AURORA REGIONAL ECONOMIC
ALLIANCE
An Economic Development & Chamber of Commerce Corporation

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

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MGT

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POSITION IN BRIEF

Aurora, IL (population 197,899). The Aurora Regional Economic Alliance ("Alliance") is seeking a Vice President of Operations to play a pivotal role in the economic transformation of Aurora, Illinois. This is an exciting opportunity to drive organizational strategy, improve internal operations, and support economic initiatives in a dynamic city.

The Alliance is a newly formed 501(c)(6) public-private partnership dedicated to advancing economic opportunities and fostering business growth in the Aurora region. This unified organization integrates the missions of four key civic entities -- the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce, Invest Aurora, Aurora Downtown, and the Quad County African American Chamber of Commerce -- to create a powerful, unified approach to economic development. This consolidation paves the way for new initiatives that will drive workforce development; empower small, minority, and women-owned businesses; and fuel innovation and entrepreneurship.

Aurora, the second-largest city in Illinois, is a vibrant riverfront community located just 40 miles west of Chicago. The City has long been a transportation hub with easy access to Interstate 88 (five interchanges), as well as two Metra stations (commuter line), a regional airport, four institutions of higher education, 14 business parks, and a 130-mile plus fiber network.

With over 5,000 new jobs created post-pandemic and more than $100M in new development investment underway, Aurora is poised to reach new and exciting heights in the coming decade. This role offers the chance to be a key leader in this momentum.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The City of Aurora is Illinois' second largest city, located 40 miles west of the City of Chicago, in Kane and DuPage Counties with portions extending into Will and Kendall Counties. Aurora's history and early development are tied to the Fox River, which runs through its present day downtown. Early in the City's history, the riverbanks served as a site for timber mill and grain mill activities. An early key employer, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad located its roundhouse and locomotive shops in downtown Aurora in the 1850's. Still standing, the Roundhouse is emblematic of the strength and durability of Aurora's commercial sector. Our historic downtown remains a thriving business center. Significant investments in all sectors of the community have helped to maintain the health and vitality of our entire community.

Redevelopment in the later part of the last century of the Hollywood Casino in our downtown and of the regional mall concepts on our East Side provided the city with an economic upswing and a significant growth in our population. Additionally, the new century has brought a renewed commercial interest in Aurora. Aurora has created over 7,000 new jobs in the last 6 years (in spite of the national pandemic), brokered an historic agreement with the Hollywood Casino to relocate and expand within Aurora, and has partnered with the Fox Valley Mall to reimagine this important property, introducing new residential units and improved mall tenancy.

Aurora is home to the Paramount Theatre, the largest subscription-based live performance theatre in the country, which attracts regional audiences with its Broadway Series and other performances. Contributing to the historic nature of the downtown, the largest collection of commercial buildings by Prairie School architect George Grant Elmslie is in Aurora. Also located downtown is the newly constructed Aurora Public Library.

The Route 59 retail corridor is consistently identified as the single largest commercial corridor outside of Chicago. Along with the 1.3 million square feet Fox Valley Mall, Aurora is also home to the Chicago Premium Outlets Mall, one of the top performing malls in the Simon Premium Outlets' national portfolio. Along with other major retail corridors, Aurora is also home to 13 business parks.

As a center of education, the city is home to Aurora University, Robert Morris College, and a branch of Rasmussen College, and enjoys two branches of Waubonsee Community College, one of which is located downtown. According to the census of Aurora's population, 37% over the age of twenty-five hold a bachelor's degree.

Aurora is served by three main school systems, one on either side of the Fox River, and a third, the Indian Prairie School District (IPSD) 204, formed in 1972 to serve the far eastern portion of Aurora and Naperville. In all, Aurora is served by six school districts and more than forty public schools within Aurora city limits.

The prestigious Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) is a state-funded residential magnet school for grades 10 to 12. While IMSA operates with public funds (and uses the site originally designated West Aurora High School North Campus), it is managed independently of Aurora's other public schools. Any Illinois student who meets admission requirements may apply to attend IMSA, tuition free. Other private schools include Aurora Central Catholic, Rosary and Marmion Academy and Aurora Christian High School, plus seven parochial schools and an elementary school associated with Aurora Christian.

Today, Aurora is a culturally diverse city with a strong Latino presence. Historic areas of the downtown are being redeveloped, and new developments are being built all over the city.

AURORA AT A GLANCE

Population: 197,899

Households: 60,396

Land Area: 45.02 square miles

Median Home Value: $260,400

Median Household Income: $90,109

THE ROLE: VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

Reporting to the President & CEO, the Vice President of Operations will be responsible for ensuring the Alliance's internal systems, strategic direction, and operational efficiencies support its ambitious goals. This role requires a strategic, process-driven leader with a background in organizational management, operational excellence, and cross-functional collaboration.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Partner with the CEO, Board of Directors, and other key leadership to develop and implement strategic plans, monitor key performance indicators (KPIs), and drive continuous improvement in all areas of business operations.
- Oversee the Alliance's daily operations, ensuring internal efficiency and high-performance team culture.
- Drive organizational alignment with the Alliance's economic development mission and strategic goals.
- Manage financial operations in collaboration with the CEO and CFO to ensure the financial health of the organization, including budgeting, forecasting, and managing operational expenditures. Assist with the preparation of quarterly reports and presentations to the City of Aurora.
- Demonstrate an ability to provide clear, effective direction to staff; supervise Alliance staff and ensure employee priorities and tasks are completed in a timely manner and aligned with organizational agreements and strategic plans.
- Improve organizational policies and processes, enhancing efficiency and accountability.
- Facilitate cross-departmental and organizational collaboration, acting as a key connector to ensuring alignment, shared resources, and operational synergies.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The ideal candidate will be a proven leader with a passion for economic development and a track record of optimizing operations in complex organizations. Experience in start-ups, mergers & acquisitions, or public-private partnerships is highly valued. This individual must be comfortable working in a fast-paced, evolving environment, with an ability to pivot as organizational needs change.

The ideal candidate will exhibit excellent judgment, making data-driven decisions and taking proactive measures to manage risk and ensure the success of projects and initiatives. This includes being a problem-solver able to navigate complex challenges and develop solutions that balance priorities effectively.

QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS:

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Entrepreneurship, Organizational Management, Human Resources, or other related field is required.
- MBA, MPA, or equivalent advanced degree is preferred. Any equivalent combination of experience and education will be considered.
- Experience in organizational leadership, strategic operations, and financial management.
- Demonstrated ability to streamline processes, manage change, and drive operational excellence.
- Strong interpersonal and leadership skills, with the ability to motivate and guide a diverse team.
- Experience working with boards, governmental agencies, businesses, and community stakeholders.
- Financial acumen, including budget oversight, fiscal policy development, and grants management. Ensure the Alliance operates within budget constraints while delivering high-quality services.
- Must possess a valid Illinois Driver's License or ability to obtain one.

WHY JOIN THE AURORA REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALLIANCE?

This is more than just an operations role—it's a chance to shape the future of economic development in one of Illinois' most exciting regions. By joining the Alliance, you will:

- Be part of a mission-driven organization dedicated to economic revitalization.
- Lead a newly unified team, establishing best practices and driving efficiency.
- Work in a collaborative, fast-moving environment, where your impact will be tangible.
- Enjoy a competitive salary and benefits package with long-term career growth opportunities.

To learn more about the Alliance, visit Aurora Regional Economic Alliance – An Economic Development & Chamber of Commerce Corporation.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

- Salary Range: $140,000–$160,000 DOQ +/-
- Insurance: Five health plans are available through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. Dental and vision insurance are fully covered by employer. Complimentary life insurance in the amount of $25,000.
- Vacation Time: Three weeks paid vacation.
- Work Environment: Hybrid work flexibility, with in-office presence required most days.

HOW TO APPLY

Starting salary range: $140,000– $160,000 DOQ with a competitive benefits package. Apply online at www.GovHRjobs.com with a resume, cover letter and contact information for five professional references. The position is open until filled with first reading of applications on March 24, 2025. Confidential inquiries are encouraged and should be directed to Maureen Barry, Senior Consultant, MGT, at 847-380-3240, x116 or Ashley Eccles, Senior Consultant, MGT, at 847-380-3240 x134.

The Aurora Regional Economic Alliance is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity in our workforce. We encourage applications from all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or veteran status.

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