

Position Profile

On behalf of our client, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership,

*CohenTaylor Executive Search Services
is conducting a retained executive search for its*

Chief Executive Officer



Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

Fast Facts

- An innovative regional community development organization serving a core area of 27 counties in southern and western Minnesota.
- 2018 Corporate budget: \$3.7M
- 2017 Consolidated revenue: \$17M
- 2017 Consolidated assets of \$121.6M
- 26 Staff members
- 11 Board members
- Offices in Slayton, MN and Mankato MN

Accomplishments include:

- Owns and operates 1,769 rental units and 50 properties, with 400+ units currently financed and in the pipeline
- Gathered over \$618,943,921 of public and private investment to the region.
- Initiated and developed comprehensive homebuyer services, which has now served 4,541 people in education, 1,341 households in mortgage counseling, 233 households in foreclosure counseling, 210 households in post-purchase/counseling, 170 households in financial literacy, and 34 households in financial coaching.
- Enabled 326 households to purchase homes with low-interest mortgages, gap financing, or closing cost assistance.
- Constructed 270 new affordable single-family homes in growing communities
- Provided 79 units of service-enriched housing for families and individuals.
- Rehabilitated 1,859 homes and 2,747 rental housing units for low-income families in local communities.
- Repaired 336 downtown businesses and community buildings through low-interest loan programs.
- Provided disaster relief services to 626 families affected by tornadoes or floods.



SWMHP MISSION

To create thriving places to live, grow, and work through partnerships with communities.

SWMHP OVERVIEW

The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership is a non-profit community development corporation serving twenty-seven counties in Southwest and South-Central Minnesota. The Partnership aims to build strong and healthy places to live so that the communities of our region thrive. We believe strong community development supports economic development.

To do this we work with our community partners to help them:

Plan. Community Development planning and market analysis are important steps in community building. The Partnership assists cities, counties, and townships to evaluate their local needs, create a realistic plan, and access funding sources to get started.

Build. The Partnership strives to provide quality, safe affordable housing for residents in the region by constructing, acquiring and/or rehabbing affordable rental units; and making homeownership possible for more people by designing and building quality homes at affordable prices.

Empower. Not only do we provide financial and homeownership capability services, we continually seek and secure funding to provide low-interest mortgages and closing cost assistance.

Preserve. Maintaining the vitality of communities in our region often requires reinvestment in homes, rentals and businesses. The Partnership helps secure funding and administering rehabilitation efforts.

Support. In each community, we provide development expertise to support local governments, businesses, school districts, community action agencies, and other service providers in their efforts to meet local housing needs.



HISTORY

In 1990, communities of southwestern Minnesota were struggling with the results of their own success coming out of the Farm Crisis of the 1980s. Labor needs were changing and labor shortages growing, resulting in the active in-migration of people into Southwestern Minnesota. The results included housing shortages and other infrastructure constraints that were creating barriers to the continued growth of the local economy and efforts to broaden the job base. Communities across the region began seeking solutions to these challenges.

The local public sector and private non-profits from southwestern Minnesota began responding to their communities and sought technical assistance. In response to this need, on May 16, 1992, three community action agencies and a regional planning organization together organized the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership.

Today, SWMHP is a highly productive, innovative and well-respected regional community development organization that serves a core area of twenty-seven counties in southern and western Minnesota. It is known for its enduring partnerships with communities and for providing quality services and products. SWMHP has grown to become a premier housing and community development organization in Minnesota. It has gained national recognition, as evidenced by substantial funding from national partners such as NeighborWorks America and ArtPlace America.

Since its inception, SWMHP has accomplished the following tangible results:

- Developed, financed or rehabilitated over 9,000 housing units;
- Leveraged and secured over \$600 million in private and public investment for the service area;
- Served over 6,500 households to become homeowners or to retain homeowner status, through education, counseling and lending;
- Own and operate over 1,700 affordable rental units in 50 properties across 28 rural communities and have preserved or developed 1800 additional rental units for other owners;
- Maintain a robust real estate development pipeline, currently have over 400 units in process.

CURRENT PRODUCTS

SWMHP promotes and delivers a high-quality comprehensive menu of housing services and products, including:

- Community Planning & Technical Assistance
- Homeownership Assistance
- Community Building & Engagement
- Land Development & Redevelopment
- Housing Preservation & Rehabilitation
- Single Family Housing Development
- Multi-Family Housing Development
- Housing Assessments & Inspections
- Supportive Housing Services

CURRENT PARTNERS

The work of SWMHP is relationship driven and is long tenured. Development partners in the region include a broad array of organizations and communities. Some of SWMHP's current partners include the Kandiyohi County HRA, the Redwood Area Development Corporation and the Redwood Falls HRA, the Southwest Minnesota Mental Health Center, the Nicollet County Drug Court and Nicollet County Health and Human Services, Southwest Health and Human Services, the Southwest Initiative Foundation, Economic Development Authorities including: the St. Peter EDA, Montevideo EDA, St. James EDA, Blue Earth EDA, Mankato and Blue Earth County EDA and multiple communities.

SWMHP is also an active member of several regional and national housing and community development associations, affiliated with [Rural LISC](#), [Enterprise Community Partners](#), [Housing Partnership Network](#), [National Rural Housing Coalition](#), ArtPlace America, and is a Chartered Member of [NeighborWorks® America](#).

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

SWMHP's competitive advantages include:

- A comprehensive front to back end suite of services with excellent delivery, from community planning to project and program execution
- An ability to leverage financing and funding streams, at the local, state and national levels
- Highly respected real estate development and project management skills
- A highly innovative and entrepreneurial spirit with a willingness to take risks and respond to community needs
- An effective and responsive partner with a powerful set of local, regional and national relationships
- Highly valued human capital and is respected for the quality, competence and responsiveness of staff
- An important regional and national player in policy and advocacy work

INNOVATION

SWMHP helps communities solve community issues, and this focus has driven SWMHP to seek many innovative solutions over the past 20 years. Three innovative programs currently underway include Partnership Art, Financial Capabilities and Solace.

Partnership Art – an innovative approach to using art as a Community Builder.

In September 2015, SWMHP was the recipient of a three-year award from ArtPlace America's Community Development Investments (CDI) program to assist in incorporating arts and cultural strategies into our ongoing work with communities in the region. A project which became a program of SWMHP now called Partnership Art.

The goal of Partnership Art is to engage arts and cultural strategies in community planning efforts that provide outcomes representative of the diverse demographics of SW Minnesota

- To help strengthen the social, physical and economic fabric of rural, diverse communities
- To engage the diverse cultural groups of the southern Minnesota regions
- To broaden the capacity for and network of community place makers in the region who can develop and lead creative strategies to approach community planning, development and engagement.

SWMHP focused this work by partnering with three communities in the region (St. James, Worthington and Milan); as well as bringing on a resident artist to focus on the internal structure and processes of the organization.

The results of Partnership Art have been strong. With the ArtPlace CDI funding, SWMHP was able to partner with artists and arts organizations to assist in addressing community/organizational opportunities and needs in each of the locations using arts and culturally based community development strategies. Results demonstrated more equitable and inclusive involvement by community members, and outcomes which generated with, rather than for or to, each of the communities.

Given its record of effectiveness and innovation, Partnership Art was recognized as a compelling new aspect of SWMHP's efforts on behalf of the region's changing towns and neighborhoods. The long-term success of what

is being called “Partnership Art 2.0” will depend on the continued integration of creative practice and thinking into SWMHP’s programs and organizational culture. For this to occur, these attributes will need to be reinforced by structural and symbolic reminders that this way of working is SWMHP’s “new normal.”

Financial Capabilities – an innovative approach to supporting diverse communities.

SWMHP’s homeownership services are driven by local and regional demographics. Minnesota has the largest homeownership gap in the nation (38%). In Southern Minnesota, populations of color are primarily a result of immigration, including refugee resettlement. Demographics for these communities indicate that the largest emerging market groups in the region are Hispanic/Latino, Southeast Asian, and East African. There are over 50 languages spoken in the region.

The Homeownership Department has found direct engagement with diverse communities effective in determining there is more to reducing the homeownership gap than just down payment assistance and mortgage assistance. Many clients are not ready for homeownership due to economic or credit problems. For those that may be ready for homeownership, the lack of safe and affordable housing has made it difficult for those that have little to no home maintenance skills to purchase. Responding to the needs of these clients has led SWMHP to expand its approaches with activities such as teaching home maintenance workshops, growing partnerships with ESL and Adult Basic Education providers, and new upstream services like financial capability courses.

Financial Capabilities is provided to anyone over 18 years old; focuses on new immigrants, populations of color, low-to-moderate income households, and single parents; and covers topics such as: budgeting, banking, building credit, identify theft, and mortgages; though each course is designed to meet the needs of the clients.

Solace –An innovative approach to re-entry housing.

This 30-unit multi-family housing complex, with services, in St. Peter is set to open in October of 2018; and the story behind the development of this project is a compelling one. The evolution started with concern from Nicollet County Court and Social Services about the recidivism cycle occurring in individuals exiting the drug court system. SWMHP entered the conversation early to discuss opportunity for a supportive housing community that would target women exiting the system for family reintegration and intensive services; and a community based Solace “advisory group” was brought together to inform the next steps, including: City of St. Peter, Nicollet County- Commissioners, Probation, Prosecutor, Defenders, and Public Health, the School District and a Drug Court Graduate.

The group was battling uphill with a system that is incredibly siloed and complex. Several barriers were encountered along the way, including: access to rural support services, management of a difficult to house population; NIMBY; and most significant, complications related to interpretation of the 1999 Supreme Court’s Olmstead Decision (“integration mandate” of the ADA requiring public agencies to provide services in the most integrated setting appropriate), and development costs higher than desirable for competitive Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding. The group worked hard at the State level and was able to reverse the Olmstead interpretation. In the process, the project gained interest at State and National levels, was successfully funded in 2017, and will be the first of its kind in MN, is increasingly viewed a potential model for other communities and agencies faced with similar systemic housing issues.



THE ROLE

SWMHP is currently seeking a dynamic and innovative leader for their next CEO. This is an incredible opportunity to guide the future direction of SWMHP, following the retirement of their long-time founder, and legacy leader.

Reporting to the Board, the SWMHP CEO is responsible for the overall strategic, operational, and financial management of all entities of the organization. The CEO will serve as a visionary leader, and will adapt and refine the future strategic plan to stay current and continue to meet the needs of the communities in Southern Minnesota. This new CEO will act as a catalyst for change, capitalizing on innovation underway, and utilizing the positive energy and momentum of the staff to propel the organization forward. They will play a key role in developing and mentoring staff, ensuring the correct organizational structure is in place, ensuring staff are working toward consistent outcomes. The board anticipates that in the first year, the new CEO's time will be equally split internally and externally.

The CEO will have total leadership responsibility of 26 staff, split between the Mankato and Slayton locations.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy & Vision

- Develop and maintain a strategic planning process that clearly communicates the priorities of the organization's mission, goals and objectives, ensures that the strategic priorities are implemented as adopted.
- Provide for future development and growth of the organization that is consistent with and in alignment with mission, goals and objectives and conform to customer need.

Management, Finance & Operations

- Responsible for financial planning and budgeting consistent with the board's goals, priorities, strategic plan.
- Lead and develop SWMHP's staff through organizational structuring planning, assigning accountability, training, and effective communication.
- Proactively develop staff skills through coaching/mentoring, training, and special projects.
- Administer the day-to-day operations of the SWMHP organization.
- Create, monitor, and report against the annual budget while maintaining sound fiscal processes
- Evaluate financial trends, assesses internal opportunities and risk in relationship to the financial position of the organization in order to effectively compete for capital, manage financial resources and adopt best in class financial processes.

Revenue Generation

- Work with the existing SWMHP development team to identify, prioritize, and structure new multi-family projects to ensure future revenue goals are met.

Board Relations

- Collaborate with the Board, Executive Committee, and staff to build SWMHP's strategic direction.
- Identify, recruit and nurture future Board participation and leadership.
- Ensure the achievement of the Board's long-range goals and initiatives.
- Report information required to enable the board to act with appropriate fiduciary responsibility.

Organizational Culture

- Provide leadership and foster a team culture consistent with SWMHP's values.
- Continue to build a culture of trust and collaboration, breaking down silos and ensuring staff are working collectively toward common goals.
- Capitalize and build on the existing momentum and collaboration around innovative approaches to community development.
- Prioritize existing and new work for the organization to ensure work life balance.

National External Relations & Governmental Affairs

- Communicate the organization's position to public and private agencies, individuals and the news media and represents the organization in meetings of local, state and national organizations and governments.
- Lead and manage all government and public relations activities.
- Nurture relationships with representatives of local, regional and state government and other organizations both public and private.
- Direct and collaborate the organizations legislative lobbyist efforts to represent appropriate community development interests.
- Act as a national thought leader on community development best practices.

Regional and Local Thought Leadership and Relationship Management

- Build and maintain strong relationships in the region with industry-related stakeholders.
- Foster and develop future, innovative partnerships in the region.
- Act as regional thought leader on community development best practices, championing the rural communities SWMHP supports.

Limited Partnerships and Subsidiaries

- Manage all affiliated and subsidiary organizations and ensure that all activities are in conformance with applicable law, regulations and appropriate business principals.

“Affordable Housing is important because it gives people a nice place to live. It's motivation to do better because of stable, quality housing.”

-Sibley Park Apartments Resident, Lindsey P.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Proven organizational leadership experience as CEO or relevant role.
- Proven experience actively mentoring and developing staff.
- Demonstrable competency in strategic planning, and establishing an organizations vision for future growth, while managing current organizational capacity.
- Prior experience with earned income or joint venture components.
- Excellent interpersonal and public speaking skills.
- Adept at board governance.
- Experience leading organizations through change.

- Local or national expertise in housing and/or community development.
- Working knowledge of housing and community development, including the MN Housing Credit projects & technology.
- Proven experience with complex real estate development transactions, ideally in a rural setting.
- Experience with USDA Rural Development programs and requirements.
- Passionate about acting as the voice and advocate of the communities of Southern Minnesota, as well as nationally.
- Politically astute in community building; equipped to build trusting partnerships across race and socioeconomic divisions.
- Strong ability to advocate on behalf of rural and affordable housing initiatives
- Willing and able to take risks.
- Proven experience establishing strong external relationships across varied constituencies.

Education and Experience

- A Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration or related field required. Related master's degree preferred.
- It is preferred that candidates have a minimum of 7-10 years of industry experience in public or business administration, housing and community development or not-for-profit environment with 7-10 years leadership experience.

Location & Work Arrangement

- This CEO will be co-located at the Slayton, MN and Mankato, MN offices.
- In addition, local and national travel will be required frequently.

**For more information or to send your credentials, please email info@cohentaylor.com
All inquiries will remain confidential.**

