

Sarah L. Davasher-Wisdom

Experienced Chamber Executive

Skilled executive with significant experience in non-partisan advocacy within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. 15 years of leadership experience, including 10 years of non-partisan lobbying experience, 5 years of chamber experience and 3 years as the lead operator at the largest metro Chamber in Kentucky. Successful fundraiser who has led operational turnarounds, strategic planning, and product development. Master's and undergraduate degrees in fields of management, public relations, and political science; graduating from the Institute for Organizational Management in January 2020.

Professional Experience:

July 2014 – Present; Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI), Louisville Metro Chamber of Commerce, Louisville, KY

(January 2020 – Present); President & Chief Executive Officer

- Represents the organization to internal and external stakeholders and provides the leadership necessary to achieve GLI's purpose. Responsible for the day-to-day management of all GLI functions creating and carrying out policies established within the limits of the bylaws of GLI and policies established by the Board of Directors and for the long-range planning for GLI's effective performance.

(March 2019 – January 2020); Chief of Staff & Chief Operating Officer

- Manages, coaches, and leads a 31 staff team in order to grow the greater Louisville regional economy through traditional economic development; talent attraction, retention, and development; and public policy. Specific areas of oversight and leadership include government affairs, fundraising, finance, marketing and communications, economic development, talent attraction and workforce, human resources, board and foundation relations, products and events, strategic planning, and grant writing.

Notable Achievements:

Government Affairs: Launched a government affairs program that went from a 62% success rate in 2015 to a 75% success rate resulting in a better business climate.

Fundraising: Implemented processes and accountability metrics that resulted in moving investment and dues revenue from \$2.4M in 2014 to \$3.9M in 2018. Personally led campaign fundraising asks with a 53% dollars closed ratio.

Communications: Doubled number of articles mentioning GLI, with 96% positive or neutral articles, resulting in increased member satisfaction as measured by NPS. Specifically the score in 2019 was 38, compared to -16 in 2014.

Human Resources: Oversight of full HR process. Led efforts to improve employee satisfaction with a result of 42% to 85%

Greater Louisville Foundation: Restructured the Foundation to be an independent revenue-producing entity focused on talent attraction and retention

Earned Income: Led implementation of a product that provides over \$100,000 each year in revenue and provides hundreds of members with access to health care

Board engagement: Led board engagement efforts that resulted in 92% of board members serving on committees

Grants: Initiated and led grant writing initiative that yielded \$1.4M in grant funding during a two-year period, which enabled the launch of a talent attraction campaign

Strategy: Led multiple strategic planning processes, including the current \$7.5M capital campaign plan that stands at 80% to goal and will close in 60 days. Other specific results include formation of a 15-county economic development partnership, a collaborative partnership with the Academies of Louisville, a tax reform coalition, and a workforce think tank.

Finance: Personally led a multi-month budgeting process based on the strategic plan

Leadership: Secured 5-star accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Awards: Recognized as one of the top three chambers in the U.S. from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives

(April 2016 – March 2019); Chief Operating Officer

- Managed, coached and led the Metro Chamber team that includes: Finance & Administration, Human Resources, Government Affairs, Communications, Strategic Planning, Board Administration, Greater Louisville Foundation, Events, Sponsorship, Products, Investor Development, and Marketing.

(October 2015 – April 2016); Senior Vice President, Public Affairs & Strategy

- Managed, coached and led the Metro Chamber team that includes: Government Affairs, Communications, Strategic Planning, Board Administration, and the Greater Louisville Foundation.

(July 2014 – April 2016); Vice President, Government Affairs & Public Policy

- Developed and managed all activities related to government affairs and public policy; monitored local, state and federal issues as they impact the mission and work of GLI; and developed GLI's state and federal legislative agendas.

(September 2011 – July 2014); Manager of Government Relations, Kentucky District, Tennessee Valley Authority, Bowling Green, KY

- Represented the TVA Board in relations with the KY state legislature, Governor's office and administration, as well as district congressional staffs throughout the 36 county TVA region in KY.

Notable Achievement:

Lobbying: Led passage of HB 192, which alleviated duplicative reporting requirements for TVA distributors. The bill was the fourth sent to the Governor's desk during the regular session of the 2014 General Assembly.

(January 2009 - September 2011); Strategic Communications Officer; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville, KY

- Launched state legislative outreach initiative to secure funding for community projects needed local match; coordinated community relations, and public/military command information in the overall management of the Louisville District's strategic communications program.

March 2004 – January 2009; Congressman Ron Lewis, Elizabethtown, KY

(November 2004 - January 2009); Community Development Coordinator

- Developed and implemented a community and economic development program for Congressman Lewis based on proactive and outreach-oriented constituent service.

(December 2005 - January 2007); Acting Executive Director; Central Kentucky PRIDE,

- Spearheaded Central Kentucky PRIDE, a nonprofit organization designed to identify and address environmental concerns across the 2nd Congressional district.

(March 2004 - November 2004); Field Representative

- Served as a liaison within a 10-county region for Congressman Lewis.

(July 2001 - March 2004); Office/Sales Manager; American Heritage Homes & Heritage Creek Construction, Bowling Green, KY

Notable Achievement:

Sales: Distinguished as “top salesperson of the year” for every year employed by the company.

Educational Background and Certifications:

Master of Public Administration, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 2006

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and Public Relations; Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 2004

Certificate Program in Legislative Studies, Georgetown University, Government Affairs Institute, 2010

Institute for Organizational Management, 2018-present (Graduation anticipated January 2020)

International Economic Development Council courses in workforce and economic development, 2019

Honors and Group Affiliation:

Graduate, Institute for Organizational Management, January 2020

Fund for the Arts Board of Directors, 2017-present; Advocacy Chair 2018-Present; Campaign Leadership Team 2017-2019; Finance Committee 2019; Resource Development Committee 2018-present

Graduate, 2015 Bingham Fellows

Graduate, 2013 Leadership Bowling Green

Member, Toastmasters International, 2009-2010

