COMPASS

Executive Director

WATERFRONT DISTRICT BIA | THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

Salary: $60,000–$75,000 | Reports to the Board of Management

Help shape the future of Thunder Bay's Waterfront District

The Waterfront District is home to independent businesses, restaurants, arts and culture, and one of Thunder Bay's greatest assets: Lake Superior. It is a place with a strong identity and considerable potential. It also faces real challenges, from vacant properties and pressure on local businesses to the need for more activity, investment, and coordinated action.

The Waterfront District Business Improvement Area (BIA) is looking for an Executive Director who can bring people together, represent local businesses, and turn priorities into visible progress. This is a hands-on leadership opportunity for someone who enjoys working directly with people and wants to make a difference in a neighbourhood they can see and experience every day.

The opportunity

Working with the Board of Management, you will lead the BIA's work to strengthen the district as a vibrant place to visit, do business, live, and invest. You will be a visible presence among members and community partners, a practical advocate for the district, and the person who keeps the organization focused on results.

What you will help achieve

- **Strategic leadership.** Turn the BIA's strategic priorities into achievable plans, make sound choices about where to focus limited resources, and keep the Board informed of progress and emerging opportunities.
- **Member relationships and advocacy.** Build trust with business and property owners. Work constructively with the City and community partners to advance shared priorities, including cleaner, more welcoming public spaces, stronger support for businesses, and conditions that encourage investment.
- **Programs and district development.** Build on the Waterfront District's cultural and culinary strengths through events, promotions, and partnerships that bring people downtown throughout the year. Help advance conversations about vacant properties, residential growth, and a more active mixed-use district, recognizing that many of these outcomes depend on partners.
- **Organizational management and Board support.** Keep day-to-day operations, communications, and finances well managed. Support the Board with clear information and recommendations, and explore practical ways to strengthen the BIA's funding and capacity over time.

You may be a good fit if you…

- Build strong working relationships with people who have different interests and perspectives.
- Can move from a conversation with a business owner to a meeting with City staff or the Board, and communicate effectively in each setting.
- Are organized, resourceful, and comfortable taking responsibility for both plans and practical follow-through.
- Understand budgets, priorities, and accountability, and know when to seek advice or support.
- Care about local business, downtown development, and the future of Thunder Bay.

Experience and potential

Experience in leadership, business, community development, economic development, association management, or a related field would be valuable. Familiarity with municipal processes, Board governance, advocacy, events or marketing would be assets. **We are interested in what you have accomplished, how you work with people, and your ability to learn.**

We recognize that strong candidates may bring different combinations of experience and skills. If you have the judgment, initiative, and relationship-building ability this role requires but are still developing in some areas, we encourage you to apply. **For the right candidate, the Board is open to discussing a scope of responsibility and development plan that allows you to grow into the full Executive Director mandate.**

What success could look like in your first year

- Members see an accessible, responsive BIA that understands their priorities.
- The Board has a realistic action plan, clear reporting, and evidence of progress on its strategic priorities.
- District events and partnerships support more consistent activity and a stronger Waterfront identity.
- The BIA has strengthened its working relationships with the City and other partners on issues it cannot resolve alone.

Compensation and how to apply

The salary range is $60,000–$75,000, with the starting salary and responsibilities to be discussed based on experience and the agreed scope of the role.

Please submit a resume and brief cover letter explaining your interest in the Waterfront District and the results you would bring to this role.

Apply to: melissa@compassleadership.ca
Deadline: December 11, 2026

The Waterfront District BIA welcomes applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.