



COMMERCIALIZATION DIRECTOR

GENERAL INFORMATION

Status:	Full-time	Reports to:	CEO
Compensation:	\$135,000-175,000 Salary is commensurate with experience	Location:	Chicago, IL (Both in-person and virtual work required)
Role structure:	This role works as part of a senior team including the Technical Program Director, Operations Director, Strategy Director, and Workforce Development Director. Applicants should feel comfortable working in a fast-paced, start-up environment, requiring flexibility with tasks and roles.		
Benefits:	Health / vision / dental plans, unlimited PTO, parental leave, life insurance, retirement match (1:1 employer match up to 5% of salary), flexible work-from-home opportunities		

Applicants must be legally authorized to work in the U.S. without sponsorship. Please note that Current is not able to provide visa sponsorship.

Current provides equal employment opportunity as required by law to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy (including childbirth and conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), age, marital status, physical or mental disability, veteran or military status, citizenship status, order of protection status, or any other protected classification. This policy applies in all aspects of employment, including without limitation recruitment, hiring, training, evaluation, promotion, demotion, discipline, compensation, benefits, and termination.

Application deadline: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026 at 11:59 PM, CT

[APPLY HERE](#)

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Description:

Current is seeking an entrepreneurial leader with a passion for technology and commercialization and a strong desire to drive innovation in the water and climate sectors and related industries.

The field of water-related technologies is rapidly evolving. We are looking for a leader who appreciates the technical and commercial complexity inherent in deploying and scaling water solutions but is also willing to work diligently to identify and break down all types of barriers to implementation through innovative programs and product offerings. As the Commercialization Director, you will play a pivotal role in shaping the long-term

strategy of Current's key initiatives, including [Great Lakes RENEW](#) - Current's NSF-funded Regional Innovation Engine, and Current's water technology accelerator.

As a collaborative organization, we work with a wide range of impact-oriented practitioners, and need a commercialization leader who relishes the challenges of working across technical domains, sectors and issues. This role includes management responsibilities for contractors, interns, and vendors with possible management of full-time employees as we grow. We are looking for someone who excels at clear communication and creative partnership development.

Key Responsibilities:

The Commercialization Director will lead a suite of programs and support structures with the goal of accelerating the development, adoption, commercialization and scale-up of technologies that address a wide range of water- and climate-related challenges. Specifically, this role is responsible for identifying the most promising technologies – including those “home grown” within Current's own partner consortia and companies recruited to engage - and systematically supporting their development through pilot and demonstration partnerships and commercial scaling opportunities.

Program Strategy and Infrastructure:

- Working closely with the Current's Technical Program Director and Strategy Director, refine and implement a strategy to provide end-to-end commercialization support from TRL 1-9 across the region, with deeper focus on TRLs 4 and up, with special attention to filling gaps between existing offerings. Lead a suite of commercialization projects, including:
 - Building and staffing Current's accelerator program in Chicago.
 - Execute partnerships with existing accelerator programs and entrepreneurship support organizations to deliver resource recovery-focused cohorts.
 - Identify and evaluate new pilot opportunities with industry, utility, and community partners.
- With the senior leadership team and evaluation partner, refine key metrics and measures to track progress of commercialization efforts to support an annual evaluation, and leverage learnings to inform continuous improvement, performance management, and strategy refinement.
- Design and develop core partner agreements for Great Lakes RENEW and other major initiatives. Work with Current's leadership team to develop a Master Consortium Agreement (MCA), informed by other relevant models and laying the foundation for desired end-state core functions, capacities, and capabilities for RENEW (e.g., including IP and data sharing considerations).
- Identify and secure additional support (legal, insurance, staffing, etc.) needed to deliver on commercialization goals.
- Continually evaluate commercialization offerings and benchmark best practices outside the Great Lakes RENEW ecosystem for continual improvement.
- Coordinate with senior Current personnel to support the establishment of a water resource recovery connected testbed network across the Great Lakes Region (Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana). Advise on the design of the connected testbed network including: business models, IP, insurance, intake/vetting/matchmaking, and the piloting needs of water entrepreneurs.

Coalition and Ecosystem Building:

- Lead engagement with the Current Industry Consortium, including recruiting new and managing existing members from industries across Great Lakes RENEW areas of focus (including manufacturing, agriculture, food and beverage, energy, and others).
- Source end-user priorities and contribute significantly to developing feedback loops that take end-user challenges, gaps, and priorities, and feed them into R&D, translation, and workforce development competitive funding opportunities, technical priorities, and overall Engine strategy.
- Convene and oversee the RENEW Translation Working Group, composed of expert accelerators, incubators, investors, entrepreneurship support organizations and testbeds.
- Build connections outside the ecosystem to make Current/Great Lakes RENEW relevant nationally, attract more partners and collaborators, and broaden the reach and impact.

Team Integration and Horizontal Leadership:

- Provide a critical bridging role across RENEW verticals: R&D, Translation (commercialization), and workforce development/STEM education. Act as a liaison to multiple consortia (Research, Industry) and working groups to implement the commercialization goals of Current and RENEW. Collaborate cross-functionally with horizontal teams (communications, policy, and operations).
- Collaborate with senior RENEW personnel on combined R&D and commercialization strategy. Own creative commercialization thinking to drive key strategic initiatives, and provide thought leadership and participation on behalf of Current in industry events/panels and publications.

Capital Attraction and Deployment:

- Refine RENEW investment and creative capital deployment plan, including:
 - Supporting external partners to investigate and launch a new RENEW investment fund.
 - Converting corporate/industry prospects to full members of Current's Industry Consortium.
 - Identifying philanthropic and government funding opportunities to support broader commercialization goals.

Fundraising and Grant Management:

- Conceptualize and build competitive funding proposals for unlocking federal, state, and philanthropic dollars.
- Support the team in developing and maintaining relationships with funders.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

What we're looking for...

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required, MBA or related graduate degree preferred.
- Experience working to commercialize and grow startups (including previous work with accelerators, incubators, investment funds, industry, tech transfer offices, or other related work).

- Experience with corporate engagement, including recruitment, convening, and relationship management.
- 10+ years in leadership positions with general management across a variety of roles within the technology/commercialization industry preferred.

Values and Attributes:

- **Passion for Current's mission and values** - You have a deep, shared commitment to the things we are passionate about: environmental stewardship; economic opportunity; technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- **Positive and collaborative work ethic** - You have a drive to succeed for and with our team and partners and to lift up the people, organizations, and businesses that share our goals.
- **Network orientation** - You value relationships beyond one-off transactions and understand that in this long-term, system change work, effectiveness depends on the breadth and depth of our relationships.
- **Creative approaches to problem solving** - You know that the first idea isn't usually the best, and you know how to push yourself and your team to come up with new approaches.
- **Curious and learning oriented** - You want to understand your successes as well as your failures, and you're fueled by curiosity about the unknown. Everyone on our team is constantly asking questions about how the world works and how we can improve it. Comfort with ambiguity. You have a flexible and agile approach to big and small challenges and understand that progress is often nonlinear. You're willing to adapt and help Current adapt to be more resilient to our changing landscape.
- **Accountability and humility** - You're comfortable owning responsibility for a project's execution, but happy to share credit for the final team product. You are motivated by your team's opportunities and successes, and to support the whole team in tasks that contribute to individual and team goals.
- **Empathetic leadership** - You understand that our diverse partners across government, community, university, and industry face diverse challenges in their own work, and you listen to understand and build bridges.
- **Results orientation** - You find ways to track and measure what matters in your work, and in Current's work. You're rigorous about sharing those results with the team and when appropriate, our partners.

ABOUT CURRENT

[Click here to learn more](#) about who we are, our values, partner promises, and more.