



Cornerstone West CDC Position Description: Economic Development Director

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Cornerstone West CDC is a non-profit organization based in Wilmington, DE. Cornerstone West CDC's mission is to create affordable housing and promote the revitalization of Wilmington's West Side, a unique and historic neighborhood made up of a collection of four small but cohesive communities at the doorstep of downtown. A testament to Wilmington's diversity, the West Side is home to some of the most economically, racially, and socially diverse communities in the state. Cornerstone facilitated the development of a [West Side Revitalization Plan](#) in 2012 and is leading implementation efforts in the areas of economic development, housing, and community engagement as the fiscal and operating agent of the West Side Grows Together neighborhood coalition. Recently, via a pilot program, Cornerstone has expanded its work to partner with organizations to build and replicate successful community economic development programs throughout the State of Delaware. For more information, see our website at westsidegrows.org or find us on Facebook at [West Side Grows \(Wilmington, DE\)](#).

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Economic Development Director will be responsible for leading the dynamic, expanding Cornerstone West CDC Economic Development programs across the State of Delaware, with a core focus in Wilmington. This position plays a key role in driving economic growth, fostering business development, and enhancing the overall quality of life within Wilmington, Dover, Georgetown, with a focus on Wilmington's West Side. The ideal candidate will be passionate about supporting small business development, building equitable community economic development, attracting / leveraging resources to our business communities, especially those in under-represented areas of the State, and committed to persistent incremental community change. This position will oversee all current Economic Development activity, including: Commercial Corridor Revitalization (West Side Focus), the Build From Within Fund (including the Wilmington Strong Fund), the Building Better Business Districts Program (three partners sites across Delaware), and KIVA Delaware (statewide microlending). The Director will oversee Economic Development Staff - 2 full-time, 1 part-time, and interns as necessary. This individual will establish policies, procedures, and methodologies. This person will lead a strategic vision, demonstrate leadership skills, and collaborate with various stakeholders. Additionally, this position will be instrumental in promoting sustainable economic practices and implementing initiatives that support the long-term prosperity of our organization and the communities it serves.

Economic Development Strategy:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy to attract and retain businesses, increase job opportunities, and stimulate economic growth within the community.
- Develop economic strategies to increase retailing in West Side commercial districts, including attracting new users into existing facilities and expanding market opportunities such as creating a regional West Side Marketing Plan.
- Collaborate with local, regional, and state economic development agencies to leverage resources and develop budget requests to maximize business attraction efforts by working with Elected Officials, Mayor's Office, and the Office of Economic Development.

- Develop and implement programs and partnerships Statewide to support small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups in partnership with DALE, La Plaza, Downtown Dover Partnership, NeighborGood Partners and other key stakeholders.
- Successfully execute following programs and projects: West Side Commercial Corridor Revitalization, Build From Within (funded by American Rescue Plan Act dollars), Wilmington Strong Fund, Small Business Technical Assistance, Vacant Property Research for potential commercial development, Building Better Business Districts, and Kiva Delaware.

Performance Monitoring and Reporting:

- With support from our Accounting Team, maintain compliance with State and Federal funding reporting and procedures. Prepare and manage reporting requirements to ensure compliance with funding agencies.
- Provide support for the Economic Development Surveying and Focus Groups for the Wells Fargo 10 Year Evaluation Report.
- Establish key performance indicators and metrics to assess the impact and effectiveness of economic development programs and initiatives as well as Monitor progress, collect data, and analyze trends to evaluate the success of strategies and make data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement.
- Prepare regular reports and presentations for the organization's leadership team, board of Directors, and external stakeholders.

Grant and Fundraising Management:

- Research and pursue funding opportunities, grants, and sponsorships to support economic development initiatives and cultivate relationships with potential donors via grant writing and reporting as well as support the President with yearly budget development.
- Aggregate and Track the number of grant disbursements and improvements, in conjunction with data collection and research in order to demonstrate impact.
- Conduct thorough research and analysis to identify emerging economic trends, opportunities, and challenges that impact the local community and businesses via Annual Reports, Impact Reports, Maps, Data Collection and Evaluation.

Small Business Support, Community Engagement, and Technical Assistance:

- Recruit Economic Development Stakeholders from the West Side business community to further develop the Building From Within Committee and establish commitment to reviewing ongoing and new small business projects.
- Partner effectively with Wilmington Alliance, in support of Wilmington Strong Fund.
- Partner effectively with the Launcher Entrepreneurship Program in the West Side, and via expansion into Kent and Sussex Counties.
- Manage 3 to 4 staff persons within the Organization's Economic Development Team, including; KIVA Delaware Program Manager, Commercial Corridor Manager,, Construction Project Manager.
- Represent Cornerstone at local, city, and state meetings and events, and stay informed of best practices in the field of neighborhood commercial development and small business development.

Business Attraction and Retention:

- Facilitate networking opportunities and create partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and support organizations.
- Develop workshops and training as well as provide guidance, resources, and access to capital for local businesses to foster their growth, innovation, and competitiveness.
- Proactively identify and target businesses and industries that align with the community's economic development goals and create opportunities for growth and diversification by building strong relationships with existing businesses and provide support to foster their expansion, retention, and success within the community.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree in economics, business administration, urban planning, public administration, or a related field. Advanced degree preferred. Or equivalent experience.
- Proven track record of successful economic development initiatives, preferably within a local or regional context of Delaware.
- Strong project management and organizational skills – with emphasis on project implementation and execution and the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.
- Either lived experience of owning a small business or experience in providing technical assistance to small businesses is a must.
- Strong “can-do” attitude, flexibility and ease with change and high levels of uncertainty
- Strong understanding of economic development principles, practices, and strategies.
- Knowledge of local, state, and federal economic development programs, policies, and incentives.
- Experience in attracting and retaining businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting small businesses.
- Excellent leadership and interpersonal skills with the ability to collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- Outstanding communication and presentation skills, both written and verbal.
- Strong knowledge of social media, Wix, or similar platform for website management and email blasts.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, analyze complex issues, and make informed decisions.
- Strong project management and organizational skills, with the ability to prioritize and manage multiple initiatives simultaneously.
- Proficiency in using data analysis tools, software, and databases.
- Familiarity with Delaware's economic landscape, community development initiatives, and regulatory environment is a plus.
- Fluency in Spanish, a plus.

COMPENSATION & CONDITIONS

- The salary range is \$60,000-70,000 annually, based on experience.
- Time commitment is 40 hours per week, exempt.
- Compensation includes a full benefits package such as paid time off, medical, dental, life insurance, and employer contribution to a retirement plan.
- A satisfactory criminal background check, valid driver's license, and acceptable driving record are required at the time of appointment and throughout employment in this position.

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- Must have own means of transportation.
- Must be able to traverse sidewalks in neighborhoods that may have uneven pavement or obstacles.
- Must have access to stable internet and phone.
- Must have the capacity to work remotely.
- Must be able to work a flexible schedule, including evenings and weekends, in order to attend community events and meetings.

TO APPLY

For consideration for this position, please email your resume and 1-page cover letter to Sarah Lester, President & CEO, at slester@westsidegrows.org.

Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. EOE/M/F/D/V