



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**  
**Executive Search Firm to recruit the next Chief Executive  
Officer of FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance**

**March 10, 2023**

**Summary:** FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance ("FloridaWest") is issuing this Request for Proposals for the services of an Executive Search Firm ("ESF") to assist in the recruitment of a Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"). The ESF shall assist the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee in attracting, interviewing, and hiring a CEO. Services include development of a position description and terms of employment, development of a recruitment plan, conducting a nationwide search, vetting of qualified candidates, and decision assistance in final selection. The ESF will coordinate its efforts with the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee.

**Background:** FloridaWest is a 501(c)6 non-profit principally funded by Escambia County and the City of Pensacola. We receive 20% of our funds from the private sector and partner with them to retain and attract new business, promote sustainable development, address infrastructure challenges, and improve quality of life for a rapidly growing community. Further information can be found at [www.floridawesteda.com](http://www.floridawesteda.com).

**Chief Executive Officer Position:** FloridaWest is seeking an experienced Economic Developer that will serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the organization. The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for effectively leading FloridaWest as well as overseeing all financial and operational aspects of the corporation in accordance with the Bylaws and the Mission of FloridaWest. The FloridaWest CEO serves as the public face and voice of the corporation and plays a leading role in building and maintaining collaborative relationships with business and community leaders. The current staff of FloridaWest is approximately 5 full time positions and the budget is approximately \$1.3M. The FloridaWest office is located at 3 West Garden Street, Suite 618, Pensacola, FL 32502. Details on the duties of the CEO can be found in Attachment A.

**Services Requested:** The FloridaWest Executive Search Committee seeks the following services to identify a new CEO.

- In collaboration with the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee, develop a job position suitable for a nationwide search that is consistent with the FloridaWest Bylaws as well as the needs of the Corporation.
- Coordinate with the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee throughout the process.

- Conduct a nationwide search to identify a diverse pool of highly qualified individuals to serve as the FloridaWest CEO. This portion of the search is expected to be complete four (4) months after the execution of a contract.
- In coordination with the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee, develop evaluation criteria to be used.
- Vetting of qualified candidates to identify those both willing and most worthy of consideration; provide those candidates to the Executive Search Committee.
- Perform all relevant background checks, including social media activity.
- Inform each candidate that makes it to the final selection that their names will be shared with the FloridaWest Board of Directors.
- Development of an executive offer for the most qualified candidate to include benefits and terms of employment. The executive offer will be evaluated by the FloridaWest Executive Search Committee as part of the final selection process. It is expected that the CEO will serve an initial 3-year term with subsequent 5-year terms, based upon performance.

It is desired that the entire search process be concluded in four to six months from execution of the contract.

**RFP Selection Process Timeline:**

Proposals are due before April 10th at 5:00 p.m. The FloridaWest Executive Search Committee convenes on April 19<sup>th</sup> to review proposals. Start of work should begin within 30 days.

**Proposal Requirements:**

FloridaWest will consider proposals from Executive Search Firms with specific experience and success in recruiting Chief Executive Officers for small to mid-size economic development organizations. The Board reserves the right to make the final hiring decision. Proposals should be no more than 20 pages, not including references, and cover the following:

1. Organization Description: Brief history and summary of your firm and expertise.
2. Recruitment Approach: Describe the process to be used to find a successful candidate for the FloridaWest CEO role. Detail how you will accomplish the above scope of work, including a clear delineation of the firm's responsibilities and the expectations of FloridaWest. Include any networks to be used on behalf of this search.
3. Deliverables: Delineate how success will be measured throughout the process.
4. Proposed Timeline: Estimate the start and end dates for each phase of the search process.
5. Budget: Proposed cost along with narrative of what is included in this cost.
6. References: Provide two references:
  - a. A successful Chief Executive Officer search, where the CEO has been with the organization more than three years. Please provide contact information for both the CEO, and if possible, the board member contact with whom the firm contracted.

- b. A recent (within the past 12 months) Chief Executive Officer placement. Please provide contact information for the CEO as well as the board or staff contact with whom the firm worked most closely.

**Proposals to be considered and evaluated**, must be received via email with a subject line "FloridaWest Executive Search Firm Proposal" before 5:00 p.m. on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at [mstoker@floridawesteda.com](mailto:mstoker@floridawesteda.com). Proposals received after 5:00 p.m. on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 will not be accepted or considered. Faxed or mailed proposals are not acceptable. Proposals must be appropriately signed by an authorized representative of the Offeror. By submitting a proposal, the firm authorizes FloridaWest to contact references to evaluate the firm's qualifications for this project.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. The respondent's experience and reputation (Point range: 40)
2. The capabilities and experience of the personnel assigned to the project (Point range: 10)
3. The extent to which the services meets FloridaWest's needs (Point range: 10)
4. The pricing and timeline proposed by the firm (Point range: 40)

**Disclaimer:** This RFP does not commit FloridaWest to select any firm, award any work order, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or procure or contract for any services or supplies. FloridaWest reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals received, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the RFP guidelines, when it is in the best interests of FloridaWest to do so.



**Community Economic Development Association, Inc.  
(dba "FloridaWest EDA")  
Job Description**

**Job Title:** Chief Executive Officer ("CEO")  
**Reports To:** Board of Directors  
**FLSA Status:** Exempt  
**Department:** Economic Development  
**Revision Date:** March 2023

**Summary:** This position functions as the chief administrative/executive officer of the Community Economic Development Association, Inc. (dba "FloridaWest EDA"). This position is responsible for the operation, control, and planning functions for all of the FloridaWest's services relative to the goals and objectives of the Board of Directors.

This individual directly supervises all senior staff, and indirectly supervises all non-managerial employees. This position carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable bylaws.

This position manages all economic development efforts for FloridaWest, to include the ability to attract and recruit new businesses and demonstrated skill with existing business retention and expansion, workforce development, entrepreneurship, site development and project management.

**Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Formulate, plan, organize, and administer objectives and policies for achievement of major area goals.
- Assure the critical success factors of the organization are constantly highlighted and addressed.
- Assure effective and profitable operation for FloridaWest through optimum use of human resources, financial resources, equipment, technology, and processes in order to fulfill the goals of FloridaWest.
- Assure sound business practices are in place and used by all staff.
- Responsible for the finances of the organization, which include: the planning of the budget, presentation to the Board of Directors, and control and audit of the approved budget.
- Approve disbursements, co-sign checks with the officers, and maintain general control of expenditures.
- Establish and maintain a satisfactory working relationship with community leaders, public officials, and private and public agencies.
- Serve as a spokesperson for FloridaWest and the Pensacola Escambia County Economic Development Commission.
- Present to various organizations—professional and civic groups—in the area concerning the FloridaWest and its activities and purpose.
- Serve as advisor to the President, Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors regarding FloridaWest policy and the drafting of President and Board-directed policy statements.

- Interact with the Board of Directors and FloridaWest committees as directed.
- Serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and all other committees and task forces.
- Supervise all employees to include: hiring, establishing salary levels and termination within limits of the budget and policies adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Delegate responsibilities to appropriate staff members.
- Make final decisions as to the selection or termination of all direct reports.
- Prepare and maintain statements regarding all FloridaWest policies set forth by the Board of Directors, and formulate plans whereby the Board may re-examine, reaffirm, and/or rescind such policies when necessary.
- In concurrence with the Board, responsible for the location, design, and upkeep of facilities and equipment, which provide for efficient operation and an attractive first impression to the community.
- Serve as a point of reference and information for all of FloridaWest's activities.
- Work directly with companies that lead to increases in job growth at those companies.
- Develop and manage product development efforts to assist companies in the creation of new jobs.
- Manage Economic Development Department staff in areas including: technology, entrepreneurship, existing business, business recruitment, project management, and workforce development.
- Meet with key partners in the community to assist in economic development activities including business recruitment and retention, product development, and entrepreneurial efforts.
- Create partnerships regionally, nationally and globally with business leaders, investors, site selection consultants, state and national economic development professionals and private sector clients, focused on economic development programs and opportunities.

This job description reflects management's assignment of essential functions; it does not prescribe or restrict other tasks that may be assigned.

### **Contacts**

Board/Committee Members: Extensive contact with the Chairman, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, miscellaneous committees, and task forces Associated with FloridaWest activities.

Staff members: Continuous contact with staff in a team-oriented environment, providing information and assistance as required.

Customers: Contacts with walk-ins, phone calls, local business professionals, volunteers, scheduling of appointments, requiring courteous, professional communications.

Members/Public Officials: Contact with FloridaWest members, Board of Directors, and public officials is extensive including frequent communication with task force leadership and members, scheduling appointments, preparation of agendas, notification of meetings, assistance with event organization and set up.

### **Accountability**

This individual is directly responsible to the President and Executive Committee and is ultimately accountable to the Board of Directors for all actions involving FloridaWest. Assigned work is performed independently and the individual must exercise initiative and judgment in the performance of duties. This employee is responsible for determining the urgency and priority of workload.

## **Competencies**

To perform the job successfully, an individual should demonstrate the following competencies:

Analytical - Synthesizes complex or diverse information; Collects and researches data; Uses intuition and experience to complement data; Designs workflows and procedures.

Problem Solving - Identifies and resolves problems in a timely manner; Gathers and analyzes information skillfully; Develops alternative solutions; Works well in group problem solving situations; Uses reason even when dealing with emotional topics.

Technical Skills - Assesses own strengths and weaknesses; Pursues training and development opportunities; Strives to continuously build knowledge and skills; Shares expertise with others.

Oral Communication - Speaks clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations; listens and gets clarification; Responds well to questions; Demonstrates group presentation skills; Participates in meetings.

Teamwork - Balances team and individual responsibilities; Exhibits objectivity and openness to others' views; Gives and welcomes feedback; Contributes to building a positive team spirit; Puts success of team above own interests; Able to build morale and group commitments to goals and objectives; Supports everyone's efforts to succeed; Recognizes accomplishments of other team members.

Change Management - Develops workable implementation plans; Communicates changes effectively; Builds commitment and overcomes resistance; Prepares and supports those affected by change; Monitors transition and evaluates results.

Delegation - Delegates work assignments; Matches the responsibility to the person; Gives authority to work independently; Sets expectations and monitors delegated activities; Provides recognition for results.

Leadership - Exhibits confidence in self and others; Inspires and motivates others to perform well; Effectively influences actions and opinions of others; Inspires respect and trust; Accepts feedback from others; Provides vision and inspiration to peers and subordinates; Gives appropriate recognition to others; Displays passion and optimism; Mobilizes others to fulfill the vision.

Managing People - Includes staff in planning, decision-making, facilitating and process improvement; Takes responsibility for subordinates' activities; Makes self available to staff; Provides regular performance feedback; Develops subordinates' skills and encourages growth; Solicits and applies customer feedback (internal and external); Fosters quality focus in others; Improves processes, products and services; Continually works to improve supervisory skills.

Quality Management - Looks for ways to improve and promote quality; Demonstrates accuracy and thoroughness.

Visionary Leadership - Displays passion and optimism; Inspires respect and trust; mobilizes others to fulfill the vision; Provides vision and inspiration to peers and subordinates.

Business Acumen - Understands business implications of decisions; Displays orientation to profitability; Demonstrates knowledge of market and competition; Aligns work with strategic goals.

Cost Consciousness - Works within approved budget; Develops and implements cost saving measures; Contributes to profits and revenue; Conserves organizational resources.

Diversity - Demonstrates knowledge of EEO policy; Shows respect and sensitivity for cultural differences; educates others on the value of diversity; promotes a harassment-free environment; Builds a diverse workforce.

Organizational Support - Follows policies and procedures; Completes administrative tasks correctly and on time; supports organization's goals and values; Benefits organization through outside activities; Supports

affirmative action and respects diversity.

Strategic Thinking - Develops strategies to achieve organizational goals; Understands organization's strengths & weaknesses; Analyzes market and competition; Identifies external threats and opportunities; Adapts strategy to changing conditions.

Adaptability - Adapts to changes in the work environment; Manages competing demands; Changes approach or method to best fit the situation; Able to deal with frequent change, delays, or unexpected events.

Judgment - Displays willingness to make decisions; Exhibits sound and accurate judgment; Supports and explains reasoning for decisions; Includes appropriate people in decision-making process; Makes timely decisions.

Planning/Organizing - Prioritizes and plans work activities; Uses time efficiently; Plans for additional resources; Sets goals and objectives; Organizes or schedules other people and their tasks; Develops realistic action plans.

Professionalism - Approaches others in a tactful manner; Reacts well under pressure; Treats others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; Accepts responsibility for own actions; Follows through on commitments.

### **Qualifications**

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

### **Education/Experience**

Bachelor's degree required, Master's Degree preferred, Certification encouraged. Five years of related experience working in an executive position with significant personnel, financial, and strategic responsibility and/or training in economic development; or equivalent combination of education and experience. Significant supervisory experience preferred.

### **Computer Skills**

To perform this job successfully, this position should have knowledge of Windows XP (at a minimum); all aspects of the Microsoft Office Suite, version 2010 preferred; ability to conduct database operations; and the ability to navigate the Internet.

### **Job Knowledge/Skills**

- Familiarity with the goals and objectives of FloridaWest and their role in the community.
- Sound understanding of budget and accounting principles.
- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret complex documents.
- Ability to respond effectively to sensitive inquiries or complaints.
- Ability to write and make presentations respectfully and effectively to staff, public groups, board members, and local officials.
- General personnel management aptitude.
- Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists.
- Ability to calculate figures and amounts such as discounts, interest, commissions, proportions,

percentages, area, circumference, and volume.

- Ability to apply concepts of basic algebra and geometry.

### **Work Environment**

The work environment is in an office setting but will require frequent in-town and out-of-town travel. Frequent interaction with staff, Board, Committee, and task force members, as well as the general public, is expected. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate. Moderate travel will be required for this position.

### **Physical Demands**

Due to the variability of subject and program matters encountered in administering an economic development association, the position requires full mental capabilities for a successful performance. An exceptional command of interpersonal skills of communication and flexibility is also of necessity as the President acts as a liaison between the Chairman, the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, other FloridaWest committees, employees, and the general public. This individual must possess a good sense of judgment in giving assignments to staff members and setting priorities, while at the same time practicing prudent business skills and overseeing the financial management of the FloridaWest. In the office, reading, composing documents and computer entry requires sitting in one position for extended periods of time, disrupted by phone calls, interspersed with staff and volunteer visits. Travel requires moving from location to location, meeting schedules and deadlines which involve excessive walking, carrying of personal and professional baggage, and staying alert for long hours.

Frequent sitting, standing, stooping, climbing, and balancing may be required for certain tasks. Travel to local businesses will be required. Ability to lift/carry up to 25 pounds and acute vision is required. The employee must have full use of his/her hands to handle and feel various items. The employee may, at times, be exposed to outdoor weather conditions.

### **Position Benefits**

Insurance: FloridaWest offers discounted medical, dental, vision, and life insurance plans to all permanent employees.

Retirement: FloridaWest offers a 401(K) retirement plan through Slavic for all full-time permanent employees who have been employed as such for at least one year.

Technology Assets: This position is eligible for FloridaWest-purchased technology assets.

### **Work Hours**

This is a salaried, exempt position. Long work hours exceeding normal business hours are required on most days and without extra compensation.