



Search for the President and CEO

Nexus Louisiana

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

THE SEARCH

Nexus Louisiana—a Baton Rouge-based tech incubator, accelerator, and innovation engine closely aligned with the city’s research universities and economic development activities—seeks a strategic leader to serve as its President and CEO. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the President and CEO will provide visionary and consultative leadership; assess and align the organization’s structures; and advocate passionately for Nexus Louisiana’s position as a driver of innovation in the city, the region, and across the state now and in the future.

Nexus Louisiana houses accelerator programs and connections to capital that position technology startups for growth across Baton Rouge and beyond. The organization has over \$15M in assets and a \$2M annual operating budget. Its approximately 15 staff oversee a range of programs that provide mentorship, investment, and opportunity for local entrepreneurs to grow their ideas, engage with expertise, connect with capital, and leverage community assets. It is closely tied with Louisiana State University (LSU)—the state’s land-grant, R1 flagship university—as well as with Southern University and A&M College (Southern)—Louisiana’s 1890s land-grant HBCU.

The President and CEO will address Baton Rouge’s needs to support new ventures and startups on the path to growth and sustainability to advance the capital region's broader economic dynamism. They will cultivate the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Baton Rouge area, which in 2023 was among the fastest-growing metro areas in the country. They will leverage the political capital and material resources of Nexus Louisiana and its Board in new and effective ways; facilitate connections and cross-pollinating activities across the region; and devise new marketing and communications strategies to broadcast and celebrate the work of the organization and the city. With a range of other organizations and institutions in the region that provide services, education, funding, and advice to support technology startups, Nexus Louisiana has a unique role to play in convening and coalescing these components to sustain a robust innovation ecosystem.

The successful candidate for the President and CEO role will be a convener, motivator, and relationship builder with the strategic vision and managerial acumen to position Nexus Louisiana for bold and meaningful impact. In this role, the President and CEO will fuse their knowledge of the innovation economy, early-stage investments, private sector business development, public funding models, and

university-based tech transfer with the managerial acumen and political skill needed to ignite a new era of growth in Baton Rouge.

The Board of Directors has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to aid in the effort to recruit a permanent President and CEO. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT NEXUS LOUISIANA

Nexus Louisiana is a technology incubator dedicated to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the state of Louisiana and the Baton Rouge region. The organization's mission is to accelerate the growth of high-potential technology-enabled companies by providing them with coaching, capital, and connections. The programs offered through Nexus Louisiana leverage regional collaboration to foster mentorship, investment, and opportunity for local entrepreneurs to grow their ideas and transform the technology industry in Louisiana.

The organization was founded to grow new technology jobs in Baton Rouge and Louisiana, with a focus on ensuring that people who are underrepresented in tech entrepreneurship have the support and connections to succeed. Since its founding, Nexus Louisiana has raised \$245M in capital, serving over 1800 businesses and leading to job creation and economic advancement across the region. While Nexus Louisiana's charter is statewide, it is funded partly through a portion of the Baton Rouge lodging tax, and its primary partners, facility, and impact are focused in Baton Rouge.

History

Nexus Louisiana, established initially as the Research Park Corporation in 1992, was created through Louisiana Legislative Act 1273. This legislation aimed to stimulate technological innovation and economic development in the Baton Rouge area by enabling the formation of a public-private partnership focused on tech-driven growth. The charter outlined specific objectives, including promoting the growth of technology-focused businesses, fostering collaboration between startups and established companies, and supporting workforce development through educational partnerships.

In 2019, the organization rebranded as Nexus Louisiana to reflect better its mission of connecting entrepreneurs with resources, mentorship, and funding opportunities. This transformation aligned with Louisiana's commitment to enhancing its technology ecosystem, positioning Nexus Louisiana as a central hub for innovation.

Context

Based in Louisiana's state capital, Baton Rouge, just an hour from New Orleans, Nexus Louisiana is situated to play a regional and statewide leadership role in the growing "Silicon Bayou" tech sector. Louisiana's

technology ecosystem is rapidly evolving, with Baton Rouge emerging as a critical player in this transformation. The state has seen a significant increase in tech job growth, particularly in software development, digital media, and cybersecurity sectors. The estimated direct economic impact of the technology sector is \$6 billion and growing. Recent statistics highlight:

- **Tech Job Growth:** Louisiana's tech job market has grown by over 25% in the past five years, outpacing national averages.
- **Emerging tech employment opportunities:** 16.8% of 2023 technology job postings in Louisiana were for occupations related to emerging technologies or positions that required emerging tech skills.
- **Investment Trends:** In 2022, venture capital investment in Louisiana startups reached approximately \$250 million, indicating growing investor interest.
- **Workforce diversity—**According to CompTIA's State of the Tech Workforce report for 2024, women account for 30% of Louisiana's technology workforce, with Black or African American workers accounting for 21% and Hispanic or Latino workers making up 4%.

Programs

Nexus Louisiana offers various programs designed to support entrepreneurs at different stages of their journey. The mentorship network connects entrepreneurs with experienced industry professionals and successful founders who offer guidance, insights, and networking opportunities. The organization regularly hosts educational workshops, networking events, and speaker series focused on key topics such as funding, marketing, and technology trends. Nexus Louisiana also hosts pitch competitions that facilitate connections between startups and potential investors. Through partnerships with local educational institutions, the organization cultivates future entrepreneurs.

- **Mentorship Programs:** [BizTech Challenge](#) is a hands-on learning and mentorship program designed to increase innovation and entrepreneurship in STEM-based fields among students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The [Venture Capital Apprenticeship Program](#) (VCAP) is a partnership with the LSU Department of Finance, Nexus Louisiana, and its affiliates Innovation Catalyst and the Red Stick Angels, where students gain practical experience through working on short-term projects with participating companies.
- **Networking Events and Pitch Competitions:** [BREW](#) is an annual event showcasing and connecting Louisiana entrepreneurs. In addition to a pitch competition that gives them visibility to potential clients, attendees gain access to keynote speakers, panels of seasoned judges, and some of the most cutting-edge ideas in local technology. Other events include [High Stakes Pitch](#) and [PitchBR](#).

- **Accelerator Programs:** [Ignition](#) is a structured program for assessing and honing a business idea's viability and preparing for a successful pitch. It includes intensive training, workshops, and pitch preparation, culminating in a demo day for startups to showcase their ideas to potential investors.
- **Incubator Program:** Nexus Louisiana's [Tech Park](#) incubator space provides startups with access to office space, mentorship, and resources to help refine their business models and scale their operations. [Geaux Global](#) connects startups to resources and opportunities for international commerce.

Partners

Nexus Louisiana works closely with a range of key partners that enhance its mission and extend its impact within the community. These partners include local educational institutions which provide research collaboration and student talent; government agencies that support economic development initiatives; and industry associations that help connect startups with established businesses and investors. Additionally, Nexus Louisiana collaborates with private sector companies that offer sponsorships and mentorship, creating a robust network that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the region. Key program funding and delivery partners include LSU, Southern, Baton Rouge Community College, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, and Louisiana Economic Development.

Board of Directors

Nexus Louisiana is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a diverse group of professionals from various sectors, including technology, finance, education, and community development. The board is made up of nine to twelve members, with designated seats for appointees representing the business sector and educational institutions, including members from Baton Rouge Community College, Southern University, Louisiana State University, the City of Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, and Louisiana Economic Development (LED). The Board is responsible for setting strategic direction, ensuring fiscal responsibility, and providing oversight to the organization. Members are selected based on their expertise, commitment to innovation, and ability to foster connections within the local and regional business communities. This governance structure ensures that Nexus Louisiana remains responsive to the needs of entrepreneurs while maintaining accountability and transparency.

Finances and Fundraising

Nexus Louisiana has total assets of \$15M and an annual operating budget of \$2M. A dedicated lodging tax supports a significant portion of Nexus Louisiana's operating budget, which generates revenue from hotel stays in the Baton Rouge area. This tax plays a critical role in funding various programs, infrastructure, and services to support local entrepreneurs and foster innovation. Additionally, Nexus Louisiana secures funding through grants, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions.

Incubator companies receive favorable rental rates for office space, and many stay on as longer-term tenants. Major expenses include operational costs, program development, staff salaries, and marketing initiatives to promote entrepreneurship.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Building on its positive track record of connecting entrepreneurs and their start-ups to the resources needed to build and scale business, Nexus Louisiana seeks to increase its visibility to more systematically connect with future tech entrepreneurs and expand the number of businesses it incubates. The President and CEO will bring the strategic vision, as well as the political acumen and connections needed to amplify the organization's strengths and ensure that Nexus Louisiana remains a center of excellence.

The incoming President and CEO will be a strategic thinker and strong decision-maker who can provide a unified vision for Nexus Louisiana. They will effectively engage legislators, media, the local business sector, and a passionate internal team of employees who bring a wide range of tenures in their roles. This person will enter an organization that has contributed meaningfully to the growth of several Baton Rouge-based technology startups and has an opportunity to amplify its impact. To do so, the President and CEO must first assess the organization's business model, programs, and current impact. They will then make decisions about the distinct value that Nexus Louisiana can offer and the strategy to deliver those results best.

Opportunities and Challenges

Assess and advise on strategy and programs

The next President and CEO will engage in thoughtful conversations across the organization, with the Board and staff, as well as startup tenants, Nexus Louisiana's intended target audiences, and current partner institutions about the future of Nexus Louisiana and its offerings. This will position Nexus Louisiana to boldly and viably move forward, building on its strong foundation. This leader will first direct an assessment of the organization's strengths and resources, helping Nexus Louisiana to thoughtfully consider what to preserve and what must differentiate the organization to position it for a sound future. Starting with a focus on Baton Rouge, the President and CEO will, over time, expand this strategic lens to assess the potential for programming and impact at a broader scale, establishing a north star for the organization to bring it into closer constellation with partners near and far and to accelerate its broad impact.

Invest in the technology startup ecosystem of Baton Rouge, the region, and beyond

Baton Rouge has emerged as a tech hub, with partners like Louisiana State University producing 1,500 STEM grads annually and strong tech expansion across Louisiana in recent years. Nexus Louisiana is also proximate to Southern University and A&M College, the 1890s land-grant HBCU of Louisiana, whose

efforts at small business development and seeding the diverse workforce of the future dovetail with Nexus Louisiana's service mission. These and other partners have created a dynamic ecosystem in which Nexus Louisiana can play an increasingly significant role. The President and CEO will ensure that Nexus Louisiana is positioned to complement and leverage the existing ecosystem, connecting local emerging talent with resources and support to help grow companies, identifying new opportunities, filling gaps, and serving as connective tissue with clients, partner institutions, and other organizations in the tech ecosystem both regionally and globally.

Cultivate a culture of collaboration, innovation, and growth among the Nexus Louisiana staff and board

The President and CEO will embrace Nexus Louisiana's collaborative spirit and demonstrate active listening, open communication, transparency, clarity, and equity in their organizational leadership. They will be key in advancing smooth and steady organizational culture and change management efforts and engaging team members and the board in the organization's evolution. They will liaise with the Board with nuance and skill, ensuring communication and collaboration are centered and that the organization's fiscal health is placed first. This will include relationship building around Board governance, forging trust with existing members, and galvanizing new members around the mission.

Build partnerships for impact

The next President and CEO will be an inspirational and respected leader in entrepreneurship locally and nationally, defining areas for partnership and mutual investment that can expand Nexus Louisiana's impact. Through retaining strong core partnerships across higher education institutions, local and state government, the Chamber of Commerce, regional businesses, economic development organizations, and peer entities across the state, Nexus Louisiana's next leader will identify new opportunities to leverage the organization's unique value. The President and CEO will implement best practices from similar organizations globally and draw upon the expertise of its academic partners to define and create systems to expand impact.

Broadcast Nexus Louisiana's vision, capabilities, and impact locally and nationally

Nexus Louisiana's next leader will be present as a visible and accessible leader throughout Baton Rouge and Louisiana, in both the technological and political spheres, and ensuring that Nexus Louisiana's programs and impact are evident and celebrated. Through marketing and sophisticated communications, gathering data, and pipelining Nexus Louisiana's achievements to the public, the President and CEO will champion the organization's work and the possibilities of the Baton Rouge region and beyond. They will build and nurture both local, national, and international relationships with authenticity, serving as a compelling narrator and demonstrating how Nexus Louisiana's work is directly tied to the economic vitality of its home in Baton Rouge and the state of Louisiana.

Diversify revenue streams to ensure long-term sustainability

The President and CEO will be an effective fundraiser and ambassador responsible for articulating Nexus Louisiana's successes to external audiences and funders. This individual will also provide leadership on the optimal funding strategy for sustaining a thriving facility. They will champion the accomplishments of the emerging tech leaders supported by Nexus Louisiana and strategically enhance the visibility of the organization's successes. At the same time, the President and CEO will nurture relationships with donors, government, community-based organizations, corporate industry partners, and others to join in these efforts.

Qualifications and Characteristics

While no one candidate will embody every trait and bring every experience, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- Strong understanding of the startup ecosystem, innovation trends, and economic development strategies.
- A track record of providing visionary and operational leadership guiding an institution through a period of organizational assessment, strategic planning, evolution, and growth.
- Political savvy with the capacity to navigate board governance, legislative, and business interests and to successfully communicate with a multitude of constituencies, strategic partners, donors, and the tech community.
- Excellent judgment and problem-solving skills. Experience strengthening processes, policies, and technology to increase organizational effectiveness.
- Demonstrated ability to build strategic partnerships and secure funding.
- Strong financial acumen and experience in budget management.
- Passion for fostering innovation and supporting entrepreneurs.

Compensation and Location

The salary range for this position will be competitive and commensurate with experience. The President and CEO is expected to maintain a visible and accessible presence with staff and the community. Periodic travel for conferences and network building is expected.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including CVs and two- to- three page letters

of interest responding to the opportunities, challenges, and qualifications outlined above) should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller search website](#).

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Nexus Louisiana is an Equal Opportunity Employer