

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

PedNet Coalition narrows search for director to three

By [Becky Neems](#)
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**The PedNet Coalition is looking for multiple financial sponsors. An earlier version of this article misstated what the coalition is looking for.*

COLUMBIA — The PedNet Coalition has narrowed its search for new leadership.

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The coalition interviewed three finalists last week for the executive director position that opened when Ian Thomas, who has held the post since the coalition's inception in 2000, announced he will resign to run for the Fourth Ward seat on the Columbia City Council.

Thomas will resign when the new executive director begins in mid- to late January and will shadow him or her for about a month.

Steve Spellman, PedNet treasurer and president-elect of the organization's board, said one finalist is from Columbia and the other two live out of state. A search committee that included officers of the coalition's board selected the finalists.

"We are in the final stages of making the decision," Spellman said.

There were 26 applicants, Spellman said. The annual salary for the position will be in the range of \$50,000 to \$70,000.

Spellman said the new director will arrive as some of the government funding that PedNet has tapped into for health and bicycling is phasing out and the organization looks for new sources of income.

"We are coming into a new era," Spellman said.*

According to its website, PedNet's goal is to "create an active transportation network and a healthy community ... through community engagement, policy campaign action and effective planning."

One of the nonprofit's goals is more healthy living, but its core is still bicycling and other "active transportation," Spellman said.

PedNet has a longtime partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a private health philanthropy, but needs other sources of funding for its programs.

PedNet branched out into consulting in 2010 to help communities across the nation identify federal grants and begin programs such as the Walking School Bus, safe cycling and trail development.

PedNet engaged in a strategic planning process over the summer, before knowing about Thomas' decision, and Spellman said the effort will help the transition.

A change in leadership will be an opportunity for the nonprofit to reintroduce itself to contributors and organizations in the community, Spellman said.

Even with the new opportunity for leadership, Thomas has left his mark.

"It is a significant loss," Spellman said. "Ian is fantastic, but he has other life goals. It's an opportunity to go forward."

Supervising editor is [John Schneller](#).