



National Western Center Authority

Chief Executive Officer

2026

The Organization

The Organization	The National Western Center Authority
Revenue	\$15.8M
Staff	30+
Location	Denver, CO
Website	https://nationalwesterncenter.com/
Leadership	https://nationalwesterncenter.com/staff/
Overview	<p>The National Western Center Authority (“the Authority”) manages and operates a 250-acre year-round urban entertainment, engagement and education hub in Denver. While this campus dates back 150 years as the historic home to the National Western Stock Show (WSSA), the Authority was established in 2018 as a result of public-private collaboration to advance the legacy and vision of the Center. In close collaboration with partners including the Western Stock Show Association (WSSA), Colorado State University (CSU), and representatives from the surrounding communities, the Authority works to oversee development and management of the campus and venues, and drive year-round event booking and operations outside of the 16-day January Stock Show event.</p> <p>The National Western campus features multiple state-of-the-art facilities that include the CSU Spur, Stockyards Event Center, Sue Anschutz-Rodgers Livestock Center, Legacy Building (which opened January 2026), Equestrian Center, the Stockyards (multi-purpose outdoor area for large events) and Riverfront Open Space. The Authority books these venues (outside of the Legacy building, which is owned and operated by the WSSA and CSU Spur), as well as the to-be-built new Denver Coliseum. These venues accommodate audiences and events up to 25,000 attendees or more for outdoor events, and around 5,500 attendees indoors including concerts, festivals, trade shows, expos, conferences, corporate meetings, weddings, etc. Capacities as low as 20 attendees can be accommodated in conference rooms on site.</p> <p><i>History</i></p> <p>The National Western Center dates to the origins of Denver, when rail lines brought a booming cattle industry that thrived off Denver’s central location for trade, the open range, and rich mountain soil for cultivation. Founded in 1881, the Denver Union Stock Yard company was a central unit of sale and commerce. To support the burgeoning cattle industry, the Denver Union Stock Yard Exchange Building was constructed and later expanded to be the hub for stockyard and show operations, a newspaper, bank, Colorado State Farm Bureau and local office of the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.</p> <p>In 1906, the Denver Livestock Exchange hosted the first Western Livestock Show, which continued to grow and prosper, bringing people from across the world together annually to the livestock exchange of the year in a social, interactive event. The campus grew to include the National Amphitheater, Livestock Pavilion, Denver Coliseum, Hall of Education, Beef Palace, National Western Club, Expo Hall, Stadium Hall and Events Center.</p>



In 2011, the City and County of Denver, Western Stock Show Association, Colorado State University, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and History Colorado announced plans to develop a new vision for the future campus of the National Western Complex. In March 2015, the [National Western Center Master Plan](#) was adopted by Denver City Council to advance the vision of the National Western Center, and in 2018, the Authority was created and tasked with programming, operating and maintaining the campus in perpetuity.

The Position

Position Title	Chief Executive Officer
Location	Denver, CO
Reports To	Board of Directors
Direct Reports	Five: Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Real Estate Officer, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, and Director of Community Outreach & Engagement.
Position Summary	<p>The National Western Center Authority (“the Authority”) is entering a defining chapter as the Campus moves from vision and development into full operational reality. The new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will serve as both an inspirational, visionary leader and a disciplined operator, responsible for translating an ambitious civic mission into sustained performance, financial viability, and operational excellence.</p> <p>In close collaboration with the Authority’s operational partners, this leader is responsible for attracting high-quality programming, tenants, partners, and visitors year-round, while delivering exceptional guest experiences and maximizing asset utilization.</p> <p>The next CEO will be an experienced, polished executive and operator with a demonstrated ability to navigate a nuanced ecosystem of stakeholders that includes the City of Denver, WSSA, CSU, and community partners. The CEO will work closely with the Board of Directors to affirm and refine the long-term vision, mission, and strategies for increasing utilization of the still-growing campus, and then convert those aspirations into clear execution priorities, systems, and results. As facilities come online and expectations rise, the CEO will have full P&L responsibility and accountability for the financial growth and sustainability of the enterprise.</p> <p>The next CEO will serve as the public face, chief advocate, and global promoter of the National Western Center, respecting the campus’ agriculture and education legacy while broadening its reach programmatically, regionally, nationally, and internationally.</p> <p>The CEO must be a master communicator and consensus builder with the ability to engage city leadership, institutional partners, neighborhood stakeholders, customers and community organizations with integrity, transparency, and resolve. This leader will build a high-performing team, establish clear structures and processes, and scale the Center’s operational infrastructure to support programmatic growth, while balancing financial sustainability.</p>

Responsibilities

Vision, Strategies & Goals:

- Translate the Authority's vision into clear short- and long-term business objectives, execution roadmaps, and capital priorities.
- Work with the Board and executive team to determine clear guidelines and goals for facility utilization and revenue generating activities, with an eye toward diversification of revenue streams and expanding the existing customer base.
- Ensure enterprise-wide alignment by clearly identifying roles and expectations for shared governance with the WSSA and CSU.
- Partner with the Board to finalize remaining near- and longer-term development priorities, including the Equestrian Center to be completed by 2028, and guide implementation.

Sustainable Growth:

- Drive an integrated commercial strategy that aligns ticket sales, premium offerings, sponsorships, merchandise, and brand marketing.
- Lead sales, marketing and other growth-related activities for all venues under the Authority's management to ensure short-term and long-term revenue growth targets are achieved.
- Establish and track measurable performance metrics tied to bookings, revenue, EBITDA, customer satisfaction, loyalty, engagement, and consumption (ticket sales, premium products, sponsorships, food & beverage, and merchandise).
- Evaluate, develop, and price new products, programming, and experiences to expand and diversify the customer base locally, regionally, nationally, and beyond.

Operations:

- Collaborate with the Board and executive team to develop and implement management, operational, and workforce plans that support growth and profitability objectives.
- Build an agile organization capable of responding quickly and decisively to market opportunities, operational challenges, and changing conditions.
- Oversee P&L, real estate, and asset management decisions, in close consultation with key stakeholders.
- Serve as the Authority's lead negotiator on all contracts and revisions to the Framework Agreement.

Team Management:

- Recruit, retain and develop a world class team, suited for the new strategy and vision.
- Refine the organizational structure with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and decision rights aligned to strategic objectives.
- Provide the leadership and culture necessary to maintain a motivated, productive and competent team through open communication and delegation of responsibilities and authority.

External Relationships:

- Promote the visibility and reputation of the Authority and Campus globally by initiating, developing and sustaining effective relationships with all key stakeholders.
- Serve as the lead liaison between the Authority and neighboring communities – Globeville, Elyria and Swansea – and the leaders of the Community Investment Fund, engaging them with transparent dialogue and collaboration, respecting the history and identity and diversity of the residents.
- Build strong internal and external relationships with key stakeholders including community partners, local, regional and state business and government leaders, tenants, sponsors, and customers of the Campus.

The Person

Pivotal Experience & Expertise

Strategy & Governance: A strategic leader with a track record of innovation and mobilizing behind an ambitious vision. Demonstrated success developing, implementing, and articulating a vision for an organization, with an eye toward driving growth and forming partnerships around goals and strategy.

Commercial Experience – Events / Entertainment / Arena Management: Proven experience growing revenue and EBITDA from events, sponsorships, membership, philanthropic support, ticket sales, and other relevant activities. A commercially savvy leader with demonstrated ability to increase and diversify revenue streams through a variety of innovative strategies that align with long-term goals.

Executive Operations: Operational management experience (for-profit or non-profit) with a large, complex organization, driving growth and managing organizational change. Evidence of outstanding financial and operational management, including planning, budgeting, and resource allocation. Strong people management skills, and the ability to recruit, retain, and develop a high-performing and talented team.

Stakeholder Management: Ability to work with a diverse set of stakeholders, including boards, corporate and government partners, community organizations and residents, and customers. Proven track record navigating complex relationships and challenges with discernment and diplomatically balancing various priorities. Strong communication skills with the ability to build consensus.

Compensation for this role will be determined based on experience and skill set, with an anticipated salary range of \$300,000-\$350,000 (not including bonus) with an openness to consider alternative compensation approaches.

Nominations and interested individuals should be directed to: nationalwesternCEO@heidrick.com

Engagement Team

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