
MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

TITLE: VP, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

FLSA: EXEMPT

REPORTS TO: CHIEF INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM OFFICER (CIEO)

UPDATED: DECEMBER 2024

PAY GRADE: 8

POSITION SUMMARY

The Vice President, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, is responsible for the operational leadership and execution of programs that advance Michigan's entrepreneurial ecosystem and increase access to risk capital for startups and scaling businesses. Reporting directly to the Chief Innovation Ecosystem Officer (CIEO), this role translates strategic vision into actionable outcomes, ensuring the effective deployment of resources and alignment of initiatives with statewide economic development objectives.

This position oversees the delivery of programs supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, and may consult to the capital access team, including SSBCI and equity capital initiatives, while fostering relationships with grantees, ecosystem partners, and financial stakeholders. This position ensures measurable results by driving program performance, maintaining accountability, and building a thriving ecosystem for Michigan's entrepreneurs, innovators, and investors.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(These duties and responsibilities are judged to be "essential functions" in terms of the Americans With Disabilities Act or ADA)

- ↳ Directs and oversees the operational execution of MEDC's Entrepreneurship and Innovation team.
- ↳ Manages cross-functional teams, driving accountability, operational efficiency, and alignment with state-wide economic development objectives.
- ↳ Mentors and develops team to foster a high-performing, execution-focused culture.
- ↳ Oversees program performance, ensuring measurable outcomes and compliance with federal, state, and organizational requirements.
- ↳ Builds and nurtures relationships with key stakeholders, including senior leaders of SmartZones, incubators, accelerators, universities, and investment firms, to advance MEDC's objectives.
- ↳ Acts as a primary operational liaison for capital providers, entrepreneurs, and ecosystem partners to align resources with strategic goals.
- ↳ Leads and directs outreach and communication efforts to promote program resources and educate stakeholders about funding opportunities.
- ↳ Drives initiatives to attract and retain investment capital in Michigan, fostering collaborations with venture capital firms and angel networks.
- ↳ Executes programs to strengthen Michigan's entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a focus on addressing funding gaps and support services for early and growth-stage companies.
- ↳ Establishes metrics and reporting systems to evaluate the impact, efficiency, and transparency of programs under the VP's purview.
- ↳ Identifies opportunities to enhance program delivery, streamlining operations and adopting best practices from national and international benchmarks.
- ↳ Continuously evaluates and updates operational strategies to address emerging trends and needs within Michigan's innovation and investment ecosystems.



- ↳ Represents the MEDC at events, conferences, committees and groups to educate stakeholders on resources and programs available for early-stage high-tech businesses.
- ↳ Performs other related duties as directed.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by a person in this position. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties that may be performed by such a person.

RECOMMENDED EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATION: This position requires a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) from a four-year college or university in any related field; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

EXPERIENCE: This position requires a minimum of eight to ten years of progressive experience in technology businesses or innovation-focused roles, including at least 5 years in economic development, technology commercialization, or equivalent. Position requires experience effectively working with early-stage tech companies, demonstrating successful outcomes such as scaling, fundraising, or exits.

Preferred candidate will have strong background in stakeholder management, including government agencies, private investors, and academic institutions. Deep experience engaging with university programs in science, engineering, or business, with a strong understanding of technology transfer and commercialization processes, and experience in fostering partnerships with accelerators, incubators, and venture capital firms to drive ecosystem growth is also highly preferred.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: The position has supervisory responsibilities.

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, OR REGISTRATIONS: None required.

OTHER KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

(To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.)

REQUIRED:

1. Extensive knowledge of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including service providers, key organizations, funding mechanisms, etc.
2. Comprehensive knowledge of funding landscapes, including local angel networks and national/international venture capital ecosystems.
3. Demonstrated ability to lead cross-functional teams, drive strategic initiatives, and deliver measurable outcomes in a dynamic environment.
4. Ability to manage complex projects, align operational execution with strategic objectives, and adapt to rapidly changing industry trends.
5. Ability to analyze, assess, and direct operations for a business unit.
6. Ability to function with strong interpersonal skills and the ability to coach and guide employees.
7. Ability to lead, motivate and move corporation forward from both individual employee and overall organization perspectives.
8. Ability to function with excellent written and verbal communication skills with keen listening and negotiation skills.
9. Ability to multi-task and adapt to quickly changing environments.
10. Ability to read, analyze, and interpret complex documents.

11. Ability to respond to highly sensitive inquiries or complaints.
12. Ability to write speeches and articles using original or innovative techniques or styles.
13. Ability to make effective and persuasive speeches and presentations on controversial or complex topics to top management, public groups, and/or boards of directors.
14. Ability to apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to a wide range of intellectual and practical problems.
15. Ability to think strategically, define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
16. Ability to effectively use common business computer software such as word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software.
17. Ability to travel, with the potential of overnight stays, as required.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit, use hands to finger, handle, or feel; talk and hear. The employee is occasionally required to stand; walk; reach with hands and arms; and stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, and ability to adjust focus, especially due to concentration on a computer screen and small numbers. The job requires extensive in-state and occasional out-of-state travel.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

The qualifications listed above are guidelines for selection purposes; alternative qualifications may be substituted if sufficient to perform the duties of the job.