

## ***Benjamin Robert Johnson***

Ben currently serves as Chairman of the national Innovation Advocacy Council (IAC), which informs and educates policymakers and elected officials to modernize federal innovation & entrepreneurship policy, and a Board member of IAC's parent organization, SSTI.

Ben Johnson is also the full-time Vice President, Programs at BioSTL, where he leads its innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem building initiatives, including state and federal public policy, diversity/equity/inclusion initiatives, and regional talent & workforce development. Since 2001, BioSTL has transformed St. Louis' innovation economy through a comprehensive programming that leverages the region's medical and plant science strengths. Through this work, Ben helped co-create the St. Louis Equity in Entrepreneurship Collective and STEMSTL to advance systems-level interventions that bring equitable outcomes to St. Louis' entrepreneurship and STEM ecosystems.

Ben is also co-founder/President of NEXT Missouri, a grassroots advocacy group promoting pro-entrepreneur policy in Missouri. He is a Board member of the Missouri Biotechnology Association, Missouri's statewide biotechnology trade association; Board Chair for St. Louis Makes, a nonprofit dedicated to reshaping St. Louis' manufacturing future; and a founding Board Member of The Education Equity Center of St. Louis, which fosters a regional approach to racial equity in education through convening, capacity building, and systems change.

Prior to BioSTL, Ben moved to St. Louis to complete the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs and previously led creation of a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in Indiana.

Ben received his M.B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis and his B.A. from Northwestern University, majoring in Economics and Political Science with a minor in Business German.