

Position Opening

Executive Director

Purpose: The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is seeking an experienced community development professional to serve as their next Executive Director. This role is a highly visible leadership position serving a 5-county region with an approximate population of 165,000, 63 cities and villages, and nearly 100 townships. The Executive Director reports to a 15-member Commission. The organization's annual budget is approximately \$1.1 million and supports a staff of between 8-11 employees, depending on workload. The Executive Director is responsible for strategic leadership, organizational accountability, and overall operations.

Position Description: The Executive Director assumes overall leadership for the Commission. They implement the Commission's mission through the development of community-based planning and economic development projects. Historic projects include the creation of award-winning community and economic development plans, provision of staffing services for seven regional organizations, management and deployment of a \$2 million revolving loan portfolio, and grant writing and administration for public works grants resulting in \$18 million of federal investments to develop over nearly 150 acres of new industrial land. The Executive Director establishes contracts and grant agreements, and are accountable for all human resource and financial management duties at the Commission. The Executive Director provides executive oversight of the Commission's contracts, grant agreements, financial management, budgeting, and human resources in partnership with the Finance Manager and Administrative Assistant. The Executive Director also establishes and communicates the Commission's vision, building strong relationships with regional partners and advancing the organization's mission throughout southwest Wisconsin. A primary responsibility of the Executive Director is to foster a collaborative, engaged, and high-performing organizational culture that supports employee development and organizational success.

A Day in the Life: The Executive Director's first year will be spent learning, maintaining, and building organizational culture and helping SWWRPC staff continue to succeed on their projects. The Finance Manager and Administrative Assistant will help on-board the Executive Director to the Commission's finances, practices, and procedures. Building and maintaining strong relationships will be one of the most important functions of the new Executive Director, and may consume a significant amount of time during the first six-months. The most impactful and productive external relationships will be with regional planning and economic development partners such as board members of Prosperity Southwest, rail transit commissions, and local leadership in communities where SWWRPC is currently engaged. The Executive Director will need to quickly orient themselves to the Commission's operations in order to prepare several large, visible planning projects slated for late summer or early fall, 2026. These projects include long-range community planning projects, multi-year regional hazard mitigation planning, and administration of public works grants.

About Us: SWWRPC has been providing southwestern Wisconsin with community and economic development services for 56 years. We advocate for necessary and positive change grounded in a history of agriculture, food production, manufacturing, small businesses development, and abundant natural resources. Our staff are interdisciplinary and service-driven. You can read our Strategic Plan here: <https://www.swwrpc.org/about-us>.

About the Commissioners: The Executive Director answers to a board of 15 Commissioners made up of three representatives from each member county. These members include the county board chairs from each county, and 10 county-appointed Commissioners. The background of these Commissioners is diverse, and include experience as local elected officials, small business owners, farmers, educators, public safety professionals, engineers, realtors, finance professionals, journalists, and a member of the state Assembly. The Commissioners value transparency and accountability, and have a practice of giving the Executive Director latitude in setting the organization's vision and direction. They support this work through policy development, and by serving as connectors between the Commission and the region. The Commissioners are dedicated public service with a passion for the communities of southwestern Wisconsin, and want the Commission to continue delivering unique value to the region.

Location: The Executive Director will be based out of the Platteville office. This role requires frequent travel around the region to accommodate project meetings. The Executive Director will be required to attend or facilitate evening meetings.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Leads all project development and revenue generation efforts for the organization.
- Creates an organizational culture that fosters a productive and supportive working environment for employees
- Establishes organizational strategy either directly through project and culture development, or indirectly through the facilitation of a strategic plan
- Establishes a vision how the Commission can have a positive impact on the communities of southwestern Wisconsin
- Assumes overall duties and management of the Commission, including implementation of policies and procedures, budgeting, financial management, communications, and personnel management.
- Acts as the commission's personnel officer in the approval of administrative decisions related to the implementation of the Commission policies and procedures.
- Sets organizational culture by leadership through example, employee engagement, establishment of professional development standards, and alignment of projects and staffing with organizational mission.
- Drafts and presents the annual budget to the Commission for approval.
- Manages day-to-day operations, programs, and projects in a manner consistent with the Commission's governing documents, policies, and funder requirements.
- Responsible for the hiring, orientation, supervision, evaluation, discipline, and termination of all Commission staff and volunteers engaged to support the organization's mission.
- Represents the Commission before federal and state agencies, other regional planning commissions, and local governments within the SWWRPC region.
- Seeks funding sources to maintain and enhance Commission programs and operations.

- Acts as the Commission's personnel officer in the administration of the Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies and Procedures.
- Coordinates with the Commission Chair and administrative staff to prepare agendas, minutes, and meeting packets for all Commission and committee meetings.
- Encourages Commissioner participation in program development and legislative advocacy.
- Reviews and works with Commissioners to update, maintain, and implement all Commission policies, procedures, and strategic plan.
- Enhances the Commission's visibility and reputation through media interviews and presentations, along with delivering presentations to county and town boards, city and village councils, nonprofit organizations, and professional groups.
- Keep abreast of professional developments in the field through reading and attendance at conferences and seminars.
- Attends professional planning activities, conferences, seminars, and training sessions, including the Wisconsin Association of Regional Planning Commission meetings.
- Implements any other duties as assigned by the Commission.
- Leads planning projects on occasion and as needed, and also serves in a supporting role for Commission planning projects when needed.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated ability to generate organizational revenue through the development of contracts and grants, and to maintain the continuing investment of member counties.
- Established organizational management skills, including financial management, strategic planning, and human resources.
- Innovative leadership that will bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the region, while respecting its traditions, history, and economic and cultural diversity.
- Experienced in managing a hybrid in-person/remote workforce.
- Demonstrated experience in collaborating within and across multiple sectors including public officials, higher education, private enterprise, and nonprofit representatives.
- Capable leader who supports the development of high-performing staff with diverse skills, styles, and responsibilities.
- General understanding of municipal finance, including operational and capital expenditure restrictions and economic development incentive practices. An understanding of the basic components of school financing is beneficial.
- Understanding of Comprehensive Planning law in Wisconsin as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes, and including "best practices" for leading planning projects.
- Successful at balancing a wide variety of issues and deadlines simultaneously.
- Possess exceptional communication and relationship skills.
- Experienced in grant writing and administration.
- Proven leadership of governing boards and organized community stakeholders.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local funding opportunities.
- Thorough understanding of community and economic development planning.
- Experienced with project contracting and preparing scopes of work.
- Creative in the analysis of regional development and facilitating economic development.
- Strong understanding and use of all Microsoft Programs.
- Ability to work productively with others and the public in a collaborative environment.

Education and experience:

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in economic or community development, urban planning, public or business administration, or related field.
- Experience in a supervisory or management role at a planning, economic development, governmental or community development consulting organization.
- A background in planning and/or economic development.
- Experience in HR practices, including recruiting, benefits analysis, retention best-practices, performance evaluation, etc.
- Experience in management and public administrative practices.
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.
- Desirable - Master's Degree; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully meet the core Qualifications, and Duties and Responsibilities of the position.

Time Allocation:

- Executive leadership (project scoping and development, policy development, HR): 30%
- Administrative functions (financial management, budget management, reporting): 25%
- Commissioner engagement (meetings, communication): 15%
- Project support (management, staff support, etc.): 15%
- Direct project work: 10%
- Other duties as needed or assigned: 5%

Compensation:

- Position type: Full-time permanent. FLSA exempt
- Salary range: \$110,000-\$125,000
- Relocation allowance: \$1,500
- Health insurance: SWWRPC pays 88% of premiums (approximately \$13,000 for a single plan and \$33,000 for a family plan).
- Other benefits: Dental and Group Life Insurance, Income Continuation Insurance, Flex Spending, participation in the Wisconsin Retirement System.
- 40 days paid time off, including holidays (12 days), vacation (15 days), and sick leave (13 days)
- Paid family leave for those who qualify
- Hybrid remote/in-person work opportunity
- Generous professional development opportunities

How to Apply

Email a cover letter, resume, and 3 professional references as a single PDF to Jon Hochkammer, Public Administrative Associates, LLC at jonhochkammer@gmail.com. Include "Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Search" in the subject line. Questions regarding the position should be directed to Mr. Hochkammer at (608)225-3024. The application deadline is August 17, 2026.

SWWRPC is committed to attracting, retaining, developing and promoting the most qualified employees without regard to their race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, citizenship status, veteran status, or other characteristic prohibited by state or local law. We are dedicated to providing a work environment free from discrimination and harassment and where employees are treated with respect and dignity.