



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION OVERVIEW



explore
LAWRENCE

Lawrence is your quirky, cool friend who brings fun to the neighborhood. Lawrence works hard and plays hard. Lawrence is both outgoing and welcoming, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and innovation. Its eclectic personality is reminiscent of the proverbial “Renaissance Man,” whose expertise spans a broad range of areas: Education, Arts & Culture, Sports & Social Accomplishments. Lawrence is a catalyst for organic creation and original thought, a lightning rod for cultural change. Its energy is contagious. Like a great film, it leaves you wanting more.

Lawrence is a city happy to be what it is: a city doing things in its own way, with free thinkers not trying to be anyone else. Founded by pioneers driven to create a state where people of all races would be free, Lawrence has continually defined itself as an open, energetic, and welcoming community.

We have lots of fans. We’ve been included on national lists for:

- Best College Town in the Midwest
- #7 of the top 20 Coolest Towns in America
- America’s 50 Best Cities to Live in
- One of the Quirkiest Cities in the US

And in Kansas, we make the list for:

- 4 of the top 10 best restaurants
- The most iconic bar (Johnny’s Tavern)
- Top 3 best mountain bike trails (Lawrence River Trail)
- and, drumroll please, the Best Destination in Kansas (our fabulous Mass Street and Downtown Lawrence.)

ABOUT LAWRENCE, KANSAS

- Lawrence population: 95,000. Location: Northeast Kansas, 40 minutes west of Kansas City.
- Lawrence was founded in 1854 by the New England Emigrant Aid Society in an effort to keep the territory free from slavery. It is said that Lawrence is one of the few cities in the U.S. founded strictly for political reasons.
- Lawrence and Douglas County are part of the Freedom’s Frontier Heritage Area. The Heritage Area was designated by Congress as an area of significant shared heritage where history, culture and landscape combine to tell the stories that contribute to our national and individual freedoms. The area encompasses counties in eastern Kansas and western Missouri.
- Lawrence is home to two universities: the University of Kansas (KU) and Haskell Indian Nations University.
- Approximately 28,000 undergraduates attend KU, which is ranked as one of the nation’s most beautiful campuses.
- Haskell Indian Nations University is the nation’s only inter-tribal university for Native Americans. Haskell’s students represent more than 150 tribes from all across the country.
- Dr. James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, is buried in Lawrence where he lived and coached most of his adult life. Naismith’s Original Rules of “Basket Ball” are housed in the DeBruce Center adjacent to the top college basketball venue in the nation, Allen Fieldhouse.
- Lawrence boasts one of the most vibrant downtown shopping, dining and entertainment districts in the Midwest. Massachusetts Street, named after the home state of the city’s founders, and the entire downtown district, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It’s the number one most visited destination in Kansas.



ARTS & CULTURE The arts have been essential to this town since some of the first settlers arrived packing brass instruments to form a community band. From visual to experimental, Lawrence continues to back the arts because this town knows that what's good for the arts is good for the community.

HISTORY & HERITAGE Lawrence was founded in the 1850s as the state's center of resistance to the expansion of slavery. And it paid the price. Targeted, pillaged, and burned to the ground during the Civil War, the community rebuilt with a commitment to education, civility, and the future. It's quite a legacy to live up to... but we try.

COLLEGE SPORTS The Kansas Jayhawks men's basketball team is legendary in college sports. Allen Fieldhouse, where the home games take place, holds the Guinness World Record for loudest indoor stadium. Adjacent to the Fieldhouse is the DeBruce Center which holds James Naismith's Original Rules of "Basket Ball". There's nothing quite like college football game days in the fall when the whole town is abuzz.

LIVE MUSIC From cozy and intimate venues featuring big-time acts to large outdoor street concerts, Lawrence's live music scene is unmistakable! In typical times you can find local and touring musicians every day of the week.

FOOD Come sit in the kitchens where chefs know the farmers who supply them and delight in offering the best possible local combinations with a global palate in mind. We know a good visit starts with a good meal, and Lawrence has a range of unmistakable restaurants to please every taste.

OUTDOORS Lawrence offers several escapes for those wanting to get active or relax in the great outdoors including Clinton Lake and State Park, Baker Wetlands, The Kansas River, miles upon miles of trails, and much more!

ABOUT LAWRENCE, KANSAS

MEETINGS

The great thing about hosting a conference or event in Lawrence is that, not only do we have a wide variety of hotels and facilities to suit your needs, we have so much for guests to enjoy in their free time. That's what makes a meeting successful – getting down to business during the day and having a chance to experience the food, the fun, the shopping, the history, the live music, and much more after the work is done. It's one part of what makes us unmistakable.

Lawrence has two Conference Hotels, the largest featuring 15,000 square feet of meeting space. In total, there are 18 hotels in Lawrence and 1,500 guest rooms.

There are 30 special event spaces that can accommodate all kinds of groups, several located on the University of Kansas campus.

SPORTS EVENTS

Lawrence is a sports town and home to some of the best sports facilities in the Midwest. Lawrence is a top destination for collegiate championships and top youth tournaments!

Sports Pavilion Lawrence is an ideal venue for youth basketball and volleyball tournaments and has hosted some of the most memorable events in the region.

Rock Chalk Park, a University of Kansas facility features one of the fastest tracks in the world as well as world-class tennis, soccer, and softball facilities

Cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts always love an event in Lawrence!



eXplore Lawrence represents the travel and tourism industry for Lawrence and Douglas County, Kansas. We are dedicated to creating economic development by attracting visitors, conventions, and events to our city.

eXplore Lawrence develops and coordinates resources to create an exceptional visitor experience for both leisure and business travelers, resulting in increased overnight stays, direct visitor spending, and repeat visits.

eXplore Lawrence is a premier destination concierge; it is a visitor's ultimate resource for all things Lawrence. eXplore Lawrence conveys a professional, polished attitude with an aptitude toward providing the right answer at the right time. eXplore Lawrence leads by example in promoting a customer-centric culture where the needs of guests are anticipated and addressed. Its friendly smile and welcoming demeanor invite guests to stay a little longer and enjoy the company. It is the local tour guide who is quick with a story about every aspect of the town, relating the storytelling to the interests of its guest. eXplore Lawrence is the consummate host, a collaborative event planner who cares about the details and thinks ahead in such a way that the result seems effortless.

eXplore Lawrence is focused on increasing overnight stays, direct visitor spending, and awareness of Lawrence and its amenities.

eXplore Lawrence leads by identifying the needs of its target audiences and delivering on those needs much better than competing communities.

eXplore Lawrence facilitates resource coordination to create an exceptional visitor experience for both leisure and business travelers.

eXplore Lawrence operates on a \$1.2 million annual budget and employs five full-time staff members.

ABOUT EXPLORE LAWRENCE

EXPLORE LAWRENCE MISSION

The mission of eXplore Lawrence is to broadly market the area as a year-round visitor destination thereby positively impacting the region's economy by retaining and attracting visitors to the City of Lawrence and Douglas County.

VISION FOR THE DESTINATION

- Be recognized as the premier visitor and convention destination in the State of Kansas
- Foster partnerships amongst area tourism facilities and businesses contributing positively to area economy and environment
- Be the catalyst that helps create an ample and available workforce that is comprised of motivated, well-trained, and customer-focused individuals
- Generate enthusiastic public and private sector support and investment in the tourism industry and its activities
- Create an atmosphere where the area's tourism industry is cohesive and works collaboratively on all efforts and issues



POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Director of eXplore Lawrence is responsible for the leadership and management of all daily operations of the organization in its mission to brand, market, and sell Lawrence as a must-experience destination. eXplore Lawrence coordinates and develops resources to create an exceptional visitor experience for both leisure and business travelers that results in increased overnight stays, direct visitor spending, and repeats visits. The position reports directly to the Executive Board of Directors and is accountable for carrying out the long-range strategic plan and direction set forth by the Board of Directors and ensuring that the organization meets or exceeds established goals. They serve as the key spokesperson for the organization, ensuring active communication with the tourism industry, public and private partners, and develop the advocacy programs to communicate the mission and raise awareness of the organization and the organizational work that eXplore Lawrence outputs.

The mission of eXplore Lawrence is to:

- Improve the local economy by attracting visitors, meetings, conferences, and events to the city;
- Encourage economic growth by providing quality services to our visitors;
- Responsibly manage transient guest tax funds and fiscal operations of the organization;
- Maintain productive working relationships with our partners in the business community.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Activities of this position revolve around the solicitation of travel and tourism-related business for Lawrence in cooperation with area hotels, restaurants, local sports organizations, attractions, University communities, and other sports and travel-related businesses.

The essential elements of the duties of the Director of eXplore Lawrence include: coordinating and overseeing budgeting, financial reporting, staff planning, and program activities. The Director must maintain a thorough knowledge of the community and a working relationship with the staff of area hotels, partner organizations, and opportunities at the state/regional level. The Director must keep abreast of and functions in the Lawrence and regional area.

The Director supervises four departments of eXplore Lawrence

- 1) Sales (Meetings, Associations, Conferences, Sports, and Special Events)
- 2) Marketing and Communications
- 3) Community Relations & Engagement and
- 4) Visitor Information Services



POSITION DESCRIPTION

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Education & Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, marketing and communications or other relevant field required; advanced degree is preferred; or an equivalent combination of education, experience, and training to provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the successful performance of the essential job duties.
- Minimum of seven to ten years of leadership or management/supervisory experience in fields utilizing the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed above and below.
- Prior hospitality/tourism, DMO, association, or economic development experience preferred.
- Working knowledge of destination marketing, business theories, practices, and procedures.
- Direct Experience with Boards of not-for-profit organizations that utilize public funds.
- Experience in supervision with proven ability to recruit, train and develop staff.

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities:

Communication Skills

- Exceptional communications and presentation skills
- Strong relationship-building skills and ability to clearly communicate mission and progress to all constituents
- Extensive public speaking experience; proven experience in media relations

Sales Leadership

- Proven success with sales team recruitment, retention, and overall development
- Experience with setting goals and measuring success
- Significant sales experience
- Significant event recruitment experience

Critical Characteristics Needed

- Innovative, strategic, and visionary leader; able to interpret rapidly changing and emerging industry trends and resources, while demonstrating the ability to adapt or discontinue actions for the greatest return on investment
- An inspirational leader with an entrepreneurial spirit
- Transparent, direct, and accessible; possess a proven track record of leading a functionally diverse staff and managing a large board that includes a broad section of constituents
- Ethical stewardship: demonstrates high integrity and business ethics at all times, serving the public and employees in full accord with policies and bylaws
- Cultural competence: ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with diverse cultures, operating with an inclusive perspective, and developing culturally competent team members
- Possess a high degree of social consciousness and cultural sensitivity



POSITION DESCRIPTION

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

Build out a post-COVID Strategic Plan, mapping out 6-month, 12-month, and 36-month details and goals for eXplore Lawrence.

Build out a strong sales and marketing plan, with emphasis on sales. Coordinate with Division Directors to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive sales and marketing program. Coordinate the development of annual work plans and strategies to promote the city as a destination for business and leisure travelers, conferences, and sports events.

Generate leads and help facilitate RFP's, in partnership with Lawrence hotels, that produce conference/meeting sales with area trade associations, local/regional/national businesses, and other cultural/educational institutions.

Coordinate and assess monthly and annual performance reports for all divisions; make appropriate recommendations for enhancing individual and team performance. Oversee all administrative, human resources, and organization policies. Work with the Board to ensure adherence to organization policies, procedures, laws, guidelines, and ethical standards.

Develop and maintain working relationships with partners locally, statewide, and regionally. A strong working relationship with state and regional tourism associations is expected to leverage local assets and further develop Lawrence as a business and leisure destination.

Manage and maintain annual program budget to achieve goals and objectives set by the Governing Board and City of Lawrence. Track and approve all expenditures. Holds general responsibility for the management of organizations finances by monitoring and controlling all operating expenses within the approved budget. Oversees the creation of financial reports and annual audit reports per procedures approved by the Board.

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Work with local government officials to maintain and increase public funding. Find and secure additional funding sources.



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board of Directors and all Board committees, including the Executive Committee. Advise/recommend the Chair of the Board, the Board, and other committees. Orient/educate new Board members. Plan and arrange Board meetings, including the preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes.

Represent eXplore Lawrence at local, state, regional, and national conventions of organizations that serve to foster the betterment of the organization's mission. Oversees and monitors staff involvement in travel and marketing associations.

Serve as the primary spokesperson for the organization. Responsible for all communications to the industry and general public. Point person for local, state, national, and international media.

Establish and maintain ongoing effective communication with Governing Board members, government leaders, business and cultural institution leaders, and the local, state, and national tourism industry.

Serve as the point person for legislative issues related to the tourism industry. Communicates to the Governing Board legislative issues and information that may affect the tourism industry.

Other duties as assigned by the Governing Board.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

- Salary and benefits will be competitive and commensurate with experience
- 401(k)
- Health and Dental
- Short-term and Long-Term Disability
- Paid Vacation, Holidays, and Sick Leave

HOW TO APPLY

Email a Cover Letter and Resume to jobs@explorelawrence.com by April 22, 2021

QUESTIONS?

Contact Michael Davidson at mdavidson@explorelawrence.com or (785) 856-5301

