*Small Magic is seeking a Managing Director of Programs & Operations to build and hold the internal infrastructure that makes Small Magic's mission possible. We are nearly doubling in size over the next 18–24 months. You'll make sure our people, programs, and systems double with us primarily owning the people, operations, and program portfolio.*

**KEY DETAILS**

**Reports to:** Executive Director
**Manages:** Operations Director, Program Director (Families), Program Director (Childcare Centers), Data & Systems Lead
**Location:** Birmingham, AL (required)
**Schedule:** Full-time
**Compensation:** $120,000 - $150,000 annually

**WHO WE ARE**

Small Magic is a Birmingham-based organization focused on one goal: ensuring children under five are ready for kindergarten and a life of opportunity. We work alongside civic leaders and partners to strengthen the systems that support early learning across our city, from direct-service program delivery to broader ecosystem work.

We are entering a defining chapter. With significant new public and private investments committed, Small Magic is doubling in size over the next 18–24 months. The infrastructure to support that growth is being built currently. We're looking for a proven senior leader to inherit this momentum, stabilize what's been built, and lead the continued improvement that keeps Small Magic operating at its best.

**WHAT YOU'LL DO**

The Managing Director of Programs & Operations is the operational backbone of Small Magic ensuring that as we scale, our people, programs, and systems scale with us. This role is responsible for the internal systems, people, and program portfolio that make Small Magic's community work possible.

The person in this role will:

- **Run and improve what exists |** You'll both inherit and build operational infrastructure to support Small Magic's team and operations. Your first job is to strengthen what's been built. And you also have the judgment to recognize when a system is hitting its ceiling before it becomes a crisis and the credibility to lead the

pivot when it does. You're not attached to inherited processes for their own sake. You ask whether what we're doing is still the right thing to do.

- **Own people operations and culture |** You lead talent acquisition, onboarding, performance management, and staff development across a growing team. You think carefully about how culture scales what gets preserved, what gets formalized, and what gets left behind. You bring a no-nonsense, compliance-grounded approach to HR where you treat HR as infrastructure, not paperwork. You move quickly and fairly on performance, and you build systems that protect both staff and the organization. You advise the Director of Finance & People on compensation philosophy and HR compliance. The Director of Finance & People runs HR operations and compliance; you set people strategy and own talent outcomes.
- **Own data and reporting infrastructure |** You are accountable for how Small Magic defines and measures success across its program portfolio. You oversee a clear performance framework that tracks reach, impact, and experience and you ensure data drives decisions. You partner closely with the Managing Director of External Affairs to translate data into compelling impact stories for funders and partners.
- **Lead a team of leaders |** You manage through multiple levels overseeing a Director of Finance & People, two Program Directors (Families and Childcare Centers), and a Data & Systems Lead. You clarify roles, develop managers, and maintain a high and consistent performance bar. You understand that structure drives behavior and you design teams accordingly.
- **Partner upward and across |** You sit on the senior leadership team alongside the Managing Director of External Affairs and report directly to the Executive Director. You bring informed recommendations not open-ended problems. You ensure strategy, execution, and external engagement stay aligned across the organization.

To make this concrete, if you were in the role today, you might be:

- Reviewing data dashboards alongside the Programs and External Affairs teams to both track program fidelity and distill compelling stories about our impact; You own the performance framework and the integrity of the data; External Affairs owns the external narrative
- Running quarterly business reviews to assess how the organization is performing across its goals and making recommendations when there are gaps
- Recognizing that a vendor relationship that worked at 10 people won't work at 25 and making the recommendation and leading the transition
- Working with Program Directors to pressure test children served projections against staffing capacity
- By the end of year one, every leader on your team has a clear scorecard, we've hired to plan with a high hit rate, the organization runs on one performance framework

and a quarterly review rhythm, and the ED spends her time on strategy, not operations

**WHO YOU ARE**

We'll evaluate candidates for this role based on demonstrated strength in the areas below:

- **Operator with judgment |** You have led complex operational functions and know how to run things well. You've run or owned a suite of programs or functions and understand what it takes to deliver. You're not just a process person, you also know when the process is the problem.
- **People builder |** You have experience managing managers and shaping team structures as organizations grow. You clarify roles, develop talent, and make hard calls when needed. Your HR instinct is grounded in compliance and fairness. You also know how to hire A players.
- **Data-informed decision maker |** You think beyond dashboards. You know how to define what success looks like, ensure the right data is captured, and drive course correction when results lag.
- **Calibrated urgency |** You move with speed and discipline. You avoid both analysis paralysis and reckless execution. You know when to stabilize, when to improve, and when to rebuild, and how to explain why.
- **Community rootedness |** You believe the communities we serve are experts and partners. You're attentive to how history, policy, and power shape opportunity. Familiarity with Birmingham or similar Southern urban contexts is a genuine asset.
- **Builder mentality with a running start |** You're energized by operational rigor *and* by the question of what comes next.

While not requirements for application, competitive candidates will likely have:

- Significant experience leading operations, people, or program functions in a nonprofit or mission-driven organization
- Experience successfully inheriting, scaling, and building new systems
- Responsibility for managing multiple teams or layers of staff
- Experience living in or working with lower-income communities

**WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Small Magic is committed to building a team that reflects the diversity and strength of the community we serve. We encourage applications from people and communities most impacted by inequity. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.

The compensation range for this role is $120,000 - $150,000, commensurate with demonstrated competency and prior experience. Benefits include a highly flexible work environment, premium health insurance, retirement matching (up to 5% after 3 months), paid time off (approximately 30 days), professional development funds, and a work-issued laptop.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Applications through the form located at smallmagic.org/careers are strongly preferred. If you don't have access to a Google account, you may send your application materials to programs@smallmagic.org.