



Position Description

Position Title: President and Chief Executive Officer

Reports to: South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership Board of Directors

Date Posted: January 27, 2022

About the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership

The South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership is a 501c (6) organization dedicated to advancing the economy of a bi-state region of 47 smart connected communities in northern Indiana and southwest Michigan. Formed in 2013, South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership is a collaboration of partners in economic development, education, industry, entrepreneurship, government, and others, all focused on a long-term systemic approach to advance the regional economy. The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership aligns the efforts of these various stakeholders around five key areas:

- Educating a world-class **workforce**.
- Recruiting and retaining great **talent**.
- Attracting and growing high-wage **industries**.
- Promoting **inclusion**.
- Helping **entrepreneurs** thrive.

The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership seeks to unify and collaborate so that the communities across the region work together to achieve what cannot be done individually. The South Bend – Elkhart region has a variety of economic, demographic and quality of place assets. The region’s key strengths include many existing place-based assets, a competitive cost structure, access to markets, higher education resources, and cultural diversity. Innovation Districts are already emerging throughout the region, and leaders are exploring additional place-based development opportunities in their communities. Home to the University of Notre Dame as well as numerous other higher educational institutions, the region is a knowledge-driven, highly connected region that serves and provides access to the global innovation economy.

The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership also provides staffing for the **South Bend - Elkhart Regional Development Authority** (“RDA”), a separate entity formed in 2015 to apply for and then distribute \$42MM of Regional Cities Initiative funding from the State of Indiana. Intended to spur investment in quality-of-life projects for Elkhart, Marshall and St. Joseph Counties and the municipalities within the region, the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership CEO works closely with the 5-member RDA board (meets monthly) focused on the long-term prosperity of the region and raising per capita income of its residents.

In late 2021, the region received a \$50MM **Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative** (“READI”) grant from the State of Indiana. In concert with additional public and private investments that would serve as matching funds to the READI grant, the overall impact is significant. Based on the example projects included in the South Bend-Elkhart region’s “Smart Connected Communities 2030 Plan,” the \$50MM from the State of Indiana could generate over \$461MM of total investment, comprised of 11% READI grant funds, 14% local public funding, and 75% private sector funding.

Through a \$42.4MM Lily Endowment Inc. grant, the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership also has oversight of the Labs for Industry Futures and Transformation (LIFT) Network which brings together business, community and educational partners in new and innovative ways centered on creating a diversified economy of



the future based on technology and advanced manufacturing. The **LIFT Network** is aligned with iNDustry Labs at Notre Dame.

The **South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership Foundation** is a separate 501c (3) affiliate that allows for tax deductible contributions to be made to the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership’s ongoing work within the region.

The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership’s new CEO is expected to bring a sense of business urgency to the role and elevate the visibility and functioning of this well-funded, growth-oriented organization. South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership’s \$2.3MM annual budget is generated through public and private sector support as well as state and private grants. This executive will oversee and manage all aspects of the organization and includes ongoing collaboration with Local Economic Development Organizations (“LEDOs”) in each county along with other key partners such as education, workforce, business advocacy, government, and other regional organizations.

Regina Emberton has served as the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership’s President and Chief Executive Officer (and first employee) since the organization’s inception in 2013. She has announced her plan to leave the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership to lead a locally based telecommunications firm that works to improve economic development via dark fiber-optic cable. As a result, the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership’s Board of Directors has embarked on a national search to recruit a new CEO who will guide the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership and continue to lead its significant economic development and collaboration activities in the years to come. More information about the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership is available at SouthBendElkhart.org.

About The South Bend - Elkhart Region

The South Bend-Elkhart region encompasses communities across Elkhart, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties in northern Indiana and Berrien and Cass counties in southwest Michigan, with a total population of over 518,000. Situated along the I-80/I-90 corridor at I-94, the region’s central Midwest location provides proximity to Chicago, Detroit and Indianapolis and enables access to major cities, markets, and customers. The South Bend International Airport is the second busiest airport in Indiana. Travelers can catch a private or commercial plane on four airlines with service to 12 nonstop destinations or train to Chicago.

Residents of the region appreciate their access to the larger big cities as noted above. However, they especially enjoy regional and local amenities such as Lake Michigan beaches, bike trails, and a burgeoning local culinary scene while appreciating the conveniences of a smaller, friendly hometown environment. The region offers an outstanding quality of life based on educational opportunities, affordable homes, an increasingly diverse population, and green space. Arts and culture include galleries, community festivals, restaurants, museums, and theatre venues. The region is also home to beautiful parks, golf courses, and close access to a myriad of minor league, professional, and collegiate sports. Residents also benefit from excellent health care facilities, and shopping options at national retailers and unique local boutique shops.

Key industries in this region include food and agriculture, advanced manufacturing, logistics and distribution, technology and life sciences, healthcare, and higher education. Top employers in the area include the University of Notre Dame, Gulf Stream Coach, Whirlpool Corporation, Meijer, Inc., Honeywell International Inc., Saint



Joseph Medical Center. Indiana consistently ranks among the best states in the nation to do business, based on a favorable tax climate, right-to-work laws, entrepreneurial spirit, and talented workforce.

For additional information about the region, please visit multiple community links from the following website: [Quality of Life - South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership \(southbendelkhart.org\)](http://southbendelkhart.org)

Position Objective:

The President and CEO position of the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership is an outstanding opportunity for a seasoned leader from economic development, chamber, nonprofit or public or private sectors to lead a well-respected organization committed to the success of the business sector and overall economy and quality of life in northern Indiana and southwest Michigan. During its 9 years in existence, and through periods of significant growth, the organization has been consistently well managed and highly regarded throughout the region. The new CEO will inherit a securely funded organization with a clear vision and will work with an engaged and committed Board of Directors and professional colleagues on the staff team who are eager to move the Partnership's objectives forward. Through its collaboration with many stakeholders, this CEO position represents an opportunity to continue to elevate and amplify the impact of the northern Indiana and southwest Michigan businesses and further develop and shape a forward-facing direction for one of the nation's most exciting regional communities.

Reporting Relationships:

The President and Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") reports to the Partnership's 24-member Board of Directors (includes 6-member Executive Committee), which meets bi-monthly. The CEO will also work with the 4-member Board of Directors of the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership Foundation, the supporting 501c (3) organization, and with the 5-member Board of the Regional Development Authority.

The CEO will directly supervise the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Strategy Officer with executive oversight of the other 11 employees, along with interns and an outsourced accountant. The Partnership's staff members appreciate the team-oriented and flexible culture that has been developed and fostered, especially during the challenging months of the pandemic.

Other important interactions include: executives and employees of funding partners, investors and customers; elected/appointed officials and their staffs at the local, county, regional, state and Federal level; owners/executives of businesses with operations in the northern Indiana and southwest Michigan region; representatives of target and prospect businesses domestically and internationally; representatives and leaders of other community, business and academic organizations in the region; venture capitalists, organizations that attract entrepreneurs and innovation; economic development consultants; members of the media; and the public at large.

Position Charter:

The President and Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the effective and efficient execution of the strategic direction set forth by the Board of Directors. This includes creating a platform for public/private engagement on regional economic strategy, program implementation, convening key regional actors, marketing the region, and encouraging collaborations are key parts of the position.



Primary Responsibilities:

Collaboration and Engagement Management

- Assure the necessary dialog on issues related to the regional business climate.
- Coordinate efforts with other organizations and stakeholders with similar interests.
- Maintain and grow positive relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials, including convening the Mayors and Commissioners Council; higher education institutions including convening the Higher Education Advisory Council; private sector leaders; philanthropic organizations; and economic development professionals.
- Work with the Board on an annual basis to assure fundraising occurs properly and raises needed funds.

Communications And Public Affairs

- Provide information to local, state, and national media outlets to increase awareness, and ensure they receive information on important topics and key events.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson articulating the positions of the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership.
- Develop and implement ideas to promote regional approaches to solving problems.
- Inform regional stakeholders of the efforts, activities, and accomplishments of the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership.

Management and Operations

- Engage in strategic planning activities with the Board.
- Assure development of, and execution against, the budget and strategies approved by the Board.
- Board Governance - Manage board member communications, including new appointments, documentation, and orientation; and assure that the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership bylaws and policies are enforced, and proper reporting occurs.
- Manage direct reports, including the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Strategy Officer.
- Maintain an environment of teamwork that supports and rewards efforts and results.
- Assure an ethical and professional reputation is maintained for the work done by the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership.
- Plan and attend South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership Board, Executive Committee and Regional Development Authority meetings.

Travel

- The CEO is expected to travel regionally, statewide, nationally, and perhaps internationally.

Experience and Professional Qualifications:

The ideal candidate will have extensive experience in a broad leadership role focused on economic development in a complex market. This executive is currently serving as the top executive of a complex municipal, countywide, regional, or state economic development organization or a large chamber of commerce or as the “#2” or other senior-level executive within an organization as noted above. Alternative background could be as a leader from a private sector business or a public sector organization within a growing regional area. The successful candidate will have the ability to quickly gain credibility with and the confidence of the South Bend-Elkhart region’s business, political, education and community leadership. A successful track record of progressively responsible career growth and specific experience working with both the public and private sectors as well as other economic development-focused organizations is important.

Education:

A Bachelor’s degree in economic development, planning, marketing, communications, business, or a related field; Master’s degree, CECD designation or other advanced training and certification preferred.



Required Skills:

Professional Skills and Knowledge

- **Economic development** (knowledgeable about issues, models, and methods for successful economic development at a community, county, region, or state level).
- **Public/private relationships** (demonstrated track record of developing effective collaborations and partnerships between the public and private sector).
- **Board relationships** (experience with governance issues and Board of Director interactions).
- **Leadership experience** (strong human resource and staff development skills; can effectively attract, retain, coach, mentor and empower staff).
- **Industry knowledge** (current economic development trends including financing tools, governmental planning, zoning, economic development, and redevelopment).
- **Sales orientation** (experience in marketing and selling a community, county, region, state; effective negotiation skills).
- **Planning** (adept in developing and implementing tactical and strategic plans to fulfill the mission).
- **Varied industries** (experience with diverse industries including food and agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, logistics, distribution, higher education, technology and life sciences, start-up enterprises).
- **Fiscal management** (able to manage the Partnership financial affairs; good investor relations).
- **Educational institutions** (demonstrated collaboration with leaders of public and private secondary and technical schools and colleges and universities).
- **Workforce development** (experience in community and regional interconnected solutions to meet employment needs through training, education, career paths and workforce learning).
- **Technology** (knowledgeable of technology resources (including Salesforce, Microsoft Office Suite, QuickBooks), social media and its role in driving business development and supporting staff productivity).
- **Regional familiarity** (experience in Indiana, Michigan, and the Midwest helpful but not required).
- **Fundraising** (experience with successful resource development activities and campaigns).
- **Media/public relations** (ability to effectively articulate goals, objectives, and accomplishments of the Partnership to the media and the regional community).

Personal Traits

- **Leadership** (a take charge individual; can manage, motivate, challenge and delegate to others).
- **Executive presence and strength** (polished; self-confident; personal charisma; sets limits and boundaries).
- **Strategic thinker and visionary** (sees beyond daily operations toward broader strategic goals; can analyze the “big picture”).
- **Ethical** (person of good character and integrity; sensitive to confidentiality).
- **Interpersonal relations skills** (relate well to people; engages and builds effective relationships with individuals at all levels; tactful).
- **Consensus-building** (demonstrates willingness and ability to work with and through others; diplomatic).
- **Communication skills** (excellent listener; outstanding written and oral communication abilities; strong presentation skills; experienced public speaker).
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion** (embraces demographic profile of regional community; promotes diversity and inclusion programmatically).
- **Political acumen** (ability to strategically navigate among municipal, county and state leaders).
- **Energetic self-starter** (self-starter; genuinely enthusiastic; sense of urgency; strong personal work ethic).
- **Savvy** (possesses confidence and ability to maneuver through complex situations effectively).
- **Teamwork** (demonstrated success in working in teams; speaks of “we” first, not “I”).
- **Humility** (does not seek the spotlight; freely recognizes/gives credit to others in accomplishing goals).
- **Organizational skills** (results oriented; sets clear priorities and meets established goals and objectives).
- **Entrepreneurial** (takes initiative; a proactive person who demonstrates leading edge thinking).



- **Adaptable/flexible** (able to adjust quickly to fluid and complex situations).
- **Confidence/credibility** (can earn respect of Board, staff, business, government, and other regional leaders).
- **Persuasive** (synthesizes viewpoints and mobilizes support to accomplish key projects and objectives).

Challenges and Opportunities

Key accomplishments and challenges for the new President and CEO in the first year and beyond include:

- Establish presence as the South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership's CEO to understand the details of the day-to-day operations and become knowledgeable about the work of regional partners, staff, finances, initiatives, and Board members.
- Initiate formal and informal introductions and connections with the Partnership's partners and funders along with key industry leaders through varied communications and in-person meetings. Ensure a smooth transition between CEO leadership, demonstrating continued strong and appropriately transparent communication among all stakeholders.
- By listening and observing, form effective working relationships with key LEDO executives and staff, municipal, county, state and national government leaders, entrepreneurial business owners and corporate executives, economic, community and tourism partner organizations, university, and other educational officers. Continue to build upon collaborative ecosystem, ensuring all stakeholders feel appreciated, valued, and heard. Seek to enhance volunteer engagement and collaborative participation across the Partnership's footprint as appropriate.
- Continue forward momentum with READI and other resources regarding grant funding application, review, disbursement, and review process throughout region. Celebrate progress as change becomes evident within the region.
- Reinforce strong team orientation among Partnership staff, integrating newer team members, encouraging professional growth/stretch opportunities, and promoting a strong, appreciative, supportive culture.

Cultural Competencies and Commitment:

- Exhibits high integrity
- Ability to be proactive and take initiative
- Demonstrated success working in teams
- Hardworking, humble approach to work
- Consistently provides quality results
- Responsible work ethic
- Demonstrated cross-cultural competency
- Highly motivated by challenges
- Value and vision driven
- Positive can-do attitude
- Well organized habits
- Reliable with a ready-to-help disposition
- Positive approach to problem solving

This job description in no way states or implies that these are the only duties to be performed by the employee(s) incumbent in this position. Employees will be required to follow any other job-related instructions and to perform any other job-related duties requested by any person authorized to give instructions or assignments. All duties and responsibilities are essential functions and requirements and are subject to possible modification to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities. To perform this job successfully, the incumbents will possess the skills, aptitudes, and abilities to perform each duty proficiently. Some requirements may exclude individuals who pose a direct threat or significant risk to the health or safety of themselves or others. The requirements listed in this document are the minimum levels of knowledge, skills, or abilities. This document does not create an employment contract, implied or otherwise, other than an "at will" relationship.

The successful candidate must submit to a required background check prior to the first day of employment. A background check may consist of, but not limited to, a criminal history check, employment reference check, social security and address verification, drug tests and an education verification. All qualified applicants will



receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, disability, sex, age, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or presentation, pregnancy, genetics, veteran status, or any other status protected by state or federal law.

Salary and Benefits

The President and Chief Executive Officer is expected to earn an attractive compensation package; appropriate benefits and some relocation assistance will be provided.

Location:

The President and Chief Executive Officer position will be based out of the Partnership’s primary office location in the historic Studebaker Building 113, 635 S Lafayette Blvd, Suite 123, South Bend, Indiana 46601; telephone: 574.344.4686.

Contacts

If you are aware of an outstanding leader who meets these requirements and would be interested in evaluating this dynamic opportunity, please email RegionalPartnership@Waverly-Partners.com or contact WAVERLY PARTNERS, the executive search firm retained by the Partnership Board on this search.

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