



Position Profile

President & Chief Executive Officer

Commerce Lexington

Lexington, Kentucky

The Chamber

Commerce Lexington, with 1900 members, 22 staff, and a \$4.8MM operating budget, serves as a key economic development driver for the Greater Lexington region. The organization represents many businesses across the Bluegrass region and focuses on economic growth, public policy, workforce development, entrepreneurship, leadership development, and regional competitiveness. Commerce Lexington combines traditional chamber functions with aggressive business recruitment and expansion strategies, giving it a broader regional role than many peer organizations.

Among its signature programs are Young Professionals Connect, Leadership Lexington, Leadership Central Kentucky, Business Development & Upward Mobility Initiatives, Economic Development initiatives, workforce partnerships, and regional marketing efforts through Greater Lex, promoting the region as a destination for business investment and talent recruitment, highlighting the area's affordability, quality of life, healthcare, education, and central location within the eastern United States.

Commerce Lexington and its public-sector partners recently received national recognition from the International Economic Development Council for work tied to the Regional Competitiveness Plan and collaborative economic development efforts. The awards highlighted Lexington's public-private partnership model and regional growth strategy.

Current and emerging priorities include talent attraction, entrepreneurship, innovation economy growth, advanced manufacturing recruitment, biotechnology, and continued expansion of the region's healthcare, technology, equine, and professional services sector. Regional leaders are also investing in entertainment districts, tourism infrastructure, and mixed-use redevelopment projects designed to strengthen both economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Bob Quick, who has successfully led Commerce Lexington for more than 25 years, has announced his upcoming departure. The Board of Directors has embarked on a national search to recruit a new President & Chief Executive Officer to guide Commerce Lexington and its prominent business and economic development leadership activities.

More information on Commerce Lexington and its programs can be found on the website:

<https://www.commercelexington.com>

Lexington, Kentucky, and the Blue Grass region

Lexington is Kentucky's second-largest city and the economic and cultural center of the Bluegrass region. Known internationally as the "Horse Capital of the World," Lexington blends a strong business climate with scenic landscapes, nationally recognized equine assets, a major university presence, and a high quality of life. The city offers the amenities of a larger metropolitan area while maintaining a more accessible, affordable, and community-oriented environment.

The regional economy is diverse and stable, anchored by healthcare, education, advanced manufacturing, technology, logistics, agribusiness, tourism, and the equine industry. Lexington's central location places it within a day's drive to much of the U.S. population, supporting both business growth and tourism. The area continues to attract employers and professionals seeking lower operating costs and a balanced lifestyle.

Lexington offers strong educational opportunities from early childhood through higher education. Public education is led by Fayette County Public Schools, one of Kentucky's highest-performing and most diverse districts. The community also supports numerous private and independent schools, including college preparatory, faith-based, and Montessori options. The region has some of the top public and private k-12 schools in the state, with Woodford County High School ranked the number 7 school in Kentucky.

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The region is home to ten colleges and universities and five professional and technical colleges, including the state's flagship university, University of Kentucky. The University anchors the city with nationally recognized programs in healthcare, engineering, agriculture, business, and research. Additional institutions include Transylvania University, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, and nearby regional colleges and universities that contribute to workforce development and cultural vitality.

Sports, recreation, arts, culture, and entertainment are all represented in the Bluegrass Region. Athletics are deeply woven into Lexington's identity. Kentucky Wildcats basketball and football drive significant regional enthusiasm and national visibility. The city also benefits from a strong equine culture centered around Keeneland and the area's internationally known horse farms. Lexington maintains an extensive parks system with walking trails, sports facilities, golf courses, nature reserves, and greenways. Lexington's arts and culture scene continues to grow and supports live theater, symphony performances, galleries, public art, music venues, festivals, bourbon tourism, and historic attractions.

Lexington offers a rare combination of economic opportunity, affordability, natural beauty, and cultural authenticity. Residents benefit from shorter commute times, strong healthcare systems, nationally recognized higher education, vibrant college athletics, access to outdoor recreation, and a growing arts and dining scene. The city's scale allows professionals and families to remain connected to the community while still enjoying the amenities of a larger market.

For more information about Lexington and Fayette County please see VisitLEX at www.visitlex.com and <https://www.lexingtonky.gov>.

The Position

Location

The President & Chief Executive Officer position is located in Commerce Lexington's offices at 330 East Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky 40507.

Reporting Relationships

The President & Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") of Commerce Lexington reports to the 61-member volunteer Board of Directors and works closely with an 18-member Executive Committee, on which the CEO serves as the Board Secretary. The CEO supervises the EVP of Economic Development, Chief of Staff & EVP of Membership & Engagement, Chief Communications Officer, Chief Policy Officers & Director of Regional Engagement, SVP of Community & Minority Business Development, SVP of Talent & Education Strategy, SVP of Finance, and the VP of Strategic Partnerships & Foundation Management; a total staff of 22 employees and 3 interns.

Other important interactions include: executives and employees of Commerce Lexington member organizations and affiliates; local, state, and national elected officials and their staffs; education officials; and representatives of other public and private sector partnership organizations.

Position Charter

The President & Chief Executive Officer is the chief executive and administrative officer of Commerce Lexington Inc. and serves as the leading voice for the Greater Lexington business community. The CEO formulates and executes strategic objectives that advance economic growth, support business success, and enhance quality of life, while providing overall leadership for operations, policy, and membership in partnership with the Board of Directors.

As the principal spokesperson and ambassador, the CEO represents the membership and fosters strong relationships across business, government, higher education, and civic sectors. This role requires balancing regional leadership on major initiatives with a strong commitment to the needs of small and mid-sized businesses, while driving organizational growth, engagement, and impact.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

The President & CEO is responsible for the following activities within the limits of Commerce Lexington's bylaws and the policies as established by and with appropriate delegation from the Board of Directors:

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Strategic Leadership & Regional Impact

- Provide clear strategic vision for Commerce Lexington and guide long-term priorities in partnership with the Board of Directors.
- Lead initiatives that strengthen the regional economy, advance workforce development, and promote a competitive business climate.
- Serve as a trusted advocate for the business community on key issues at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Identify emerging economic opportunities and position Commerce Lexington to respond strategically and effectively.
- Balance bold, forward-thinking leadership with thoughtful, disciplined decision-making.

Member Engagement, Growth & Value

- Champion Commerce Lexington's role as a member-driven organization, ensuring programs, advocacy, and initiatives reflect the needs of businesses of all sizes.
- Strengthen relationships with existing members and key investors while expanding the organization's reach and value proposition.
- Oversee membership development, retention, engagement, and investor relations to drive sustainable growth.
- Ensure Commerce Lexington remains a vital convener, connecting business leaders and fostering collaboration across sectors.

Organizational Leadership & Culture

- Lead, mentor, and support a high-performing professional staff.
- Foster a collaborative, empowered workplace culture with clear expectations, accountability, and alignment.
- Develop emerging leaders and promote succession planning across key functions.
- Provide decisive leadership and direction when organizational priorities require clarity and focus.
- Maintain a positive, high-trust environment that encourages innovation, teamwork, and professional growth.

External Leadership & Community Engagement

- Serve as the chief spokesperson and public representative of Commerce Lexington.
- Build and sustain trusted relationships with business leaders, elected officials, higher education institutions, and civic organizations.
- Act as a skilled convener who brings diverse stakeholders together around shared regional priorities.
- Maintain a strong and visible presence throughout the Lexington region, representing the Commerce Lexington in public forums, media, and community initiatives.

Operational & Financial Stewardship

- Ensure effective management of all Commerce Lexington operations, programs, and initiatives.
- Oversee financial planning, budgeting, and resource allocation to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Maintain strong financial discipline, ensuring decisions reflect enterprise-wide priorities.
- Partner with the Board to develop and execute revenue strategies that support mission and growth.
- Provide oversight of governance, operational systems, and compliance with all applicable policies, regulations, and best practices.

Compensation

The President & CEO is expected to earn a competitive base compensation commensurate with the candidate's experience and knowledge. The CEO will also be eligible to receive a discretionary annual bonus. In addition, the candidate will receive appropriate benefits including but not limited to healthcare coverage, retirement, paid holidays, and other paid time off. Additional perquisites and some relocation assistance may be provided.

The Candidate

Education

A bachelor's degree or graduate degree in business, finance, law, public administration, or other discipline is preferred. However, any combination of advanced education, training, or lived and learned experience will be valued and considered.

If the candidate's professional experience includes Chamber, association, or economic development industry background, then a graduate of the U.S. Chamber's Institute for Organization Management, Certified Chamber Executive, Certified Association Executive, Certified Economic Developer designation, or other certification, will be appreciated but optional.

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Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate must have a proven track record of senior leadership experience and may come from a variety of backgrounds such as: serving as the top executive within a progressive and comparably-sized Chamber of Commerce, or related significant business association, or economic development-focused organization; experience as a “#2” or other senior-level executive at a larger like enterprise as noted above; or an executive from a complex private or public sector entity. Significant Board interaction is strongly desired.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- **Advocacy/Public Affairs** (experience in the process of local, state, regional, and national government, and government organizations; has developed effective working relationships with elected/appointed officials).
- **Board Relationships** (significant involvement with Board development and recruitment, governance issues, and Board of Director interactions).
- **Business Savvy/Variety of Industries** (programmatic success of serving businesses of all sizes from small enterprises and working with entrepreneurs to large global companies; interactions with executives and owners of diverse industries).
- **Collaborative Relationships** (demonstrated track record of developing effective partnerships among all sectors, from large companies to entrepreneurs, from city to state governments, from related business organizations to higher education).
- **Communication/Media/Public Relations** (strong communicator with internal and external audiences including business members and prospects, Board of Directors, government representatives, staff, members of the media and the public; ability to effectively articulate goals, objectives, and policy positions of Commerce Lexington to the media and the community at large).
- **Diversity** (inclusive; has experience working with diverse groups; promotes diversity programmatically).
- **Economic Development** (able to identify both local and regional issues and effectively manage interactions with regional organizations to achieve common goals; has worked collaboratively with established public sector delivery systems and private sector resources to effectively promote the business growth of a community, county, or region).
- **Established Contacts** (has developed and maintained regional and national connections with business, government, and other public sector organizations).
- **Executive Leadership Experience** (strong staff leadership and human resource development; has effectively led a complex organization).
- **Fiscal management** (demonstrated ability to manage financial affairs of an organization; i.e., develop revenue sources and control expenditures to preserve financial stability).
- **Membership Development/Sales Orientation** (has actively promoted a membership-based organization; track record of membership development, retention, increased value, and appropriate expansion; ability to market and promote the organization).
- **Planning** (has successfully developed and implemented both operational and strategic plans).
- **Resource Development** (experience with varied successful funding activities including development programs, publications and advertising, special events, dues, and non-dues revenue campaigns).

Desired personal traits

- **Business Champion** (personal belief in the free enterprise system and the role of business in serving the economic and community development needs of society).
- **Change Agent** (able to set forth a vision based on collaboration and communication; willing to take calculated risks to push the envelope and challenge traditional thinking for positive change).
- **Collaborative/Teamwork** (sees value in working with others to achieve positive results for the community; demonstrates a willingness and ability to work with and through others; recognizes that many parties are necessary to accomplish big things; speaks of “we” first, not “I;” relishes in sharing credit with others).
- **Communication/Interpersonal Skills** (good listener; excellent written and oral communication skills; personable; relates well to diverse population and at all levels; builds constructive and effective relationships; socially adept and a good conversationalist).

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- **Credibility/Integrity/Genuine** (can command respect of Board, members, staff, business, and regional leaders; honest; possesses the highest ethical and moral standards; sincere; authentic; trustworthy; transparent).
- **Empowering Management Style** (encourages staff; inclusive while providing basic direction and allowing staff team to execute; holds staff accountable; serves as a mentor for staff in their own professional development).
- **Energetic/Positive Attitude** (genuinely enthusiastic; strong personal work ethic; genuinely light-hearted; able to enjoy life and see the humor in sometimes difficult situations).
- **Executive Presence** (polished; self-confident; has political savvy necessary to maneuver through complex situations effectively and quietly).
- **Leadership** (Sound judgment and the ability to take calculated risks when appropriate; a take charge individual; can manage, motivate, challenge and delegate to others; proactive versus reactive; looks for and fosters “win-win” results).
- **Organizational Skills** (results oriented; meets established goals and objectives).
- **Persuasive** (able to synthesize various viewpoints and convince disparate groups to come to a logical resolution).
- **Political Acumen** (demonstrated ability to strategically navigate among local, county, state, and federal leaders).
- **Strategic Thinker/Visionary** (can plan for the future and also brings innovative ideas; a forward thinker and able to envision “the big picture” beyond daily operations and lead an organization and community toward strategic goals and ideas).
- **Visibility** (highly visible to staff, members, and leaders in the community; active in the region and community).

Challenges and Opportunity

The projected first year accomplishments and projects for the new President & CEO of Commerce Lexington include:

- Establish presence as CEO and become completely familiar with all operating aspects of the organization including staff, finances, program of work, Board members, volunteers, and the communities it serves.
- Build and sustain strong, trust-based relationships with key business leaders, elected officials, community stakeholders, and educational partners by proactively initiating formal and informal connections and developing a deep understanding of the individuals and organizations driving regional influence and impact.
- Work with the Board and staff to evaluate and refine Commerce Lexington’s strategic direction through the development and execution of strategic, operational plans while continuing to strengthen and align the organization’s mission and vision as a chamber of commerce and economic development organization.
- Evaluate the organization’s financial position budgetary plans, working closely with staff and the Board to strengthen both near and long-term financial health, with a clear focus on expanding and diversifying funding streams.
- Become actively involved in the community, attending multiple chamber and non-chamber events; become known as “the face” of the organization within the community.

The President & CEO position of Commerce Lexington is an outstanding opportunity to lead and grow a successful combined economic development and chamber organization in a unique and welcoming “front porch” community led by an engaged and influential volunteer Board of Directors. Since 2004 with the merger of Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce, Lexington United, and the Lexington Partnership for Workforce Development, Commerce Lexington has sought to promote economic development, job creation, and overall business growth in Lexington and its neighboring communities, while strengthening existing businesses through the many provided programs and services. The President & CEO will benefit from the community’s highly educated population and a city that balances traditional heritage with open-minded, forward-thinking growth, all intertwined with its deep equestrian identity. This new executive will have an opportunity to move this dynamic organization to an even higher level of influence and success in the years to come.

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Contacts

If you know an outstanding chamber of commerce or economic development executive or other business leader who meets these requirements and would be interested in evaluating this dynamic opportunity, please email:

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Commerce Lexington and WAVERLY PARTNERS firmly support the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all. All applicants will be considered for employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran, or disability status.

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