

Position Posting:

Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority – Innovation Terminal Project Development Lead

About the Organization:

The Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority (DWCPA) is a public authority established in 1978 to promote trade, maritime activity, and economic development in southeastern Michigan. The DWCPA advances investments, job creation, tourism, environmental sustainability, and strategic partnerships throughout the Port of Detroit region.

About the Position:

The DWCPA is seeking an Innovation Terminal Project Development Lead to direct the next phase of development of the Detroit Wayne Maritime Innovation Terminal. Following completion of the Terminal feasibility study, this position will translate the project's findings and recommendations into an actionable implementation program, coordinating the founding organizations and recruiting the financial, institutional, and industry partners needed to launch a sustainable maritime innovation center.

The Terminal is envisioned as a phased, partner-led facility supporting applied research, testing and demonstration of emerging maritime technologies, including advanced materials, digital systems, automation, vessel technology, and clean maritime solutions. The Project Development Lead will work closely with the DWCPA Executive Director and founding partners to establish the organization, resources, programs, and operating model required for implementation.

Primary duties will include:

- Develop and execute a comprehensive implementation plan with priorities, milestones, schedules, budgets, responsibilities, and measurable deliverables for the Terminal's initial development and launch.
- Lead fundraising strategy and execution, including identifying and cultivating philanthropic, corporate, public-sector, and institutional funding sources; preparing proposals; grant applications; coordinating grant opportunities; and pursuing capital and operating commitments. Grant writing assistance and state and federal lobbyists are available for assisting in government funding opportunities.
- Coordinate among founding entities and other key stakeholders to align goals, decision-making, resource commitments, project responsibilities, and schedules; organize and support advisory council meetings and follow-up actions.
- Develop recommendations for the Terminal's organizational and governance structure, including legal and operating arrangements, partner agreements, management responsibilities, and decision-making procedures. Legal assistance with development of entity structure is available.
- Create a viable business and operating model identifying core programs and services, target customers and users, earned revenue opportunities, partnership contributions, and a strategy for long-term financial sustainability.
- Prepare and maintain a multi-year financial pro forma, including startup and capital requirements, staffing, operating expenses, revenue assumptions, cash flow, funding gaps, and alternative scenarios.

- Recruit and secure initial anchor partners and users, including maritime businesses, technology developers, manufacturers, research institutions, universities, and workforce organizations; negotiate preliminary participation arrangements in coordination with DWCPA leadership.
- Develop a phased staffing and organizational capacity plan, identifying initial positions, responsibilities, hiring sequence, outside professional services, and projected personnel costs.
- Coordinate early-stage facility and site implementation planning with technical consultants and partners, including space needs, infrastructure priorities, permitting considerations, procurement, and construction-readiness activities.
- Provide regular written progress reports, budgets, risk assessments, and recommendations to DWCPA leadership and the Terminal's advisory bodies; represent the project in meetings and presentations.

Qualifications:

A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in business, public administration, engineering, finance, economic development, planning, or a related field is required. An applicable graduate degree is preferred. Candidates should have at least seven years of progressively responsible experience in project development, organizational leadership, fundraising, economic development, commercialization, or a related field.

Demonstrated success developing partnerships, securing funding, preparing business plans and financial models, and managing complex multi-party initiatives is strongly preferred. Experience with public authorities, universities, research and innovation facilities, maritime transportation, manufacturing, or infrastructure development will be favorably considered.

The successful candidate will be entrepreneurial, organized, resourceful, and skilled at turning a strategic concept into a functioning enterprise. Strong written and oral communication, financial analysis, relationship management, negotiation, and project management skills are essential. The ability to work effectively with public, private, and academic partners is particularly important.

Employment Terms:

The position will be based in Detroit, with periodic regional travel and stakeholder meetings and . Compensation and benefits will be established based on qualifications and the approved position budget. The position will be a full-time employment role for a two-year period.

- \$130,000 – 160,000 annually, commensurate with experience and qualifications.
- Vacation and paid time off, healthcare stipend, and employee retirement contribution support.
- This is a two-year grant-funded position, and employment beyond the grant term is not guaranteed.

To apply:

Interested and qualified applicants should submit a resume and cover letter to tveasy@portdetroit.com, under the subject line "Innovation Terminal Project Development Lead" letter to:

Equal Opportunity Employer