



Bennington County Regional Commission

BCRC Seeks Executive Director

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC), a regional planning and community and economic development organization located in southwestern Vermont, seeks an Executive Director with demonstrated management and collaborative leadership abilities. The Executive Director will ensure that the BCRC efficiently and effectively advances its core mission while positioning the organization to take advantage of new opportunities that will benefit the region. An understanding of rural communities and an ability to establish and nurture relationships both inside and outside of the region will ensure that the organization will meet these objectives.

About the BCRC and the Region

The BCRC serves seventeen towns and villages in southwestern Vermont, working on behalf of those municipalities to build strong, resilient, and sustainable communities, to foster economic prosperity, and to promote a high quality of life for residents of the region. This mission is accomplished through direct planning and community development assistance to town and village governments, preparation and implementation of plans and special studies, and by developing working relationships with local and regional organizations. The BCRC works cooperatively with local governments to establish and advance regional cohesiveness, actively advocates for adherence to adopted regional policies, and facilitates effective communication between local, state, and federal levels of government.

The BCRC maintains an office in an historic building in the center of Bennington's downtown. The Commission is overseen by 17 municipally appointed commissioners representing each of the member towns and villages as well as several commissioners representing specific interests such as economic development, housing, transportation, conservation, and public health. The BCRC currently employs nine full-time and two part-time staff. Principal program areas include: municipal and regional planning, transportation, environmental and water quality planning, community and economic development, emergency management, energy planning, and solid waste planning and management. The BCRC also periodically provides direct administrative and planning support for local and regional community development organizations with complementary missions.

The BCRC is organized with separate, but cooperating, planning and community and economic development divisions. Staff members work collaboratively across program areas as project needs warrant, with division directors working with the Executive Director to provide oversight and direction. The Executive Director also works closely with the BCRC's Financial Manager and regularly meets with an Executive Committee which provides policy guidance and operational oversight. The BCRC is funded through a variety of short and long-term grants and agreements with state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations, and through direct support from member municipalities. The annual operating budget over the past several years has averaged approximately \$1.4 million.

Bennington County is a largely rural area, with historic village centers interspersed through the scenic valley that lies between the Green and Taconic Mountain Ranges. The largest towns of Manchester and Bennington are focal points of economic activity in the north and south, respectively. While agriculture

and manufacturing remain important to the region's economy, new opportunities are being realized through entrepreneurship and the growth of small local businesses. Economic vitality and workforce development have been challenged in recent years due to a population characterized by low growth and an aging demographic, together with challenges related to the availability and cost of housing. The Green Mountain National Forest is a significant presence in the region and abundant natural resources, recreational opportunities, and a vibrant cultural scene are key regional attributes. While decidedly rural in character, the region benefits greatly from its proximity to major northeastern urban centers and transportation hubs.

Organizational Context and Opportunity

The BCRC was established over 50 years ago as one of eleven regional planning commissions in Vermont. Unlike all but one other regional commission in Vermont, it also serves as the designated economic development agency for the region, having absorbed that function over the past several years. Moreover, the BCRC provides staff support for a regional solid waste organization since there is no operating district in southwestern Vermont. These are just some of the diverse functions that the next Executive Director will be overseeing at an organization which, in the absence of county government, provides a wide range of important services.

The next Executive Director will be responsible for developing and leading the organization to:

- Promote a clear vision for regional economic development.
- Create broad awareness of the organization and its programs while encouraging greater engagement among local officials, residents, nonprofit organizations, and businesses in all member towns and villages.
- Remain a recognized leader in addressing and solving regional challenges through direct technical support and by facilitating collaboration.
- Support and strengthen existing programs and investigate and cultivate new opportunities that benefit local communities and businesses.
- Foster external relationships with peers, funders, and stakeholders and determine partnership opportunities that will most effectively meet local and regional needs.
- Increase diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in measurable ways throughout the region.
- Become an active partner in all major projects and initiatives in the region that advance adopted regional objectives.
- Build a culture of teamwork among staff and with local officials and partner organizations.
- Identify and access funding sources to build and diversify revenue streams while maintaining a focus on locally identified priorities.
- Engage with statewide legislative issues and advocate for implementation of regional planning and economic development initiatives.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will exemplify a number of the following attributes, skills, and experiences and will have the capability to oversee an organization of the BCRC's size and scope:

A Knowledgeable and Strategic Executive

- Understands comprehensive planning and community/economic development issues of concern to a rural region like Bennington County.

- Committed to the mission of the BCRC and experienced in working with local and state government, businesses, and organizations that are central to implementing that mission.
- Able to assess trends, introduce new ideas, and manage change within the organization while evidencing a commitment to overarching concerns such as social equity, climate change, and community sustainability and resilience.
- Capable of guiding the development and execution of a strategic organizational vision and implementing plans to leverage funding, partnerships, and public awareness.

An Authentic and Engaging Leader

- Provides honest and accessible leadership while motivating and respecting staff and strategically delegating responsibilities to encourage positive working relationships.
- Serves as a reliable and trusted contact for commissioners and is a working partner with members of the BCRC's Executive Committee.
- Strongly advocates for the organization and local communities through politically savvy engagement with peers and key state officials and office holders.
- Builds relationships by engaging with key partners, developing trust, and delivering on promises.
- Listens to and appreciates a diversity of viewpoints while effectively communicating positions based on the BCRC's adopted regional policies and the needs of the organization.

An Effective Communicator

- Is a spokesperson, with significant civic engagement experience, who will raise the profile of the BCRC across the region.
- Leverages connections to support the use of BCRC resources.
- Understands how to most effectively engage in partnerships, when to assume a leadership role, and how to protect the interests of the BCRC in any such collaboration.

An Experienced Manager

- Demonstrates organizational management skills that will ensure financial stability and efficient delivery of services.
- Able to manage the financial aspects of an organization that relies on a complex array of funding sources which support a similarly diverse array of projects and programs.
- Assesses operational needs and directs the organization in a way that responds to change and takes advantage of new opportunities.
- Simultaneously advances multiple priorities and tasks, recognizing relationships between diverse programs, and allocates time and resources accordingly.

Desired Credentials

- A minimum of 7 years of senior leadership or equivalent experience.
- Academic degree and relevant experience that reflects both knowledge of organizational management and technical aspects of regional planning and development.

Application Guidelines

Candidates must include a resume and a cover letter that describes how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of the Bennington County Regional Commission. The cover letter also must include answers to the following two questions:

- What is the most important thing that a regional organization such as the BCRC can do to ensure that it effectively addresses the quality of life and economic development needs of its communities?

- What are the most important skills and personality traits needed in an effective leader?

Applications will be reviewed as they are received and interviews with selected candidates scheduled as promptly as possible.

The salary range being offered is \$90,000 to \$105,000.

Send required documents to: Employment@bcrcvt.org. All applications will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions should be submitted to: Employment@bcrcvt.org.

The BCRC is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer and looks forward to an inclusive hiring process. It encourages a broad range of applicants, including candidates from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences.