



**Position Profile**  
**President & Chief Executive Officer**  
**Charleston Area Alliance**  
Charleston, West Virginia

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**The Charleston Area Alliance**

The Charleston Area Alliance is a regional economic development, chamber of commerce and community development organization serving the State of West Virginia's capital city of Charleston and Kanawha County along with the broader regional marketplace. The organization has almost 500 private, public and nonprofit investors who support the Alliance's efforts to create a more vibrant community and prosperous economy. The Alliance is focused on local business growth, job creation, innovation and attracting industry to the region along with fostering an enhanced quality of life.

The Alliance is pursuing the following Strategic Goals and Key Objectives:

- Create an inclusive environment in which people want to live, work and play.
  - Promote culture, art, music, and recreation as a means to intentionally gather people and contribute to a dynamic urban atmosphere that celebrates inclusivity in the community.
- Facilitate downtown housing to create a robust and vibrant community.
  - Create positive economic impact and growth in the urban areas of Charleston through the facilitation, marketing, and partnership in the development of new or rehabilitated housing.
- Create growth through support of existing businesses.
  - Impact jobs through personal visits with Kanawha Valley employers in existing industries.
- Serve as the collaborative conduit for property development.
  - Showcase, market, and maintain knowledge of sites and facilities in the region that are suitable for development.
  - Encourage mixed use development projects that prioritize housing.
  - Develop shovel ready greenfield and brownfield sites.
- Create growth through a strategic communication, recruiting and marketing plan.
  - Increase awareness of the economic advantage of a location in the Kanawha County, through the promotion of the community.
  - Recruit international businesses that create job opportunities for a diverse mix of talents and cultures.

The Charleston Area Alliance provides a variety of programs and services for investors, members and for the region, including economic and business development, professional women and young professionals' networks, small business innovation, workforce development, leadership, downtown Charleston community events, membership development and services activities. The Alliance's affiliate, the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce, focuses on public policy and advocacy which includes formal endorsement of key issues and candidates for elected office.

With an 8-member staff, a budget of \$1.7MM and a 36-member Board of Directors, the Alliance has a solid reputation on a regional basis. In addition to its important work in economic and business development, the Alliance also plays a pro-active role in the redevelopment of Charleston's downtown core. The organization offers a variety of events and programs that are valued by members and the community at large and generates revenue through investment, sponsorships and attendance fees. In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the regional economy, the Alliance staff and volunteers have creatively ensured that relevant programs and events are offered virtually and through ongoing communication with investors, members and the regional community. While the pandemic has influenced the finances of the Alliance, the team-oriented efforts of the staff have minimized this and continued to demonstrate the value of the organization to the region.



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The Alliance's previous President & CEO served for almost 15 years and left the organization in late 2020 to lead a regional technology park. A local business leader and former Board Chair is now serving as Interim CEO and the Board of Directors has embarked on a national search to recruit a new President & CEO who will guide the Alliance and its prominent leadership activities within the region.

More information on the Alliance is available on its website: [www.charlestoneareaalliance.org](http://www.charlestoneareaalliance.org)

### ***The Position:***

#### ***Location:***

The CEO and the Alliance's staff occupy 14,000 sq. ft. of the first floor at 116 Smith Street, Charleston, WV 25301, of a 70,000 sq. ft. 4-story building owned by the Alliance; telephone 304.340.4253. The Alliance leases the remaining space to over 20 commercial tenants and new business ventures participating in the Alliance's incubator program.

#### ***Reporting Relationships:***

The President & Chief Executive Officer of the Charleston Area Alliance reports to the Chair of the 36-member Alliance Board of Directors. The Alliance Executive Committee meets monthly and the full Board meets bi-monthly. The Alliance Board includes 5 *ex officio* members representing public sector partners. The members of the Alliance Board also serve as the Board of Directors of the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce.

This executive will directly supervise the Alliance staff: Chief Financial Officer, Vice President-Administration, Vice President-Communications & Development, Vice President-Community Development, Vice President-Economic Development (position currently vacant), New Markets Consultant (contract position), Real Estate & Facilities Director and Executive Assistant.

Other important interactions include: representatives and employees of Alliance member organizations and investors; local, state and national elected officials and their staffs; executives at other public- and private-sector partnership organizations including West Virginia Department of Commerce, Charleston Main Streets, Advantage Valley (regional economic development agency), Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau and West Virginia Chamber among others; education officials; and members of the media.

#### ***Position Charter:***

The President & Chief Executive Officer is responsible for inspiring and leading a diverse team of economic and civic development professionals, while building sustainable, direct relationships with business executives, local and state economic development offices, federal, state and local government officials and community leaders. The CEO must inspire trust, build consensus and meet deadlines. This executive oversees the planning, coordination and implementation of strategic economic development projects, Chamber of Commerce activities and downtown redevelopment efforts. In addition, the CEO is charged with identifying existing area business and/or industry that can be expanded with appropriate assistance, resources and planning. This individual strategically targets and courts new business sectors to diversify the Charleston region's economy and assists government officials and other partners in creating a better economic environment for existing and new businesses.

#### ***Major Duties and Responsibilities:***

- Prepare strategic plan with short- and long-term goals to meet development objectives, increase membership, effective event planning, resurgence of downtown areas and enlist support from members of the Alliance, other economic development agencies, business, industry, government, community and volunteer organizations.
- Provide proactive leadership to the organization under the policy guidance of the Board of Directors (e.g., providing detailed policy recommendations to the Board with thoughtful and substantive analysis of the various policy alternatives, assuming responsibility for implementing the final policy directives, etc.).



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- Design and implement a comprehensive economic development program and appropriate marketing strategies for the area, including implementing sales plans for new business recruitment, existing business expansion, and overall region promotion.
- Maintain close working relationships with the local, state and federal government, business and community sectors.
- Hire, manage and develop the Alliance staff.
- Establish governance policies, protocols, systems and procedures for the Alliance.
- Prepare and administer yearly budgets.
- Develop and submit grant proposals for funds from private foundations, corporations and government agencies.
- Identify potential contributors to secure private funding and investment for special projects and ongoing operations through examination of past records, individual and corporate contacts.
- Develop public relations and marketing materials to enhance the area image and promote area for expanded or new development.
- Negotiate agreements with representatives of other organizations or government to facilitate the location or expansion of business in the region.
- Work with education partners at the secondary, collegiate and post-college level on workforce development issues and education.
- Develop and implement education and support programs for Alliance members.
- Effective work with the Board of Directors in accomplishing the above, and perform other tasks as directed by the Board.

### ***Compensation:***

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

### ***The Candidate:***

#### ***Education:***

A Bachelor's degree is expected; an advanced degree in business, law, public administration or related field is valued. Persons with a demonstrated commitment to continued professional development through the U.S. Chamber Institute for Organization Management, Economic Development Institute of the University of Oklahoma, Certified Economic Developer or Certified Chamber Executive designation may be advantaged.

#### ***Professional Qualifications:***

Candidates may come from a variety of professional backgrounds. An experienced, entrepreneurial leader with a background that includes significant engagement with business and community leaders and a keen interest and passion for the Alliance's mission and the Charleston region may be well suited for this role.

Persons with 5 to 10 years of experience serving as a senior executive of a comparably sized, complex multi-constituency economic development organization, chamber of commerce, or related significant business association, or economic/community development-focused organization may be advantaged. Persons currently serving at the COO level or as a "#2" at a similar organization and professionally prepared to step up to the CEO-level position may find this role of considerable interest. Executives from complex private or public sector entities with proven general management experience in significant corporate development/marketing/sales role where advocacy and constituent leadership is clearly evidenced may also be considered.

#### ***Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities***

- **Executive leadership experience** (possesses strong staff leadership and delegation experience; has led a complex economic development, chamber, community or corporate organization).
- **Collaborative relationships** (demonstrated track record of developing effective relationships and strategic

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alliances built on trust among all sectors and constituents).

- **Economic/business development** (works collaboratively with established public sector delivery systems and private sector resources to effectively promote the economic development of a community or region).
- **Community/regional/state development** (able to identify local, regional and state issues and effectively manage interactions with and among local, regional, and state organizations to achieve common goals).
- **Planning** (proven track record of successfully developing and executing operational and strategic plans).
- **Governance** (significant involvement with board development and recruitment, governance issues, and interactions with sophisticated business and public sector leaders serving as directors).
- **Management skills** (strong business acumen and problem solving).
- **Fiscal management** (financially literate; demonstrated ability to manage financial affairs of an organization; experience with an annual budget with revenues of at least \$1.5MM; knowledgeable in contract negotiation).
- **Marketing and promotion** (ability to market and promote the Alliance, Charleston, Kanawha County and region).
- **Consensus-builder** (able to forge effective working relationships with various parties and encourage them to work together toward common goals).
- **Public policy** (capable of advocating sound public policy and developing effective and even-handed working relationships with elected/appointed officials and their staffs).
- **Fundraising** (experience with varied successful resource development activities including capital campaigns, sponsorships and advertising, special events and other non-dues revenue campaigns).
- **Staff leadership** (demonstrated background of leading and managing an experienced staff; inclusive while providing basic direction; allows senior staff team to execute without excessive personal involvement).
- **Volunteer organization experience** (proven ability to motivate and utilize volunteers).
- **Varied industries** (experience within a business environment with diverse industries including energy and natural resources, business services, automotive, chemical, healthcare, hospitality and retail).
- **Inclusion** (experience working with diverse groups; promotes diversity programmatically).
- **Media/public relations** (ability to effectively articulate goals, objectives and policy positions of the Alliance to the media and the community; recognizes the value and potential of using social media and technology to market, promote and achieve the Alliance's goals and objectives).

### Desired personal traits:

- **Integrity** (possesses the highest ethical and moral standards; trustworthy).
- **Communication skills** (good listener; excellent written and oral communication skills; experienced public speaker).
- **Visionary** (able to envision "the big picture" beyond daily operations and lead an organization toward strategic goals and ideas).
- **Interpersonal relations skills** (relates well to people; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Leadership** (a take charge individual; can manage, motivate, challenge and delegate to others).
- **Persuasive** (able to synthesize various viewpoints and mobilize support for policy objectives).
- **Executive presence/credible** (polished; self-confident; able to command respect of Board, staff, business, government and community leaders).
- **Teamwork** (recognizes that many parties are necessary to accomplish big things; speaks of "we" first, not "I"; relishes in sharing credit with others).
- **Genuine** (fair; self-aware; walks the talk; takes responsibility).
- **Servant leadership** (excellent human relations skills; humble; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Analytical** (can collect, analyze and apply data to various economic development and redevelopment projects and appropriately structure deals for the mutual benefit of all parties).
- **Energetic self-starter** (genuinely enthusiastic; strong work ethic, sense of urgency, and a "can do" attitude).
- **Organized** (pro-active; able to establish Alliance agenda and maintain key priorities).



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- **Decisive** (makes decisions in a timely manner and achieves desired outcomes).
- **Executes for results** (proven track record of “getting things done;” holds others accountable).
- **Regional knowledge and sensitivities** (has or able to develop an appreciation for the Appalachian region, culture, history, and ways of doing business).
- **Political acumen** (demonstrated ability to strategically navigate among municipal, county and state leaders).
- **Sense of humor** (genuinely light-hearted; able to enjoy life and see humor in sometimes difficult situations).

### Challenges and Opportunity:

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

- Establish a presence as the Alliance’s CEO, immersed in the details of the day-to-day operations of the organization and become knowledgeable about the work of its staff, finances, programs, Board members and committed volunteers.
- Initiate formal and informal introductions and connections with the Alliance’s investors and members, through varied communications and in-person meetings. Communicate the Alliance’s relevancy and value to existing and prospective investors and members by connecting investment with tangible outcomes.
- By listening and observing, form effective working relationships with key municipal, county, regional, state and national government leaders, entrepreneurial business owners and corporate executives, economic, community and tourism partner organizations, college and other educational officers, cultural arts leaders.
- Help guide the Alliance staff, Board and volunteers through the issues the pandemic has fostered on the Charleston regional community. This includes funding for economic development efforts along with continuing the Alliance’s creative and effective measures in offering programs and services virtually and through direct communication with investors, regional stakeholders and the public at large.
- Articulate an ongoing vision. Work with the Board and staff to evaluate the strategic direction and efficiency of the Alliance and offer a vision for possible short and long-term changes. Initiate a multi-year operational and budgetary review of the entire organization and its engagement with other related entities in the region.
- Become actively involved in the Charleston area community, attending multiple Alliance and community events; become known as “the face” of the Alliance within the regional community.

The President & Chief Executive Officer position of the Charleston Area Alliance is a challenging but exciting opportunity for an economic development, chamber of commerce, association, or perhaps private sector executive to lead and expand an organization committed to the success and growth of the Charleston region. The CEO will inherit an enthusiastic, experienced, and dedicated Chamber staff and a committed and influential Board of Directors. The level of collaboration between the private sector and public sector is also strong. Widely recognized as the “go to” business organization in the region, the Alliance is well regarded and, as such, the new CEO can have tremendous influence within the regional community. This CEO position represents a leadership opportunity to bring the organization to “the next level” along with an exciting role in defining the region for years to come.

### About the Charleston Region

Charleston is the capital city of West Virginia and the most populous city in the state with over 46,000 residents. It is also the county seat of Kanawha County, with over 208,000 residents and a 3-county MSA of over 250,000. The community is the economic engine of the region and key industries include government, business services, chemicals, natural resources and energy, hospitality and recreation. Some of the region’s largest employers include Charleston Area Medical Center, State of West Virginia government, Toyota, Dow Chemical, Frontier Communications. Charleston is the regional hub for business, education, healthcare, retail, financial and professional services and entertainment.

Charleston and the Kanawha Valley are in the beautiful Appalachian Mountains, close to scenic mountains, state and national parks, and pristine rivers. It offers world class recreation, a favorable business climate, a workforce of over 440,000. Three interstate highways run through Charleston, which is along the Kanawha River. Arts and culture



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include art and history museums, galleries, a variety of community festivals, restaurants, ballet, opera, and thriving theatre. The educational environment includes outstanding public, private and parochial schools along with University of Charleston and West Virginia State University, along with BridgeValley Community and Technical College and Marshall University Graduate School that enroll over 20,000 students.

The CEO will join a unique, livable community and have an opportunity to significantly influence the future direction and growth of the region. With its excellent transportation system, it is also within easy driving distance to major metropolitan areas like Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. It has a very low cost of living and offers an excellent quality of life.

More information on the Charleston region can be found on the following websites:

- Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau: [www.charlestonwv.com](http://www.charlestonwv.com)
- City of Charleston government: [www.charlestonwv.gov](http://www.charlestonwv.gov)
- Kanawha County government: [www.kanawha.us](http://www.kanawha.us)
- Advantage Valley regional economic development organization: [www.advantagevalley.com](http://www.advantagevalley.com)
- Drone video tour of the City of Charleston: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlbdAiw6rDc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlbdAiw6rDc)

### Contact

The client organization we represent, and WAVERLY PARTNERS firmly support the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of race, religion, sex, age, national origin or disability. If you are aware of an outstanding economic development, chamber, association or business executive who meets these requirements, please contact WAVERLY PARTNERS, the executive search firm retained by the Alliance Board on this search and the preferred provider of executive search services of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

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