
RICHMOND ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS ECONOMICS

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Jennifer Wakefield

President and Chief Executive Officer

Greater Richmond Partnership

RABE Speaker on Thursday, April 28, 2022



Jennifer Wakefield, APR (Accreditation in Public Relations), is the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP). In her role, she is responsible for collaborating with public and private sector stakeholders to set and drive the organizational vision.

She assumed her current role in February 2021 after serving as Interim President and CEO twice, Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President of Marketing for the organization. In this time, she has created a new strategic framework for the organization, doubled the size of the Board, added new investors increasing the budget by more than 15 percent while reducing administrative expenses and created new committees to engage investors in the work of GRP.

Prior to joining GRP, Jennifer served as the Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the Orlando Economic Development Commission (now the Orlando Economic Partnership) for 11 years. There, she launched a branding campaign bringing international attention to the region, increasing leads by 50 percent, increasing consideration of Orlando as a business location among c-suite executives from 19 percent to 63 percent and bringing the organization to its highest funding in history. She worked on numerous transformational projects in the region including the Amway Center, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Citrus Bowl, Lake Nona Medical City, SunRail, BRIDG / NeoCity and the merger of the Orlando Economic Development Commission and the Central Florida Partnership.

In her 20+ year career, she has garnered extensive experience in strategic planning, marketing and communications, operations and management and is a recognized thought leader in developing marketing strategies for economic development. In addition to her experience in economic development, she has experience in the transportation, utility and financial services industries.

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Jennifer has a master's degree in communications from the University of Central Florida and a bachelor's degree in public relations and advertising from the University of West Florida. She holds the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) designation, signifying a high level of professional experience, competence and ethical standards. She is a former adjunct communications professor at the University of Central Florida.

Jennifer is a board member of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), on the IEDC Economic Development Research Practitioners (EDRP) council and has served as a regular speaker at IEDC marketing courses and conferences. She is a member of the American Marketing Association (AMA) and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

In the Richmond Region, she is on the Management Roundtable, the Richmond Federal Reserve Industry Roundtable, University of Richmond Robins School Executive Advisory Council, the City of Richmond Economic Vitality Advisory Committee, the I-64 Innovation Corridor Research Council, the Japan-Virginia Society and is part of the VCU Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Cluster Development Program.

Jennifer has been named among Top 50 Economic Developers by Consultant Connect, Top 40 Under 40 Economic Development Professionals by Development Counsellors International and International Economic Development Council and Top 40 Under 40 professionals in Orlando by the Orlando Business Journal. She has won numerous local, regional, national and international awards for her work. She is a 2005 graduate of Leadership Orlando and a 2018 graduate of Lead Virginia.

Jennifer is a self-professed Star Wars nerd who can be found exploring the Richmond Region with her husband, son and miniature poodle.