



PURCHASING AUTHORITY
Town of New Milford, Connecticut

Recruiting Firm RFP

The Town of New Milford is requesting proposals from qualified recruiting firms to conduct an executive search for an Economic Development Director.

Proposals are due no later than 3 p.m., Thursday, October 18, 2018. Proposals received after that time will be considered informal and rejected. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all submissions.

The proposal package may be obtained online at www.newmilford.org. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all submissions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a vertical stroke, positioned above a horizontal line.

Pete Bass, Mayor
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Town of New Milford RFP

Executive Search for the position of Economic Development Director

Introduction

The Town of New Milford ("Town"), pursuant to the Town Charter, requests proposals by qualified executive search firms and consultants to conduct an executive recruitment campaign for the position of Economic Development Director.

Evaluation will be based on:

- Proposal completeness,
- Ability to meet the requested service needs,
- Experience and demonstrated track record in conducting executive search, recruitment, placement, and retention in other municipalities, state, or other similar non-profit entities,
- Expertise and availability of key personnel,
- Consulting fees, expenses, and guarantees,
- Satisfaction of other clients,
- Guarantee of placement retention
- Ability to successfully complete the search in a timely manner.

Upon acceptance of a responsive Proposal, the contemplated transaction would be contingent on (a) negotiation and fee agreement, and (b) approval of the Agreement and conveyance by the New Milford Town Council.

Proposals must be responsive to Town's request. The Town shall determine the most responsive and responsible consultant providing the best service at the most reasonable cost. Cost alone shall not be the determinative factor. The Town reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, either in whole or in part, with or without cause, waive any informality of any proposals, cancel this request for proposals, and to make the award in the best interest of the Town, subject to and contingent upon Town Council approval and the other approvals noted above.

Eligibility

The executive search firm shall specialize in recruitment for executive level Economic Development Director positions for municipalities, state, or other non-profit entities. To be eligible for consideration, the proposing firm must demonstrate that it, or the principals(s) assigned to the project, has successfully completed similar services to those specified in the Scope of Work as defined below, with institutions similar in size and complexity to the Town of New Milford.

The successful firm will work directly with the Mayor, select members of the Town Council and Economic Development Corporation, and all other associates for all activities involved with this project. The successful firm may be responsible for the following activities including, but not limited to: assisting with the development of the position profile, development of the search strategy, marketing, advertising and announcements, testing and screening of applicants, candidate assessment, conducting candidate interviews, providing report(s) of candidate assessment, and recommending the most qualified candidates for interview opportunities.

For consideration, proposals must detail the firm's experience and abilities in the specified area and other disciplines directly related to the proposed services. Profiles and resumes of project staff must be included.

Background

New Milford is located on the banks of the Housatonic River in picturesque Litchfield County, twelve miles north of major interstate transportation corridor I-84; 55 miles from Hartford, CT; 75 miles from Springfield, MA; and 75 miles from New York City. The town encompasses 64 square miles and has a population of just under 30,000 residents.

New Milford is connected to Interstate I-84 via Route 7 on the south and into Massachusetts to the north. This transportation corridor has shaped New Milford's most accessible industrial and commercial areas, boasting seven different commercial and industrial zones totaling just over 3,000 acres. The town recognizes that businesses, large and small, are the primary engine of its economy. Both industrial and commercial real estate are more affordable than neighboring communities and a relative bargain compared to lower Fairfield and Westchester counties. To facilitate and ensure a growing and robust business sector, processes for businesses interested in coming to or expanding in New Milford are being streamlined and redesigned to be competitive with neighboring towns and states. The workforce is educated with diverse skill sets and advanced problem-solving skills. Wages are lower than the average for Connecticut and also lower than the neighboring communities of Danbury, New Fairfield, and Westchester County. New Milford's government and town departments welcome the challenge of accommodating new development while at the same time preserving, redeveloping or revitalizing residential, industrial or retail districts which may need to be repositioned given access needs and changing markets. For example, proximity to New York City makes New Milford an ideal location for the required backup datacenters of the financial services market.

The Town of New Milford is poised for transformative growth, with consensus support for economic development from residents, elected officials, and key stakeholders. The town is seeking an experienced Economic Development Director with a proven track record to bring jobs and capital investment into the community. Candidates should have extensive business and site selector contacts, demonstrated experience with federal and state economic development funding programs, and be a documented deal-maker and self-starter. The primary focus of this highly visible position will be to bring new industries and businesses to New Milford resulting in net job creation and increased tax base. Preference will be given to those with clean and green industry contacts and proven track record.

The Economic Development Director will be responsible for developing, organizing, and implementing economic development strategies for New Milford to promote the growth and development of the

town's economic base, vigorously seeking out and bringing new businesses and creating jobs, while retaining and expanding existing businesses and jobs. The Director will promote New Milford to targeted industries and site selection consultants and be the lead contact and driver for economic development activities.

This position reports to the Mayor, works with the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, and interfaces with the Economic Development Commission, Town Council as well as other land use committees, commissions, and developers.

Scope of Work

The executive search firm shall meet with the Mayor, Search Committee and other stakeholders upon execution of a contract with the Town. The firm will:

- Review the existing job description
- Develop a candidate profile
- Develop a recruitment strategy
- Carry out the recruitment process
- Screen all applications and create a recommended candidate list
- Design and finalize the interview process, prepare interview questions for the committee's consideration, suggest panel make-up, and other associated tasks.
- Facilitate the interview process
- Perform appropriate background and reference checks
- Negotiate offer for hire with candidate(s) upon request

The Search Committee will have complete and final authority over the interview process and the development of the interview questions. All candidate applications will be made available to this committee prior to the finalization of a candidate list.

The search firm will:

- Proactively recruit this position via existing national and local networks contacts with relevant background and experience as the primary means of outreach
- Post the position through the appropriate networks and publications
- Receive and review resumes of applicants, determine that candidates meet the qualifications, and screen candidates via skype or telephone interviews to clarify qualifications and experience.
- Prepare and present a written summary of at least eight candidates with the most promising qualifications and experiences to the Search Committee.
- Ascertain the strengths and personal dimensions of each candidate and report to the Search Committee
- Assist the Search Committee in evaluating these candidates and further identifying the top four to five candidates for serious consideration and interviews.
- Conduct in-depth reference and background checks with individuals to evaluate candidates' past job performance, criminal history, financial, employment and educational background, and any other pertinent factors.

- Advise the Search Committee of additional areas, services, or important steps that are not listed above.

The search firm will also:

- Coordinate the candidates' schedule and participation in the interviews.
- Debrief the Search Committee following each candidate interview and identify additional candidates if necessary
- Notify applicants not selected.
- Assist the Search Committee with compensation, benefits, and relocation negotiations.
- Guarantee placement for twelve months: If the hired candidate resigns or is terminated, for any reason, during the first twelve (12) months of employment, the search firm will conduct a new search on the same terms as the original search at no additional cost.

Terms and Conditions

The Town intends to select one firm to provide this service but reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without explanation. If the selected firm does not execute a written signed agreement with the Town within a reasonable amount of time, the Town reserves the right to enter into an agreement with the next most qualified firm. The Town reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and investigate the ability of the executive search firm to meet the required needs. The Town reserves the right to waive all requirements for this proposal.

Format and Contents of Proposal

The proposal shall include:

- **Cover letter:** Transmittal letter should reflect the RFP subject, name of firm, address, contact person with all applicable contact information, and date of preparation.
- **Qualifications:** Describe the background, experience and capabilities of your firm as it relates to the Scope of Work outlined above. Highlight successful placements in other municipalities or government agencies during the past five years.
- **Scope of Services:** Provide a scope of services and a proposed outline of tasks, products and schedules. Also, identify the extent of Town personnel involvement deemed necessary, including key decision points at each stage of the project. Major proposed deviations from the desired scope of services outlined above should be clearly noted and justified.
- **Cost:** Provide cost proposal for scope of services including fixed costs, fees, expenses (including anticipated advertising expenses), reimbursable costs, and any other anticipated costs. The proposal must be a firm offer for a ninety (90) day period.
- **Timeline:** A detailed timeline for completion of each phase and total project.
- **Consulting staff:** Provide the name, title, background and experience of the primary consultant for this project. Identify all staff who will be assigned to work directly or indirectly on this search and throughout the project.
- **Subcontractors:** Identify all subcontractors that will be utilized for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate (1) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and (2) What percentage of the overall scope of work subcontractor will perform.

- **Insurance:** The selected firm will be required to submit evidence of and comply with all insurance requirements deemed necessary by the Town.
- **References:** Provide a list of at least three clients the firm has contracted with in the past two years who can verify your firm's ability to provide the scope of services requested. Provide name, title and complete contact information 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.
- **Performance Guarantee:** If your firm offers a performance guarantee, describe the terms and conditions under which the guarantee applies.

Proposal Submission

Deadline for submission is October 18, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Please submit an original and 4 copies of your proposal to:

Town of New Milford Purchasing Department
10 Main Street
New Milford, CT 06776

Mark the outside of the sealed envelope "RFP for Executive Search for an EDD".

In addition please include one electronic copy of the proposal via CD or USB.

Opportunity Profile

Economic Development Director

Town of New Milford New Milford, Connecticut

September 2018

Town of New Milford

New Milford is located on the banks of the Housatonic River in picturesque Litchfield County, a few miles north of major interstate transportation corridor I-84, 55 miles from Hartford, CT; 75 miles from Springfield, MA; and 75 miles from New York City. The town encompasses 65 square miles and has a population of just under 30,000 residents.

New Milford's downtown has a distinct New England feel with historic buildings, unique small businesses and the locally owned and operated Bank Street Theater. Adjacent to this area is the beautiful Village Green, which was established in 1707 and where a variety of community events take place including Village Fair Days, weekly summer music concerts ranging from jazz to country, and the Halloween Trunk or Treat, to name a few.

A short distance from the downtown flows the Housatonic River. The town has recently appointed a Riverfront Revitalization Committee whose charter is to utilize the river as a means to enhance New Milford's quality of life and bring economic benefits that other communities have realized from connecting their downtown areas to a riverfront. Under the leadership former Mayor Liba Furhman, the committee has recently been awarded a BAR grant of just under \$200,000 and is exploring opportunities for investment.

New Milford has a strong environmental stewardship presence and focus which has resulted in 9,500 acres of open space, numerous community and state parks, recreational facilities, and a growing system of bikeways and trails. An engineering feasibility study and preliminary design has just been completed for a 13 mile Bike and River Trail connecting New Milford to Brookfield to the south and Kent to the north. This trail system is additive to the work of the Riverfront Revitalization committee as it not only provides additional recreational opportunities but also an economic driver component via the access through and around the riverfront and downtown areas. Candlewood Lake, Connecticut's largest manmade lake, was built in 1926 by Connecticut Power & Light to produce electricity for the region and New Milford residents enjoy direct access via both town and residential beaches. Lynn Deming Park, the town's waterfront beach area and marina on Candlewood Lake, has just undergone a \$1,200,000 improvement project.

This unique quality of life has made New Milford a haven for caring, friendly residents, artists, musicians, and summering families seeking refuge from the New York City throughout its history. It has a highly rated educational system with upgraded buildings and beautiful athletic turf fields.

And New Milford provides a myriad of housing choices, including kid-friendly suburban neighborhoods, converted historic buildings, and active adult communities; housing prices in New Milford are lower than the neighboring communities and significantly lower than lower Fairfield and Westchester Counties, while not forsaking charm and good taste. Here you will find unsurpassed quality of life with New England small-town friendliness and charm.

But make no mistake, New Milford isn't just another sleepy New England town relying solely on tourism as its only economic driver. Route 7 connects New Milford to Danbury and Interstate I-84 on the south and into Massachusetts to the north. This transportation corridor has shaped New Milford's most accessible industrial and commercial areas, boasting 7 different commercial and industrial zones totaling just over 3,000 acres. The town recognizes that businesses, large and small, are the primary engine of its economy. Both industrial and commercial real estate are more affordable than neighboring communities and a bargain compared to lower Fairfield and Westchester Counties. To facilitate and ensure a growing and robust business sector, processes for businesses interested in coming to or expanding in New Milford are being streamlined and redesigned to be competitive with neighboring towns and states. The workforce is educated with diverse skill sets and advanced problem-solving skills. Wages are lower than the average for Connecticut and also lower than the neighboring communities of Danbury, New Fairfield, and Westchester County. New Milford's government and town departments welcome the challenge of accommodating new development while at the same time preserving, redeveloping or revitalizing residential, industrial or retail districts which may need to be repositioned given access needs and changing markets. For example, proximity to New York City makes New Milford an ideal location for the required backup datacenters of the financial services market.

New Milford has a good base of existing manufacturers and service companies: Kimberly Clark's northeastern hub, located on Pickett District Road, services New York City and Boston and is in the process of securing corporate approvals for a multi-million dollar expansion. Engineering and manufacturing company Neeltran is outgrowing its existing footprint and has just received Zoning approvals for expansion. FirstLight and Eversource, two of New Milford's largest commercial taxpayers, are a constant presence with their Rocky River hydroelectric power generation station and distribution systems, supplying power to northeast grid. Ameico, a relative newcomer to New Milford, is a wholesale distributor and seller of European-designed home furnishing, jewelry and other high end items. These are just a few of the companies that are present and strong in New Milford.

Creativity and innovation are two of the hallmarks of New Milford, making it an ideal place for business startups or expansion. A co-working space concept called The Makery not only serves as a brainstorming hub for would-be entrepreneurs, but also hosts a variety of workshops and events to help small business owners and startups. This concept has proven extremely popular and speaks to the town's educated and diverse work force.

Government Organization

New Milford operates under the New England style of government with a Mayor and a nine member Town Council. Elections are held every two years and the Town Council serves as the legislative body of the municipality. The current Mayor and Town Council were elected in 2017.

Planning and Economic Development

Resources for economic development include various Boards, Commissions, and Committees:

- Department Services Team
- Downtown Business Alliance
- Economic Development Commission
- Economic Development Corporation
- Farmland Preservation Committee
- Grant Writer
- Inland/Wetlands
- Riverfront Revitalization Committee
- Zoning and Zoning Enforcement
- Zoning Board of Appeals

The Department Services Team, reinvigorated and recently enhanced by the current Mayor, Pete Bass, has streamlined processes resulting in time saving of 20-40% from the time a prospective new business expresses interest in New Milford to final approval. Key representatives from the various commissions and committees meet on a weekly basis, sometimes with prospective developers, applicants, or their agents, coordinating the application review process among the municipal departments and serving as the liaison between the department reviews and the applicants.

The Economic Development Corporation has recently been re-adopted and restructured, chaired by an experienced former economic development director, Alexander “Oley” Carpp. The Corporation offers businesses access to micro lending and mezzanine financing, as well as façade improvement grants and loans inside the downtown business zone.

Major Projects under Consideration

Currently there are four major projects under study and consideration, aimed at further improving quality of life as well as bringing economic benefits to New Milford.

A multimillion dollar **Library modernization project** was kicked off in January of 2014 and the presentation of blueprints is anticipated to happen at the August Town Council meeting. The modernization project is the culmination of thousands of volunteer hours, community surveys and focus groups. Plans include modern new spaces for children, teens, and adults, new meeting spaces and a dedicated study space as well as updated staff areas.

The **Riverfront Revitalization Committee (RRC)** was chartered in early 2017 to produce ideas and a plan to leverage the town’s access to the Housatonic River in ways that would enhance the quality of life for residents, attract business and entrepreneurial investment and offer amenities to attract new residents and visitors. Through its outstanding work, the RRC was one of five projects in the state of Connecticut to be awarded a BAR grant in the amount of \$170,000. With this money, the RRC intends to champion a “bridge to bridge” master plan which clarifies development, incorporates the town owned brownfield remediation site known as Century

Enterprise Center, dovetails into the Bike and River Trail design, and connects the Village Green to the Housatonic River.

The Bike and River Trail (BRT) was first conceived in July 2014. But the catalyst for getting New Milford's BRT efforts off the ground was the completion of the Still River Greenway in neighboring Brookfield, CT in 2016. The success and popularity of the 2.25 mile greenway served as inspiration to create a committee that same year to determine the design and feasibility of an ambitious "Brookfield to Kent" connector. Preliminary designs have been created and proposed and finalization is underway, including obtaining easements and permissions across private properties.

Community Center

In 2015 the closure of an aging elementary school due to declining enrollment started a controversy of what the best use might be of this 15 acre town-owned property known as John Pettibone School. These discussions led to a broader question of whether or not New Milford residents want a community center. As a result, a 25 person bipartisan committee was appointed in spring of 2018 to determine, regardless of location, whether residents want a community center and if so, what would it include, where should it be, and how would it be funded. The committee is currently in the process of gathering preliminary market data on these questions.

Other Resources

The current Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted in 2010 and will be revised in the coming 12 months. It is a policy guide for the Town's boards and commissions and contains the community's aspirations, goals, and recommended actions to achieve those goals. The revision will incorporate special studies, functional plans and other strategic planning components that have been pursued or are being pursued across the various committees. For the current POCD follow this link:

http://www.newmilford.org/filestorage/3088/5827/2010_POCD.pdf

The Town has recently added a Grant Writer position, focused on obtaining new and competing grants as well as maintaining compliance with existing grant awards. This position is responsible for researching and applying for state and federal grants related to all Town matters, including grants for parking lot and sidewalk improvements, brownfield site assessments, open space and land acquisition, capital infrastructure improvements, STEAP grants, and TIGER/state road projects. Hired in early spring of 2018, this position has already applied for over \$2,000,000 of grants and New Milford has been awarded \$470,000.

Economic Development Director

The Town of New Milford is poised for transformative growth, with consensus support for economic development from residents, elected officials, and key stakeholders. The town is seeking an experienced economic developer with a proven track record to bring jobs and capital investment into the community. Candidates should have extensive business and site selector contacts, demonstrated experience with federal and state economic development funding

programs, and be a documented deal-maker and self-starter. The primary focus of this highly visible position will be to bring new industries and businesses to New Milford resulting in net job creation.

The Economic Development Director will be responsible for developing, organizing, and implementing economic development strategies for New Milford to promote the growth and development of the town's economic base, vigorously seeking out and bringing new businesses and creating jobs, while retaining and expanding existing businesses and jobs. The Director will promote New Milford to targeted industries and site selection consultants and be the lead contact and driver for economic development activities. This position reports to the Mayor, works with the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, and has considerable interfaces with the Economic Development Committee, Town Council as well as other land use committees, commissions, and developers.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan, identifying high value industries that provide a good fit to town's existing workforce and attract new families and job talents.
- Attract new business to the Town, resulting in net job creation and growing capital investment.
- Partner with the Western Connecticut Council of Government, the Connecticut Department of Commerce and other federal, state, and local organizations to promote economic development and position the town as the preferred location for business and talent.
- Develop and maintain relationships with regional leaders at all levels, including counties, municipalities, colleges/universities, real estate professionals, financial institutions, and other allied organizations.
- Work with the Chairman of the Economic Development Corporation (EDCorp) to identify funding sources for new business ventures,
- Propose and implement initiatives and programs identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan, with an emphasis on business attraction and retention, brownfield redevelopment, and entrepreneurial enhancement.
- Promote and solicit venture investments in Town.
- Facilitate quick evaluation and approvals for new businesses.
- Present prospects and status reports to the Mayor and Town Council as well as other reports/presentations to town officials, committees and commissions, economic development interest groups and the general public to negotiate agreements, communicate needs of multiple parties, development programmatic activities, explain projects, proposals, and recommendations.
- Represent the Town at local, state, and/or national economic meetings and/or forums.

Knowledge, Skills and Ability

- Demonstrated existing relationships with site selectors.
- Understanding of key growth industries and companies; has contacts in key areas and is familiar with or has knowledge of which companies are expanding and potentially moving in the next five to ten years.
- Demonstrated experience in selling communities with a suburban setting as a destination for mid through large sized corporations.
- Proven ability to conduct research, with data mining and associated analytical and problem solving skills.
- Demonstrated initiative and ability to work independently; with a superior sense of urgency.
- Demonstrated successful experience in strategic planning, goal and metrics establishment. Proven track record of timely and accurate execution.
- Demonstrated ability to identify needs, develop and initiate market research and community studies.
- Demonstrated ability to identify, analyze, develop and design tax incentives to maximize community investment while increasing tax revenues and the grand list.
- Demonstrated effectiveness as an inspirational community representative with strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Proven track record of networking and collaborating with C suite executives, Business Development and Economic Development Directors nationally, as well as State and Federal OPM personnel.
- Demonstrated proficiency in GIS technology to identify ideal site locations for prospective new businesses or expanding existing businesses.

Education and Experience

Bachelor's Degree in Business/Public Administration, Economics, Marketing, Finance, Urban Planning, Commercial Real Estate, or a closely related field from an accredited college or university required. Minimum 10 years of business development experience, including five years in a highly successful economic development role with proven experience in negotiation and deal closing.

Master's Degree preferred.

CEcD preferred.

AICP preferred.

Compensation

The town expects immediate results from the successful candidate. Accordingly, salary will be competitive, commensurate with experience and qualifications.

References and Background Information

There will be an extensive background and reference check of candidates. Once strong mutual interest has been established, candidates are asked to provide a list of references that should include, but not be limited to, a supervisor, a peer, a development client and a subordinate, as applicable. Candidates will be asked to sign an authorization to release information for the purpose of a background investigation, which may include verification of education, credit check, criminal and driving records. Should an offer be extended prior to the completion of these checks, the offer will be made contingent on the successful completion of the reference and background checks.