

## Position Specification



*Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*

### **The Engagement**

J. Tedesco & Associates has been retained by Ava Community Energy (Ava) in Oakland, California, and its board of directors, to lead their executive recruitment for the agency's next **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**. The CEO will carry a torch of continuity, building from the success of the outgoing CEO, and will take the organization to new heights as it continues to expand its community reach and array of innovative energy efficiency programs. Ava, which launched in 2018 as East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) and changed its name in 2023 to better reflect the breadth of the communities they serve, is an innovative, consumer choice aggregation agency focused on supplying green energy to over 1.7MM commercial and residential customers in their service territory. More details about Ava and this impressive opportunity can be found below.

*J. Tedesco & Associates is a boutique, retained executive search firm, founded in 1998, headquartered in San Diego, with team members in San Francisco and Chicago. The utility sector is our firm's primary specialty, and we lead assignments from emerging leader level up to the c-suite and board level. We have a deep understanding of the California energy landscape and significant experience recruiting for Bay Area organizations. More information about our firm can be found at: [www.tedescoassociates.com](http://www.tedescoassociates.com)*

### **About Ava Community Energy**

Ava, which was created in 2016 and launched in 2018 as East Bay Community Energy, is a community choice aggregator (CCA) that serves a diverse array of communities, including the cities of: Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont Pleasanton, San Leandro, Tracy, and Union City. The unincorporated areas of Alameda County (including Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, San Lorenzo, and Sunol) are also served by Ava. In 2025 Ava will extend service to the San Joaquin County cities of Stockton and Lathrop.

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Ava's charter is to provide its customers with low carbon, cost-effective electricity that integrates innovative energy products and maximizes local benefits through the development of local solutions, ranging from increasing access to rooftop solar to supporting the adoption of electric vehicles. The agency, which is one of the largest energy supplying CCAs in California, has roughly 70 employees that run a \$770M operation, where 95% of the budget is spent on power procurement. Ava is governed by a board of directors consisting of an elected official from each of the participating jurisdictions and one representative (non-voting) from the Community Advisory Committee. The board sets rates and determines the mix of power sources.

The CCA Framework:

By law, as a non-for-profit Joint Powers Authority, Ava provides electric service as a CCA under the CPUC Code Section 366.2. Ava's customers opt in, allowing them to receive a greener supply of electricity compared to the fossil fuel dependent investor-owned utilities and at a lower cost. Ava, procures the electricity, while PG&E provides the transmission and distribution infrastructure to deliver it to Ava customers, and PG&E also maintains the account billing. Ava allows participating local governments to pool the electricity demands of their communities in order to increase their purchasing power for higher renewable power content and invest in local energy infrastructure and energy efficiency programs. Ava is locally controlled and ratepayer supported, with no taxpayer subsidies. The agency is funded through program revenues; its budget is completely separate from the general funds of participating local governments. Ava has the rights and powers to set rates for the electricity it furnishes, incur indebtedness, and issue bonds or other obligations. As a public agency, net revenues are returned to the community to keep rates competitive and promote clean energy programs.

**Ava's Culture and Commitment to Diversity**

Ava believes in a vibrant culture that supports and nurtures a workplace that offers every individual the opportunity to attain professional goals and contribute to accomplishing their mission. Ava fosters a culture of open communication, responsibility, curiosity, accountability, and teamwork. The agency wants creative problem solvers that are excited to work in an entrepreneurial environment and grow the organization! As an equal opportunity employer, Ava is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The agency is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of their service area's rich culture and many communities.

More information about Ava can be found on the agency's website: [www.avaenergy.org](http://www.avaenergy.org)

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## **Position Summary**

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a critical role at Ava that will further the agency's path of success as it continues to expand its community reach by providing green power, innovative energy efficiency programs and lower rates to the growing number of customers they serve. The CEO has responsibilities that span a broad array of functions and duties that include organizational administration and management, programs, policy and adhering to legislative priorities, regulatory advocacy, partner collaboration and community engagement. More details are as follows:

### Internal Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership and helm the operation of the organization and all of its functional areas, including power procurement, marketing, account services, technology & analytics, local development, infrastructure delivery, finance and rates, human resources, operations, public and regulatory policy and legal.
- Set the direction of the organization, assigning and evaluating work and work structure as needed to achieve the organization's objectives.
- Lead the strategic plan and financial planning process, prepare and administer the annual budget; ensure a system of accounting controls for strong fiscal management of income and expenses.
- Effectively engage in activities that support the recruitment, training, development, and retention of staff, as well as establishing, maintaining and evaluating performance standards. Champion a culture and workplace environment that engages and motivates staff, and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Plan, recommend, develop and/or direct the development of program and policy direction, and work with internal teams to develop responsive programs to meet the clean energy needs and objectives of customers.
- Work with staff to analyze the impact of newly enacted state and federal legislation and CPUC decisions/actions on Ava's operations with a key focus on three major legislative principles: Accelerating Decarbonization, Promoting Local Development, and Stabilizing Community Choice.
- Stay informed on community, social, and political problems, and their relevance to and impact upon Ava's programs, and guide Ava's public relations program to inform the public about the agency's operations, services, programs, goals, and objectives.

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- As needed, successfully select and manage contractors and vendors, and negotiate contracts for win-win outcomes.
- Perform related duties as assigned by the board or as needed in line with the organization's charter, mission and objectives.

Board of Directors

- Serve as Ava's primary liaison to the board and act under the direction of the board.
- Attend monthly and other board meetings, and ad hoc meetings as they arise.
- In coordination with the board of directors, develop strategic and resource planning, and implement the adopted strategic and resource plans.
- With the board's input, develop Ava's annual operating budget and seek approval of the budget from the board. Present and support the presentation of annual and quarterly financial documents.
- Explain, advise and recommend action on policy matters to Ava's Board of Directors; and advise the Board of Directors of problems and/or potential problems and recommend appropriate courses of action.

External

- Actively represent Ava on/at a variety of committees, boards, and commissions, and in public hearings and other meetings.
- Engage and foster positive relationships with Ava's member agencies, customers, private businesses, regulatory and other agencies, and utilities. Examples:
  - *Regulatory agencies: California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), California Independent System Operator (CAISO), California Energy Commission (CEC), California Air Resources Board (CARB)*
  - *Key partner agencies: CC Power and California Community Choice Association (CalCCA)*
  - *Utilities: Pacific Gas & Electric Company and other investor-owned utilities*
- Address legislative and regulatory bodies to influence or persuade them to form supportive opinions or take actions related to advancing program goals; review economic trends and regulatory changes to determine the impact on operations; review and critique codes and ordinances; and initiate studies of technical problems and recommend revisions.
- Consult with and solicit the cooperation of business and community groups and government agencies in assessing, identifying, and analyzing renewable energy and energy conservation needs and objectives in the region.

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## **Attributes of a Strong Candidate**

- A well-respected and influential leader with strong business acumen and a history of driving results and helping organizations and teams successfully achieve their mission.
- A broad leadership skillset that can adapt to various situations, ranging from strategic to operational, and those requiring more immediate, short-term, or long-term action.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking.
- Proven success fostering a collaborative, customer-focused, continuous-learning, and high-performance and enjoyable workplace culture.
- Well skilled with board management and utilizing various communication methods with individual board members and the entire board to ensure the Board is oriented, educated and up-to-speed with various issues so that the board is efficient and effective. Able to balance the board's interest on programs at the local level, while also keep the board focused on the 3 most critical elements of a successful CCA: (1) power supply (2) energy risk management and (3) good reserves.
- Possesses an insider's understanding of the complex California energy industry and all its nuances. This includes being well-connected and staying abreast of technological and regulatory changes.
- A politically savvy individual who understands the important role that each one of Ava's member organizations plays in contributing to the overall success of Ava, and someone who can exercise excellence in overall political management.
- Cultivates and maintains positive, productive partnerships and champions transparency, is inclusive and collaborative.
- Takes fiduciary responsibility seriously and has the skill and experience to effectively manage the organization's finances.

## **Candidates should possess the following Knowledge/Abilities**

- Knowledge of the principles, practices and procedures of municipal governance, including the Brown Act.
- Knowledge of related regulatory and statutory issues and requirements
- Knowledge of energy principles, energy supply and the California energy market
- Ability to collaborate and communicate with external partners and stakeholders, public and investor-owned utilities, energy services and power suppliers, local advocacy organizations, regulators and other governmental agencies, interest groups, unions, community groups, the public, legislative and the media.

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- Knowledge of principles and practices, methods and technical requirements of utility management, organization, administration, financing, pricing, and community relations.
- Ability to identify and respond to issues, concerns, and needs of the Board, member agencies and the community.
- Ability to develop risk management strategies, policies, and contingency plans to address changing needs.
- Ability to lead long-range strategic and fiscal planning for program development, and plan, schedule, budget and allocate program resources, and can monitor, evaluate, and assure compliance with program goals, policies and procedures.
- Ability to negotiate contracts.
- Ability to comfortably discuss current issues in demand-side management, renewable energy, climate change, and energy policy.
- Ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously within time constraints.
- Ability to exercise discretion and independent judgment.
- Ability to maintain a good working relationship with staff, stakeholders and customers.
- Ability to recognize and resolve problems of a sensitive or political nature.
- Ability to Analyze, collect, interpret, and evaluate a variety of complex qualitative and quantitative data; compute cost/benefit ratios; project costs.
- Knowledge of IOU, CEC, CAISO, and CPUC, including authorized energy efficiency and renewable energy programs
- Some knowledge/familiarity with FERC would be helpful.
- Ability to prepare clear and concise reports, policies, procedures, correspondence, and other written materials as needed, including the preparation of periodic and ad-hoc reports as required by the board, funding agencies and other interested parties.
- Ability to effectively communicate, both orally and in writing, including making presentations of findings, recommendations, and policies to board members, employees and key stakeholders.

## **Required Qualifications**

*Any combination of experience and training that would provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:*

- a bachelor's degree, ideally in business, public administration, engineering, or a related field
- 10+ years of progressively responsible experience in energy/utility companies or agencies
- 5+ years of broad and extensive people management experience responsible for the implementation of programs, budgets, and administrative operations.

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- Executive level leadership in the public or private sector is required and managerial experience in a public agency is desirable.
- Additional certifications/training in managerial techniques are highly desirable.

**LICENSES:** Possession and continued maintenance of a valid class C California driver's license with a safe driving record is required to operate company vehicles.

**HYBRID WORK STRUCTURE:** Ava currently maintains a hybrid work structure, with all employees expected to attend regular in-person meetings near the main office in Oakland. The CEO is expected to be based in the San Francisco Bay Area and available to meet, as often as needed, with Board members, community members and employees for face-to-face meetings.

**PHYSICAL AND WORKING CONDITIONS:** *The CEO position requires physical and mental demands to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions.*

## Compensation and Benefits

For the CEO position, Ava offers a generous compensation and benefits package (subject to board approval) including a target annual base salary range of: \$400,000 - \$450,000 as well as other additional compensation potential, Plus:

- Zero-cost health insurance (medical, dental, vision)
- Life and AD&D, EAP, STD, and LTD benefits
- Retirement plan with Employer Matching
- Car Allowance
- Social Security deferment
- Paid Time Off
- Commuter Benefits
- Fertility & Adoption Benefits
- Pet Insurance
- Mental Health Support
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Onsite Fitness Center
- Complimentary Garage Parking
- And More!

Ava strongly encourages people of all characteristics to apply. The agency prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment of any type based on age, religion, color, gender identity or expression, race, ancestry or national origin, religion or creed, marital status, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information or characteristics, and those with a disability as protected by federal, state, and local laws.

*The recruiting practices of J. Tedesco & Associates are AA/EEO compliant and are aimed at developing a diverse slate of candidates.*



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**PLEASE DIRECT ANY INTEREST OR INQUIRIES TO:**

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**TO APPLY FOR THE CEO POSITION, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. a Cover Letter that addresses the following 4 areas:

- *A summary of your qualifications, specifically your executive leadership, budget/finance, governance and personnel management, contract negotiation and energy market or utility experience.*
- *An example of a time when you successfully managed competing political interests among parties. How did you do it and what was the outcome?*
- *A description of your approach and experience working with a board of directors.*
- *An example of how you have promoted and supported diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.*

2. a current Resume

**Thank you for your interest in this opportunity!**

**THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS 5 PM PACIFIC TIME, MAY 10, 2024**





*CEO Executive Recruitment  
Update  
4/17/24*

# Ad Hoc Committee Actions & Progress

Action: Retained J. Tedesco & Associates	Targeted Timeline	Requested Board Direction
<p><i>J. Tedesco &amp; Associates is a boutique executive search firm, founded in 1998, which specializes in recruitment for positions in utilities and the energy sector.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4/18/24 - Target date for official recruitment launch, including a posting on the Ava website</li> <li>• 5/10/24 - Application due date</li> <li>• 5/13/24-6/6/24 - Search committee candidate review</li> <li>• 6/12/24 - Search committee presents proposal for CEO selection at June BOD meeting</li> <li>• 7/15/24 - Target CEO start date</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Provide direction on the position specification.</b></li> <li><b>2. Approve proposed posted target salary range for the position of \$400-450k.</b></li> </ol> <p><i>This is consistent with CEO data provided by Tedesco's database of CCA CEO compensation.</i></p>