

Draft Maple Broadband Guidance on Governance – The Role of Executive Director

The role of Executive Director in a Communications Union District (CUD) in Vermont exists to support the volunteer Governing Board and Executive Committee, manage operations, coordinate projects, handle communications, and ensure the CUD can execute its broadband-deployment mission effectively.

Why the Executive Director role is essential to a CUD

CUDs were created to solve a statewide broadband gap. Volunteers alone cannot:

- Manage multi-million-dollar infrastructure projects,
- Navigate complex federal funding programs,
- Maintain continuous operations across multiple municipalities.

The Executive Director provides the professional continuity and expertise needed to successfully turn Executive Committee/Governing Board decisions into actual broadband deployment.

Core Responsibilities/Functions of the Executive Director

Vermont statute (Title 30, Chapter 82) does not prescribe specific Executive Director positions, but it empowers the CUD Governing Board to appoint officers, hire personnel, and create committees necessary to carry out district powers. The Executive Director role therefore exists to execute the Governing Board's statutory authority, which includes building and operating communications infrastructure.

The Executive Director should have a background in telecommunications or in management of an adjacent field such as construction, technology, or municipal administration. Specific competencies include financial planning and management, strategic planning, program management, and comfort reviewing and negotiating legal agreements.

The Executive Director role includes the following categories:

Operational management

The Executive Director handles day-to-day operations that volunteer boards cannot realistically manage, including:

- Coordinating engineering, pole studies, construction schedules, and vendor relationships.
- Managing shared services and administrative workflows.
- Tracking project progress and ensuring compliance with state/federal requirements.
- Timely and accurate reporting of key operational activities and financial position to the Executive Committee/Governing Board.

Board support

MBB is governed by volunteer representatives from member municipalities. The Executive Director ensures the Executive Committee/Governing Board can function effectively by:

- Scheduling meetings, preparing materials, recording minutes.
- Following up on action items and facilitating working groups.
- Drafting recommendations and helping build consensus on policy or strategic decisions.

Communications & public engagement

Because MBB is a public entity, the Executive Director maintains transparent and accurate communication:

- Managing websites, newsletters, media relations, and public reports.
- Serving as a liaison between MBB, member-municipalities, residents, and external partners.
- Ensuring MBB's mission and priorities are represented in public forums.

Grant, funding, and regulatory support

Federal and state broadband funding requires specialized administrative capacity:

- Preparing grant applications and managing awarded funds.
- Maintaining feasibility studies and business plans.
- Coordinating with state agencies and private providers.

Stakeholder coordination

Executive Director act as the connective tissue between:

- Member-municipalities
- Private ISPs and contractors
- State agencies (e.g., Department of Public Service)
- Regional planning commissions

Summary:

The Executive Director at MBB serves as the operational, administrative, communications, and project-management backbone that enables the volunteer Executive Committee/Governing Board to fulfill its mission of building and maintaining public broadband infrastructure.