



## Downtown Berkeley Association - Chief Executive Officer

Full Time | On-site | Berkeley, CA

### About the Downtown Berkeley Association

[Downtown Berkeley Association](#) (DBA) stewards one of the Bay Area's most dynamic and culturally significant urban districts. For more than 16 years, DBA has managed the Downtown Berkeley Property-Based Business Improvement District (PBID), providing essential environmental and economic vitality services, with the goal of creating a welcoming, vibrant, and prosperous City center and public realm. With an imminent renewal of the PBID in 2026, and a recently completed [Strategic Plan](#) and 10-year [Management District Plan](#), the organization is positioned for steady, thoughtful leadership in its next chapter. The district is home to Berkeley's premier arts district with nationally recognized anchors such as Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Freight, and BAMPFA; and adjacent to University of California, Berkeley, which is also the largest property owner in the district. The area boasts a vibrant mix of students, residents, small businesses, property owners, arts



organizations, nonprofits, and public institutions. It is one of the most transit-connected downtowns in the region. Berkeley is known for its deep community involvement and identity where the public is tapped into all things happening in their city.

### The Opportunity

Downtown Berkeley is in a period of continued evolution. Ongoing development, increased residential density, strong cultural institutions, and new city leadership create meaningful opportunities to shape how one of the Bay Area's most visible urban districts grows and defines its next chapter. Alongside this opportunity is the complexity facing many urban centers: balancing economic and cultural vitality, equity, public safety, housing, and community priorities in ways that are both pragmatic and values-aligned. A defining priority in this next phase will be the launch of a new Safety Ambassador Program — strengthening coordination, visibility, and impact in ways that build confidence for businesses, residents, and visitors alike. The organization is also navigating a multi-year phase of disciplined financial stewardship tied to structured municipal financing, creating an important focus on long-term sustainability, diversified revenue, and thoughtful partnership with the City.

For a steady, relationship-oriented leader, this is a rare opportunity to serve as Downtown Berkeley's primary representative and trusted voice in civic forums, city meetings, and regional conversations. The

CEO will play a visible role in aligning City partners, service providers, property owners, and community stakeholders around a shared approach to safety, hospitality, and economic vitality. In partnership with organizations such as the Berkeley Chamber and Visit Berkeley, the CEO will help advance shared priorities while honoring the diversity of viewpoints that defines the community. For a leader who values diplomacy, coalition-building, and meaningful civic impact, this moment offers both challenge and the chance to shape lasting outcomes for the district.

## **Key Responsibilities**

### Ambassador Operations & Economic Vitality (50%)

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of the district's 20-person Ambassador team that provide cleaning, hospitality, landscaping, and homeless outreach services in the Downtown; as well as thoughtful expansion and implementation of the Safety Ambassador Program as a defining initiative of the PBID's next phase.
- Advance business attraction, retention, and vacancy reduction efforts in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Guide marketing, communications, and placemaking initiatives that highlight Downtown Berkeley's cultural assets and strengthen its regional profile.
- Ensure clear performance standards, strong coordination with City partners, and measurable impact that strengthens safety, visitor attraction, economic growth and community confidence.

### Strategic Leadership & Vision (25%)

- Provide steady, forward-looking leadership in implementing the PBID Management Plan and the organizational Strategic Plan, translating vision into practical progress and measurable outcomes.
- Serve as Downtown Berkeley's primary representative in local and regional forums, bringing credibility and balance to conversations related to economic development, public safety, housing, homelessness response, and public realm improvements.
- Build trusted relationships with elected officials, city departments, educational institutions, property owners, small businesses, developers, nonprofits, arts organizations, and residents — helping to align diverse perspectives around shared priorities.
- Position Downtown Berkeley as a welcoming, culturally vibrant, and economically resilient district within the broader Bay Area landscape.

### Relationship Building & Partnership Development (25%)

- Lead the organization with strong financial oversight, including budgeting, contract management, reporting systems, and long-term sustainability planning.

- Partner closely with an engaged Board of Directors to ensure transparent communication, effective governance, and shared accountability.
- Support and develop a small, dedicated staff team, fostering a culture grounded in professionalism, service, and responsiveness.

### **Ideal Candidate**

The next leader of Downtown Berkeley thrives in complex, civically engaged environments and values steady, thoughtful leadership. You bring people together, build trust across diverse perspectives, and translate shared vision into practical action. Comfortable in city meetings, board discussions, and conversations with small business owners alike, you combine diplomacy with operational discipline. If shaping the future of a vibrant, dynamic downtown while strengthening its long-term foundation excites you, this is an opportunity to make a lasting impact.

### **Required Qualifications:**

- Senior leadership experience in a business improvement district (BID), nonprofit, economic development, municipal, placemaking, or similarly complex community-based organization. Direct BID experience is welcome but not required.
- Demonstrated success building trusted relationships across diverse stakeholder groups, including small businesses, property owners, public officials, community organizations, and institutional partners.
- Strong financial and organizational leadership experience, including budgeting, contract oversight, and long-term sustainability planning within a lean operating environment.
- Experience partnering with or reporting to a Board of Directors, with a collaborative and transparent leadership style.
- Political acuity and sound judgment, with the ability to navigate complex civic environments with diplomacy, steadiness, and credibility.
- A pragmatic, solutions-oriented mindset — someone who can hold big-picture vision while attending to operational detail.
- A community-centered and approachable presence, comfortable representing the organization publicly and engaging in occasional evening or weekend civic events.

### **Our Team, Culture, and Benefits**

This is a full-time position based in Downtown Berkeley, California. The Downtown Berkeley Association is a collaborative, mission-driven organization committed to making the district safe, vibrant, and welcoming for all. Our team values partnership, creativity, integrity, and a solutions-oriented approach. While rooted in the district's 16-year history, we embrace new ideas and strategies to strengthen downtown Berkeley for the long term.

The salary range for this role is \$185K-\$200K, commensurate with experience, and includes a competitive benefits package designed to support well-being, work/life balance, and professional growth. Some benefits include a retirement match, complimentary YMCA membership, and generous PTO.

### **Belonging and Inclusion at DBA**

At DBA, diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to who we are, how we work, and the communities we serve. We seek to build a workplace where all people — particularly those from historically underrepresented communities — feel welcome and valued, and where diverse perspectives fuel innovation and better outcomes for our district. We are committed to ongoing learning, removing barriers to opportunity, and ensuring that every voice has a chance to be heard and contribute meaningfully to our shared success.

### **How to Apply**

Please submit a thoughtful cover letter and resume by April 24, 2026 to: Susannah Sallin, Search Consultant to Nonprofits, [apply@sallinsearch.com](mailto:apply@sallinsearch.com) with "Downtown Berkeley Assn. CEO" in the Subject Line. We will respond to all applicants. Thank you.