



Assistant Executive Director

Salary: \$84,500 to \$105,000





Welcome to Albert Lea, Minnesota!

Located in the heart of southeastern Minnesota, the City of Albert Lea offers a welcoming blend of natural beauty, accessibility, and small-city character that makes it an ideal place to live, work, and lead. With a population of about 18,000 residents, Albert Lea serves as the hub of Freeborn County and benefits from its location at the crossroads of Interstates 35 and 90 - providing easy access to Rochester, Mankato, the Twin Cities, and northern Iowa while maintaining the comfort of small-town living.

Known as the "Land Between the Lakes," the community's setting between Fountain Lake and Albert Lea Lake provides abundant opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, and biking, while more than 300 acres of parkland and a growing network of trails connect residents to nature year-round. The City's early participation in the nationally recognized Blue Zones Project reflects its long-standing commitment to wellness and livability, with walkable neighborhoods, active public spaces, and a strong sense of community pride.

Albert Lea's affordable cost of living, high-quality schools, strong healthcare system, and revitalized downtown make it a desirable place for families and professionals alike. Local festivals, community concerts, and lakefront events foster connection and civic spirit. The community continues to invest in business development, housing, and infrastructure, positioning itself for growth while maintaining the friendly, inclusive atmosphere that defines life in southern Minnesota.

For a leader seeking both professional opportunity and personal fulfillment, Albert Lea offers the best of both worlds - a place where one can make a meaningful impact, enjoy an exceptional quality of life, and be part of a community proud of its past and optimistic about its future.

Albert Lea Economic Development Agency

The Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA) serves as the leading organization driving business growth, job creation, and community investment in Albert Lea and Freeborn County. ALEDA was established in 2003 through the merger of two long-standing economic development entities - the Albert Lea Port Authority (founded 1987) and Greater Jobs, Inc. (founded 1943) - uniting public and private partners around a shared mission: to create quality jobs, expand the local tax base, and strengthen the regional economy.

ALEDA operates as a unique hybrid model that combines the public authority of the City's Port Authority with the flexibility and community engagement of a private nonprofit. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors representing City, County, and business interests, reflecting the collaborative spirit that defines economic development in the region. This structure allows ALEDA to respond quickly to business needs, leverage resources from multiple partners, and sustain long-term strategic initiatives.

Key areas of focus include business retention and expansion, industrial and commercial site development, entrepreneurship support, workforce collaboration, and housing and redevelopment efforts. ALEDA also manages the Albert Lea Business Development Center, a business incubator providing space, technical assistance, and mentoring for startups and growing firms. Through strong relationships with the City of Albert Lea, Freeborn County, regional partners, and the State of Minnesota, ALEDA positions the community for continued investment and sustainable economic growth.

With a dedicated board, engaged partners, and a community ready to embrace new opportunities, ALEDA provides the next Assistant Executive Director a platform to lead meaningful economic transformation - where strategy, collaboration, and local pride intersect to shape Albert Lea's future.



Albert Lea Economic Development Agency

KEY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Business incubator and entrepreneurship support (via the Albert Lea Business Development Center) to help startups and expansion.
- Site selection, industrial park development, workforce and infrastructure support, including access to freeway and rail corridors in the region.
- Incentives, grants, tax increment financing (TIF) collaboration with the City to support business investment and housing development.
- Strategic planning documents (e.g., “Albert Lea 2040 Economic Development” plan) that guide the organization’s agenda.

POSITIONING & IMPACT

ALEDA is uniquely positioned to leverage Albert Lea’s strategic geography, its manufacturing heritage, and its commitment to reinvestment and renewal. For a forward-thinking executive, the opportunity is to lead a lean but dynamic agency where visible results - jobs created, sites activated, community revitalized - are within reach.



MISSION

To provide and promote services and resources to retain, expand, create, and attract businesses and quality employment opportunities in Freeborn County.

VISION

ALEDA will be recognized as a catalyst for community development. We are dedicated to building a strong economy and improving

CORE VALUES

COLLABORATION

ALEDA values cooperative partnerships and collaboration in decision making to improve the quality of decisions and to secure broad commitment.

INNOVATION

ALEDA values creative solutions and continuously seeks new, flexible, and responsive ways to achieve the mission.

EXCELLENCE

ALEDA values excellence in all its endeavors, striving to balance our clients’ needs with sensitivity and fairness. We strive to empower growth throughout the county, regardless of size or current resources.

RESPONSIVENESS

ALEDA strives to create a business climate that cultivates action, decision, and the ability to move the business forward.

Role of the Assistant Executive Director

POSITION OVERVIEW

This position will support ALEDA's Executive Director - Strategic Initiatives & Projects and the Finance and Operations Director in carrying out organizational strategies, managing projects, providing administrative support, and engaging with community stakeholders. This is a hands-on, developmental role designed for a professional who is eager to gain experience in economic development, project management, finance, administration, and organizational leadership while working directly in ALEDA's Albert Lea office.

Following the conclusion of the working agreement with the Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives & Projects in 2026/27, this role is expected to grow into ALEDA's chief leadership position, reporting directly to the Board of Directors. At that time, the position would continue to fulfill the key responsibilities listed in this job description while assuming increased leadership in guiding strategy, ensuring financial sustainability, overseeing major projects, and mentoring the ALEDA team.

The individual in this role will work closely with the Finance & Operations Director, staff, and the Board to advance ALEDA's mission. This position also serves as a visible ambassador for ALEDA's mission and vision, actively engaging with city, county, and community leaders.

CORE DUTIES OF THE POSITION



Project Coordination

- Assist in planning, coordinating, and tracking ALEDA projects.
- Develop progress reports, timelines, and documentation for initiatives.
- Support staff and community partners in day-to-day project tasks.



Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Help represent ALEDA at community meetings and events.
- Build and maintain relationships with local businesses, government representatives, and regional partners.
- Provide timely updates and communications on ALEDA's initiatives.



Organizational, Finance & Administrative Support

- Provide administrative support for ALEDA programs and initiatives.
- Assist with scheduling, meeting coordination, and maintaining records.
- Draft and edit reports, presentations, agendas, and correspondence.
- Support the Finance and Operations Director with financial tracking, data entry, invoices, and document management.
- Contribute to smooth daily operations and ensure effective communication within the team.



Learning & Professional Development

- Receive mentorship from the Director of Strategic Initiatives & Projects and the Finance and Operations Director.
- Build knowledge of economic development programs, policies, and best practices.
- Develop leadership, project management, finance, and administrative skills through hands-on experience.

Role of the Assistant Executive Director



Phased Transition of Duties

The Assistant Executive Director of Projects & Administration will receive support throughout 2026/27 from the Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives & Projects, who will serve as a part-time, remote advisor. During this period, certain responsibilities will transition progressively to the Assistant Executive Director of Projects & Administration with the expectation that this role will then become the chief leader of ALEDA.

The following key responsibilities will be phased in over the course of 2026/early 2027:

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement strategies that advance ALEDA's mission and long-term vision.
- Work with the Board to set strategic direction and ensure measurable progress.
- Foster alliances with businesses, government entities, and community partners.

Financial Stewardship

- Oversee ALEDA's budget, financial reporting, and fiscal integrity in collaboration with the Finance and Operations Director.
- Ensure the organization's financial health, stability, and sustainability.
- Monitor financial performance against goals and adjust plans as needed.

Organizational Leadership & Mentorship

- Recruit, develop, and lead staff to achieve organizational goals.
- Mentor team members to build their professional skills, confidence, and career growth.
- Set clear expectations, provide coaching and feedback, and ensure accountability.
- Build a positive, collaborative, and high-performing workplace culture.

Project Management

- Plan, coordinate, and oversee key projects from conception to completion.
- Develop project timelines, work plans, and performance measures.
- Ensure projects are delivered on time, within scope, and aligned with ALEDA's strategic objectives.
- Support staff and partners in effective project execution.

Community Engagement

- Represent ALEDA in the community, serving as a trusted resource and advocate.
- Partner with local, regional, and state organizations to drive economic growth.
- Promote ALEDA's role as a catalyst for business development and community vitality.

Desired Attributes for the Next Assistant Executive Director

✓ Relationship-BUILDER & Community Connector

The next Assistant Executive Director must:

- Build and sustain strong relationships with the City of Albert Lea, Freeborn County, Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce, Albert Lea Convention & Visitor's Bureau, utility partners, business leaders, and developers.
- Be approachable, visible, and active in the community.
- Meet people where they are - from CEOs to small business owners to civic clubs.
- Be collaborative, not territorial; someone who brings people into the conversation rather than pushing them out.

✓ Exceptional Communicator With Tough Skin

The organization needs someone who:

- Communicates clearly, proactively, and frequently (e.g., phone calls and face-to-face, not hiding behind email).
- Can handle difficult personalities and political dynamics without taking things personally.
- Can "read the room," deliver hard news with professionalism, and translate government language for businesses.
- Has strong public speaking skills and can represent ALEDA confidently in many environments.

✓ Strong Economic Development & Finance Acumen

Knowledge and experience is required:

- Understanding of economic development tools, especially TIF, gap financing, incentives, real estate development, and business retention/expansion.
- Familiarity with government processes, municipal partners, and funding structures.
- Skilled at project management, prioritization, and navigating multi-stakeholder projects.
- Ability to think strategically about land, industrial parks, redevelopment, and long-term growth.

✓ Ego-Free, Team-Oriented Leadership

The next Assistant Executive Director must:

- Put the mission above personal credit: "leave your ego at the door."
- Work in true partnership with staff; help grow and prepare for the future.
- Foster trust, build alignment within the Board, and create unity among partners.
- Exhibit humility, authenticity, and sincerity.

✓ Forward-Thinking, Creative, and Solution-Oriented

The new leader must be:

- Visionary, with the ability to see and prepare for Albert Lea's future (housing, industrial expansion, new industries, redevelopment).
- Creative, with tools and incentives when traditional approaches won't work.
- A problem-solver who is willing to innovate and evaluate new ideas rather than dismissing them.

✓ Resilient, Self-Motivated, and Action-Oriented

- Has stamina, energy, and drive; a true go-getter.
- Works hard, manages many moving parts, and keeps projects moving forward.
- Follows through relentlessly (e.g., "20 phone calls if needed").
- Doesn't get discouraged by slow processes, tough personalities, or setbacks.

✓ Personable, Down-to-Earth, and Comfortable Across All Audiences

The next Assistant Executive Director should:

- Be relatable, warm, and easy to talk to.
- Adapt naturally when engaging with all age groups, business leaders, farmers, developers, and civic clubs.
- Maintain credibility, honesty, and authenticity at all times.

Projects/Initiatives/Goals for the Position

➡ Kick Off and Deliver a Major Housing Initiative

Why: Housing is the single biggest constraint on workforce growth and business recruitment.

First-year milestone: Move one priority housing site (e.g., old golf course, high school, or Mayo property) from concept to a defined development commitment (LOI, land purchase, or developer agreement).

➡ Secure land and build capacity for industrial growth (spec buildings + industrial park)

Why: ALEDA needs ready sites and speculative space to capture incoming projects and avoid losing opportunities.

First-year milestone: Secure an option or purchase agreement on at least one suitable parcel (≥20–100 acres) and begin planning for a spec building or shovel-ready lot.

➡ Rebuild and Deepen Local Partner Alignment (City, County, Chamber, CVB, HRA)

Why: Strong, active partnerships are essential for housing, TIF, redevelopment, and governmental backing.

First-year milestone: Convene a stakeholder realignment summit and deliver a one-page shared priorities agreement (housing, industrial land, downtown redevelopment).

➡ Preserve and Transition Critical Relationships to Sustain Momentum

Why: Much of ALEDA's pipeline depends on personal relationships (Current E.D.'s network and key partners).

First-year milestone: Complete a structured relationship-handoff plan with outgoing E.D. and meet with the top 10 CEOs/major partners to establish ongoing points of contact.

➡ Rescue/Accelerate Stalled Downtown Redevelopment (300 Block + Key Projects)

Why: Visible stalled projects damage optics and community confidence; getting them moving restores momentum and attracts investment.

First-year milestone: Produce a rescue plan for the 300 Block (communication strategy, developer re-engagement, timeline with go/no-go milestones) and relaunch at least one downtown redevelopment action.

➡ Refresh Strategy, Public Narrative, and Community Engagement

Why: Clear strategy and improved public communication will combat misconceptions, build support, and recruit new partners/residents.

First-year milestone: Lead a refreshed 3 - 5 year strategic plan with county/city leadership and launch a public “what ALEDA does” campaign that clarifies funding, wins, and community benefits.

➡ Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Reduce Single-Person Risk

Why: Key staff (e.g., Finance and Operations Director) hold critical operational knowledge; retention, cross-training, and strong administrative systems are essential.

First-year milestone: Implement cross-training/documentation for core finance and admin functions, plus a retention/succession plan and at least one operational improvement that frees the ED to focus on partnerships.



Position Announcement



ORGANIZATION: Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA)

POSITION: Assistant Executive Director

SALARY & BENEFITS: \$84,500 to \$105,000, plus health insurance, HSA, retirement, paid time off

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 4, 2026

JOB SUMMARY: The Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA) is seeking a strategic and collaborative Assistant Executive Director to lead business attraction, retention, and community investment efforts in Albert Lea and Freeborn County. The Director will guide key initiatives that support job growth, expand the tax base, and strengthen partnerships with public and private stakeholders.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree (completed or in progress) in Business, Finance, Planning, Political Science, Communications, or a related field, and a minimum of three (3) years of relevant work experience in project coordination, administration, finance, business development, or community engagement. Experience in economic development, governmental, nonprofit, or professional consulting settings is a plus.

APPLY: Visit <https://daviddrown.hiringplatform.com/359778-albert-lea-economic-development-agency-assistant-executive-director/1374099-application-form/en> and complete the application process by January 4, 2026. Finalists will be selected on February 4, 2026, and final interviews will be held on February 23, 2026.

Please direct any questions to Liza Donabauer at liza@daviddrown.com or 612-920-3320 x111.



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