
Job Title: Director of Economic Development & External Affairs
Reports to: President
Position Status: Full-Time, exempt

Position Description:

The Downtown Boston Alliance (DBA) seeks a strategic, creative, and highly organized leader to advance Downtown's economic vitality, partnerships, sponsorship revenue, brand presence, and external relationships.

The Director of Economic Development & External Affairs leads DBA's work to attract new businesses, activate vacant storefronts, strengthen partnerships, develop sponsorship revenue, elevate the Downtown brand and communications, and tell the story of the district through research and data.

At the same time, this role plays a key internal leadership function—coordinating major initiatives across departments, building systems that keep projects on track, managing staff performance, and supporting the President in delivering organizational priorities.

This position is ideal for a results-driven leader with strong civic, business, or nonprofit experience; a talent for partnership-building; and the operational discipline to move projects from concept to execution. Candidates who excel in this role may grow into senior executive positions within the organization.

About the Downtown Boston Alliance (downtownboston.org):

The Downtown Boston Alliance was created by property owners committed to achieving the district's full potential as a premier and vibrant destination. Our mission is to significantly improve the experience of all who live, work, visit, go to school or shop in Downtown Boston by: (1) providing supplemental services to keep the streets and sidewalks clean, upgrade the aesthetic appearance of the district, and make people feel welcomed and safe; (2) promoting and fostering an energetic and thriving business climate in the area; and (3) serving as the voice and advocate for the district.

Principal Responsibilities:

Economic Development & Business Attraction

- Lead business recruitment, retention, and storefront activation for our Downtown district.
- Oversee the Level Up Downtown Initiative, including pipeline development, business outreach, and permitting coordination.
- Maintain relationships with property owners, brokers, entrepreneurs, small business partners, and cultural operators.
- Identify opportunities for pop-ups, incubators, late-night programming, and emerging business models.

Sponsorship, Revenue, and Partnerships

- Develop and implement a sponsorship strategy and earned revenue plans tied to signature events, public art, activations, and district initiatives.
- Build corporate, civic, philanthropic, and institutional partnerships.
- Design sponsorship packages, negotiate agreements, and oversee benefit fulfillment.

Marketing, Communications, and Brand Strategy

- Oversee DBA's brand, digital presence, communications, social media, earned media, and content strategy, including any third-party vendors in this work.
- Ensure messaging reflects a modern, dynamic, and inclusive Downtown Boston.
- Develop new outlets or events for telling DBA's story, with an emphasis on more directly providing thought-leadership in commercial real estate sector locally.
- Serve as a public-facing representative for the organization; support media engagement for the President and relevant staff.

Research & Data Storytelling

- Supervise research and data activities including retail trends, office occupancy, visitor volumes, economic impact, and program outcomes.
- Produce dashboards, reports, and presentations for the Board of Directors, members, public agencies, the media, and partners.

Cross-Departmental Leadership & Internal Execution

- Serve as organizational "glue" across teams—coordinating high-priority projects involving Events, Operations, Planning, and Finance.
- Build systems, SOPs, KPIs, and internal workflows that improve communication and execution.
- Manage deadlines, accountability, and project delivery across departments.

Team Leadership

- Supervise communications, marketing, research/data, public art coordination, community and government relations, and economic development staff.
- Provide coaching, professional development, and performance oversight.
- Partner with CFO to develop and manage department budgets.

Qualifications:

- 6-10 years in economic development, partnerships, external relations, marketing/communications, business attraction, or related work.
- Demonstrated ability to move complex projects from concept to successful completion.
- Strong leadership and personnel management skills.
- Proven experience in sponsorship development.
- Excellent relationship-building and communication abilities with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Familiarity with Downtown Boston or the region's civic ecosystem a plus; commitment to inclusive economic development essential.

Logistics & Compensation Details:

- Full-time, exempt with comprehensive benefits.
- Primarily (80-plus-percent) on-site in Downtown Boston, with flexibility as appropriate.
- Occasional early mornings, evenings, and weekends for programs and events.
- Salary range: \$115,000–\$140,000 depending on experience.

Application Process:

- Please email cover letter and resume to: jobs@downtownboston.org with subject line "Director of Economic Development & External Affairs - (YOUR INITIALS)".
- Cover letter should include the answer to this question: "What is the place, business, or experience you most associate with your favorite city and why? Please address whether the link seems organic or more intentionally cultivated?"

- Each file name should include applicant's last name
- No phone calls, please

The Downtown Boston Alliance is an Equal Opportunity Employer and greatly encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply. Diversity of opinions, experiences, and backgrounds is a key and valued component of our work to promote a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive experience in Downtown Boston through an organization that is itself diverse and inclusive.