POSITION PROFILE

President & CEO

Council of Development Finance Agencies

Dublin, Ohio

Introduction to the Council of Development Finance Agencies

Founded in 1982, the Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA) is a national association built to strengthen the efforts of state and local development finance agencies in fostering job creation and economic growth through tax-exempt bonds and other public-private partnership finance tools. Headquartered in Dublin, Ohio, CDFA is a membership organization that has grown into one of the most respected and influential voices in the development finance industry, shaping policy, practice, and professional standards nationwide.

CDFA exists to help public agencies, financial institutions, and community partners put capital to work, turning financing tools into real projects, jobs, and economic opportunity. In the broader field of economic development organizations, CDFA has built a distinct and essential niche: it is the only national association singularly focused on the specialized world of development finance.

Underlying all of CDFA's work is a shared sense of purpose: helping communities access the capital needed for job creation, small business growth, infrastructure, and housing. CDFA places particular emphasis on extending these tools to historically underserved and disadvantaged communities, ensuring that its technical and legislative work translates into broader economic opportunity.

Advocacy

Advocacy sits at the center of CDFA's work. CDFA is the leading voice for the development finance industry in Washington, D.C., producing an annual federal policy agenda and engaging directly with Congress and federal agencies to protect and expand the tools practitioners rely on. CDFA tracks legislation, educates lawmakers, and builds the coalitions needed to defend and expand development finance mechanisms, serving as a trusted, reliable resource for the industry's legislative and regulatory interests.

Education & Training

CDFA is known as the industry's premier educator, bringing a commitment to supporting the next generation of development finance professionals. Through the CDFA Training Institute, the Development Finance Certified Professional (DFCP) program, and a full slate of courses covering bonds, tax increment financing, revolving loan funds, tax credits, and other mechanisms, CDFA delivers technical training that is not available elsewhere. This training and professional development work has become one of CDFA's most valued offerings, establishing the organization as a premier source of best-practice knowledge for development finance professionals nationwide.

Networking & Convening

CDFA also serves as a forum where development finance agencies, lenders, consultants, law firms, and other partners come together to share experiences, troubleshoot problems, and learn from peers facing similar challenges. Through its National Development Finance Summit, state financing roundtables, and year-round programming, CDFA has built a professional community around development finance that exists at this scale nowhere else in the industry.

Research & Resources

CDFA's online resource database, state financing program directory, and topic-specific resource centers provide a steady, trusted source of current information on financing tools, policy developments, and emerging practices.

Advisory Services

CDFA also provides direct technical assistance and advisory work, including support for grant administration and consulting services that help communities and agencies design and strengthen their own development finance programs.

Quick Facts

- Annual Budget: $2.1M
- Total Staff: 14
- Direct Reports: 4
- Member Organizations: 436
- Work mode: Hybrid, with in-person expectation at CDFA's headquarters in Dublin, Ohio

The Opportunity

The Council of Development Finance Agencies seeks an experienced, visionary leader to succeed a longtime executive and guide the association's continued growth and impact.

In partnership with a mission-driven Board of Directors who deeply value CDFA's legacy and historic contributions, the incoming President & CEO will direct the association's efforts to engage, convene, and educate its membership. The role also carries responsibility for advocating at the federal level to preserve and expand access to the development finance mechanisms the industry relies on.

This is an exciting and dynamic moment for CDFA. After more than two decades of stable executive leadership, CDFA enjoys an exemplary reputation among its members and across the development finance field, and the organization benefits from a strong financial position.

At the same time, CDFA is navigating a shifting federal landscape and is approaching the end of its current strategic plan. Developing a new plan and charting CDFA's next chapter will be an immediate priority for the incoming leader, one that must be balanced with providing reassurance and stability for the internal team during a period of transition.

The ideal candidate will be a seasoned and strategic leader of high-performing teams, with a solid understanding of nonprofit operations and governance and fluency in the development finance mechanisms most relevant to CDFA's membership. Deep subject-matter expertise is not essential. What matters most is the ability to identify and engage subject-matter experts to support CDFA's educational and advocacy initiatives, and to speak credibly and confidently with both legislators and members.

Shifts in federal funding for local and state development finance offices are creating a significant opportunity to support economic development work in different ways. This moment represents an extraordinary opportunity for CDFA to serve as a trusted resource to its membership in navigating this changing terrain, advancing the association's mission while expanding its membership and increasing its revenue in the process. With a solid organizational foundation to build upon, this opportunity requires a President & CEO with the ability to cast a strong vision while also being entrepreneurial.

Key Position Functions

Vision and Strategy

- Develop and convey a compelling vision for CDFA's future. In partnership with the Board of Directors and in consultation with the staff, translate that vision into a strategic plan that will guide the organization's growth and continued impact.
- Establish clear goals and measurable KPIs tied to the strategic plan, and hold the organization accountable to them over time.
- Ensure CDFA's educational offerings, programming, and services remain closely aligned with what members and the broader market actually want and need, adjusting proactively as the field evolves.

Leadership and Governance

- Serve as a trusted partner to the Board of Directors, build strong relationships with board members, genuinely listen to their ideas, and help them better understand and fulfill their governance roles.
- Lead, recruit, and retain a high-performing staff team, cultivating morale, enthusiasm, and a strong sense of shared purpose across the organization.
- Delegate administrative and operational responsibilities appropriately, freeing senior leadership capacity for strategic priorities.
- Foster an internal work culture that reflects CDFA's values and sustains staff engagement and retention.

External Representation and Advocacy

- Represent CDFA externally with gravitas, serving as the face and voice of the organization to members, policymakers, industry partners, funders, and the public.
- Serve as a subject-matter expert on development finance issues and tools, lending credibility to CDFA's advocacy and thought leadership.
- Maintain CDFA's leadership position in federal policy and advocacy efforts, engaging directly with Congress and federal agencies to protect and advance the development finance tools the industry depends on.
- Maintain and expand the coalitions essential to CDFA's representation and advocacy, making full use of the combined voices needed to be heard and effect change.

Delivery of Programming and Effective Membership Engagement

- Inspire the confidence of the membership through visible, credible leadership and consistent follow-through.
- Ensure an engaged, active, and growing membership base that clearly understands and values what CDFA membership provides.
- Strengthen the professional community CDFA has built through its national convenings, trainings, and networking opportunities, ensuring members continue to see CDFA as the premier gathering point for the development finance field.

Finance and Revenue Generation

- Identify and pursue new pathways for both earned and contributed revenue, increasing revenue diversity and strengthening the organization's long-term financial sustainability.
- Maintain awareness of the market and proactively leverage opportunities to increase market share, expand programs, or launch new offerings that meet emerging member and industry needs.
- Oversee the overall financial health of the organization, ensuring resources are aligned with strategic priorities and organizational goals.

Qualifications

Competencies and Attributes for Success in the Position

- Strategic vision and planning
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- External representation and executive presence
- Government and policy relations
- Board governance and partnership
- Member and stakeholder engagement
- People leadership and team building
- Business and financial acumen
- Subject-matter credibility

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Proven financial management and budgeting experience
- Proven understanding of the development finance sector
- Willingness to represent CDFA at the federal level and advocate for policies that support the interests of the membership
- Proven experience working with or serving on boards and an understanding of nonprofit governance
- Demonstrated ability leading high-performing teams
- Ability to travel nationally to engage and convene members; frequent travel to Washington, D.C., for advocacy efforts is expected
- Ability to maintain frequent in-person presence at the CDFA office in Dublin, Ohio

Desired Qualifications

- Subject-matter expertise in development finance
- Staff leadership experience in membership organizations

- Fundraising experience
- Proven experience with nonprofit strategic planning and implementation
- An existing network of funders, partners, and/or development finance experts that can be leveraged to advance the work of CDFA

Compensation

CDFA is pleased to offer a competitive base compensation and benefits package for this role. Projected base compensation is $235,000–$265,000, commensurate with experience.

Preference is for a candidate to be based in CDFA's current Dublin, Ohio, office; however, the board is open to considering hybrid work options. Relocation assistance will be provided for candidates outside the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area.

Application Process

Benefactor Group is pleased to be assisting CDFA with this executive search. All applications are considered highly confidential. To be considered for this position, please submit a resume at the link below. In the application, you will also be asked to briefly describe your interest in the role.

To apply, please visit: https://bit.ly/CDFA-CEOapp.

To learn more about CDFA, please visit https://www.cdfa.net/.

Please do not contact CDFA staff or board with questions or interest in the role. All inquiries about the position should be directed to Benefactor Group.

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