

The Company Lab (CO.LAB)
Chattanooga, TN
Job Description: Chief Executive Officer

What: CEO job opening

Where: The Company Lab, 11-year-old nonprofit organization

Work environment: Fast-paced, flexible, head-down and hardworking, fun

Industry/sectors: Nonprofit, startup, entrepreneurial

When: Summer 2022

Where: Chattanooga, TN

Salary: Competitive (compensation, benefits, and relocation stipend if needed)

Team: Currently includes five other achievement-driven, motivated members

Who is CO.LAB?

The Company Lab (CO.LAB) is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to accelerating startup businesses in the greater Chattanooga region. We support companies from launch to scale. We envision an innovative, inclusive, diverse and thriving Chattanooga. We believe that entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in this vision, and it is our job to empower this daily.

Founded in September 2009, and originally called Create Here, [CO.LAB](#) emerged to support and attract entrepreneurs and innovators to the City of Chattanooga — which has a unique set of assets from its infrastructure and natural beauty to its citizens and leadership.

Funded by LaunchTN, foundations and various local businesses, CO.LAB currently employs [six people](#) (including the CEO) with an approximately \$1M annual operating budget. The CEO position of Colab has recently opened due to the elevation of the current CEO, Lindsey Cox, to the CEO of LaunchTN, ensuring continued close collaboration between the two organizations.

To date, CO.LAB has worked with 100s of companies (including [Branch Technology](#), [Variable](#), [WeCounsel \(now Visuwell\)](#)) through a variety of programming, supported \$120 million of early-stage capital, and been key to the growth and vibrancy of Chattanooga's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Using the city's unique assets — its tech infrastructure and natural resources — CO.LAB started GIGTANK, an accelerator program targeting companies needing ubiquitous high-speed internet to scale.

In addition to supporting individual entrepreneurs and startups, The Company Lab runs [Startup Week CHA](#), which is a five-day celebration of the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem that includes networking, speakers, mentoring and funding opportunities. Over 1,000 people attended Startup Week activities in 2021.

CO.LAB mission is to provide:

Programs, capital, connections, a talent pipeline + voice and platform

- programs for founders with a vision to rapidly scale their small to medium enterprises or tech-enabled business
 - access to traditional and non-traditional capital pathways
 - connections to customers, mentors and access to corporate partnerships
 - support of the regional talent pipeline to ensure startups can grow in place
 - a voice and platform to tell the story of Chattanooga’s entrepreneurs
- (These align with CO.LAB’s [new strategic plan](#).)*

Overview of role

The Company Lab is seeking an inspiring, experienced, collaborative leader to join their high-energy, high-performing team as CEO.

The CEO should have insight or experience into early-stage, high-growth companies, and the ability to keep both details and a broad vision in mind.

They should be the kind of person who motivates, not micromanages; who communicates expectations clearly and has the organizational skills and work ethic to jump in with an enthusiastic team who is already moving forward with an established plan.

The CEO is expected to lead the organization based upon the key initiatives outlined above, and a [5-year Strategic Plan](#), which was enacted in Summer 2021. The CEO will execute on this plan in 2022 and beyond, while updating it periodically based upon the needed direction, advice of the Board of Directors, and input from the CO.LAB team and broader Chattanooga community.

The ideal candidate will have a well-developed network, enabling them to connect Chattanooga-area startups with relevant contacts, strong mentors and capital resources. They will need to provide direction for the CO.LAB staff to ensure that they are focused on the most important projects for accomplishing CO.LAB’s mission.

Finally, the CO.LAB CEO will need to be able to maintain and build partnerships throughout Chattanooga and regionally in order to recruit a talented and diverse set of entrepreneurs.

CO.LAB CEO must reside in Chattanooga during their tenure.

General characteristics

- Excellent communication and listening skills + emotional intelligence
- Effective at building and maintaining partnerships
- Results-driven, metric-oriented
- Values diversity and inclusion, has actively worked toward it
- Strong analytical, financial and critical thinking skills
- Effective, efficient decision-maker
- Comfort operating in undefined environments and managing ambiguity/change

To apply, submit a persuasive cover letter and confidential resume. Submissions should be combined into one .PDF file, and emailed by April 30, 2022 to: jobs@colab.is.

The CO.LAB CEO's duties and responsibilities will include:

1. Lead with the board of Directors in developing updates to the strategic plan, and — at the appropriate time — create a new strategic plan
2. Ensure a positive, supportive, respectful working environment where autonomy and flexibility is valued and achievement rewarded
3. Develop an operational plan which incorporates goals and objectives that work toward the CO.LAB's strategic direction
4. Oversee the planning, implementation and evaluation of CO.LAB's programs and services; monitor day-to-day operations
5. Oversee the planning, implementation, execution and evaluation of new ventures and special projects; oversight of potential venture capital fund
6. Determine staffing requirements for organizational management and program delivery
7. Oversee the implementation of the human resources policies, procedures and practices including the review and refinement, as necessary, of job descriptions for all staff
8. Work with staff and the board to prepare a comprehensive budget, secure adequate funding for operations and administer funds/monitor monthly cash flow
9. Ensure that CO.LAB complies with all regulatory and tax guidelines
10. Establish good working relationships and collaborative arrangements with community groups, funders, politicians, and other organizations to help achieve CO.LAB's strategic goals and contribute to the growth of the Chattanooga entrepreneurial community
11. Ensure that CO.LAB is a resource to all members of the community interested in scaling their business
12. Act as the public face who takes responsibility and accountability for the organization
13. Exhibit servant leaderships and be part of the "all hands on deck" team when needed
14. Possess the needed communication and social skills to navigate conflicts and challenges

Education & Preferred Experience

- Bachelor's degree required or equivalent working experience
- 7+ years of experience in management, high-growth startups, economic development, venture capital, or a related area well aligned with CO.LAB's mission
- Experience or proficient knowledge of fundraising in a non-profit setting
- Experience or proficient knowledge of raising capital, including but not limited to venture capital, angel investment, crowdfunding and debt
- Demonstrated ability to manage a team of 5 or more

Live, work, play — love your job, love your city

The Gig City

In 2008, the city's municipal electric company EPB began construction on the city's Smart Grid — the most advanced, automated energy infrastructure - to help customers manage usage and minimize outages.

By 2010, the city announced the availability of residential [symmetrical](#) internet speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps — *the nation's fastest residential internet service at the time, by far.*

Chattanooga was also the first city in the United States to have citywide gigabit-per-second fiber internet. By 2015, Chattanooga launched the world's first community-wide 10-gigabit internet service, which is available to all homes and businesses within EPB's 600-square-mile radius.

All this earned Chattanooga the name Gig City, and contributed to the entrepreneurial boom the area has seen in the past decade.

Some of the country's brightest startups and companies have grown out of Gig City, including [Bellhop](#), [Branch Technology](#), [Variable](#), [Southtree](#) and [FreightWaves](#). Located in what's known as [Freight Alley](#), the area also has a strong logistics industry, which is prime for tech innovation.

Volkswagen's state-of-the-art North American headquarters is also located in Chattanooga, along with many other suppliers and manufacturers.

More recently, Chattanooga made [national headlines](#) for attracting tech talent as the top [work-from-home city](#) in the country.

The Scenic City

Equally as important in the entrepreneurial ecosystem as infrastructure and technology are the area's natural resources.

Countless people who could live anywhere in the world choose to live in Chattanooga because of its high quality of life. Residents and visitors can be downtown in the middle of a vibrant city, and within 10 minutes they can be in the middle of a quiet wooded area.

- The city's riverwalk consists of [16.1 miles of paved trails](#) along the riverfront.
- The city's natural assets have made it home to [USA Cycling Professional Road National Championships](#), which draws 50,000 people and millions in revenue.
- The Scenic City has also been home to both half and full [Ironman competitions](#), which also draws in thousands of spectators and millions in revenue.

This company offers fair and equal employment opportunities for everyone regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other basis protected by local, state or federal law. We recruit, process, and assign all applicants on the basis of their qualifications for the particular job, and we do so without regard to any factor unrelated to their ability to fulfill job requirements.