



City of Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)

Position Title: Vice President, Small Business Retention & Growth

Reporting to: Senior Vice President & Chief Economic Development Officer

****IN-PERSON POSITION. NO REMOTE APPLICANTS PLEASE****

OPEN UNTIL FILLED

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is the economic development agency for the City of Baltimore. Our mission is to grow the city's economy in an inclusive manner by retaining, expanding, and attracting businesses and promoting investment, thereby increasing career opportunities for residents.

BDC is committed to a more equitable economy by supporting minority and women-owned businesses and promoting investment in neighborhoods that have been negatively impacted by institutional racism and/or generational poverty. We develop strategies and facilitate collaboration among our partners to intentionally create an inclusive and equitable economy.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Vice President, Small Business Retention & Growth reports to the Senior Vice President and Chief Economic Development Officer and is responsible for leading BDC's comprehensive small business support initiatives that ensure Baltimore's existing small businesses thrive, expand, and build generational wealth. This position plays a critical role in implementing Baltimore's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by executing retention programs, growth services, and capacity-building initiatives that prioritize historically underserved entrepreneurs and strengthen Baltimore's small business ecosystem across target industry sectors including life sciences, technology, logistics, hospitality and tourism, creative industries, and social innovation. The VP works collaboratively with internal teams, government partners, business support organizations, and community stakeholders to drive inclusive small business growth, prevent displacement, and create sustainable economic opportunities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Small Business Retention Programs

- Lead proactive business retention initiatives identifying at-risk businesses and providing targeted intervention support to prevent closures and displacement
- Develop early warning systems detecting business distress through data analysis, outreach, and community intelligence, and connecting owners with immediate assistance
- Create retention programming specifically supporting historically underserved business owners facing displacement pressures, rising rents, or neighborhood transition challenges
- Coordinate with landlords, developers, and community stakeholders on business preservation strategies and long-term tenancy solutions
- Establish and manage Business Stability Funds providing emergency grants and forgivable loans to businesses facing unexpected challenges
- Conduct regular business health assessments and outreach visits to identify needs and strengthen relationships with small business owners

- Partner with industry associations and business networks to monitor sector trends and identify emerging retention challenges
- Track retention metrics including business survival rates, years in operation, and displacement prevention outcomes

Business Expansion and Growth Services

- Oversee business expansion programs helping existing small businesses scale operations, increase revenue, add locations, and create quality jobs
- Develop growth capital access programs connecting historically underserved entrepreneurs with financing including loans, equity investment, and alternative capital sources
- Create business expansion technical assistance covering operations optimization, marketing and sales growth, financial management, and strategic planning
- Coordinate workforce development partnerships with MOED and training providers helping businesses hire, train, and retain quality employees
- Facilitate business-to-business networking, supplier diversity programs, and supply chain opportunities connecting small businesses with corporate and institutional customers
- Support businesses seeking procurement opportunities with Baltimore City, anchor institutions, and major corporations
- Develop sector-specific growth programs for priority industries aligned with Baltimore Together target sectors
- Create incentive programs rewarding businesses for job creation, wage increases, and investment in Baltimore communities
- Track expansion outcomes including revenue growth, employment increases, new locations, and capital investment

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

- Lead comprehensive technical assistance programs providing culturally competent, industry-specific support tailored to the needs of historically underserved entrepreneurs
- Develop one-on-one advising services addressing unique challenges of BIPOC entrepreneurs, women business owners, and immigrant entrepreneurs
- Create cohort-based learning programs building peer networks, shared knowledge, and collaborative problem-solving among business owners
- Provide financial literacy and business management training tailored to different business stages from startup through maturity
- Coordinate with professional service providers including accountants, lawyers, and consultants offering pro bono and reduced-cost services
- Develop specialized programs addressing digital transformation, e-commerce, technology adoption, and online marketing for small businesses
- Create mentorship programs connecting experienced business leaders with emerging entrepreneurs
- Provide access to business tools, resources, templates, and software supporting efficient operations
- Partner with business schools, SBDCs, SCORE, and other technical assistance providers to expand service capacity

Commercial Space and Lease Support

- Provide commercial lease negotiation assistance helping business owners secure fair, sustainable lease terms and understand their rights as tenants
- Develop advocacy programs protecting small businesses from predatory leasing practices, excessive rent increases, and unfair evictions
- Create educational programming on commercial real estate rights, lease terms, tenant protections, and negotiation strategies
- Coordinate with legal service providers on lease review, negotiation support, and tenant advocacy

- Establish landlord engagement initiatives promoting stable, long-term business tenancies and fair leasing practices
- Connect businesses with affordable commercial space opportunities including BDC properties, community-owned facilities, and subsidized spaces
- Develop programs supporting business relocation when necessary, minimizing disruption and preserving customer relationships
- Partner with BDC's Real Estate Development team on commercial space affordability strategies and anti-displacement initiatives

Succession Planning and Business Transitions

- Develop business succession planning programs ensuring smooth ownership transitions and preserving business legacies in Baltimore communities
- Create programs facilitating employee ownership transitions, cooperative conversions, and worker-owned business models
- Provide technical assistance on business sales, transfers, family transitions, and legacy planning
- Coordinate with financial advisors, business brokers, and legal experts on succession implementation and ownership transfer processes
- Establish business matchmaking services connecting retiring owners with next-generation entrepreneurs, particularly BIPOC entrepreneurs seeking acquisition opportunities
- Develop financing programs supporting ownership transitions and management buyouts
- Create educational programs on estate planning, business valuation, and ownership transition options
- Track succession outcomes including successful transitions, business continuity, and preservation of jobs

Access to Capital and Financial Resources

- Build relationships with community development financial institutions (CDFIs), credit unions, and mission-driven lenders expanding capital access
- Connect businesses with BDC debt/equity programs, equity investors, angel networks, and venture capital firms seeking to invest in Baltimore companies
- Provide financial readiness training helping businesses become bankable and prepare strong loan applications
- Partner with banks on loan guarantee programs and credit enhancement tools reducing lending risk
- Develop crowdfunding and community investment campaigns mobilizing local capital for small business growth
- Track capital deployment outcomes including loans closed, grants awarded, jobs created, and business survival rates

Data, Performance Management, and Impact Measurement

- Develop comprehensive business health monitoring systems tracking retention, growth, and survival metrics aligned with Baltimore Together CEDS goals
- Conduct regular business surveys, assessments, and outreach measuring program effectiveness and identifying emerging needs
- Create data-driven intervention strategies using analytics to target businesses most at risk and allocate resources strategically
- Establish performance dashboards tracking program outcomes including businesses served, jobs created, revenue growth, and capital deployed
- Coordinate with research partners and universities on longitudinal business survival studies and economic impact analyses
- Track equity metrics including BIPOC business ownership rates, wealth creation, and disparities in business outcomes

- Prepare regular reports on program performance, community impact, and return on investment for senior leadership and stakeholders
- Use data insights to continuously improve programs, refine strategies, and demonstrate impact to funders

Team Leadership and Management

- Recruit, hire, develop, and retain a high-performing small business support team
- Provide regular coaching, feedback, and performance evaluations for direct reports
- Foster a collaborative, creative, and results-oriented team culture focused on serving entrepreneurs and creating community impact
- Establish clear goals, expectations, and accountability measures for team performance
- Ensure team members have the resources, training, and support needed to excel in their roles
- Coordinate cross-functional work with other BDC teams including Business Development, Commercial Districts, Real Estate, and Marketing
- Promote professional development opportunities for team members and build organizational capacity in small business support
- Manage program budgets responsibly and ensure fiscal accountability across all initiatives

Inclusive Economic Development

- Ensure all small business programs advance CEDS equity goals and eliminate racial and gender disparities in business ownership and economic outcomes
- Prioritize resources and support for BIPOC-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and immigrant entrepreneurs facing systemic barriers
- Ensure programs are culturally competent, linguistically accessible, and responsive to diverse community needs
- Address systemic barriers including access to capital, commercial space, business networks, and procurement opportunities
- Support businesses creating quality jobs with living wages and benefits for Baltimore residents
- Track and report on equity metrics including business ownership demographics, wealth creation, job quality, and neighborhood investment
- Incorporate equity considerations into program design, resource allocation, and evaluation criteria
- Build authentic relationships and trust with historically underserved business communities through consistent presence and culturally grounded engagement

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Microsoft Office Suite: Proficiency in Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint
- CRM Systems: Experience with customer relationship management platforms for tracking business interactions and program outcomes
- Small Business Operations: Deep understanding of small business challenges, financial management, and growth strategies
- Business Advising: Strong capability in one-on-one business coaching, problem-solving, and strategic planning with entrepreneurs
- Financial Analysis: Ability to review financial statements, assess business health, and provide sound financial guidance
- Program Management: Experience designing, launching, and managing comprehensive business support programs with measurable outcomes
- Cultural Competency: Skilled at working across cultures and building authentic relationships in diverse business communities
- An ability to listen to others and learn from their best ideas, and possess a healthy sense of intellectual curiosity
- Collaborative approach to cross-functional work with both internal teams and external partners

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- A Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship, or related field is required; a Master's degree is preferred
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in small business development, business advising, entrepreneurship support, or community economic development, with at least 5 years in a senior leadership or management role
- Demonstrated experience working with historically underserved entrepreneurs, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, or in underserved commercial corridors
- Strong understanding of small business operations, financial management, marketing, and growth strategies across multiple industries
- Proven experience with business technical assistance, coaching, consulting, or advising programs
- Deep knowledge of barriers facing historically underserved entrepreneurs including access to capital, commercial space, business networks, and systemic inequities
- Proven ability to build trust and authentic relationships with diverse business communities and understand cultural nuances
- Experience managing programs, staff, budgets, and demonstrating measurable outcomes and community impact
- Exceptional skills in communication, problem-solving, relationship management, and stakeholder engagement
- A strong understanding of public-private partnerships and the dynamics of urban economic development
- Ability to build and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of stakeholders including business owners, community leaders, government officials, and support organizations
- Experience with commercial real estate, lease negotiation, or property development preferred
- Background in business succession planning or ownership transitions preferred
- Entrepreneurship or small business ownership experience preferred

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Workplace Setting: The position requires presence in an office setting, employees are scheduled to work a 7.5-hour workday Monday through Friday, providing a total of 37.5 hours per work week. The BDC 7.5-hour workday plus one hour for lunch, begins between 7:00 am – 9:00 am and ends between 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm. Flexibility for occasional extended hours or weekend work may be required.
- Equipment Use: Proficiency in using standard office equipment such as computers, printers, copiers, and telecommunication devices is essential.
- Regular evening and weekend work for business meetings, networking events, and community engagements
- Frequent travel throughout Baltimore to meet with business owners, visit businesses, and attend stakeholder meetings
- BDC's offices are located at 36 S. Charles on the 21st & 20th floors and are accessed via elevators and emergency stairs.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Mobility: The position requires the ability to sit for extended periods, stand, and walk, including occasionally moving between different locations within the office and off-site to meet with businesses.
- Manual Dexterity: Must be able to use hands and fingers to operate office equipment, handle documents, and perform data entry.
- Lifting: Occasionally required to lift and move objects weighing up to 20 pounds.
- Vision and Hearing: Adequate vision and hearing are necessary for reading documents, using a computer, and communicating with others in person and via telecommunication devices.

DRESS CODE

- Professional Attire: The candidate is expected to adhere to a professional dress code that reflects the organization's standards and presents a neat, clean, and business-like appearance.
- Meetings and Events: For meetings with public officials, community leaders, or external partners, business formal attire may be required.
- Casual Days: On designated casual days, business casual attire is acceptable, provided it maintains a professional and respectful appearance.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

This is a salaried, benefited, at-will position, and work is performed as required to complete project priorities and may require extended hours beyond a conventional work week, including evening meetings and business events.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. BDC also offers a full package of benefits, including paid sick, personal, and vacation leave; subsidized medical/dental with Health Savings Account; 403(b) retirement with employer matching; parking/transit subsidy; mobile phone reimbursement; and other benefits.

The starting salary range for the VP, Small Business Retention & Growth is \$140,000 - \$180,000, commensurate with experience.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Candidates should submit a cover letter and resume via email to Shantel McLaughlin at smclaughlin@BaltimoreDevelopment.com, subject line of the email indicating "VP, Small Business Retention & Growth."

Candidates can also learn about us by visiting our website at baltimoredevelopment.com and baltimoretogether.com. No Phone Calls Please. Only applicants scheduled for interviews will be contacted.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

BDC is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to a more equitable economy through employment, supporting minority and women-owned businesses, and promoting investment in neighborhoods that have been negatively impacted by institutional racism and/or generational poverty. We develop strategies and facilitate collaboration among our partners to intentionally create an inclusive and equitable economy.

BDC does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.