

Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative – Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer Opportunity Profile 2022

BACKGROUND

The Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative was re-launched in 2021 to capitalize on a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Southwest Pennsylvania to lead the nation and globe in expanding its robotics and autonomy cluster. The Collaborative was one of 529 regions to apply for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and is one of just 21 regions to win. The Collaborative will receive a \$62.7 million federal grant over the next four years.

[Read the official Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative Press Release](#)

Leading the Collaborative will be the inaugural Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer (RECO). The RECO will guide the grant's strategy, working as a convener and collaborator to harness the capacity of our diverse Collaborative and ensuring that each of the grant's five projects achieves its goals individually and collectively. The RECO will lead development of an annual summit to share progress with a broad set of community partners and ensure adherence to the grant's requirements and recommendations. The RECO will coordinate with the EDA to ensure the grant's successful execution.

The Collaborative Board is made up of regional leaders from industry, education, labor, and the non-profit sector, and is co-chaired by Farnam Jahanian, President of Carnegie Mellon University and Stefani Pashman, CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. The RECO will staff the full board and board sub-committees in their work overseeing strategy and execution for this important project. The Collaborative's sole member is the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (Conference). The Collaborative and the RECO will leverage the Conference's expertise in research and analysis, advocacy, and marketing.

ABOUT US

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development is one of the nation's leading economic and community development organizations. The Conference brings together public and private sector leaders around a shared regional agenda designed to improve the economic future and quality of life of the 10-county Pittsburgh region. Collectively, the Conference and its affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work as one to drive strategic and inclusive economic development in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

OBJECTIVE

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the RECO advances the region's pursuit of specific actions and investments needed to supercharge cluster development and ensure that its economic benefits equitably reach individuals from all corners of our region. The position will start by managing the implementation of a regional robotics and autonomy cluster strategy, as outlined by the [Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative](#), by providing thought leadership and strategic project management to a broad range of relevant efforts. This position will manage a team of 1-3 direct reports.



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PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy Implementation for the Build Back Better Grant

- Coordinates and evaluates all aspects of the cluster development strategy; proactively monitors, investigates, and assesses developments that affect scope.
- Manages the implementation of the strategy as outlined in SWPA's proposal, working closely with representatives of the five project leads to:
 - Track activities to ensure targets and outcomes are reached.
 - Identify barriers and develop mitigation plans.
 - Track metrics and make appropriate recommendations for improvements.
 - Ensure connectivity across the five projects.
- Leads coordination of an annual summit to report publicly on project activities and progress.
- Maintains knowledge of federal funding opportunities and positions the region, through partnership, to seek related funding; builds a solid team and network to support cluster development activities across the region.

Coalition Building

- Builds and maintains strong positive relationships with stakeholders from across the region and across the public-private spectrum; cultivates an effective coalition to champion broad interests of the key clusters, including the robotics and autonomy cluster.
- Coordinates interaction among all stakeholders; establishes and supports meaningful workstreams and cross-collaboration; facilitates regular coalition and partner meetings, including the annual meeting to report-out on progress.
- Cultivates strong positive relationships with existing and prospective public and private funders; supports fundraising efforts.

Board Management

- Serve as the chief liaison to the CEO and the SWPA New Economy Collaborative Board of Managers. Staffs and manages the governing board and its activities.
- Coordinates communication between the governing board, project leads, and coalition; drives effective board engagement.

EDA Partnership

- Acts as the Southwestern Pennsylvania liaison to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- Attends/coordinates attendance for EDA events and opportunities.
- Monitors EDA grant and technical assistance opportunities and provides recommendations to our leadership and coalition.
- Builds and maintains relationships with other Build Back Better Regional Challenge awardees to learn and share best practices.

Other Duties as Assigned

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EDUCATION SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's degree and at least ten years of progressively responsible senior leadership experience in economic development, with a track record of success and proven results in leading a complex organization. Advanced degree preferred.
- Understanding of economic development practices, driving innovative cluster strategy development, workforce and education practices, and public policy processes.
- Deeply demonstrated commitment to equity and the correlation to regional economic development.
- Experience developing and operationalizing strategic plans and leading complex initiatives.
- Proven track record of managing robust public-private partnerships and building effective coalitions within regional economic development.
- Project or program management experience in the economic development, community development or similar field that requires an interdisciplinary systems approach.
- Compelling public communicator, able to articulate complex ideas in an easily understood manner to various stakeholder groups.
- Understanding of robotics and autonomy cluster dynamics (desirable)
- Experience in federal grant management, budgeting, compliance, and reporting (desirable)
- Experience working with a board of trustees/directors (desirable)
- Familiarity with public policy and economic/community development issues in Southwestern PA (desirable)

COMPENSATION

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with experience and qualifications.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates for this position will be evaluated by Jorgenson Consulting. Only a limited number of the most highly qualified applicants meeting the job responsibilities and organizational focus will be invited to participate in the interview process. For consideration, please submit a letter of interest and résumé to Todd Jorgenson at SWPANEC@jci-inc.net

REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECK

There will be an extensive background and reference check of candidates. Once strong mutual interest has been established, candidates are asked to provide a list of references that should include, but not be limited to, a supervisor, a peer, a development client and a subordinate, as applicable. Candidates will be asked to sign an authorization to release information for the purpose of the background investigation, which may include education, social media background, credit check, criminal and driving records. Should an offer be extended prior to the completion of these checks, the offer will be made contingent on the successful completion of the reference and background checks.