



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

Director of Economic Development





The Position

The City of Virginia Beach is seeking a highly ethical, visionary, charismatic, and results-oriented Director of Economic Development to champion a new, complex era of growth fueled by strategic redevelopment and aggressive business attraction. This is a unique, high-impact opportunity to inherit a highly functioning, well-funded department with strong operational Deputy Directors and staff while guiding the City through a pivotal expansion phase.

The next Director will serve as the City's chief economic strategist and global ambassador, translating the City Council's vision for growth into tangible job creation and capital investment.

The Director reports directly to a Deputy City Manager and works in a strong collaborative relationship with City leadership and external partners. The Director will lead a dedicated team of 20 professionals, including two strong and extremely capable Deputy Directors who manage the day-to-day operations and internal portfolios.

If you are a seasoned leader with a strong moral compass and the political acumen to foster consensus among diverse stakeholders, from the tourism industry and defense contractors to the City Council and the Virginia Beach Development Authority (VBDA), this challenge is for you.

Priorities

- Build trust and strong working relationships with the VBDA, City Council, and the business community.
- Update and implement the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Represent Virginia Beach as a dynamic ambassador for business attraction and investment, both nationally and internationally.
- Partner with the Convention & Visitors Bureau to align tourism, resort development, defense, and agriculture as key drivers of the local economy.
- Strengthen regional collaboration with partners such as the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance and state agencies to advance shared economic prosperity.
- Lead and empower the Economic Development team by filling vacancies, mentoring emerging leaders, and promoting a collaborative, high-performing culture.

The Successful Candidate

The next Director will be a strategic thinker who also has both the technical skills and knowledge to lead when the City is considering investments and evaluating various deal terms and components of economic development agreements, opportunities, and partnerships. Additionally, the next Director will be a relationship-driven leader with the ability to develop and maintain collaborative external relationships, which are essential for guiding Virginia Beach through its next chapter of growth.

This individual will have a proven record of success in redevelopment and business attraction, with the ability to navigate complex projects involving zoning, incentives, and partnerships. They will understand the nuances of both greenfield and redevelopment opportunities, with the insight to translate Virginia Beach's assets, its industrial expansion, ITA redevelopment area, and diverse economic base into tangible outcomes for residents and businesses.

As an excellent communicator and credible advocate, the successful candidate will be comfortable representing the City on regional, state, national, and international stages. They will build bridges between the City, the business community, and partners such as the VBDA, City Council, and the Convention & Visitors Bureau, ensuring tourism, defense, and agriculture are aligned as shared drivers of economic prosperity.

Internally, the Director will foster a culture of accountability, collaboration, and excellence. They will mentor and empower staff, fill key vacancies, and champion professional growth to position the department as one of the most respected and effective in the region.

Above all, the successful candidate will be a forward-thinking strategist – someone who can honor Virginia Beach's strengths while shaping a bold economic vision for its future.

Qualifications

Preferred qualifications include a master's degree in business administration, public administration, marketing, economics, or a related program and six years of management/leadership experience; or a higher-level education and experience equivalent to twelve years in the field, including five years of higher-level program management or administrator experience.

The preferred candidate will have diverse experience and knowledge of economic development focused on capital investment, workforce development/job creation, incentives, entrepreneurial and business startups, business accelerators, public-private partnerships, business administration and economics.



Inside the Organization

The City of Virginia Beach exists to enhance the economic, educational, social, and physical quality of the community and provide valued, sustainable, municipal services. The City is led by the City Manager in a Council-Manager form of government, inclusive of ten Council Members and the Mayor. The City's organizational values guide member performance and define the culture. These values include quality customer service, teamwork, leadership and learning, integrity, commitment, inclusion, and diversity.

The City of Virginia Beach employs over 7,000 City employees, and the City's operating budget is \$2.5 Billion. The average employee tenure is 10 years.

The City earned a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index three years in a row; and is among the best municipalities across the country for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) equality according to the national civil rights organization, the Human Rights Campaign.

The City of Virginia Beach has also won two awards from the Center for Digital Government as part of its sixth annual Government Experience Awards program, which recognizes how states, cities, and counties are using technology to deliver exceptional citizen experiences.

Inside the Department

The ED Director oversees the strategic direction, daily operations, and financial integrity of the department, an accredited organization with a significant \$4.7 million budget and a staff of 20, including two satellite offices in Europe. Reporting directly to the Deputy City Manager for Economic Vitality, this appointed position serves as the primary staff resource and technical consultant to the VBDA, driving their mission to attract and retain national and international businesses.



The Community

As the largest city in the Commonwealth of Virginia with a population of 460,000, it is also the 43rd largest city in the nation. Virginia Beach has a thriving tourism industry with a wide variety of hotels and attractions including the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, Virginia Beach Sports Center, skate parks, and annual festivals.

Virginia Beach's economy is diverse and growing. The cost of doing business in Virginia Beach is well below the national average, thanks in large part to low City and state tax rates, competitive wages, and transportation infrastructure that provides businesses access to more than two-thirds of the U.S. population within a two-day drive. The City's business community is renowned for its highly diverse collection of industries including a strong presence of the defense industry in the region and its growth in the high-tech business sector. Our strategic location combined with local incentives and workforce will continue to support the industry's growth.

- 4th Hardest-Working City in America – Wallet Hub (2022)
- Recognized as one of the best-managed cities in America
- Best Large City for Veterans to Live – USA Today
- One of America's Most Literate Cities – The Huffington Post/CCSU
- AAA-rating from all three bond rating agencies (for 13 straight years)
- Nationally Acclaimed Public Schools
- 38 miles of beaches on the Atlantic Ocean & Chesapeake Bay
- 23,000 acres of farmland and agriculture is the City's third-largest industry, generating more than \$170 million in economic impact
- 265 parks covering more than 4,000 acres
- 7 public recreation centers and 10 public libraries
- Low crime rate



Compensation and Benefits

The salary is commensurate with experience with a target range between \$180,000 - \$220,000. The City offers a generous benefits package, which includes health, dental, and life insurance, retirement and savings plans, holidays, and annual/sick leave. Executive benefits include five additional days of administrative leave per year and a \$6,000/yr car allowance. To review the benefits brochure, please click [here](#).



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at jobs.crelate.com. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applicant submittals occurring by **November 10, 2025**.



Questions

Please direct questions to Pamela Wideman at pwideman@raftelis.com and Kelsey Batt at kbatt@raftelis.com.