and continuity.



Communication and Transparency:

- Communicates complex financial and operational issues clearly and persuasively to diverse internal and external audiences, including board members, government entities, and partner institutions.
- Promotes transparency and accountability through open, consistent communication.

Commitment to Mission and Public Service:

- Passion for advancing higher education access, affordability, and collaboration across states.
- Understands the unique role and impact of WICHE and is committed to public service and regional collaboration.

Operational and Administrative Excellence:

- Demonstrates skill in overseeing assigned finance and other administrative functions in alignment with organizational strategy.
- Champions process improvement and technological advancement to support organizational effectiveness.



Salary and Benefits

This is a Full Time - Exempt position. The salary range is \$160,000 - \$170,000. WICHE offers a competitive benefits package which includes medical insurance with generous employer contribution to health savings account (H.S.A.), dental, life, and disability insurance; flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care); 403(b) retirement plan with employer match of 200% on employee contributions up to 5% after six full months of employment; and paid vacation, sick and personal time as well as paid family leave.

THE ORGANIZATION

Since 1953, the **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** has been strengthening higher education, workforce development, and behavioral health throughout the region. From promoting high-quality, affordable postsecondary education to helping the West get the most from their technology investments and addressing behavioral health challenges, WICHE improves lives across the region through innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy.

The [WICHE region](#) includes 15 states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States (American

Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau). WICHE's [48 commissioners](#) are appointed by the governors of the 15 Western states and, in the case of the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States, the presidents of the three sovereign nations. Commission activities are funded in part through annual dues paid by region members and in part through grants and sponsorships.



One of four regional interstate higher education compacts in the United States, WICHE was created as a body corporate and an agency of each compacting state and territory through the [Western Regional Education Compact](#). WICHE functions not only as an interstate compact but is also recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.

Mission

The member states and Pacific Island members of the Commission work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all residents of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.



Fun Facts

Some of WICHE's key programs, services, and initiatives, include:

Student Access Programs: Approximately 52,610 students have saved a total of \$671 million in academic year (AY) 2024-25 through these programs:

- More than 49,000 undergraduate students have saved \$615.6 million through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE).
- Nearly 3,000 graduate students have saved \$40 million through the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP).
- More than 560 professional healthcare students have saved \$15 million through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

Joint Purchasing Programs: Through a partnership with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, WICHE offers cost-savings programs on technology contracts and student health plans, which in AY 2024 saved 9% on costs for education, governmental, and nonprofit organizations in the West.

Trusted Research, Data, and Policy Analysis: WICHE's team of experts and researchers study issues like workforce needs, student success, and higher education affordability at the institution, state, regional, and even national level. For example, released every four years since 1979, WICHE's analysis about high school graduation projections, *Knocking at the College Door*, is an essential resource for policymakers, decision-makers, researchers, and planners in education and workforce development, and is regularly cited by major news outlets like NPR, Forbes, Yahoo News, CBS, Bloomberg, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and more.

Innovation: WCET – WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, was established in 1988 in response to the growing field of educational technology and the need to bring together higher education leaders, innovators, and practitioners. It has since become the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in higher education.

Behavioral Health Leader since 1955: WICHE's founders understood that behavioral health support was critical to strengthening the region by providing expert technical assistance, consulting, and research services. Key programs include Together With Veterans, WICHE's rural Veteran suicide prevention program in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, has launched sites across 26 states, territories, and sovereign nations, and the Psychology Internship Consortia operates currently in nine states and Guam to meet the workforce and community needs for more mental health professionals.

Pacific Island Partnership: Since 2023, all eligible Pacific Island jurisdictions in the West have passed the necessary legislation to be a member of the WICHE region. The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has awarded WICHE a renewable grant to cover the annual dues for all eligible U.S. Pacific territories and Freely Associated States, so its residents can access WICHE's tuition savings programs, workforce development support, behavioral health programs, and other resources.

Visionary Leadership Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: WICHE celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2023, representing the legacy its founders envisioned in the 1950s and signifying its continued commitment to building opportunity through regional collaboration and resource sharing in matters related to higher education and workforce now and for years to come.



THE STATE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY CENTER

WICHE's headquarters is located on the second floor of the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC).

SHEPC (pronounced SHEP-C) is also home to the offices of two other nonprofit, higher education organizations: [National Center for Higher Education Management Systems \(NCHEMS\)](#) and [State Higher Education Executive Officers Association \(SHEEO\)](#). Featuring a learning center and meeting facilities, SHEPC promotes informal cross-fertilization of thinking, as well as a quick dissemination of information and new ideas to the organizations and policymakers they serve. SHEPC also encourages synergy in activities, both in the selection of projects and in the concepts utilized within projects, and improved capacity for effective collaboration among the staff and members of the three organizations. Working together, the organizations provide rewarding educational experiences and opportunities for interns and graduate students.

The three organizations' joint interest with WICHE in the building is codified under the auspices of SHEPC, incorporated under the laws of the state of Colorado. The founders of SHEPC purchased the building through a low-interest loan from the Ford Foundation.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



Nestled at the base of the Rocky Mountains, **Boulder, Colorado**, offers an exceptional quality of life paired with a thriving business environment—making it an ideal place to live, work, and thrive.

Innovation and Opportunity - Boulder is a nationally recognized hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and research. It is home to various industries, including technology,

aerospace, natural products, clean energy, and higher education. With close proximity to the University of Colorado Boulder and several national laboratories, the city fosters a highly educated workforce and a collaborative spirit of discovery.

Vibrant Lifestyle - Boulder offers a rare blend of outdoor adventure and urban sophistication. Residents enjoy over 300 days of sunshine yearly, with easy access to hiking, biking, rock climbing, skiing, and more. The city's walkable downtown, Pearl Street, features boutique shopping, top-tier restaurants, art galleries, and live music venues.

Community and Culture - Boulder consistently ranks among the top U.S. cities for health, wellness, and overall happiness. The Boulder Valley School District is highly rated, and the city is recognized as a great place to raise a family. The community is known for their strong sense of environmental stewardship, support for local businesses, and active participation in cultural and recreational activities, with Boulder being the future home of the Sundance Film Festival beginning in 2027.



Strategic Location - Just 30 miles northwest of Denver and about 45 minutes from Denver International Airport, Boulder offers easy access to major transportation hubs while maintaining a small-town feel with big-city benefits.

Thriving Surrounding Communities – While Boulder offers an exceptional lifestyle, many of our team members choose to live in one of the many vibrant and welcoming communities nearby. From family-friendly suburbs like Louisville, Lafayette, and Superior to the scenic charm of Longmont or the convenience of Broomfield and beyond, the region provides a wide range of housing options, top-rated schools, and abundant community amenities. These towns offer a more affordable cost of living while still providing easy access to Boulder and the greater Denver metro area. Whether you're seeking great schools, outdoor recreation, cultural events, elite professional and college sports teams, or a strong sense of community, the surrounding areas offer the perfect backdrop for building a life and career.

NOMINATIONS & APPLICATIONS



The Search Committee invites letters of interest and nominations to be submitted directly to the search firm Anthem Executive. Correspondence should include a curriculum vitae and a letter of interest describing relevant experience and interest in the position. Submit materials to JR Wheless, Michael Ballew, Scott Watson, or Florene Stawowy at:

WICHEVPFA@AnthemExecutive.com

While applications and nominations will be accepted until a VPFA is selected, interested parties are strongly encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible to ensure consideration. Expressing interest is the first step in receiving consideration and does not make one an applicant for the position.



WICHE does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, or any other legally protected status.