



ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA®

The World's Premier Balloon Event

Executive Director *Position Narrative*



Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta

The [Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta](#) began as a small gathering of 13 balloons in 1972, and has grown to become the largest ballooning event worldwide, with over 550 balloons and 700 pilots, making it a joyous, spectacular experience for hundreds of thousands of international visitors, tourists, and residents every year.

The mission of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc. (AIBF) is to conduct the world's premier ballooning event while promoting the sport of ballooning, the City of Albuquerque, and the State of New Mexico, nationally and internationally. AIBF welcomes balloonists from all over the world to attend this event for the advancement of the sport of aerostation, renewing friendships, and promoting camaraderie among all participants.

Held during the first full week of October, the nine-day event starts early each morning with hundreds of hot air balloons launching into the New Mexico skies, filling the Rio Grande Valley with amazing views. The evening events include Balloon Glows where tethered balloons light up the night, followed by an incomparable drone light show and a dazzling display of fireworks. Balloon Fiesta Main Street offers a smorgasbord of entertainment, including concerts and performances, a vast array of food vendors, retail, arts and crafts, Balloon Discovery Center exhibit, and giveaways. In all, there are 14 audience-pleasing sessions that include Mass Ascensions, Balloon Glows, and a variety of other balloon events.



In between sessions, Balloon Fiesta guests explore attractions, museums, and restaurants, and outdoor activities in Albuquerque and throughout the central part of New Mexico. The local economies benefit greatly from the nine-day event thanks to millions of dollars in additional tourism-related revenue. Balloon Fiesta's most recent Economic Impact Study revealed that the event attracts approximately 828,000 visitors, including almost 630,000 from outside New Mexico, and had an overall economic impact of over \$203 million.

For Albuquerque residents, Balloon Fiesta is a unique occasion to celebrate the local culture and interact within the community. It is an annual ritual where they can meet with friends and family, enjoy local foods, and take pride in the natural beauty of the place they call home.

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with annual revenues of over \$16 million, most of which is program services revenue generated from the event itself. AIBF has 18 total employees and is led by a 24-member board of directors. During the event, the total number of employees, contractors, and volunteers exceeds 1,200.



The Opportunity

The AIBF Board of Directors is seeking a new Executive Director. This leadership transition comes at a pivotal moment for AIBF. The organization has achieved significant growth, economic impact, and worldwide recognition over its 52 years. However, AIBF faces challenges to sustaining and building on its success, including physical growth, landing sites, weather, governmental pressures, public safety, traffic, lodging, and parking.

To help realize its goals, further support its mission, and better position the Balloon Fiesta for future success, AIBF is seeking a visionary and action-oriented leader with the experience, skills, and determination to further develop and drive strategies to:

- a. refine and focus its mission and articulate a shared vision and actionable plan for its future;
- b. nurture the small but capable staff and build a collaborative teamwork culture that values staff input and development;
- c. advance the continued development of a highly effective, engaged, and knowledgeable board committed to the AIBF mission;
- d. strengthen and diversify revenue; expanding existing revenue streams and identify new revenue-generating opportunities to include corporate sponsorships;
- e. maintain financial stability and increase operational efficiency, by enhancing current systems, resources, policies, procedures, and programs;
- f. elevate visibility and awareness of the value of AIBF's programs and services, and the organization as a whole among key audiences;
- g. build and maintain meaningful, lasting relationships with outside stakeholders involved with AIBF, including local, state, and federal governments agencies, Native American leadership, the FAA, and others.



The successful candidate will bring, at a minimum, a genuine interest in learning the sport of ballooning. Deeply committed to AIBF's mission and the communities it serves, this person will have a caring, inclusive, and team-building leadership style that inspires and empowers the Board, staff, and volunteers, encourages collaboration, and fosters innovation.

AIBF has a committed board of 24 directors and a small, but capable, caring, and knowledgeable staff. With the search for a new Executive Director, AIBF is entering a transitional period, inviting new opportunities for innovative leadership with the advantages of having a strong foundation and a tradition of event success.



Position Summary

The Executive Director will serve as AIBF's lead executive and, in partnership with the Board of Directors and staff, will be responsible for the overall success of the organization. This includes leading and supporting the Board and staff through the development, refinement, and execution of a strategic plan to articulate a shared vision and actionable plan for the future.

Reporting to the [Board of Directors](#), the Executive Director will work closely with the Board President and Officers and will provide guidance and leadership to AIBF's dedicated internal staff and volunteers.

Externally, the Executive Director will serve as a lead spokesperson and advocate for the Balloon Fiesta to all audiences and will work to strengthen and expand relationships important to the organization, including but not limited to, community leaders, Native American leaders from neighboring Pueblos, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and media. The Executive Director will work closely with the Board and Board President, establishing policies, providing clear direction, and ensuring effective implementation of the AIBF mission, strategic plans, and corporate sponsorship goals by engaging, inspiring, supporting, and working with staff and volunteers.

AIBF's next Executive Director will demonstrate a high level of professionalism and integrity; a transparent, team-oriented, and collaborative style; an enthusiasm for the mission of the organization; and a commitment to boldly pursuing sustainable growth and change to move AIBF forward.

Key responsibilities for the next Executive Director include the following:

Provide Visionary and Strategic Leadership to Sustain and Strengthen AIBF:

- Provide overall strategic leadership for AIBF; serving as a champion for innovation, navigating issues, and increasing the organization's reach and impact on all communities it serves.
- Establish an inclusive and transparent planning process with the Board and staff to develop a shared, unified vision for the future of AIBF.
- Collaborate with the Board and staff to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan to move toward actualizing the vision; ensuring that the budget, staff, and priorities are aligned with AIBF's core mission and that the plan balances the need for structure and proactive strategies with the need to be flexible and reactive as unforeseen issues arise.
- Lead the staff and partner with the Board to determine the pace at which priorities can be advanced, decide which projects deserve primary attention, and monitor the rate at which decisions are implemented.





Position Summary (CONTINUED)

Sustain and Support a Vibrant Staff and Board Culture:

- Provide consistent leadership and clear direction to staff at all levels. Define organizational and individual goals, specify responsibilities and accountabilities, and evaluate staff performance regularly.
- Inspire and mentor staff, and promote a caring, professional, and efficient work environment that actively prioritizes diversity and inclusion, encourages innovation, supports professional development, and promotes the success of all staff in establishing, executing, and achieving goals.
- Promote a culture that facilitates cross-functional collaboration, strengthens communications and positive feedback loops throughout the organization, and values the impact that all staff have on each other and the overall mission.

Strengthen AIBF's Infrastructure and Operations:

- Partner with the Board to provide overall leadership and direction for all AIBF activities, managing day-to-day operations, finance, HR, IT, etc., to ensure the organization is operating in an effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner.
- Maintain the financial health of the organization, including developing long and short-range financial plans, monitoring the budget and ensuring sound financial controls are in place. Set financial priorities accurately to ensure the organization can support the needs and goals for the programs, services, and staff.
- Ensure there is sufficient revenue to meet AIBF's operational needs and strategic goals by increasing the efficacy of current revenue sources and identifying opportunities to develop new sources.
- Analyze current operating systems, practices and costs, identify and explore opportunities to increase efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and impact; using data and research to inform key decisions.
- Work with local government and external partners to ensure proper infrastructure and support for AIBF events and programs.
- Work with the FAA to ensure an expansive and safe aviation event.
- Work closely with the Board, staff, and volunteers to plan for and execute AIBF's annual events and programs.
- Elevate event and program quality through regular assessment of services for efficiency and effectiveness, alignment with mission, potential for impact, sustainability, and funding.
- Work with staff and Board to design, implement and monitor comprehensive public safety and flight safety precautions and security to ensure Balloon Fiesta's position as the largest and most impactful Balloon event in the world.

Position Summary (CONTINUED)

Represent and Advocate for AIBF Effectively with External Constituents:

- In conjunction with the staff and Board, serve as lead spokesperson, advocate, and relationship-builder for the AIBF brand, on all issues important to the organization.
- Initiate, grow, and maintain cooperative relationships and strategic partnerships with key constituencies, including balloon pilots, volunteers, elected officials, the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, the State of New Mexico, the Pueblo of Sandia and other local Native American leadership, the FAA, local, state, and federal safety and law enforcement agencies, tourism agencies, the general public, and media (traditional and digital).
- Actively participate in identifying, cultivating, and soliciting corporate prospects, and lead staff responsible for these activities.
- Partner with the Board and lead the staff to develop and implement comprehensive, targeted, and proactive marketing and branding strategies to support AIBF's mission and visibility.
- Facilitate the integration of AIBF into the fabric of the communities it serves, expanding and strengthening its reach and impact through proactive marketing and direct involvement with community leaders.
- Encourage and empower the Board and staff to also serve as external ambassadors and relationship developers to further AIBF's mission.



Candidate Profile

The successful candidate will be a collaborative, inclusive, transparent, and proactive leader with the professional experience and leadership attributes to inspire respect and shared vision among AIBF's staff, board, volunteers, external partners, and among the communities the organization serves. This leader will have a genuine interest in and commitment to the Balloon Fiesta mission as a world-leading aviation event and with the Board and staff will advocate for the interests of the AIBF.

The Executive Director will have demonstrated ability in organizational administration with ten or more years of senior leadership and management experience. Prior nonprofit experience and experience gained working in large, multi-day event-driven organizations desired, but not required. The Executive Director must be someone committed to learning about ballooning and the operations of large aviation events. An appreciation, if not love, for the culture of the southwest and New Mexico, is a plus.

The AIBF Board seeks candidates with the following specific qualities, characteristics, and experience. Understanding that each candidate brings relative strengths and areas in need of improvement and that no single candidate will be equally strong in every area, we encourage all who are interested to apply.

Visionary and Strategic Organizational Leadership:

- An action-oriented leader with the ability and willingness to "roll up their sleeves" and do what is needed to keep assignments on track.
- Proven success driving unified vision, change, and growth within an organization and translating broad goals into achievable steps.
- Exceptional deductive reasoning, critical thinking, analytic, strategic planning, and synthesis skills, with the intellectual curiosity and willingness to encourage and champion innovation, and the ability to generate buy-in and develop consensus and excitement for new ideas, while maintaining a sense of urgency and commitment to results.
- An entrepreneurial, self-motivated, confident, and influential style that is coupled with sensitivity and flexibility. A leader who is an advocate for growth and change and achieving results collaboratively.
- A trustworthy and accountable leader, with a genuine interest, strong alignment, and commitment to the AIBF mission. A leader with the highest ethical and professional standards, as well as the ability to manage the most sensitive and challenging issues with tact, diplomacy, and discretion.



Candidate Profile (CONTINUED)

Staff Management and Board Support:

- An accessible, caring, facilitative leadership style, with the ability to mentor, motivate, and empower staff with respect and kindness; a commitment to transparency, collaboration, and fairness; and the ability to balance these with the needs for expediency, decisiveness, and accountability.
- Success building a unified organizational culture, with collaborative, cross-functional staff. A leader who acknowledges and celebrates individual and collective staff success.
- Track record of prioritizing and promoting the professional development of staff, leadership, and of self.
- Experience partnering with a board in leading organizational growth and/or change, including the skill and ability to deal effectively with demanding situations, assessing all factors, and developing and implementing successful solutions is highly desired.



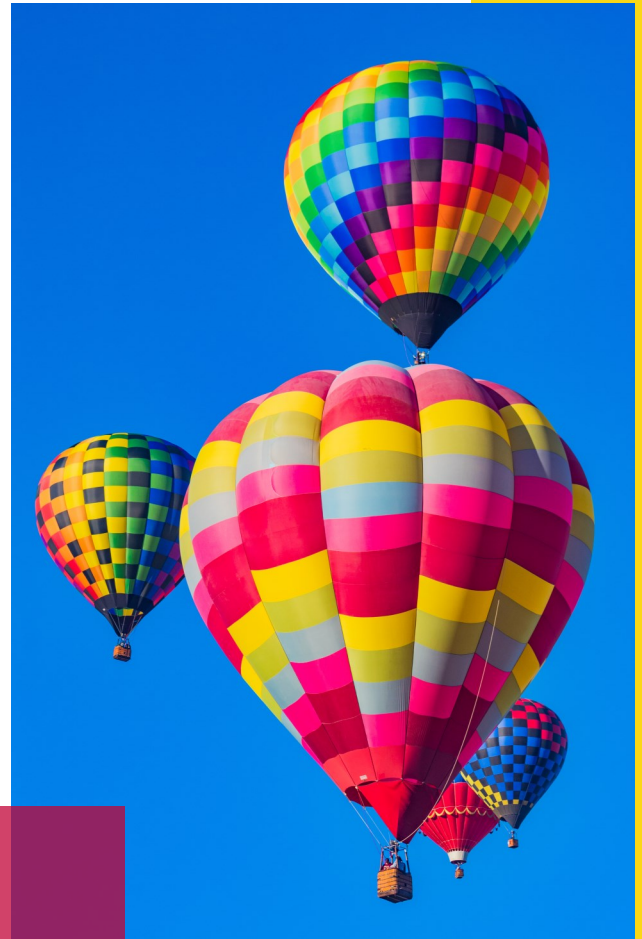
Operational and Administrative Leadership:

- Demonstrated success overseeing the following areas: corporate development; marketing and communications; finance; human resources; planning and evaluation; data analytics; and governance. Working knowledge of general business operations in a nonprofit environment is highly desired.
- A financially savvy leader with strong business acumen, solid financial grounding, and a track record of working with staff and boards on effective budgeting and resource allocation.
- Demonstrated success increasing efficiency of existing revenue sources and/or developing and implementing new revenue-generating strategies.
- Excellent organizational, administrative and project management skills, including the ability to diagnose critical areas that require attention, assimilate information quickly, arrive at conclusions and accurately represent a position to a variety of audiences; and then translate strategies into achievable steps.

Candidate Profile (CONTINUED)

External Relations, Sponsorship, Marketing, and Communications:

- Strong written and oral communications skills, as well as the listening and interpersonal skills to serve as an enthusiastic, charismatic, and credible ambassador for AIBF. Must be comfortable with public speaking and with being interviewed by a range of media outlets locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Proven ability to build and nurture meaningful, lasting relationships with internal and external stakeholders at all levels, and to educate, influence, and motivate key audiences. Previous success working with civic leaders at the city, county, state, and federal levels preferred.
- Previous success building and leveraging relationships for the benefit of an organization, including utilizing relationships to identify and secure revenue.



Education and Certifications

Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of relevant education and experience required. Holding a pilot certificate with any type of rating, or experience with regulatory agencies such as the FAA is desirable. Bilingual or multilingual a plus.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

AIBF and Berkhemer Clayton, Inc. are committed to a process that values diversity and inclusion. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, socioeconomic status, political viewpoint, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

Procedure For Confidential Candidacy

Submit resumes or nominations, with assurance of confidentiality, to Berkhemer Clayton, Inc.:

Ben Lambert
President
Higher Education, Healthcare & Nonprofit Practice
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