

Chief Innovation Officer

Overview

The Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) is a leader, a visionary, and a strategic thinker responsible for leading the organizations newly designed innovative growth department. This executive role is critical in steering Louisiana's statewide strategy to foster innovation and entrepreneurship while assisting small businesses with access to award-winning programs and services designed to accelerate and support the ultimate success of Louisiana's founders and entrepreneurs. The CIO will be instrumental in transforming Louisiana into a globally recognized hub for innovation, enhancing economic growth and creating high-value jobs across the state.

Responsibilities

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide strategy to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, a creative economy, and the growth of high-tech industries in Louisiana.
2. Create a clear definition and delineation of strategy, communications, and resources between these new focus areas and existing small business services.
3. Design and oversee programs that support high-growth startups, entrepreneurial support services, technology transfer programs, and commercialization efforts.
4. Manage all current venture capital-related programs (SSBCI, Angel Investor Tax Credit, et al.) as well as management of any equity proceeds in collaboration with the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation.
5. Build and maintain strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including state agencies, academic institutions, private sector leaders, economic development partners at the regional and local level, and entrepreneurial communities to advance the state's innovation agenda.
6. Work closely with the department to draft and recommend policies and incentives that foster an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.
7. Develop and implement a strategy for being more competitive landing federal grants aimed at innovation, entrepreneurship and the creative economy.
8. Collaborate with Higher Education partners, FastStart and training providers to develop programs that enhance the skills of Louisiana's innovative and creative workforce, ensuring alignment with the needs of a rapidly evolving economy.
9. Design and implement a new marketing strategy in order to rebrand the state's innovation efforts and attract venture capital and startups to the state.
10. Establish metrics to define success and assess the effectiveness of innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives, and adjust strategies based on data-driven insights.

Qualifications

- A Master's degree or higher in Business Administration or a relevant innovation-focused domain. A professional certification such as CPA, JD or CEcD may be substituted for the Master's degree.

- At least 10 years of leadership experience in a role focused on the intersection of innovation, economic development, & entrepreneurship.
- Must demonstrate ability to develop and execute strategies that have significantly contributed to the growth of innovation ecosystems.
- Strong network in the innovation and entrepreneurship community in Louisiana.
- Strong knowledge of venture capital investing and the local venture capital community in Louisiana.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage and influence a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with fostering innovation and entrepreneurship at a statewide level.

Preferred Selection Criteria:

- Experience working in a startup or high-tech environment
- Experience working in an innovation area within higher education

Working Conditions

- Standard office environment with regular office hours, but may require additional hours for events, meetings, and other activities.
- Frequent local travel and occasional national/international travel will be required.

Application Instructions

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter, and three professional references. Please highlight your experience and achievements in economic development and business growth strategies. Applications should be sent to Dawn.Thibodeaux@la.gov.