

Downtown Evanston Executive Director

About Downtown Evanston

Downtown Evanston (DTE) is a business non-profit that provides district management to Evanston's central business district. One of the goals of the organization is to position downtown Evanston as a highly desirable retail, entertainment, and cultural district that attracts Chicago, North Shore, and Evanston residents and tourists. Under the guidance of the Downtown Evanston board of directors, DTE staff works to achieve this destination-marketing goal by creating events, promotions, and special programs that bring visitors to shop, dine and enjoy the district's many amenities.

About the Job

The Executive Director implements the mission of Downtown Evanston and provides leadership within the organization and throughout the district and Evanston. This role promotes a strong economy and high quality of life, focusing on economic development, marketing, public realm improvements, placemaking, events and advocacy. The Executive Director nurtures strong relationships with its Board of Directors, stakeholders, and community partners. The Executive Director is responsible for the growth and leadership of the organization and manages its day-to-day operations. Day-to-day operations include marketing the district as a retail, dining, and entertainment destination; producing programs and special events; creating a welcoming environment and representing the district to the community. To that end, the Executive Director must understand issues confronting downtown small business owners, property owners, public agencies, and community organizations. The position involves reporting to a 20+ member board and being accountable to 100+ property owners and 200+ business owners. This position requires you to attend meetings and events on evenings and weekends.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Administration and Leadership:

- Administer, evaluate, and develop the organization's programs and services.
- Organize and manage the reconstitution process of the SSA every ten years. The process must begin in 2028. SSA #9 must be officially reconstituted by 2029.
- Prepare and recommend an annual work plan and operating budgets to the Board for approval.
- Assure adherence to annual plans, maintain all organizational records, and provide the Board of Directors with management reports, and cost and program analysis.
- Secure sponsorship for events and programs
- Represent the organization in areas such as downtown road construction, safety, events and street closures, city mall maintenance, and other areas.
- Lead staff to support the Board of Directors and its subcommittees.
- Ensure compliance with all state and city regulations for a special service area including an annual report and annual audit.
- Oversight of the operating budget and management of financial operations, including reconciling financials with the accountant and board treasurer.
- Manage issues of HR, budget, insurance, and other administrative activities as needed.

Place Making and Marketing:

- Promote the businesses of the district collectively to multiple market segments using the website, social media, paid advertisement, generation of positive publicity, and other methods.

- Responsible for securing financial sponsors for various programs or art installations.
- Ensure agreed-upon services, recognition and media exposure are delivered.
- Execute, review, and continuously improve marketing programs, public relations strategies, and public programs and events.
- Coordinate with contractors/partners to periodically update and optimize the existing website and manage all social media campaigns.

Events Management:

- Oversee the management of current events, including Thursday Night Market, Warm Bevvv Walk, Tree Lighting, Hygge and other Winter events, and others.
- Develop and coordinate new events that drive traffic to Downtown Evanston.
- Work and support other groups having events in the district that promote downtown Evanston.
- Responsible for securing financial sponsorship for various events and programs.
- Must be able to lift 30lbs and be on your feet for long periods of time.
- Must be able to work nights and weekends when needed.

Stakeholder/ Partner Relations:

- Coordinate communication functions, including responding to businesses and landlords, media, and other inquiries and writing monthly newsletters and other reports.
- Represent the board businesses and property owners on various City of Evanston committees, and associations as the board sees fit.
- Work with the larger community of downtown stakeholders as the representative of the organization on various collaborative efforts to promote downtown Evanston.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in business, sales, marketing, or relevant field required.
- 5 years required experience with Place Management Organizations.
- 2 years required experience in standard business administration.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills are required.
- Experience in marketing, place making, sales and sponsorship, activation of urban spaces, business revitalization, and prior SSA, Main Street Program, or business organization experience preferred.

Day to Day Expectations:

- This is a hybrid position, 75% of time spent either in office or in meetings with Evanston stakeholders; up to 25% WFH.
- Stay up to date with all developments, ordinances, City rule changes regarding businesses and zoning. Regularly attend City Council, Human Services and Economic Development meetings and either show support for or demonstrate opposition to various topics that the Board has interests in.
- Have a clear line of communications with Evanston Economic Development, public works, health department, zoning, sustainability director, mobility coordinator and community development directors and their staff on all communications that will affect any property owner or business in the district.
- Walk the district and use 311 to report overflowing garbage, graffiti, dead rodents, or any other unsightly circumstance that would result in a negative experience for a resident or visitor.

- Inspect planters and grass areas to see if the landscape contractor needs to water plants in the summer or replace missing or damaged plantings.
- Occasional tree audit - take photos of trees that are dying or need trimming, work with the City Public Works department to resolve any issues.
- Schedule block-by-block retail operators; ask: “How is business, does anything need promoting?”
 - Take photos of current inventory for social media purposes.
 - These visits occasionally require follow-up with city staff, i.e., requests for bike racks, or how to fill out a grant application.
 - Questions can relate to various topics, including: access to capital, sidewalk improvements, bus bench move or removal.
 - Act as main point-of-contact for the businesses in the City of Evanston.
- Daily social media posts via Facebook, Instagram, with pictures and reels which highlight the benefits of DTE.
- Check Google analytics for website traffic monthly. Determine Advertising spend allocations based on provided metrics.
- Daily/Weekly edits to website to keep it up to date.
- Bi-Weekly check-ins with the SSA’s bookkeeper.
 - Track invoices for sponsorships and banner sales when in progress.
 - Assist Bookkeeper with expenditure tracking.
 - Always maintain budget.
- Regular communication with property owners on potential tenants and marketing their spaces.
- Bi-weekly walks with the Evanston Police Department in the Community Policing division. Schedule quarterly ‘Coffee with a Cop’ meeting either by block or by sector (i.e.: hotels and large property managers)
- Maintain a seat on the Chicago NorthShore Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Evanston Chamber of Commerce.
- Attend art related community organization meetings.
 - Attend meetings, sit on committees, and ensure large projects benefit the district.
- Communicate with emails, calls, and coffee meetings with the real estate broker community.
- Set up quarterly visits to other districts for retail attraction efforts.
- Follow successful outside districts for new ideas and developments.

Annual Expectations:

- Issue RFPs for Landscaping, Audit, and Ad Purchases.
- Research events and placemaking ideas that have succeeded in other communities.
- Work with Bookkeeper on annual audit.
- SSA has a credit line with Byline Bank, manage this with the Board and Bookkeeper.
- Prepare and publish an Annual Report.
- Prepare and strategically distribute the annual sponsorship deck.

Salary & Benefits:

- Health insurance plans available
- PTO days
- Salary and benefits are negotiable and will be provided commensurate with experience and education. The Downtown Evanston organization seeks to hire and promote the

most qualified staff, regardless of that individual's race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

- Application Information: Letters of interest, resume, and salary history may be submitted electronically to the following email address:

downtown.evanston.edsearch@gmail.com