

## **COOK COUNTY/GRAND MARAIS JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION**

### **About the EDA**

The mission of the Cook County/Grand Marais Joint Economic Development Authority (EDA) is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Cook County a great place to live, work and do business.

The EDA is entering an exciting new chapter. With operational support already in place, the next Executive Director will step into a unique opportunity: leading economic development in Cook County while receiving onboarding and ongoing assistance in administration, grant management, and organizational development. This role is well-suited for candidates with strong skills, initiative, and the desire to work in Cook County – even if they are not yet a seasoned executive director.

### **About Cook County**

Located at the tip of Minnesota's North Shore, Cook County is known for its unparalleled natural beauty, abundant outdoor recreation, and vibrant arts and culture scene. Grand Marais is the county seat and serves as a vital hub for the region. For more information:

- Visit Cook County – [www.visitcookcounty.com](http://www.visitcookcounty.com)
- Cook County Government – [www.co.cook.mn.us](http://www.co.cook.mn.us)
- Cook County EDA - [www.cookcountymneda.org](http://www.cookcountymneda.org)

**This position is open until filled; the Board will begin reviewing applications January 23, 2026. First round of virtual interviews are expected on the week of February 2, 2026 with an expected start date of March/April 2026.**

## POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director leads implementation of the EDA's mission and strategic plan and manages day-to-day operations of the organization. This position works under the general direction of the EDA Board of Commissioners and in partnership with:

- **Administrative Support Services**, including administration, grant management, and organizational processes currently provided by North Shore Development Co. (NSDC).
- **The Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**, which hosts a consultant at the EDA offices to directly assist Cook County businesses.
- **The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)**, which leads housing initiatives. The Executive Director may support housing-related initiatives in coordination with the HRA.

The Executive Director represents the EDA in the community, fosters strong partnerships, and advances projects that promote business growth, workforce development, community development, and other local priorities.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Strategic Leadership*

- Plan, implement, and evaluate EDA programs, policies, grants, and services.
- Represent the EDA at meetings and in public forums; build strong relationships with elected officials, businesses, developers, and community groups.
- Identify opportunities for business growth and community development in partnership with local governments and organizations.
- Collaborate with small businesses and partner organizations to identify and strengthen opportunities for business support and growth.
- Support housing-related efforts in partnership with the HRA.

### *Administration & Operations*

- Manage the daily operations of the EDA.
- Oversee grant identification, writing, administration, and compliance, with consultant operational support.
- Prepare meeting materials, reports, budgets, and financial updates, with drafting and clerical support from consultant.
- Manage property at Cedar Grove Business Park to ensure compliance with development agreements and stormwater regulations.
- Maintain EDA records and compliance reporting with State, Board, and granting agencies.

## **DESIRED CANDIDATE QUALITIES AND SKILLS**

- Demonstrated commitment to being present and engaged in Cook County, with the ability to work primarily from the EDA office in Grand Marais to build strong community connections.
- Committed to learning about and engaging with Cook County's economy, culture, and community.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, ability to explain complex ideas clearly.
- Demonstrated ability to build partnerships and maintain positive relationships with government, business, and community leaders.
- Skilled in setting priorities, managing multiple projects, and meeting deadlines with limited direct supervision.
- Comfortable working in a partnership-based model with consultants and peer organizations.
- Familiarity with the operations of local units of government, including open meeting law, Robert's Rule of Order, and public meeting practices (or willingness to learn).
- Comfortable operating standard office equipment and related software.

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Community Development, or related field, AND two (2) years of related professional experience; OR
- Associate's degree in related field, AND four (4) years of related professional experience; OR
- Combination of education and experience deemed equivalent by the EDA.
- Experience in economic or community development, grant management, or nonprofit/government administration is strongly preferred.
- Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) or similar certification preferred but not required.
- Experience working with or for a local unit of government is strongly preferred; knowledge of public sector governance processes (e.g. open meeting law, Robert's Rules) is a plus.

## **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

- Salary range: \$75,000 - \$100,000 depending on qualifications
- Benefits: Health, dental, Minnesota PERA retirement and paid time off.
- Full-time, exempt, non-union position; typical schedule Monday-Friday, with some evening and weekend meetings required.

## COMMUNITY PRESENCE

The Executive Director role is community-facing. The EDA seeks a candidate who will be regularly present in Cook County and primarily based in the EDA office to build strong relationships with businesses, governments, and community partners.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, complete the online application, and submit a resume and cover letter by visiting:

<https://www.cookcountymneda.org/employment-opportunities>

- Application review begins January 23, 2026.
- First-round virtual interviews will be held the week of February 2, 2026.
- Final interviews and selection are anticipated in February 2026 with an expected start date of March/April 2026.
- Position open until filled.

## QUESTIONS

For questions about the position or the application process, please contact Theresa Bajda, North Shore Development Co., at [theresa@northshoredevelopmentco.com](mailto:theresa@northshoredevelopmentco.com).

## APPLICANT QUESTIONS

Applicants will be asked to answer the following supplemental questions when submitting their materials.

- 1) Interest and Fit:** Why are you interested in this position, and how do your skills and experience make you a good fit for Cook County and the EDA?
- 2) Experience:** Describe a time you managed or supported a project involving cross sector partners (such as businesses, nonprofits, or government). What role did you play, and what was the outcome?
- 3) Grant Management:** Please describe your experience managing grants, including any work with grant writing, administration, or reporting.
- 4) Community Engagement:** This position requires building relationships in a small community. How would you approach engaging local stakeholders, especially if you are new to the area?
- 5) Community Presence:** This position requires a full-time presence in Cook County, based out of the EDA office. If you currently live outside the area, how would you balance a commitment to be present in the community during your transition?
- 6) Growth Potential:** The EDA, with support from consultants, is open to candidates who may not yet have full executive-director level experience but are eager to learn and grow. What skills or knowledge do you believe this role will help you develop?