



Request for Proposals (RFP)
for Executive Search Firm
for the Recruitment of a President & Chief Executive Officer

1. Introduction

The Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) invites qualified executive search firms to submit proposals to lead a national search for its next President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This leader will guide the organization's strategic vision, strengthen regional economic competitiveness, and serve as a key ambassador for the Bloomington-Normal community.

2. Organizational Overview

BNEDC is a public-private partnership dedicated to fostering economic growth, business attraction, retention, and expansion in the Bloomington-Normal region. The organization collaborates with local governments, private-sector stakeholders, and educational institutions to drive economic development.

The BNEDC helps businesses and communities in the McLean County area prosper. We are a leadership organization, investing in our community's assets to grow and improve our prosperity and quality of life. You can learn more about our organization at www.bnbiz.org.

3. Purpose of the RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to identify and retain an experienced executive search firm with a proven track record in recruiting senior leadership for economic development organizations.

4. Scope of Work

It is the intention of the BNEDC to internally handle the discovery phase and onboarding phase of the search process and proposals and pricing should reflect that. The firm will work closely with the Interim CEO and an established Search Committee composed of members of the Board of Directors. The selected firm will provide comprehensive executive search services, including but not limited to:

a. Position Development

- i. Refine the CEO job description
- ii. Develop the CEO position profile including key competencies, experience, and leadership attributes

- b. Recruitment Strategy**
 - i. Develop method for accepting applications
 - ii. Create a targeted recruitment plan with a national reach
 - iii. Identify highly qualified candidate pools
 - iv. Leverage networks in economic development, public-private partnerships, and related sectors

- c. Candidate Sourcing & Screening**
 - i. Conduct proactive outreach and recruitment
 - ii. Screen candidates through interviews and assessments
 - iii. Present a slate of qualified candidates with detailed profiles

- d. Selection Process Support**
 - i. Facilitate finalist interview processes and logistics
 - ii. Create a finalist candidate evaluation matrix
 - iii. Advise on finalist candidate evaluation and selection
 - iv. Conduct finalist reference and background checks

- e. Offer & Onboarding Support**
 - i. Assist with compensation benchmarking and contract negotiation

5. Desired Qualifications of the Search Firm

Proposals should demonstrate:

- a. Experience recruiting C-suite executives, preferably CEOs
- b. Familiarity with economic development organizations or similar sectors
- c. Strong national network and candidate reach
- d. Proven methodology and successful placement track record
- e. Ability to maintain confidentiality and professionalism throughout the process

6. Proposal Requirements

Interested firms should include:

- a. Firm Overview**
 - i. History, size, and areas of specialization
 - ii. Links to website and other online presence
 - iii. Lead contact's name, phone, address, and email

- b. Relevant Experience**
 - i. Examples of similar CEO or executive-level searches including tenure of candidates after placement
 - ii. Client references (at least three)

- iii. Samples of work – job descriptions, CEO recruitment profiles, search promotional materials

- c. **Search Methodology**

- i. Detailed description of approach and process
- ii. Timeline for completion
- iii. Guarantees on timing and engagement length

- d. **Project Team**

- i. Biographies and roles of team members assigned to this search

- e. **Fee Structure**

- i. Detailed pricing including all fees and reimbursable expenses

7. Timeline

- a. **RFP Issued:** April 20, 2026
- b. **Questions Due:** May 1, 2026
- c. **Answers Due:** May 6, 2026
- d. **Proposals Due:** May 11, 2026
- e. **Evaluation & Interviews:** May 12-May 21, 2026
- f. **Firm Selection:** May 22, 2026
- g. **Search Launch Goal:** June 1, 2026
- h. **Completion Goal:** July 31 – August 31, 2026

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- a. Relevant experience and past performance
- b. Strength of methodology and approach
- c. Qualifications of assigned team
- d. Cost and overall value
- e. References and reputation
- f. Ability to meet timeline considerations

9. Terms & Conditions

- a. BNEDC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals
- b. BNEDC may request additional: screening rounds, candidate information, interviews with finalists at its discretion
- c. All materials submitted become the property of BNEDC
- d. This RFP does not obligate BNEDC to award a contract
- e. The term of any contract from this RFP shall be for a period of 9 months

10. Submission and Question Instructions

During the question period you may reach out to the below contact via phone or email. Once you have a proposal ready it should be submitted by email in PDF format to the same contact.

Subject line: BNEDC RFP – Executive Search Firm

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We look forward to partnering with a firm that will help identify a visionary and effective leader for the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council.