

Act.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Advocates for Community Transformation

Dallas, TX

"We believe that Christians are called to "seek the shalom of the city" (Jer. 29:7), bearing witness to the work God is doing to redeem and restore his creation (Rev. 21:4) by pushing back against the effects of sin on individuals, communities, and societies and working to create environments where people can flourish."

- J. Reid Porter, Founder and CEO of Act

Mission Statement

Advocates for Community Transformation (Act) is a Christian, place-based, justice organization that exists to make stronger and safer neighborhoods a normal reality for everyone. It carries out this vision through empowering residents living in high crime areas to stop illegal activity on their street using the civil justice system.

The Context

In pockets of neighborhoods across the country, crime and violence spill out from properties known as drug houses, making nearby families feel like prisoners in their own homes. Individuals on those streets are often forced to hide during gunfire and face illegal drugs, prostitution, and even assault or murder. The negative impact of constant trauma and a lack of safety are well documented.

Adverse childhood experiences like community violence can traumatize children and impair their development. On a community-level, a lack of safety deters legitimate businesses. Toxic stress strains families and keeps residents from focusing on work or school. Neighborhood-based drug sales contribute to a nationwide drug epidemic, and children who see drug dealing as viable work are more likely to become youth and adults that perpetrate crime and/or have substance and use disorders. The fear associated with crime also inhibits the social connections between neighbors and the civic engagement necessary for a community to flourish. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety is a basic material need – like food, water, and sleep – that must be fulfilled before an individual can pursue community, respect, or self-fulfillment.

Founded in 2009 by Dallas lawyer Reid Porter, Act empowers residents living in high crime areas to fight illegal activity on their street through



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So wherever you have a drug house, you have money and you have guns and you have others that want to take it. And so there you go all with robberies and assaults and murders right next door. And you could be honest, innocent and you're a prisoner in your own home.”

– Former DPD Chief,
David Brown

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We heard a lot of popping noise. When it hit me, I didn't know it... then someone saw a little drops of blood. I lost half of my lung.

- Act Client



providing access to the civil justice system and the legal tools necessary to take back their neighborhood. By representing families who are not safe because of crime and violence in their neighborhood, Act works to hold the owners of crime-ridden properties accountable and eradicate criminal activity from the property.

Since 2009, Act has had the honor of serving a total of 353 unique resident clients. These courageous individuals have worked with Act partners to create safer neighborhoods.

Act's model uniquely empowers residents by focusing on their requests for safer streets and peace at home. Act builds a team around each resident, bringing neighbors and other stakeholders together to build social cohesion and fostering collective efficacy.

Act seeks to build a collective ecosystem that weaves together neighbors, community organizations, local churches, local government offices, law enforcement, and partner law firms - the results are equipped and empowered residents, safer neighborhoods, and a more vibrant, connected, and inclusive community. Through strengthening the social bonds of trust in a community, Act is able to bring about lasting change to the neighborhoods where it serves to equip and empower residents with the tools and resources they need to become their own advocates.

Act cares not only about the physical transformation of the neighborhoods and places where clients live, but also about the spiritual transformation of all its stakeholders as well. Act proclaims that Jesus is Lord over all creation, over every street, and puts its motivation and model in the context of the Christian calling to love your neighbor and bring about God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven - shalom, the ultimate reconciliation of all that has been broken.

Micah 6:8 says, **“He has shown thee, O Man, what is good, And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.”** Act provides a private solution to a public problem – and accomplishes the mission by creating harmony between residents, police, pro bono lawyers, churches, and the city.

Act has established a regional model in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex and is poised for national expansion. [The Story of a Street](#) provides a close look at the experience for those who sign on as clients, serve as volunteer attorneys, and highlights the many partners needed to bring peace and safety to residents.

A Unique Opportunity

During this pivotal time of growth, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) will have the responsibility to develop operational processes that will guide all organizational functions. Act has a current annual organizational budget of \$3.9 million with 39 full-time positions. Act’s 36-month plan will grow that budget to \$6.4 million with 65 full-time staff by the end of 2025.

Working closely with the Founder and CEO, Reid Porter, the COO will translate the organizational vision into clearly defined procedures and Key Performance Indicators.

As an [Integrator](#), the COO will enhance the Act ecosystem, creating synergy across all team functions including programs, development, marketing and communications, finance, human resources, and administration.

The COO’s charge is to translate the Act vision and growth plans by leveraging organizational accomplishments, including the resolution of more than 225 cases. Building on the sustainable framework to create safety and peace by reducing



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Since Act has started work in this area, we’ve seen a drop in crime and we’ve seen people become more secure and proud of their neighborhood.

– Rev. Henry Green,
Community Outreach
Missionary Baptist Church

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Seek, encourage, defend, plead. Those action words call out to a Christian lawyer to dive in and get involved.

– Russ Brown, Managing Partner of Brown Fox



crime infested properties, the mission can expand and scale. Over the next 36 months, Act will **saturate Dallas and Fort Worth with its model and tackle 12% of the known drug houses through representing and empowering an additional 200 families, doubling the number of full-time employees, and launching a national model. The goal is to demonstrate to other major cities the efficacy of the Act model.**

The COO will be responsible for executing Act’s newly created 36-month plan, and innovatively bringing strategy and alignment around scaling the organization. With a proven ability to inspire, manage and nurture high performing teams, the COO will define and develop a supportive, people-first, fun, and sustainable operational culture during this significant period of growth.

The Organization

Act’s unique approach is a private solution to a public problem. The model uses existing civil laws – and puts the power of those laws into the hands of those closest to the problem, the residents. This collaborative, community-driven approach complements the work of the police and the city and results in tangible change that is long-lasting.

Act starts each case by connecting residents with one another and with neighborhood leaders who want to make their neighborhoods safer. Previously isolated neighbors – who may not know who they live next to because they fear them being connected to the illegal activity – meet and start to develop a sense of community and trust. This is social cohesion, a key piece of creating a peaceful community.

Act then expands the circle of people connected to the issue to gain a fuller understanding and holistic view of the activity. It reviews police records, meets with police officers and collaborates with other city

departments like code, fire, and the City Attorney's Office. It also works with churches and other nonprofits that may be located close to the crime-ridden property.

The next step is engaging outside lawyers – top lawyers from top firms – to help resolve the issue on behalf of Act clients. Together, they use the civil justice system to hold the owners of the problem property accountable for the activity taking place, eradicating crime, and violence, by holding the homeowner to a higher standard, all of which is guided by the clients' wishes.

Resolution of the problem can come in many forms – from an agreement between residents to a court order to address the criminal activity. The agreement can be as simple as putting up lights or a fence, or it can be as complex as a court order requiring the demolition of the property because there is no other way to stop the problem unless the structure is removed. Regardless of the form the solution takes, the criminal activity ceases and safety becomes sustainable because of the bravery of the residents, their trust in one another, and their collective action.

Act's innovative approach is affirmed by the latest in criminology science. According to Professor David Weisburd, one of the leading criminologists in the field of place theories, 50% of crime takes place at 5% of properties in a city. Crime "sticks" to these specific "hotspots" because there are particular characteristics about them that make them good drug houses.

Addressing those specific spots, the actual house or structure that the police raid repeatedly to no avail, is what has proven – both through Act's 14 years of work and through place-based theories – to eradicate crime rather than just pause or dampen it. Once the place is addressed, the activity stops. There is peace. When we address the place, we address the problem.



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Act's commitment to community equity and transformation mutually benefits impoverished neighborhoods by removing one nuisance property at a time. Act's use of the justice system empowers a crime-free community that is filled with hope. Act is a much needed community partner to help our Department abate crime in distressed communities.”

– Major Paul Junger, DPD

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Looking back over the last 10 years, it's amazing to see the transformation that has taken place in my neighborhood thanks to Act.

– Act Client



The social cohesion that is established at the start of this process continues to grow as Act connects more people, resulting in residents establishing collective efficacy, a willingness to intervene and establish informal social control. **Academics have studied the cause and effect of addressing hotspots of crime, but Act is the only organization of its kind leveraging the civil justice system and engaging the residents in targeting the place, resulting in sustainable change.**

The Mandate

The COO will have specific insight and experiences which will enhance the organizational infrastructure. The COO will be a leader with proven experience to:

- Strengthen the organization's operational model.
- Obsess about organizational clarity.
- Develop teams to work collaboratively while integrating the organizational mission across all job functions to create a common language.
- Promote healthy resolutions and conversation between staff members where there is a difference of opinion.
- Manage all internal relationships to ensure organizational goals are achieved.
- Serve as a strategic thought partner to the CEO - understanding when to champion vs. caution his vision.
- Problem solve and be a continuous learner.
- Create processes to integrate key stakeholders into the Act model in order to drive change.

The COO of Act will bring a commitment to serving others as an act of Christian faith. In partnership

with the CEO, the COO will be the glue that holds the people, processes, systems, priorities, and strategy of the organization together. The COO will be proficient at building bridges - strategically and proactively working to build the infrastructure necessary where all of Act's stakeholder base can come together to carry out Act's mission in a mutually honoring way. The COO will promote unity and appreciation for diversity and equity for all God's people, leveraging that diversity to make a greater impact for God's Kingdom.

Translate the Vision of the CEO

- Must possess a deep and growing relationship with Jesus Christ, a passion for Biblical justice and racial equity, a humble and teachable spirit, and a desire to serve and collaborate with a diverse team.
- Able to build a trusted relationship with the CEO, to facilitate his priorities and focus.
- A leader who uses a Principle Based Management Approach, open to honest dialogue to drive innovation.
- Have a servant's heart, and a redemptive mindset.
- A leader with a focus on client outcomes using an "in and down" approach.
- Able to operationalize all Act initiatives, coordinating all project management key functions and holding team members accountable.
- Have the candor and the courage to share differences of opinion with the CEO where appropriate and necessary.
- Balance the pace of the organization and the idea-to-reality timing so that both vision and reality are satisfied.



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Witness and being able to tell our clients' stories is what wins the day. And their lives are on the line, not their livelihood, not material things, but their lives, the lives of their children and their neighbors.

- Jessica Pulliam, Trial Dept. Chair, Dallas Co-Chair, Litigation group, Baker Botts

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We just want
our community to
feel like a community.

- Act Client.



Drive Organizational Outcomes

Integrate the major functions of the business, run the organization, and manage the day-to-day situations, fostering a harmonious environment for everyone.

- Execute the business plan.
- Bring high energy and grit to service with a commitment to Act clients and stakeholder base.
- Provide clarity and alignment by defining processes, systems, and procedures.
- Galvanize the team to work collaboratively by facilitating understanding and an appreciation for all departments.
- Provide transparency regarding organizational finances and possess exceptional financial management and reporting skills.
- Identify, recruit, and onboard talent.
- Establish and monitor Key Performance Indicators to measure program outcomes.
- Nurture and promote the team leveraging skill, interest, and experience.
- Identify and provide solutions for all areas where Act can be stronger.
- Demonstrate high EQ, and be solutions focused.

Leverage Organizational Vision & Strengths for Growth

- Skilled at establishing best practices for operational effectiveness.
- A solution-oriented, future-forward thinker.

- Capable of establishing clearly defined processes and procedures.
- Improve and expand organizational track record.
- Proficient with technology and familiar with ways to create greater operational efficiency.
- Skilled at problem solving.
- Able to mitigate enterprise risk.
- Embodies social grace, diplomacy, and a winsome spirit.
- Assist with building a diverse team, board of directors, donors, and strategic partners.
- Willingness to be the unsung hero and play the role of devil's advocate with the CEO and leadership team.

The Relationships

Reports to:	President and CEO
Direct Reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VP of Advancement • VP of Growth & Expansion • VP of Finance & Administration
Key Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident Clients • Law Firms • Police Officers • Church Partners • City Officials • Board of Directors • Advisory Board Members • Strategic partner nonprofit organizations • Vendors and contractors



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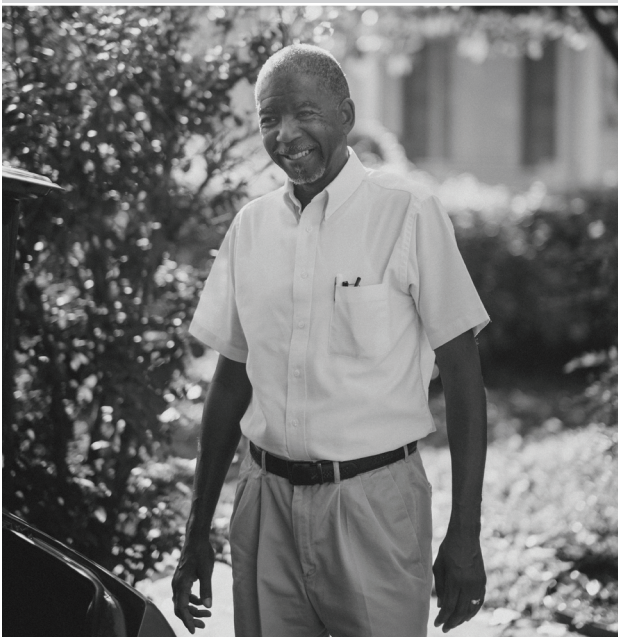
“It’s hard to argue with. There is a family with a drug dealer living next door, there’s a lot of foot traffic. It was pretty easy for me to get on board. There’s violence and there is something I can do to help them out.”

– Theo Kwong,
Volunteer Attorney from
Pro bono law firm

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Community members have reached out to me, and some houses in the neighborhood were selling drugs. We might think something is a drug house. We might pretty much know something is a drug house, but if we can't get probable cause, if we can't make a buy from the drug dealers, we can't serve or execute a search warrant.

– Major Paul Junger, DPD



The Candidate

Reporting to the Founder and CEO, the COO will be a trusted advisor to the CEO on all internal matters. The COO will articulate and translate the CEO's vision and aspirations into action items. The ideal candidate is an experienced leader with extensive operational and management knowledge in nonprofit and/or corporate sectors.

The COO will bring a passion for Act's mission and for servant leadership. The COO will manage all internal matters and thrive in the number 2 position, providing the ability of the CEO to focus externally.

The leader has

- Proven ability to engage, excite, and unite the team around common goals and a unified direction.
- An exceptional proficiency to communicate, including written, persuasion, and public speaking.
- An optimistic disposition.
- Foresight to anticipate, analyze, manage, and resolve complex problems while navigating competing perspectives.

The Location

The COO must reside in or be willing to relocate to Dallas. Act has a hybrid, flexible office policy. The COO will be a highly relational leader requiring significant in-person presence at the Act Headquarters.

Advocates for Community Transformation is an equal opportunity employer, and a diverse slate of compelling candidates is welcome and encouraged. The application requires a Statement of Faith. A Statement of Faith should describe your Christian faith and how it is relevant to your involvement with

Act and should include, at a minimum, a description of your spiritual disciplines (prayer, study, etc.) and your current place of worship.

For immediate consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

ACTCOO@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Cynthia Moreland, John Sparrow** or **Lysondra Somerville** at 404.262.7392.



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Danger was pretty much everywhere. I saw criminal activity and reported it to the cops. But that was it. I didn't know where to go from there. Who do I tell? What should be done? We just want our community to feel like a community.”

- Act Client