

# CORNELL ALLEN WESLEY

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## PROFILE

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Advocacy, Philanthropy || Strategic Planning and Business Growth**  
*Birmingham Power 60 (Most Influential Executives) Impacting the Community*

Executive leader with 15+ years of experience driving mission-focused growth, community impact, and financial sustainability in nonprofit and public sector organizations across AL, OK, AR, TX, and GA. History of creating new innovative and inclusive programs, rebirthing and/or expanding stagnant programs, securing multi-million-dollar funding sources, and building strategic partnerships that revitalize communities and businesses. Expertise in fiscal stewardship, operational excellence, and talent development where teams champion the organization's mission. Best at navigating complex stakeholder relationships to increase organizational reach.  
*BS/MBA, Economics.*

## KEY COMPETENCIES

Strategic Planning	Advocacy	Team Development
Change Leadership	Inclusion	Financial Stewardship
Critical Thinking	Innovation	Operational Management
Decision-making	Philanthropy	Communication & Influence
Fiscal Management	Fundraising	Program/Project Management
Board Collaboration	Negotiation	Stakeholder/Community Engagement

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Director (Chief Development Officer) || 2021–Present**

Department of Innovation and Economic Opportunity (IEO), City of Birmingham  
Birmingham, AL

Drive economic growth through strategic planning, leadership, and innovation.  
Promote favorable business environments that benefit Birmingham and its residents.

- **Generated \$2B** economic impact, created 5K jobs, retained 10K jobs.
- **Negotiated and secured \$1.2B** in key state-of-the-art economic growth initiatives (Tech Hub, Good Jobs, We Compete, Choice Neighbor, DOT).
- **Recruited high-profile sporting events** to Birmingham, including the World Police & Fire Games 2025, USFL, and World Games 2022.
- **Spearheaded economic development initiatives** to revitalize neighborhoods, attracting millions of dollars in investments, and creating thousands of affordable housing units.
- **Designed and implemented robust financial risk management strategies** that reduced the city's overall financial exposure while maintaining uninterrupted services to citizens.
- **Identified substantial cost savings** and optimized allocation of financial resources by conducting balance sheet reviews and financial analyses.
- **Developed and executed a comprehensive executive visibility plan;** increased positive media coverage and partnerships with key stakeholders.
- **Led and developed innovative business strategies** that established partnerships with nonprofits and private sector organizations, secured funding for community programs, and drove major economic development initiatives, resulting in new investments and job creation.
- **Represented the city in over 100 speaking engagements**, media interviews, and panels on workforce and economic development.
- **Compassionately manage talent** by leading a diverse team of 15, including senior managers, data technicians, and program managers, focusing on growth and effective team development.

## JOB CREATION, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT (AL, OK, AR, TX, GA)

### Compilation

- || \$4B, Economy Impact
- || 15K+, Jobs Created
- || 13K+, Jobs Retained
- || 95%, Staff Retention
- || 45+, ED Support Staff

### Birmingham, AL

- || \$4.5M, Operating Budget Oversight
- || \$300M, Project Budget
- || \$81M, Revenue Generated
- || Generated \$2B economic impact, created 5K jobs, retained 10K jobs.
- || Negotiated and secured \$1.2B in economic growth initiatives (Tech Hub, Good Jobs, We Compete, Choice Neighbor, and DOT).
- || Recruited major sporting events to Birmingham, including the World Police & Fire Games 2025, USFL, and World Games 2022.
- || Established 1<sup>st</sup> Birmingham Data Center, 100+ high tech, high-salary jobs.

### Oklahoma City, OK

- || Generated \$1.5B economic impact; created 5K+ jobs, retained 3K jobs.
- || Managed \$20M in federal investments.

### Jonesboro, AR

- || Secured \$20K+ in philanthropic sponsorships.

- **Oversee real estate transactions.** Liquidated 25+ municipal properties (every 4 years), generating over \$1B in impact, while identifying strategic real estate reuse opportunities to maximize community benefit.
- **Led city-wide negotiations**, securing agreements with stakeholders and balancing community benefits with project incentives like tax abatements and payments.
- **Designed workforce development initiatives** to boost job growth, expand employment, and support career advancement through training programs and apprenticeships.

#### Additional Projects

- **Established Birmingham's first data center** and network provider at DC BLOX, creating 100+ high-tech jobs with an average annual salary of \$100k+.
- **Spearheaded establishment of a new Stivers' Ford dealership**, in Palisades Mall at former Virginia College site.
- **Secured a capital investment of \$60M** to lead the development of two affordable workforce housing projects, Stonewall/American Life and American Red Cross in the City Center of Birmingham.
- **Received national critical acclaim** from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the phase I American Life project, recognized for addressing the crucial need for affordable housing Birmingham's workforce.
- **Obtained the grantee status for Foreign Trade Zone 098** in the City of Birmingham, enabling businesses to compete globally for goods and services by providing duty-free status for goods and materials within the zone.

#### **Chief Executive Officer || 2017–2023**

Fiscal Fundamentals, Inc. || Oklahoma City, OK

Aided and empowered small businesses and nonprofits to gain access to capital through various financial instruments, including debt, grant funding, and other resources. Cultivated a high-performance team culture; focused on accountability, productivity, and project efficiency.

- **Created new business and economic opportunities** by leading real estate/commercial development projects.
- **Designed and implemented strategic initiatives** that resulted in increased revenue and accelerated growth for client organizations.

#### **Principal || 2020–2021**

Emblem Strategies, LLC || Oklahoma City, OK

Led and managed client engagements while driving business growth and ensuring the delivery of high-quality consulting services, including lending, community and economic development, marketing, education, and entrepreneurship consulting for a broad range of clients.

- **Expanded the firm's client base within one year**, substantially increasing market presence.
- **Identified and implemented a new project management system** that ensured timely project deliverables, improved efficiency and collaboration across teams, streamlined workflows, and reduced costs.
- **Led team of consultants in delivering customized training programs** for public sector organizations. Equipped staff with foundational skills in project management, community development, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Developed and implemented major DEI initiatives** within the consulting firm, improving employee morale, and enhancing the recruitment and retention of diverse talent.

#### **Economic Development Representative || 2015–2019**

U.S. Dept of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) || Oklahoma City, OK

Recruited from previous role. Advised and collaborated with the staff and cabinet of the governors in Texas and Oklahoma, established strong partnerships and alliances, and drove regional economic development initiatives.

- **Accessed and managed \$20M in federal cash** for development investments in Oklahoma and Northeast Texas, **creating 10K jobs and retaining 4.5K job opportunities** for the community.
- Provided leadership, guidance, and support for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development investment of **\$2.5M in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, creating 75 jobs in the area.**
- **Led federal participation in global recruitment** efforts to attract Sofidel, a leading manufacturing company, to establish a state-of-the-art facility in Oklahoma.
- **Assisted university presidents in implementing economic impact and financial sustainability initiatives.**
- **Delivered economic development keynote addresses**, lunch and learns, and guest lectures while participating in public affairs and community development events.
- **Collaborated with federal delegations**, congressional staffers, and regional leaders to build coalitions among economic development organizations, including government councils, tribal chiefs, universities, state agencies,

financial institutions, and nonprofits, influencing key stakeholders such as governors, mayors, and federal agencies to drive impactful initiatives.

### **Manager of Financial Services & Economic Development || 2014–2015**

East Arkansas Planning & Development District || Jonesboro, AR

Oversaw development and implementation of strategies for a significant Revolving Loan Fund program, driving lending activities and economic development for 117 cities across a 12-county region.

- **Brokered \$28M+ in government-guaranteed lending**, utilizing programs such as USDA, SBA 7a/504, and international trade loans.
- **Secured \$20K+ in philanthropic sponsorships** from individuals, corporations, and private foundations.
- **Mitigated over \$700K of sequestered funds** and generated over \$100K in unrestricted revenue.
- **Collaborated with federal and non-federal partners** to revitalize, expand, and upgrade distressed communities' physical infrastructure, attracting new industries to the region.
- **Managed a federally regulated commercial loan program**, which included a community-based revolving loan fund and a USDA IRP fund operating throughout northeast Arkansas.
- **Analyzed business and industry policy questions**, influencing agency decisions and policy recommendations.

### **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Vice President ||** SBA Lending at CBC National Bank, Alpharetta, GA, 2013–2014

**Vice President ||** Financial Center Management at Fidelity Bank, Atlanta, GA, 2012–2013

### **EDUCATION**

**Master of Business Administration (MBA);** Stetson School of Business & Economics, Mercer University, Macon, GA

**Bachelor of Arts in Economics;** Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA

### **CERTIFICATIONS**

- Executive Certificate, Economic Development; Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), April 2025 (anticipated)
- Master Practitioner in Economic Development, Advanced Economic Development Leadership, 2023; University of New Mexico, Texas Christian University, and University of Southern Mississippi
- Certificate, Economic Development; University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 2018
- Ice House Entrepreneurship Program Facilitator; Kauffman Foundation, 2015
- HUD Program Administrator; Arkansas Developmental Finance Administration, 2015

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIPS**

- Board Member, International Economic Development Council (IEDC), 2020–Present
- Board of Directors, The Children's Center Rehabilitation Hospital; Bethany, OK 2020
- Board Member, Northeast Oklahoma City Renaissance & Oklahoma City Black Chamber, 2017
- Board Member, Young Professional Leaders United Way of Greater Atlanta, 2013–2014
- Board Member, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, 2012–2013

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

- Stitch Crew Mentor, Oklahoma City Thunder Launchpad, 2018
- Volunteer Mentor, The Education and Employment Ministry (TEEM), 2017
- Loaned Executive Chair, United Way of Northeast Arkansas, 2015

### **HONORS & AWARDS**

- Birmingham's Power 60 (Most Influential Executives), Birmingham Business Journal, 2022, 2023
- Top 40 Under 40, Development Counsellors International (DCI), 2023
- Oklahoma Magazine, 2021, Oklahoma Journal Record, 2020
- Leadership Oklahoma–Class 31, 2017–2018
- Man and Woman of the Year, Lymphoma & Leukemia Society, 2017
- Commendation Recipient from Governor Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, 2017
- Delta Entrepreneur Network Inaugural Fellow - Delta Regional Authority, 2014

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- The Rotary Club of Birmingham, 2021–Present
- Harvard Kennedy School (HKS); Economic Development School Practitioners, 2024–Present