



**Position Profile**  
**President & Chief Executive Officer**  
**Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce**  
**Elizabeth, New Jersey**

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**The Chamber**

The Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce is celebrating over 111 years as a leading business organization in the region. Established in 1911, one of the Chamber's founding members was John D. Rockefeller. Today, the Gateway Regional Chamber is the largest business association in Northern New Jersey with over 1,200 members ranging from **Fortune 100** corporations to entrepreneurial businesses.

The Chamber's mission is to be a business organization which represents and advances the business interests of its members. With a focus on serving members in Union, Essex, Middlesex and Somerset Counties, the Chamber is the only multi-county association in Northern and Central New Jersey. The Gateway Regional Chamber has the unique structure of serving as an umbrella organization for a number of regional and local chambers and networking groups in its regional footprint, including:

- Black Business Alliance
- Central Jersey Chamber
- Clark Chamber
- Gateway Warehouse Association
- Gateway Scholarship Foundation
- Government Affairs Committee
- Irish Business Association
- Kenilworth Chamber
- Linden Chamber
- Queen City Chamber
- Roselle Park Chamber
- Route 22 Chamber
- Somerset Hills Business Network
- Union County Chamber
- Watchung Chamber
- Workforce Education Committee

Organizations that join the Gateway Regional Chamber automatically gain membership in each of these affiliates.

The Chamber presents over 180 events each year, including networking socials, educational business seminars, special interest group gatherings, gala award dinners, business expos, trade fairs, and local activities. In addition, Gateway's size allows the Chamber to negotiate savings on business services for members, such as credit card processing, telecommunications, training, health insurance, dental programs, and a wide range of other services. The organization is also focused as an effective advocate for the business community at a federal, state and local level. The Chamber publishes *Inside Business* magazine, a quarterly news publication with an estimated readership of over 75,000.

Jim Coyle served as the Chamber's CEO for over 26 years and stepped down at the end of 2022. The Board of Directors has therefore embarked on an executive search to recruit a new leader to guide the Chamber and its prominent business leadership activities within the region.

More information about the Chamber can be found on its website: [www.gatewaychamber.com](http://www.gatewaychamber.com)

**The Position**

**Location**

The position is based at the Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce offices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Bank of America building, 135 Jefferson Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201; telephone (908) 352-0900.

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#### ***Reporting Relationships***

The President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Chamber reports to the Chair of the 10-member Executive Committee of the Chamber’s 28-member Board of Directors. Both the Executive Committee and the full Board meet monthly. The CEO leads and directs the Chamber’s staff: Vice President, Operations Specialist, Marketing Coordinator and a contract Editor of *Inside Business* magazine.

Other important interactions include: representatives and employees of Chamber member organizations; county and municipal elected and appointed officials; state and national elected officials and their staffs; representatives of other public and private sector organizations with related community and economic development missions; university, technical college and K-12 education officials; and members of the media.

#### ***Position Charter***

The President & Chief Executive Officer is the chief executive and administrative officer of the Chamber. The CEO is responsible for the comprehensive planning and operation of the organization including but not limited to: annual business plan; strategic plan; recruitment and motivation of volunteers; budget; employment, training and supervision of staff; advocacy; interpretation of policy; and other necessary functions of a highly effective chamber of commerce. The CEO is the chief spokesperson of the Chamber and operates with a focus that includes public/member relations and advocacy activities.

#### ***Major Duties and Responsibilities***

- **Communications:** Function as the chief spokesperson for the Chamber and clearly communicate the organization’s position and vision on community, public and political issues. Maintain editorial review of *Inside Business* magazine.
- **Governance:** Serve as the Chamber staff liaison to the Executive Committee, Board, and Chamber committees. Work with the Board on key volunteer leader identification and training and encourage active participation and engagement of Board members and other volunteers.
- **Strategic and annual planning:** Work with the Executive Committee, Board, and Chamber Staff to develop and regularly update the Chamber’s annual program of work and strategic plans. Make a clear connection between the Chamber’s activities and annual/strategic plans including measurable outcomes against plans that are regularly communicated to membership.
- **Advocacy/public policy:** Oversee and manage the public policy and advocacy efforts by monitoring issues of importance to business and legislative activity on the local, state and federal level and develop plans for support or opposition as necessary. Develop meaningful relationships and communication with elected officials to provide information and advocacy on behalf of the Chamber’s members and direct all messaging as it relates to public policy.
- **Public relations/outreach:** Responsible for maintaining the Chamber’s positive and highly responsive public image, including strategies for marketing, communications, public speaking and relations with members, the community and media.
- **Fundraising:** Manage a comprehensive marketing process that promotes the Chamber, serves the membership, attracts new members, and supports Chamber initiatives. Serve as the chief fundraiser for the organization, directly involved in investor solicitation and sponsorship efforts.
- **Fiscal management:** Develop the Chamber budget and relate the budget to program goals and maintain responsibility for all expenditures within the framework of the budget. Present financial statements to the Executive Committee and Board and ensure financial records are audited annually.
- **Staff leadership:** Responsible for the employment, supervision, evaluation, training and leadership of all staff. Foster a daily working environment that values ethics and teamwork and ensures the highest levels of customer service.

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- **Membership:** Responsible for the overall performance of membership activities, including membership recruitment, stewardship and retention. Motivate members to financially support Chamber programs, analyzing and interpreting the needs of members and recommending revisions and enhancements to improve service and assistance and to make membership more valuable and relevant.
- **Event/program management:** Responsible for the evaluation of programs and events making appropriate adjustments as necessary to maintain relevancy. Provide guidance and approval to the overall look and operation of all program and events.
- **Relationship management:** Responsible for developing and maintaining relationships and communications with a broad constituency including:
  - **Board of Directors:** Responsible for preparing meeting agendas, implementing approved plans and programs in accordance with established policies, serving as representative of the Board for all contacts with staff, initiating programs for Board consideration, and advising the Board on all matters under consideration.
  - **Affiliates:** Foster effective communication and engagement with the volunteer leaders of each of the Chamber’s affiliate organizations throughout the region.
  - **Key Employers:** Develop and maintain ongoing relationships with key employers and business leaders to stay informed regarding ongoing and future issues/challenges/opportunities.
  - **Government Officials:** Maintain strong communications and relationships with elected and appointed officials and their staffs in municipalities, communities and counties throughout the region. Maintain a high level of ongoing communication with officials at the State of New Jersey and Federal levels.
  - **Related Organizations:** Maintain and/or initiate effective working relationships with organizations within Northern and Central New Jersey. Regularly convene meetings of other economic development organizations, area chambers, and key volunteers.
  - **Community:** Through personal contacts with key regional and community leaders, help shape the future direction and well-being of the entire Gateway region. Take a strategic leadership role in local and regional issues, projects, or community organizations to assure presence and involvement of the Chamber to accomplish its strategic objectives.
  - **Education:** Continue to foster stronger relationships with representatives of higher education institutions and school districts.
  - **Media:** Serve as the official spokesperson of the Chamber with print and social media outlets.
- **Other duties:** Perform other tasks and duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Board.

#### ***Compensation***

The President & Chief Executive Officer is expected to earn a salary in the \$140,000 to \$160,000 range; appropriate benefits and some relocation assistance will be provided.

#### ***The Candidate***

##### ***Education***

A Bachelor’s degree is required. If a candidate brings experience in the chamber industry, then a graduate of U.S. Chamber’s Institute for Organization Management or Certified Chamber Executive designation is desirable.

##### ***Professional Qualifications***

The ideal candidate will bring 10+ years of progressively responsible experience, with a minimum of 4 years in senior leadership and may come from a variety of backgrounds such as, but not limited to: the top executive of a progressive and comparably sized chamber of commerce, or related significant business association; experience as a “second in command” or other senior-level executive at a larger like-enterprise as noted above; an executive with a strong record of community involvement from a complex private or public-sector entity. Board interaction, experience leading large numbers of volunteers, and demonstrated experience overcoming challenges are all strongly desired.

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#### Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- **Executive leadership experience** (strong staff leadership, delegation and human resource development; has led a complex corporate, chamber, community or economic development organization).
- **Collaborative relationships** (demonstrated track record of developing effective relationships and strategic alliances built on trust among all sectors and constituents).
- **Staff leadership** (demonstrated background of leading, managing and developing staff; inclusive while providing basic direction).
- **Public policy** (capable of advocating sound public policy and developing effective and even-handed working relationships with elected/appointed officials and their staffs).
- **Volunteer organization experience** (demonstrated ability to motivate and utilize volunteers).
- **Economic/business development** (works collaboratively with established public sector delivery systems and private sector resources to effectively promote the economic development of a community or region).
- **Planning** (proven record of successfully developing and executing operational and strategic plans).
- **Membership development** (has effectively promoted a membership-based organization; track record of membership development, retention, increased value and appropriate expansion).
- **Technology** (computer savvy; effectively uses social media to promote the organization and its mission).
- **Community/regional development** (able to identify both local and regional issues and effectively manage interactions with and among regional organizations to achieve common goals).
- **Governance** (involvement with board development and recruitment, governance issues, and interactions with multiple levels of business leaders serving as directors).
- **Fiscal management** (demonstrated ability to manage financial affairs of an organization; experience with an annual budget).
- **Inclusion** (experience working with diverse groups; promotes diversity programmatically).
- **Media/public relations** (ability to effectively articulate goals, objectives and policy positions of the Chamber to the media and the community).

#### Desired Personal Traits

- **Communication skills** (good listener; excellent written and oral communication skills; experienced public speaker).
- **Executive presence** (polished; self-confident; credible; able to rally others and command the respect of Board, staff, business, government and community leaders).
- **Strategic thinker** (able to envision “the big picture” beyond daily operations and lead an organization toward strategic goals and ideas).
- **Integrity** (possesses the highest ethical and moral standards; trustworthy).
- **Interpersonal relations skills** (viewed as a “connector” who facilitates discussions among constituents; relates well with people; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Executes for results** (focused; proven history of getting things done; holds other accountable).
- **Resilient** (able to cope with leadership challenges of role and bounce back when things do not go as planned).
- **Growth mindset** (not limited to traditional ways of doing things; recognizes by working collaboratively and synergistically, the sum is greater than its parts).
- **Persuasive** (able to synthesize various viewpoints and mobilize support for policy objectives).
- **Teamwork** (does not seek to build own brand at expense of others; relishes in sharing credit with others).
- **Servant leader** (humble; excellent human relations skills; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Change agent** (willing to facilitate and evaluate conversations surrounding possible change).
- **Energetic** (genuinely enthusiastic; strong work ethic, sense of urgency, and a “can do” attitude).
- **Critical thinker** (inquisitive on a wide range of issues and open-minded to a variety of viewpoints; willing to analyze, assess and reconstruct traditional ways of doing things if appropriate).
- **Regional knowledge** (has or able to develop an appreciation for New Jersey and ways of doing business).

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- **Political acumen** (known as an advocate for constituents; demonstrated ability to effectively navigate among municipal, county and state leaders; strong negotiator).
- **Sense of humor** (genuinely light-hearted; can see the humor in sometimes difficult situations).

#### Opportunity and Challenges

The President & Chief Executive Officer position of the Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce is an outstanding opportunity for a chamber of commerce, association, or perhaps private sector executive to lead an organization committed to the success of growing the Gateway region. The Chamber enjoys strong member relations and reputation with key organizations in the area along with solid fiscal results. The CEO will inherit an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated Chamber staff and a committed Board of Directors. The Chamber CEO is a highly visible leadership position and, as such, the new CEO will have considerable influence on the growth and development of the Gateway region in the years to come.

While the Chamber is in a solid position today, the Chamber's volunteer leaders have high expectations for the Chamber's new leader, especially in a post-covid era. The organization will benefit from a fresh set of eyes to look at all aspects of operations, communication and member engagement in an effort to demonstrate the Chamber's continued impact and relevance.

Key accomplishments and challenges for the new President & CEO in the first year and beyond include:

- Establish presence as the Chamber's CEO through immersion into the details of the day-to-day operations of the Chamber to become knowledgeable about the work of its staff, finances, affiliates, programs, Board members.
- Become actively involved in the Gateway region, attending multiple Chamber and non-chamber events; become known as "the face" of the Chamber within the regional community.
- Initiate formal and informal introductions and connections with the Chamber's membership and affiliates, through varied communications and in-person meetings. Identify ways to specifically communicate the Chamber relevancy and value to existing and prospective members by connecting investment with tangible outcomes thereby increasing perceived value of membership.
- In concert with Board and staff, identify opportunities to improve organization's website as virtual "front door" to the organization. Initiate review of existing events to determine their ongoing viability or opportunity to "re-cast". Engage in a more robust social media presence that is exciting and engaging.
- By listening and observing, form effective working relationships with key municipal, county, regional leaders, business owners and corporate executives, economic, community partner organizations, university, college and other educational officers. Make a concerted effort to reach out to local community, cultural arts and nonprofit leaders to foster strong, collaborative partnerships and opportunities for synergies.
- Work with the Board and staff to evaluate existing programs to ensure continued relevancy to the mission and make changes if necessary. Continuously seek to connect staff activities and actions around priorities of both operational and strategic plans in a way that is clearly tied to the organization's goals.

#### Gateway Region of New Jersey

The four counties of the Gateway region -- Union, Essex, Middlesex and Somerset - - represent a population of over 2.5 million and one of the most dynamic business markets in the Northeastern United States. Industries in the region range from pharmaceuticals to financial services, from major healthcare systems to logistics and distribution, from large universities to a myriad of entrepreneurial start-ups and privately held companies.



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Residents of the region benefit from housing options in cities, townships and boroughs with numerous K-12 education choices including strong public-school systems along with private schools in the area. There are multiple colleges and universities within the region including Rutgers University, Kean University, Essex County College, Montclair State University, Union College and other institutions. The region is the hub of healthcare, education and retail with shopping experiences ranging from unique boutiques to favorite national chains.

**Contact**

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