

Position Title: President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Reports To: Board of Directors

Position Summary

The CEO serves as the chief executive and administrative officer of the Chamber of Commerce, responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, and management of the organization. This role emphasizes driving economic development initiatives, fostering business growth, and ensuring a vibrant economic climate for the community. The CEO will act as a key advocate for local businesses and a liaison with public and private stakeholders to promote sustainable economic progress.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement the Chamber's vision, mission, and strategic goals in collaboration with the Board of Directors.
- Lead economic development efforts, including business retention, expansion, attraction, and workforce development strategies.
- Identify opportunities for community growth through research and partnerships with local, state, and federal entities.
- Build relationships with site selectors, developers, and investors to position the region as a competitive destination for business investment.
- Partner with educational institutions to align workforce development initiatives with industry needs.
- Oversee the creation and execution of programs that support entrepreneurship, tourism promotion, and workforce training.

Economic Development

- Drive initiatives to attract new businesses by leveraging regional assets such as infrastructure, workforce capabilities, and incentive programs (e.g., TIFs, Opportunity Zones).
- Ensure compliance with contract for economic development services with the City of Independence. Ongoing collaboration with members of the City Council, City Manager, and city department heads as they relate to economic development.

- Collaborate with educational institutions and industry leaders to address skill gaps through tailored training programs.
- Maintain relationships with site consultants and external stakeholders to position the region as an investment destination.
- Support innovation by fostering start-ups in key sectors such as technology, retail, healthcare, and outdoor recreation.
- Facilitate and manage quarterly meetings of the Economic Development Advisory Board.

Advocacy & Public Policy

- Advocate for pro-business policies at local, state, and federal levels to create a favorable business environment.
- Serve as the voice of the business community in public forums and policy discussions.
- Represent the Chamber's interests in government affairs by advocating for policies that support a pro-business environment.
- Act as the voice of the business community in public forums, legislative sessions, and media engagements.
- Build coalitions with other organizations to advance shared policy goals.

Organizational Management

- Supervise staff recruitment, development, and performance to ensure operational excellence.
- Provide oversight of Chamber staff and volunteers for annual SantaCaliGon Festival.
- Oversee financial management, including budget planning, fundraising efforts, sponsorship acquisition, and fiscal accountability.
- Ensure effective communication with members, Board of Directors, and other stakeholders through regular updates and transparent reporting.
- Develop membership recruitment and retention strategies to grow the Chamber's influence and resources.
- Have responsibility for overseeing maintenance and upkeep of Chamber owned physical assets including the Free Enterprise Center.
- Ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, and ethical standards.

Community Engagement

- Serve as a visible leader in the community by building strong relationships with local businesses, civic organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies.
- Promote the Chamber's mission through active participation in community events and initiatives.
- Act as a connector between businesses and resources that drive innovation and growth.

Qualifications

Education & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, economic development, or related field (preferred).
- Minimum of 5–10 years of executive leadership experience in a chamber of commerce, economic development organization, or comparable entity.
- Certifications in economic development (e.g., CECD) are highly desirable.
- Proven track record in organizational leadership roles with experience in economic development or a related field.

Skills & Competencies

- Strong understanding of economic development tools such as incentive programs and real estate financing mechanisms.
- Excellent interpersonal skills to build relationships across diverse stakeholders.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to identify challenges and develop actionable solutions.
- Proven ability to lead strategic planning efforts focused on economic development.
- Proficiency in public speaking and advocacy.

Compensation

A competitive salary package commensurate with experience will be offered. Benefits include PTO, paid holidays, 401K, health insurance, and other benefits as determined by the Chamber Board of Directors. This position is ideal for a dynamic leader passionate about driving economic growth while fostering community prosperity. Candidate selected will be required to reside within the City of Independence within 6 months from date of hire.

About the Independence Chamber of Commerce

The Independence Chamber was formed in 1920 and has served the Independence business community continuously since that time. It operates as a 501-C6 non-profit and has a 501-C3 Foundation that provides additional financial support. The 2025 fiscal year operating budget is \$1.38 million and there are currently 6 full-time employees and one ¼ time employee on staff.

The membership structure is tier based and there are currently 670 business members.

The Chamber has a total of 6 divisions within the organizational structure and include membership, economic development, marketing, public policy, community affairs, and the SantaCaliGon Festival. The annual festival is operated by the Chamber and started in 1973 and hosts over 200,000 attendees during 4 days over the Labor Day weekend. This is one of the largest free festivals in the nation and includes over 200 vendors, two stages for live music and other entertainment, a carnival, and a variety of food options.

A contract for economic development services is in place with the City of Independence and staff work in close partnership with city officials to foster economic development growth, including business retention and attraction. The most recent contract for services was approved in February 2025 for a 3-year term. The Chamber's economic development program is a public/private partnership and in addition to funding from the City, private sector partners provide financial support. An Advisory board provides oversight and reports to the Chamber Board of Directors.

About Independence, Missouri

Independence, Missouri is a historically significant city located in western Missouri, just east of Kansas City. With a population of approximately 123,011 as of the 2020 census, it is the fifth-largest city in the state. Independence played a crucial role in the American westward expansion during the 19th century serving as the starting point for the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails. It is the home of Harry S Truman who served as the 33rd President of the United States.

Today, Independence continues to evolve while preserving its rich history. The city covers approximately 78 square miles, transitioning from urban areas in the west to more rural areas in the east. It's part of the Kansas City Metropolitan area, which has a population of 2.1 million people. Independence, Missouri, offers visitors a unique blend of historical significance and

modern amenities, making it an attractive destination for those interested in American history and culture.