



**Vice President
Institute for Public Service**

About the UT System:

Through five campuses and two statewide institutes, the [University of Tennessee System](#) is improving the lives of Tennesseans today and for future generations. Everywhere you look, the UT System provides education, research and outreach to fulfill our mission and tackle Tennessee's most pressing challenges.

Background:

In 2026, the University of Tennessee established the Division of Government Relations, Economic Development, and Public Service (GEPS), aligning the Institute for Public Service (IPS) with government relations, advocacy, and economic development to expand statewide solutions and strengthen coordination across the UT System, Tennessee government, and key stakeholders.

Through GEPS, UT delivers premier government training and technical assistance, public policy support, statewide advocacy, and economic development services that reach every community in Tennessee. Together, these efforts increase the visibility and impact of UT's public service mission and reinforce its role as Tennessee's "go-to" solution partner.

Within this division, IPS serves as UT's primary vehicle for delivering hands-on assistance, training, and technical expertise statewide, translating strategy and partnership into measurable impact for Tennessee communities.

About the Institute for Public Service:

The [Institute for Public Service \(IPS\)](#) is a nationally recognized, university-based system delivering expert solutions to government and industry. In every region of the state, IPS promotes effective governance, supports economic development, and improves quality of life for Tennesseans. Its work includes direct assistance to city and county governments, training for public officials and law enforcement, support for manufacturers to enhance productivity and competitiveness, and language services, among others.

IPS includes the following agencies and programs: the [Municipal Technical Advisory Service \(MTAS\)](#), [Center for Industrial Services \(CIS\)](#), [County Technical Assistance Service \(CTAS\)](#), [Law Enforcement Innovation Center \(LEIC\)](#), [Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership \(NCEL\)](#), [Tennessee Foreign Language Center \(TLC\)](#), the [Substance Misuse and Addiction Resource Center for Tennessee \(SMART Initiative\)](#), and the [Center for Local Planning \(CLP\)](#).

Position Summary:

The University of Tennessee System seeks an innovative, collaborative, and experienced leader to serve as Vice President for the Institute for Public Service (IPS). Reporting to the senior vice president for Government Relations, Economic Development and Public Service and serving on the UT Executive Leadership Council, this statewide role requires a meaningful presence in both Nashville and Knoxville, along with frequent travel across the state. Candidates may be based in either city.

The Vice President provides strategic, operational, and financial leadership for IPS, with full responsibility for its agencies, programs, people, and resources. This leader will implement the [2026–2030 IPS Strategic Plan](#) while building upon the Institute’s longstanding reputation for trusted service, technical excellence, and strong statewide partnerships. Success will require balancing innovation with respect for IPS mission and culture, strengthening collaboration across agencies, with key government partners, and within the University of Tennessee System, and positioning the Institute for continued growth and impact.

As a central component of UT’s outreach and service mission, IPS delivers expert support to governments, industries, and communities across Tennessee. The Vice President will advance a coordinated, statewide approach to engagement, strengthen partnerships across government and industry, and position UT as a national leader in public service. This role requires a dynamic, highly collaborative leader with a strong statewide presence and the ability to travel frequently.

Key Responsibilities:**Strategic Leadership, Operations, and Innovation**

- Lead IPS Executive Directors and teams in delivering high-impact programs and services across Tennessee
- Execute the IPS Strategic Plan in alignment with the UT System’s strategic priorities
- Ensure fulfillment of IPS’s statutory responsibilities and organizational excellence
- Foster a culture of innovation, accountability, collaboration, proactivity, and continuous improvement while honoring the unique strengths and identities of IPS agencies
- Expand the reach, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of IPS by leveraging university expertise, strengthening partnerships, and identifying new opportunities to serve the state of Tennessee
- Advance a "One IPS" culture that encourages collaboration across agencies, increases awareness of shared capabilities, and strengthens service delivery for communities and industries across Tennessee

Organizational Leadership and Culture

- Build credibility through active listening, transparency, and engagement across IPS agencies and stakeholder groups
- Develop trusted relationships with employees, agency leaders, university leadership, elected officials, government partners, and external stakeholders
- Foster a culture of collaboration, proactivity, accountability, and shared purpose across the Institute

External Engagement and Advocacy

- Serve as the chief ambassador for IPS by communicating its impact, telling its story, and increasing awareness of the Institute's value across Tennessee and within the University.
- Build strong partnerships with municipal and county organizations, professional associations, and industry partners
- Contribute to UT System leadership through participation on the Executive Leadership Council
- Build visibility and awareness of IPS's impact and services across Tennessee

Stakeholder Relations

- Cultivate and maintain strategic relationships with state, county, and local officials to strengthen partnerships and support IPS's mission. Preserve and strengthen IPS's existing relationships while cultivating new partnerships that advance the University's public service mission
- Engage regularly with business and industry leaders, economic development partners, and law enforcement
- Regularly and proactively collaborate with key state partners, including the Tennessee Comptroller and other key entities in coordination with the Government Relations team
- Enhance IPS's reputation as a trusted, responsive, and impactful partner in advancing public service across Tennessee

Organizational Excellence

- Strengthen organizational infrastructure to support sustainable growth
- Promote succession planning, leadership development, and employee engagement
- Ensure financial stewardship while pursuing opportunities to diversify resources and enhance operational effectiveness
- Champion technology and process improvements that improve customer service and organizational efficiency

Qualifications:

The Vice President is a high-impact leadership role central to advancing the University of Tennessee's statewide mission and expanding the reach, visibility, and effectiveness of public service across the state.

The position requires an advanced degree and at least ten years of leadership experience working with state and local government officials in complex organizations; or significant leadership experience in higher education, particularly within a public service or outreach-focused environment.

The successful candidate will be a highly collaborative, relationship-oriented leader who values listening, builds trust through authentic engagement, and is committed to leveraging IPS's strengths to lead the organization into its next chapter.

Additional qualifications and characteristics include:

Leadership and Strategy

- Demonstrated ability to lead complex organizations and deliver results
- Strong leadership presence with a demonstrated ability to drive strategy and align stakeholders
- Demonstrated servant leadership with the ability to earn trust through authenticity, humility, and transparency
- Experience leading organizational change while preserving institutional strengths and culture
- Unwavering integrity and ethical standards
- Demonstrated ability to inspire, motivate, and elevate high-performing teams

Communication and Influence

- Ability to build trust, influence a broad range of stakeholders, and represent the Institute for Public Service effectively
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrated ability to communicate organizational impact through compelling storytelling and public engagement
- Strong presentation and public engagement capabilities
- Demonstrated ability to effectively champion the University of Tennessee System's mission and statewide impact

Institutional and Policy Knowledge

- Understanding of legislation and public policy and their impact on public service stakeholders
- Skilled at aligning University capabilities with the evolving needs of government and industry partners
- Deep understanding of the University's outreach mission, with a clear vision for expanding its impact and reach
- Ability to successfully navigate complex political, governmental, and higher education environments while building consensus across a wide range of stakeholders
- Demonstrated ability to interpret and apply laws, policies, and procedures with sound judgment and consistency

Relationship Building

- Proven ability to establish trust and credibility with employees, government officials, community leaders, and external partners
- Demonstrated success leading through influence rather than authority
- Highly collaborative leadership style with exceptional emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to visibility and engagement across urban and rural communities throughout Tennessee

Judgment and Execution

- Demonstrated ability to balance strategic vision with operational excellence
- Strong organizational and operational leadership skills
- High integrity and sound judgment in decision-making

- Proven ability to make informed, strategic decisions with openness and accountability
- Experience developing high-performing teams through coaching, empowerment, and succession planning
- Demonstrated ability to delegate effectively, empower leaders, and hold teams accountable for results

Benefits & Compensation:

Compensation for the position will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The University offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#) that includes excellent healthcare and tuition benefits for employees and their families, generous retirement benefits, a wide variety of professional development opportunities, supportive work and family benefits, and much more. Additionally, Tennessee residents do not pay state income tax.

Application Process:

To be fully considered for this opportunity, candidates must apply using the University of Tennessee's online application system using the link below. Internal candidates must apply via **Opportunity Marketplace** in DASH.

Application materials should include a resume/CV outlining relevant experience, skills, and qualifications and a cover letter highlighting your interest in the role and how your background aligns with the position.

[Apply Via the University of Tennessee Career Site](#)

The review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the search concludes. The deadline for full consideration is **October 1, 2026**. Nominations, recommendations, or inquiries may be made via the [search website](#).