



Job Description

Job Title:	APEX Accelerator Advisor
Reports To:	Director of Economic Development and Policy
FStatus:	Exempt (Salary)
Classification:	Full-Time
Date Prepared:	1/22/2026

Job Summary. Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is seeking a highly-motivated and customer service-oriented APEX Accelerator Advisor to help private sector businesses grow by obtaining local, state and federal contract work and procurement opportunities as part of a newly-established APEX Accelerator program serving Northern Illinois, with an emphasis on Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson and DeKalb Counties. Region 1 Planning Council is a federally-designated Economic Development District responsible for fostering sustained growth and investment in Northern Illinois. The person chosen for this position will help market the R1's APEX Accelerator program, identify business clients and help them navigate the process of qualifying for and obtaining local, state and federal contracts and procurement opportunities. This is not an entry-level position. Demonstrated procurement experience or experience with APEX and/or Small Business Development Center programs is strongly preferred. This is not a remote-work position. Day-to-day work will be performed at R1's office in downtown Rockford, IL, and a personal vehicle for occasional travel is required.

Illustrative Essential Job Functions. The duties listed below are intended to describe the general nature and level of work of this position.

Start-up

- Establish proficiency with APEX Accelerator program requirements, policies, and procedures and government procurement websites, such as BidBuy, DemandStar, etc.
- Develop and maintain a sustainable portfolio of APEX Accelerator Clients
- Assist R1 staff to develop a communications and marketing plan for the APEX Accelerator program.

Day-to-Day Operations

- Assist the R1 Director of Economic Development plan, coordinate, manage, and monitor all aspects of APEX Accelerator program delivery.
- Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements related to the APEX Accelerator program.
- Provide one-on-one counseling to guide business owners through the process of completing required government forms for procurement opportunities, including certification and bidding in federal, state and local government and major prime contractor markets.
- Maintain routine office hours at R1's downtown Rockford; maintain occasional office hours at various locations throughout the Rockford Region; and make client site visits as needed.
- Advise business owners on managerial and technical aspects of expanding small businesses into the government sector.
- Consult with government agencies and large corporations regarding procurement assistance



programs for small business owners.

- Facilitate and/or make referrals between entrepreneurs and professional service providers, referring clients to one or more partners as appropriate.
- Maintain APEX Accelerator program and client records using Neoserra, the CMS system used by Illinois DCEO.
- Assist R1 staff with timely completion and submission of accurate financial and programmatic APEX Accelerator reports to Illinois DCEO.

Outreach/Marketing

- Develop and conduct workshops and webinars for procurement/contracting training, matchmaking events, and other topics as needed
- Assist R1 to promote the APEX Accelerator program to appropriate business and local government audiences.
- Maintain good working relationships with key regional partners, including local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Small Business Development Centers, business incubators, industry organizations, etc.

Supervision Received. Work is performed under the general supervision of the Director of Economic Development and Policy

Supervision Exercised. No current supervisory responsibilities.

Education, Training, Experience

Graduation from an accredited institution with a Bachelor's degree in Business, Economics, Finance, Public/Contract Administration or related field; At least 5 years of government procurement/purchasing experience. A satisfactory equivalent combination of education and experience, which ensures the ability to perform the work may be considered.

Job-Specific Skills. Critical knowledge and fundamental skills required for the position include:

- Prior APEX, SBDC, non-profit, or grant/contract program experience strongly preferred
- Knowledge and familiarity of the Northern Illinois economic landscape a plus
- Budget and program management expertise
- Basic knowledge of manufacturing, quality control, processes, and diverse industry dynamics
- Excellent written, public speaking, and communication skills
- Ability to execute multiple projects simultaneously and meet all deadlines
- Ability to translate technical literature and complex topics into appropriate, concise messaging for private business and local government audiences
- A self-starter who can work with little supervision
- Ability to respond quickly and accurately within a fast-paced environment
- Strong customer service skills and ability to work with diverse groups
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality



- Proficiency with MS Office products and video conferencing. Familiarity with CRM database software, such as Neoserra, is a plus

Working Conditions and Special Demands

Work is performed primarily in an office session, sitting at a desk and operating a personal computer. Work may require attending meetings and may involve travel throughout the region. Work may include occasional field inventory and data collection as needed.

Frequently

- Sit
- Use hands to finger, handle, or feel
- Reach with hands and arms
- Speak and hear

Occasionally

- Stand
- Walk
- Climb or balance
- Stoop, kneel, or crouch
- Lift up to 25 pounds

Necessary Special Requirements.

- Evening, weekend, and travel commitments may occasionally be required
- Possession of a valid Illinois driver’s license
- Insured, personal vehicle for business use; business-related mileage reimbursement available
- Drug screening and background check
- Annual completion of Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act training

Region 1 Planning Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer.