

# **PRESIDENT/CEO**

## **INVEST AURORA**

### **AURORA, IL**



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GovHR USA is pleased to announce the recruitment and selection process for the President/CEO of Invest Aurora, an Economic Development Authority located in and benefitting the City of Aurora, Illinois. This brochure provides background information on Invest Aurora and the City of Aurora, as well as the requirements and expected qualifications for the position.

Candidates should apply at [govhrusa.com](http://govhrusa.com) with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references. The position is open until filled with first reading of applications on January 5, 2024. Confidential inquiries are encouraged and should be directed to Maureen Barry, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, at 847-380-3240, x116.







## INVEST AURORA BACKGROUND

Invest Aurora is a 501(c)(3) public/private economic development partnership dedicated to expanding economic opportunities in Aurora and developing a sustainable community for Aurora residents and businesses. Established in 2005, Invest Aurora is the primary partner to the City of Aurora in their efforts to strategically enhance Aurora's economic vitality through marketing, outreach, research and data collection. These mutual efforts will increase investment and development that reflect the dynamic and diverse nature of the city.

Invest Aurora works to make the city stronger by leveraging partnerships between public and private sectors to attract and expand business ventures that stimulate the economy, create jobs, and strengthen our community. Invest Aurora maintains a database of commercial occupants, retailers, and brokers; tracks economic development metrics; maintains a portfolio of financial programs providing financial assistance to underserved businesses; and responds to requests for information (RFIs) which come to the City and the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Invest Aurora takes an active role with community, regional and state organizations, including the State of Illinois, in implementing their outreach program to several hundred prospects per quarter. Additionally, Invest Aurora is a key driver in Aurora's business retention efforts, sponsoring quarterly leadership opportunities and bringing together industry and municipal leadership to focus on industry specific issues and opportunities. A new role recently undertaken by Invest Aurora is that of data curation. Invest Aurora subscribes to numerous data subscription services, allowing us to provide to the City detailed employment data, community demographics, and occupancy analysis. Our marketing efforts are closely coordinated with the City of Aurora and other key organizations throughout the City.

Invest Aurora has developed an active communication strategy with the local business community and regional constituents, providing unique educational opportunities, and promoting local, state, and federal financial resources available to the local business community. We act as a one-stop-shop for businesses of all sizes and industries, providing the resources necessary for commercial success.



## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The City of Aurora is Illinois' second largest city (population 197,757), located 42 miles west of the City of Chicago, in Kane and DuPage Counties with portions extending into Will and Kane Counties. Aurora's history and early development are tied to the Fox River, which runs through its present day downtown. Early in the City's history, the riverbanks served as a site for timber mill and grain mill activities. An early key employer, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad located its roundhouse and locomotive shops in downtown Aurora in the 1850's. Still standing, the Roundhouse is emblematic of the strength and durability of Aurora's commercial sector. Our historic downtown remains a thriving business center. Significant investments in all sectors of the community have helped to maintain the health and vitality of our entire community.

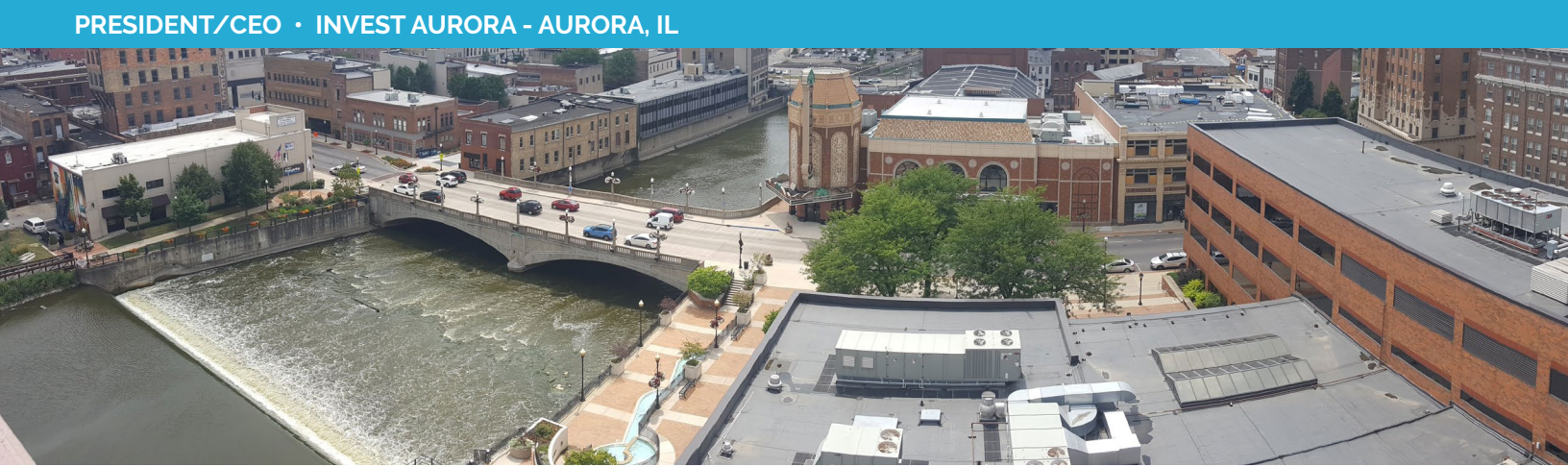
Redevelopment in the later part of the last century in the Hollywood Casino in our downtown and in the regional mall concepts on our East Sides provided the city with an economic upswing and a significant growth in our population. Additionally, the new century has brought a renewed commercial interest in Aurora. Aurora has created over 7,000 new jobs in the last 6 years (in spite of the national pandemic), brokered an historic agreement with the Hollywood Casino to relocate and expand within Aurora, and has partnered with the Fox Valley Mall to reimagine this important property, introducing new residential units and improved mall tenancy.

Aurora is home to the Paramount Theatre, a large live performance theater which attracts regional audiences with its Broadway Series and other performances. Contributing to the historic nature of the downtown, the largest collection of commercial buildings by Prairie School architect George Grant Elmsie is in Aurora. Also located downtown is the newly constructed Aurora Public Library.

The Route 59 retail corridor is consistently identified as the single largest commercial corridor outside of Chicago. Along with the 1.3 million square feet Fox Valley Mall, Aurora is also home to the Chicago Premium Outlets Mall, one of the top performing malls in the Simon Premium Outlets' national portfolio. Along with other major retail corridors, Aurora is also home to 13 business parks.







## AURORA AT A GLANCE

Population: **197,757**

Households: **60,018**

Land Area: **45.77** square miles

Median Home Value: **\$240,440**

Median Household Income:  
**\$84,565**

## INVEST AURORA/SEIZE THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Invest Aurora (operating under the aegis of the "Seize the Future Development Foundation") provides marketing support, financial programming, and assistance in negotiating real estate and development deals, working with local elected and appointed bodies as well as with the state and federal agencies as appropriate. Responsibilities include branding and marketing; vetting leads and maintaining confidential relationships (particularly related to land acquisition); data analysis services, financial resources opportunities, workforce development, and commercial retention. The Mayor's Office of Economic Development will negotiate land deals, facilitate incentive agreements and focus on the final closure of the various economic development agreements in coordination with the Aurora Economic Development Team (Invest Aurora, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Legal, Finance, Planning and Zoning and building permits).

As a center of education, the city is home to Aurora University, Robert Morris College, and a branch of Rasmussen College, and enjoys two branches of Waubensee Community College, one of which is located downtown. According to the census of Aurora's population, 26% over the age of twenty-five hold a bachelor's degree.

Aurora is served by three main school systems, one on either side of the Fox River, and a third, the Indian Prairie School District (IPSD) 204, formed in 1972 to serve the far eastern portion of Aurora and Naperville. In all, Aurora is served by six school districts and more than forty public schools within Aurora city limits.

The prestigious Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) is a state-funded residential magnet school for grades 10 to 12. While IMSA operates with public funds (and uses the site originally designated West Aurora High School North Campus), it is managed independently of Aurora's other public schools. Any Illinois student who meets admission requirements may apply to attend IMSA, tuition free. Other private schools include Aurora Central Catholic, Rosary and Marmion Academy and Aurora Christian High School, plus seven parochial schools and an elementary school associated with Aurora Christian.

Today, Aurora is a culturally diverse city with a strong Latino presence. Historic areas of the downtown are being redeveloped, and new developments are being built all over the city.





## THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The President/CEO is charged with working with existing Aurora businesses to sustain and grow the local economy, market the City to attract new business, and develop relationships with all existing City businesses to determine needs. The individual must be familiar with and understand economic incentive packages and tools. The position is required to work together with the Mayor's Office of Economic Development to create a unified approach to economic development in the city.

Work performed by the President / CEO is supported by the following employees:

- Director of Business Attraction and Financial Services (1 FTE) – Facilitates economic development planning to identify and establish business attraction and development opportunities. This individual is an expert at using Co-star, Retail Lease Trac and ESRI applications. This individual is an active participant in various trade organizations and responds to Requests for Information from potential businesses who are sourced through the website, the City of Aurora, the State of Illinois DCEO, and calls and referrals from other sources. Additionally, this individual administers the economic development financial incentives programs, including the Dunham and EDA Revolving Loan Programs.
- Director of Business Retention (1 FTE) – The primary responsibility for this individual is the retention of businesses throughout the greater Aurora community, acting as the key contact to the business community and local/regional economic development partners. Retention efforts include the development and implementation of an overall communication strategy, the dissemination of data and resources to the local business community, one-on-one interaction with local business leaders, and the collection and maintenance of local business data. Additionally, this individual is the primary liaison for the State of Illinois Community Navigator Program, providing information and resources to the local business community currently available through the State of Illinois.
- Data Resource Manager (1FTE) – This individual is responsible for ensuring the organization makes informed decisions through the collection and usage of data. They possess the ability to collect, analyze, manipulate, and report on available data sets. This position works closely with all Invest Aurora Staff Members, as well as with the Mayor's Office of Economic Development to field inquiries from the development and business community, providing a clear path for success.
- Marketing and Operations Manager (1FTE) – The Marketing and Operations Manager position is a key member of the Invest Aurora Team, responsible for both high level operational duties, as well as the development and execution of all marketing and outreach efforts. This position contributes significantly to both the internal workings of a high energy office environment and to all public facing marketing and communication efforts.





## CHALLENGES/ISSUES FOR THE PRESIDENT/CEO

The next President/CEO for Invest Aurora can expect to be involved in the following priorities:

- The City of Aurora is poised to continue a rapid expansion of its commercial footprint with several new development projects at their starting points. The President/CEO will be expected to understand the economic implications of these efforts and to ensure the City of Aurora realizes the greatest return on investment possible.
- Invest Aurora's data research services are new to the organization and will need to be continually monitored to ensure that the latest resources are available, and that staff is in a position to understand, manipulate, and translate these data points for the City and to the business community at large.
- The President/CEO is the primary contact with the City of Aurora's Mayor's Office and the Mayor's Office of Economic Development. These relationships are vital to the organization's overall success, and as such, are a high priority.
- With the departure of the Acting President/CEO at the end of June 2023, a full review of staffing levels and responsibilities will be required.
- Board development will be a high priority for the incoming President/CEO with discussions underway regarding the size and makeup of the current Board.
- The EDA Revolving Loan Program (seeded by the Federal Government) provides a revenue stream for the organization that was not available in the past. The incoming President/CEO will need to determine the highest and best use for these funds for the foreseeable future.



## CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

The President/CEO is a visible position in the Aurora community, requiring well-developed leadership abilities and management skills that are based upon a strong understanding of local government processes and creative problem solving in the economic development arena. The President must have a strong desire to work in a boutique agency wherein furthering a collegial, team-oriented environment is key. He/she must be a highly motivated, self-starting, patient, and confident individual with excellent interpersonal skills.

Invest Aurora is seeking proven and progressive candidates committed to excellence in the delivery of financial programming, data research, community/commercial marketing, and business attraction and retention. Applicants must be committed to working with the elected and appointed bodies to secure and retain the best businesses for the City. The following factors of education, experience, leadership, management style, and personal and professional traits have been identified as necessary and/or desirable for the President/CEO to succeed in this position.

### POSITION REQUIREMENTS

- Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in business, public administration, public policy, urban planning, community or economic development, marketing or related field; Master's degree preferred.
- Seven to 10 years of progressively responsible and technically complex public and/or private sector administration, economic development or planning experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience, is desired.
- Considerable knowledge of local government organizations, policies, and contracts including a command of economic development related financial practices and incentives typically available to local government in Illinois.
- Considerable knowledge of research and analysis methods, statistics, cost analysis, and report presentation.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with members at all organizational levels and the public.

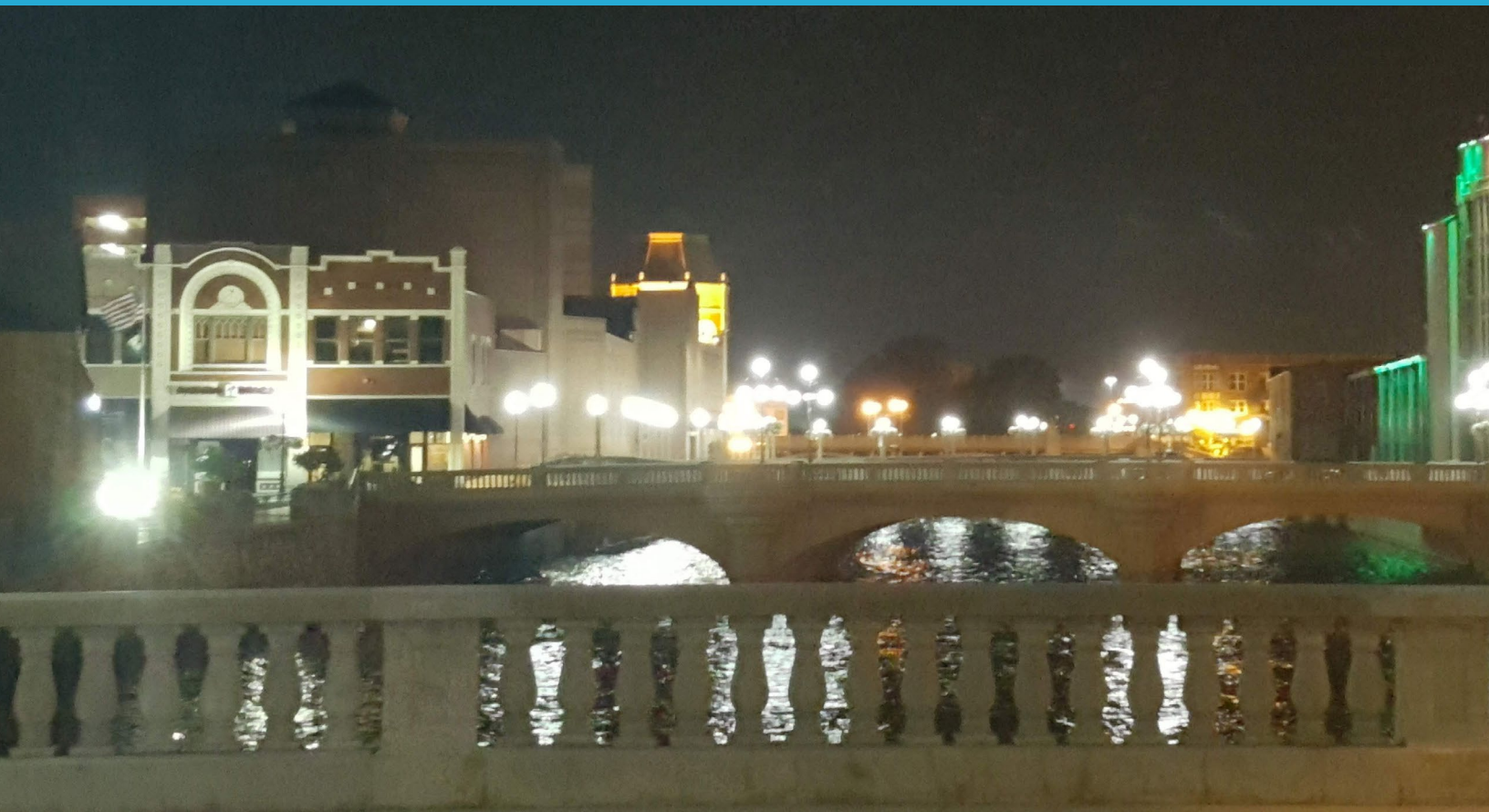
### THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Ability to understand and analyze politically complex situations. Able to exercise sound judgment when approaching and recommending solutions to complex problems and controversial issues.
- Considerable organizational skills to develop implementation plans and schedules for projects and other special assignment, assess and prioritize multiple tasks, projects and demands, manage and administer the various tasks and responsibilities of a small agency including finance, budgeting, human resources, and information technology.
- Possess a reputation for fairness in dealing with coworkers and others while ensuring the needs of the organization are accomplished.
- Management experience in creating an environment of trust, integrity, and mentorship where employees respect one another and where the organization consistently functions at a high level of customer service.
- Experience in preparing and presenting complex reports and analyses including an understanding of the principles of government budgeting, recognizing the long-term cost implications of proposed business

relationships and agreements; have familiarity with systems and metrics which measure the success and effectiveness of development proposals.

- A demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership and long-range planning practices.
- Proven verbal communication and listening skills, both one-on-one and in a public speaking venue, treating everyone in a professional and respectful manner. The ability to make effective presentations before the Invest Aurora Board and City, possess strong public relations experience, and have excellent writing skills.
- Computer literate with a demonstrated record of understanding and utilizing technology to monitor and measure departmental productivity and provide timely information to citizens.
- Experience in working and collaborating with elected officials, city boards and commissions, community groups, and the news media, other internal organizational units, and external organizations in a constructive, cooperative, and mutually supportive manner, while representing the City's interests tactfully and firmly.





## MANAGEMENT STYLE AND PERSONAL TRAITS

- Have complete personal and professional integrity, gaining respect and inspiring the trust, confidence and cooperation of co-workers, elected and appointed officials, as well as the public.
- Have a genuine passion for the City of Aurora and its residents; be devoted to customer, community, and Authority services.
- Be a visionary, one who "dreams big," helping City officials and businesses see individual projects as part of a larger, positive picture for the well-being of the entire community, while keeping an eye on the details and fiscal implications of the "big picture."
- Be creative in solving problems, encouraging and empowering employees to find new and better ways to get work done, while also applying, maintaining, and respecting the regulatory framework that guides the delivery of the Authority's services.
- Have a high energy level and enthusiasm for meeting the challenges and responsibilities of the President's position; have a strong work ethic.
- Project a professional presence in appearance, actions, and personal demeanor in representing the City, and be a person who can inspire confidence and credibility with regard to Invest Aurora programs and services.
- Be a positive and flexible team builder who both defends his/her staff when appropriate and holds the team accountable.
- Have the ability to set high standards of performance, productivity, and initiative by personnel; be comfortable in recommending and administering disciplinary actions if necessary.
- Be proactive, anticipatory, and innovative; be someone who can make difficult decisions and stand behind those decisions.
- Have an open, friendly personality and communication style and a calm demeanor; be one who can establish trust quickly with others. Have a sense of humor when appropriate to the circumstances and be able to present complex technical information to any audience in a manner that is understandable and jargon-free.
- Have the maturity and professional stature to project a strong professional and personal presence that will quickly establish credibility and gain respect within the Authority, the City, and the region as a whole.
- Be willing to keep the Board, and Mayor's office apprised of major activities and operations of the Authority in a consistent and timely manner, passing on both "good news and bad news" in a tactful, self-confident, and professional manner.



## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The anticipated starting salary range is \$140,000 - \$160,000 DOQ. A comprehensive benefits package includes health insurance including medical, dental (also available to dependents), and 401K Retirement options. The organization also offers paid vacation, holidays and sick leave.

## HOW TO APPLY

Apply online at [govhrusa.com](http://govhrusa.com) with a resume, cover letter and contact information for five professional references. The position is open until filled with first reading of applications on January 5, 2024. Confidential inquiries are encouraged and should be directed to Maureen Barry, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, at 847-380-3240, x116.

*Invest Aurora is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

