

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM FOR
RECRUITING SERVICES FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Bi-State Regional Commission (BSRC)

1504 Third Avenue

Rock Island, Illinois 61201

May 28, 2026

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR RECRUITING SERVICES FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
BISTATE REGIONAL COMMISSION (BSRC)
DUE DATE: June 8, 2026 AT 4:00 P.M. CST**

I. EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM

The BSRC invites qualified executive search firms and consultants to submit a written proposal to conduct an executive recruitment campaign for the position of Executive Director.

The BSRC will not reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals or responding to questions in response to this request. The final award will be based on best overall value when taking into consideration the firms' competence in the area of executive recruitment. The BSRC shall consider the entire proposal for, but not limited to, proposal completeness, ability to meet requested service needs, experience in conducting executive search and recruitment, expertise and availability of key personnel, cost to the BSRC, and satisfaction of other clients.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The executive search firm should specialize in recruitment for executive and senior-level management positions in local government or similar institutions. To be eligible for consideration, the proposing firm must demonstrate that it, or the principal(s) assigned to the project, has successfully completed similar services to those specified in the Scope of Work section of this RFP, with institutions similar in size and complexity to the BSRC.

The successful proposer will work directly with the appointed Advisory Group for Executive Director Search (Advisory Group) and the BSRC Finance and Administrative Services Director for all activities involved with this project. The successful proposer may be responsible for the following activities including, but not limited to: reviewing and providing suggestions for the existing position description; marketing, advertising and announcing the position; screening applicants and conducting candidate assessments and initial candidate interviews; providing report(s) on the candidate assessments and recommending the most qualified candidates for interviews with the Advisory Group; coordinating the candidate interviews; and arranging and/or performing appropriate background investigations.

For consideration, proposals must contain evidence of the proposer's experience and abilities in executive recruiting directly related to the proposed services for local governments, intergovernmental organizations, or similar institutions. All proposers shall provide profiles and resumes of the staff to be assigned to the project. Proposals will be evaluated by the Advisory Group and will be ranked in accordance with the following criteria:

- Completeness and quality of response
- Ability to meet requested service needs within requested timeline
- Experience with local government or similar institution executive recruiting
- Expertise and availability of key personnel
- Total proposed cost
- Satisfaction of other clients

III. BACKGROUND

ORGANIZATION

The Bi-State Region includes Muscatine and Scott Counties in Iowa and Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island Counties in Illinois. The region includes the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area (Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island Counties, Illinois and Scott County, Iowa) with a combined population of 384,324 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020), as well as Muscatine County, Iowa, which has been designated as a Micropolitan Statistical Area.

Due to provisions of the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act and in response to federal and local encouragement to coordinate planning across state lines, the decision was made to form the Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission in 1966. This involved merging the existing the Rock Island County Regional Planning Commission and the Scott County Metropolitan Planning Commission into one commission that would represent the interests of the entire Bi-State area. The Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission was legalized by virtue of the powers granted to them by Chapter 34, Section 3001-3005, Chapter 84, Section 1021, and Chapter 127, Section 721-728, Illinois Revised Statutes, and Chapters 28E and 473A of the Code of Iowa.

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated the Bi-State Region as an Economic Development District in 1980. The Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission officially changed its name to Bi-State Regional Commission in November 1990. The Commission currently serves 53 voluntary dues paying member governments. The five-county Bi-State Region population is 427,559 according to the 2020 Census. In 2026, Bi-State Regional Commission will celebrate its 60th anniversary as an organization. For more information on the organizational set up and BSRC see www.bistateonline.org

POSITION

The Bi-State Regional Commission (BSRC) is seeking applications from qualified candidates interested in leading a professional regional governmental organization in eastern Iowa as its next Executive Director. The current Executive Director will be retiring after serving in the position for over 25 years and is the fourth Executive Director to serve in the 60-year history of the Commission. The Commission appoints the Executive Director, who serves as the organization's chief executive officer and is responsible for managing the organization's day-to-day affairs. The following is a list of some of the more significant duties and responsibilities of overseeing and participating in service provided by the BSRC including Community and Economic Development, Regional and Metropolitan Transportation Planning, and GIS Mapping Services, Intergovernmental Programs, and Administrative Services.

SELECTION ADVISORY GROUP

The Bi-State Regional Commission has formed an Advisory Group for Executive Director Search (Advisory Group) which includes Commission officers, the Chair of the Finance and Personnel

Committee, a member of the Commission Executive Committee, and two seasoned local government administrators from the Bi-State Region. The Advisory Group geographically represents all member counties of Bi-State and does not constitute a quorum of any Bi-State Committees or the Bi-State Regional Commission. Advisory Group meetings may be held remotely or in person and will not be public meetings. Final interviews will be in person. The Bi-State Finance and Administrative Services Director, Jill Henderson, will provide staff support to the selected firm. The successful proposer will work directly with the appointed Advisory Group and appropriate staff member(s) for all activities involved with this project.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

Please note that a hybrid approach to the proposed scope that reduces expenditures may be submitted/suggested by the proposing firm. The executive search scope includes:

- Review and suggest updates to the existing job description
- Review and suggest updates to the draft candidate profile
- Conduct introductory meeting, in person or virtually, with the Advisory Group to understand individual goals and objectives in the hiring process
- Develop a recruitment marketing strategy including recommending appropriate advertisements that will attract a diverse applicant pool. Posting the position through local, regional, and national channels, professional journals, and publications including posting with the National Association of Regional Councils, the National Association of Development Organization, the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the Illinois Association of Regional Councils, the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments, of which BSRC is a member therefore there would be no cost to the search firm.
- Carry out the recruitment process with the feedback of the Advisory Group
- Review and suggest updates to the draft list of interview questions
- Receive and review resumes of applicants, determining which candidates meet minimum qualifications
- Conduct follow up telephone/electronic interviews with promising applicant's to verify qualifications and experience
- Screen all applications and create a recommended candidate list, with a written summary, of 6-8 candidates, based on qualifications and further identifying the top 3 - 5 candidates for serious consideration and interviews with Advisory Group feedback
- Conduct in-depth reference checks with the top 3-5 individuals to evaluate past job performance, educational background, employment record, criminal history, financial background, and any other pertinent factors
- Coordinate the selected candidates' schedules and participation in the interviews and facilitate the in person interviews with the Advisory Group
- Debrief the Advisory Group following each candidate interview and identifying additional candidates to interview if necessary
- Assist the Advisory Group with compensation negotiations in accord with the BSRC budget

- Notify applicants who are not selected

All candidate applications will be made available to the Advisory Group, if requested, in conjunction with the finalization of a recommended ranked candidate list.

V. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The BSRC intends to select one firm to provide this service but reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without explanation. The selected firm must execute a written signed agreement with the BSRC as soon as requested by the BSRC. The BSRC reserves the right to enter into an agreement with the next most qualified firm if necessary. The BSRC reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and investigate the ability of the executive search firm to meet the required needs. The BSRC reserves the right to waive all or some of the requirements for this proposal and consider a hybrid approach.

VI. NON-DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

Responders to this Request for Proposals (RFP) are required to include a statement that the firm will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, sex, race, creed, national origin, or disability.

VI. SCHEDULE (may be adjusted if justified and necessary)

May 28, 2026 - RFP Issued

June 8, 2026 - Proposals due

June 12, 2026 - Selected firm notified

June 15, 2026 - Preferred date for contract execution

Week of June 15, 2026 - Introductory meeting held with Advisory Group

June 29, 2026 (or earlier) - Posting and dissemination of job announcement

July 29, 2026 (or earlier) - Due date for applications

July 30 - September 4, 2026 - Applications assessed, in person interviews with the Advisory Group completed, successful applicant determined, background checks completed

September 16, 2026 - Advisory Group recommendation to Executive Committee

September 23, 2026 - Executive Committee recommendation to BSRC

November 1, 2026 - Preferable start date for new Executive Director (allows 3 month overlap with existing Executive Director if needed)

Ongoing communications and meetings as needed will occur with the Advisory Group.

VII. FORMAT AND CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal should include:

a. Cover letter. Please include the RFP subject, name of firm, address, contact person with all applicable contact information, and date of preparation.

b. Qualifications. Describe the background, experience and capabilities of your firm as it relates to the Scope of Work outlined above. Highlight any successful placements in other local government organizations during the last five years.

c. Scope of Services. Provide a scope of services and a proposed outline of tasks, products

and schedules responding to the requirements above. Also, identify the extent of staff involvement deemed necessary, including key decision points at each stage of the project and the involvement with the Advisory Group.

d. Draft Contract with Costs. Provide a draft contract with a cost proposal for the outlined scope of services including salaries, fees, expenses with advertising expenses, reimbursable costs, and any other anticipated costs with a cost not to exceed. A progress billing at June 30, 2026 for a portion of the total project costs should be including in the draft contract. Standard federal assurances may be provided by the BSRC as required.

e. Staff. Provide the name, title, background and experience of the primary consultant for this project. Identify all staff, amount of effort and provide resume of personnel who would be assigned to work directly or indirectly on this search.

f. References. Provide a list of at least three clients the firm has contracted with in the past three years who can verify your firm's ability to provide the scope of services requested preferably in Iowa or Illinois. Provide name, title, email and phone number for each reference. Provide a list of current clients who are receiving services like those requested in this RFP with a brief description of the work.

g. Performance Guarantee. If your firm offers a performance guarantee, describe the terms and conditions under which the guarantee applies.

h. Additional Services. The selected firm is welcome to outline additional services or alternative approaches that it feels are in the best interest of the BSRC.

VIII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals for the professional services outlined in the RFP are to be submitted via email to Jill Henderson jhenderson@bistateonline.org by 4:00 p.m. June 8, 2026. Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered. Firms responding to this request are encouraged to carefully check them for conformance to the requirements stated above. Responses that do not meet ALL of these requirements or are submitted to any email address other than shown above may be disqualified at the sole discretion of BSRC.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Jill Henderson jhenderson@bistateonline.org and must be submitted electronically and only to the contact above. **Questions must be submitted no later than 12:00 PM on Wednesday June 3, 2026.** All questions and answers will be placed on the BSRC website at www.bistateonline.org on June 4, 2026.

IX. TITLE VI ASSURANCE

The Bi-State Regional Commission, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for and award.