

Cohen Chambers

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Hiring Team
Northstar Social Labs
Austin, Texas
Austin, Texas, United States

Dear Hiring Team,

I'm applying for the PHP Architect role at Northstar Social Labs. I've spent 15 years building and operating PHP systems for consumer products, with most of my work focused on the parts that become difficult at scale: mobile API compatibility, large MySQL datasets, asynchronous workflows, production visibility, and monetization.

At Brightline Member Services, I own backend architecture for a platform with more than 8 million registered users. I reworked Protobuf and gRPC contracts across 120 high-use endpoints, adding compatibility and versioning controls so older iOS and Android releases could continue working during staged launches. I also helped move core workloads to GCP with Docker, Kubernetes, Google Pub/Sub, and Kafka, while adding Prometheus, OpenTelemetry, Jaeger, and liveprof instrumentation for latency, queue depth, payment failures, and database saturation.

The payment and reliability work is especially relevant to this role. I've designed credits, subscriptions, and in-app purchase flows around idempotency keys, replay-safe event handling, and reconciliation across MySQL and asynchronous queues. At CivicPulse Digital, I worked on tables exceeding one billion rows, improving schema design, indexing, partitioning, and query plans while using Redis and Aerospike to protect read-heavy paths. I've also documented retries, failure modes, and back-pressure behavior so the systems were understandable to the engineers operating them.

I prefer to stay involved from design through production support. That means defining the API contract and data model, writing PHPUnit unit and functional tests, reviewing code, supporting QA and mobile validation, setting up dashboards, and checking the graphs after release. I've led incident response and postmortems, used feature flags for gradual rollouts, and worked closely with product, design, QA, iOS, and Android engineers. I also use AI development tools such as Claude Code when they improve speed without replacing review or technical judgment.

Northstar's combination of a large PHP platform, schema-driven APIs, mobile clients, and monetization systems matches the work I know well. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how I could help evolve the backend while keeping releases reliable for members and practical for the teams building on it.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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