

## **RECRUITMENT PROFILE:**

**Client:** LaunchTN  
**Position:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
**Location:** Tennessee

### **CLIENT SUMMARY:**

Launch Tennessee (LaunchTN) is a public-private partnership with a vision to make Tennessee the best place in the nation to start and grow a business. Its mission is to empower a high-functioning network of resources focused on core priorities that support Tennessee's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through a network of entrepreneur centers and partner organizations across the state, LaunchTN fosters collaboration among entrepreneurs, capital sources, companies, organizations, and government to offer startups what they need to succeed. The goal is to make needed resources easy to find for entrepreneurs, ensuring sustainable growth of these companies and the jobs they bring for Tennessee.

Created by Tennessee public statute in 1998, the Tennessee Technology Development Corporation, now known as LaunchTN (<https://launchtn.org/>), is a non-profit organization facilitating connections and collaboration through its network of seven regional entrepreneur centers, four industry-focused mentor networks, and one national organization that supports and convenes military-connected entrepreneurs. Tennessee is one of few states that combines and coordinates funding and resources of this magnitude on a statewide level under one organization, LaunchTN. LaunchTN strives to grow Tennessee's innovation-based economy by facilitating capital formation, connecting entrepreneurs and innovators with resources to expand their businesses and develop their technologies, and empowering the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

LaunchTN is located in Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, and currently employs 12 to 14 people with a \$3.3 million annual operating budget before allocations of approximately \$10M in grant funds for the state accelerators and entrepreneur centers. In addition, it has invested a total of \$36M of assets in 72 total companies to date (45 active investments) across LaunchTN Funds - INCITE (SSBCI 1.0) and the Impact Fund. The Impact Fund is an evergreen fund that continues to receive profits and make investments. LaunchTN also anticipates budget increases due to opportunities to manage federally funded investment funds. LaunchTN is the chief advocate and marketing organization for Tennessee's entrepreneurs. The organization produces the premier *3686 Festival*, a multi-day event of networking, speakers, mentoring and funding. Through the organization's

# STANTON CHASE

network of entrepreneur centers and partners across the state, LaunchTN offers curriculum, mentors, and access to capital to help entrepreneurs build their startups.

As a public-private entity with widespread support across the state, the opportunities before LaunchTN to bring leadership, focus, funds and support for Tennessee's high growth, high wage startups and the economic engines that operate around them are immense.

## **POSITION SUMMARY:**

LaunchTN is seeking an inspiring, collaborative leader to join their high-performing team as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This position will lead LaunchTN by working with the public and private sectors throughout the state to support public and private capital investment and entrepreneur support for Tennessee's most promising startups – truly being an advocate and connector for Tennessee's entrepreneur ecosystem. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the ideal candidate will have a demonstrated track record of successfully growing an organization, working with a broad and diverse set of stakeholders, and executing across multiple priorities.

Understanding the value of the collective ecosystem and the unique nuances of each network partner, the high-profile executive selected for this role must be a servant leader driven by the mission to transform lives and communities through advancing the economic growth of Tennessee by supporting and promoting entrepreneurs and startups throughout the state. The successful candidate will have a robust comprehension of innovation, scalability and entrepreneurship and will be committed to developing a strong team to lead the execution of the strategic plan that focuses on these areas of 1) **Ecosystem Development:** enhancing the statewide startup ecosystem through its Network Partners and other stakeholders while strengthening regional and national connectivity to position Tennessee as the best state in the nation to start and grow a business. 2) **Capital Formation:** expanding capital resources and expediting their availability to TN businesses so that they can grow, be sustainable, create jobs, and build accessible economic prosperity for our state. 3) **Commercialization:** coordinating with Tennessee's research institutions to bring additional opportunities and funding to support the bringing of Tennessee high-tech innovations to market.

## **PRIMARY ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Champion entrepreneurship across the state of Tennessee by enhancing existing alliances and building new ones that leverage public and private enterprises.
- Lead efforts to expand the availability of capital for Tennessee's most promising and scalable startup, high-tech businesses.
- Refresh and lead the implementation of the strategic plan for LaunchTN.

# STANTON CHASE

- Secure financial resources required to support the strategic plan. Funding is required from various sources, including the State of Tennessee, federal grants, private corporations, and events.
- Lead and inspire a high-performing team to achieve strategic and programmatic goals as well as encourage the professional development and advancement of the team.
- Maintain strong communication with the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development (ECD).
- Promote widespread support for entrepreneurship in Tennessee and advocate for LaunchTN's mission, program, and partners both inside and outside the state.
- Support technology development and innovation by making connections with Tennessee academic and research institutions.
- Manage the fiscal performance of the organization to budget.
- Ensure financial and programmatic compliance with ECD and other state and federal audits.
- Manage grant writing and fundraising.
- Act as Chief Brand Ambassador for the organization and entrepreneurship in Tennessee.
- Manage Board of Director communications and engagement.

## **KEY SELECTION CRITERIA:**

**Excellent Communication & Listening Skills:** Comfortable, articulate, and dynamic in front of all stakeholders, both internal and external. Must effectively communicate (both written and oral) to a diverse group of personalities. Demonstrated ability to listen authentically to others with a strong ability to synthesize information - combining clear and coherent the ideas of more than one source. Must be confident and comfortable in political, social, and organizational environments.

**Builds Partnerships:** Work collaboratively with diverse groups, including staff, network partners, Board of Directors, corporations, non-profits, public entities and institutions to champion entrepreneurship and tech-based economic development. Works through formal and informal channels to build broad-based relationships and support – regionally and nationally. Connects the right people to accomplish goals. Is effective in a variety of settings: one-on-one, small, and large groups.

**Results-Oriented & Mission-Driven:** Consistently achieves results, even under tough circumstances. Holds an achievement mindset, a bias for action, and an eagerness to take the initiative. Infuses the team with a passion for upholding the mission and vision of LaunchTN while creating a culture where performance, accountability, and unparalleled customer service are always top of mind.

# STANTON CHASE

**Builds Effective, Engaged & Diverse Teams:** Demonstrated experience in building and managing diverse teams where individuals are appreciated for their different experiences, values, expertise and expectations. A collaborative person without an ego, who is driven by the success of the team, network partners and overall ecosystem. An open, friendly individual who is perceived as authentic, credible, competent, trustworthy, and team-oriented.

**Strong Analytical, Financial & Critical Thinking Skills:** Exceptional business acumen with in-depth knowledge of capital formation, startup funding and small business financial drivers. Strong analytical and critical thinking skills. Focus on driving fact-based decisions and executing with discipline and urgency. Has a distinctive track record of successfully starting and leading companies/organizations/initiatives.

**Inspirational, Humble, Strategic Leader:** Leads by example and naturally gains the respect and enthusiasm of all stakeholders to jointly achieve strategic goals. Creates breakthrough strategies and metrics for success. Ability to be innovative and can contextualize future opportunities and trends accurately. Solicits a broad range of perspectives. Is future-oriented. Articulately paints credible pictures and visions of possibilities. A person who is not afraid to roll up his sleeves to get things done.

## **EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE:**

- Bachelor's degree required or equivalent working experience.
- Minimum of 10 years of either entrepreneurial experience building and leading companies/organizations (preferred) or experience with angel or venture investments with successful track record of working closely with entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders or a combination of these important experiences.
- Experience or proficient knowledge in venture capital and angel investment.
- Experience across capital structures in both public and private markets is ideal.
- Proven ability to manage a 10 to 15-person team.
- Experience working with publicly-elected officials and administrators is highly desirable.

*This company offers fair and equal employment opportunities for everyone regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other basis protected by local, state or federal law. We recruit, process, and assign all applicants on the basis of their qualifications for the particular job, and we do so without regard to any factor unrelated to their ability to fulfill job requirements.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

# STANTON CHASE

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## **ABOUT TENNESSEE:**

Companies, investors, shareholders, and executives choose Tennessee for sound fiscal management and significant new investments in the economic ecosystem. Tennessee's budgetary discipline has allowed many meaningful investments in public education, workforce development, and our international business reach.

Tennessee's central location within the United States means businesses can connect to customers and suppliers faster. Tennessee is home to the busiest cargo airport in the world, the third-largest rail center in the U.S., and the nation's fifth-largest inland port. Tennessee is conveniently accessible within a day's drive to most U.S. markets.

During Governor Lee's administration, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) has located over 300 projects, resulting in 58,500 new job commitments and \$20.5 billion in capital investment. The department has continued to focus its recruitment efforts on creating high-quality jobs. Since Governor Lee's inauguration, 79.3% of the department's new job commitments are high-quality jobs, which are defined as projects with average wages above the county median wage. TNECD has also focused on improving job opportunities in rural regions of the state. Of the more than 300 projects located during Lee's administration, 132 projects have located in rural counties, which includes 23,800 new jobs and \$12.6 billion in new capital investment.

As part of the department's recruitment strategy, TNECD has focused on attracting companies operating in tech and other areas of innovation. The department has secured numerous victories in a variety of innovative sectors that include electric-vehicle manufacturing, software publishing, digital media and data centers. Employment of Tennesseans in tech industries has increased 14% over the last five years, with approximately 50,000 employed in the sector. Major tech and innovation projects located by TNECD in recent years include: Oracle America's office hub (8,500 jobs in Nashville), Ford Motor Company's electric-vehicle assemble and battery plant (5,760 jobs in Haywood County), Amazon's Operations Center of Excellence (5,000 new jobs in Nashville), Ultium Cell's EV battery manufacturing (1,300 new jobs in Maury County), NTT DATA Services (350 new jobs in Nashville), and Facebook's data center (100 new jobs in Sumner County).

*Source: Tennessee Department of Economic Development*

# STANTON CHASE

## **20+ REASONS WHY THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY WITH LAUNCHTN:**

- Enthusiastic and connected Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.
- Robust partnerships with Entrepreneur Centers across the state.
- Strong partnerships with industry verticals in automotive, mobility, agriculture, advanced energy and life science.
- Great relationships with Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development and Economic Development Organizations across the state.
- Strong ties to state's research institutions, including universities, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.
- Enthusiastic, dedicated staff that loves the mission.
- Strong and engaged Board.
- Secured consistent funding.
- Potential for significant federal funds.
- A strong, successful SBIR match program.
- Experience operating investment funds.
- A substantial, active network of more than 150 mentors across the state.
- Building a partner statewide accelerator for Black Entrepreneurs.
- Engagement with powerful nationally known accelerators, including Techstars.
- A strong flagship annual event, *3686 Festival* that is well-known across the state and country.
- An influx of talent and connections to capital from across the country.
- Great opportunities to advance research in material science, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, biotech, medical devices, etc.
- Innovative rural entrepreneurship efforts.
- A phenomenal business environment, including tax-advantaged opportunity zones.
- Leading companies are relocating to Tennessee – Amazon, Oracle, Ford, SK Innovation, Alliance Bernstein.
- Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, Johnson City, Chattanooga and others are recognized as creative hubs – music, arts, television etc.
- Strong potential for corporate involvement and sponsorship.
- A statewide history of entrepreneurship.