FRIENDS of the CHILDREN Chicago

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

Friends of the Children - Chicago

Development Director



TWB FUNDRAISING

FRIENDS of the CHILDREN
Chicago

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Position Overview

Friends of the Children — Chicago (Friends — Chicago) seeks an energetic fundraising professional to lead and grow fundraising efforts at a moment when the organization is positioned for greater impact and transformational growth. Reporting to Executive Director Taal Hasak-Lowy and serving on the Chicago Leadership Team, the Development Director will also lead a talented, capable, and committed development team and will partner with an engaged Board of Directors that is ready to deepen its role in fundraising.

The strongest candidates will bring a deep belief in the potential of young people facing the greatest obstacles, connection to the families and communities Friends — Chicago serves, and a commitment to equity in every part of the work. This individual will be a seasoned fundraiser with a wide variety of development experience and a strong track record in individual and major gifts.



About the Opportunity

The Development Director will be the organization's lead frontline fundraiser, taking on direct cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major donors, foundation and corporate prospects in close partnership with the Executive Director.

The portfolio carries untapped potential, and the Development Director will have the opportunity to build a major gifts program that matches the strength and impact of Friends — Chicago's programs.

About Us

Friends — Chicago drives generational change by pairing kindergarteners facing the greatest obstacles with professional, salaried mentors who walk beside them for 12.5 years, no matter what. Friends — Chicago serves children in communities most affected by poverty and gun violence, providing each child an average of four hours of one-to-one mentoring every week, year-round. The organization nurtures long-term relationships from a foundation of love, acceptance, and culturally informed engagement, and is the only one in Cook County providing this level of support.

Friends — Chicago has a model that works and is demonstrated through statistics from the national Friends of the Children network where 92% of youth go on to enroll in post-secondary education, serve in the military, or enter the workforce; 83% receive a high school diploma or GED; and 93% remain free from involvement in the juvenile justice system.

In Chicago, the FY 2025 Caregiver Survey shows the program is delivering on its promise: 98% of caregivers are satisfied with the services their family receives, 97% report their child's self-esteem has improved, and 85% have seen improved behavior at school. Friends — Chicago serves 154 children and families from its West Loop administrative office and West Side Clubhouse and from its South Side Clubhouse in Englewood, with 24 new kindergartners recruited each year.

Friends — Chicago is in a period of growth. Its FY2024-2027 strategic plan sets a goal to develop programming for middle-school-aged youth and continue to add one new cohort of kindergarteners every year. The budget in 2026 is $4.65M. With its first graduating class only four years away, Friends — Chicago seeks a Development Director to help build the fundraising capacity this ambitious growth requires.



Why Join Friends of the Children – Chicago?

Joining Friends — Chicago means becoming part of a mission-driven organization with a proven model and the ambition to reach significantly more children and families. Friends — Chicago is guided by five core values: Put Children First, Build Relationships on Love, Commit to Empowerment, Pursue Goals Relentlessly, and Demand Equity, and staff see these values in action every day.

This role offers:

- A meaningful seat at the table as a member of the Chicago Leadership Team and a close partner to the Executive Director
- A frontline fundraising portfolio with untapped potential at an organization with a strong, evidence-based program
- The opportunity to build the systems, strategy, and team that will carry Friends — Chicago through a period of significant growth
- A talented and committed development team that is ready for experienced leadership

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Lead Fundraising Strategy and Major Gifts



The Development Director owns and leads the strategy that will move Friends — Chicago towards its growth goals.

- Engage in direct cultivation, solicitation, and personalized stewardship of individual, corporate and foundation donors and prospects, including event sponsors
- Design and lead a major gifts strategy, including an ongoing multi-year pledge campaign
- Build the pipeline of new prospective individual, corporate, and foundation prospects, and identify new opportunities for funding and sponsorship
- Carry a portfolio of 50 to 75 individual, corporate and foundation donors and prospects
- Oversee the creation and implementation of the annual development plan and calendar, including individual giving, foundation and government grants, events, and communications
- Set performance goals for the fundraising program and development team, evaluate progress against goals, and adjust strategy as needed
- Oversee strategy and implementation for the annual Friendsfest gala
- Oversee outreach meetings and cultivation gatherings for prospects and donors
- Oversee foundation and government grants strategy, including grant calendar, deliverables, and stewardship of funder relationships
- Represent Friends — Chicago as a public spokesperson at events, in the press, and in donor settings

Partner with the Executive Director

The Development Director will be a true partner to Executive Director Taal Hasak-Lowy on fundraising strategy.

- Partner with the Executive Director's donor engagement work, including collaboration on strategy and joint donor meetings
- Serve as a member of the Chicago Leadership Team, including weekly meetings and participation in strategic discussions and activities

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Build Board Engagement in Fundraising

The Development Director will deepen the Board's role as a fundraising body, building the structure and providing coaching.

- Develop the Board's role as a fundraising body and increase their engagement in donor cultivation
- Work with individual board members to develop and implement their personal fundraising plans, including annual give-and-get and prospect-introduction commitments
- Lead Board orientation and coach board members on fundraising and messaging
- Provide staffing and support to the Development Committee and Friendsfest Host Committee, including establishing agendas, developing materials, and supporting the fundraising activities of committee members



Lead and Develop the Team

The Development Director will strengthen Friends — Chicago's fundraising program, building both the systems and the people who make it run.

- Supervise and provide leadership to the three-person development team
- Set clear priorities and performance expectations and hold the team accountable for results
- Coach and mentor team members, supporting their professional growth
- Build strong cross-functional relationships across program, operations, and communications



Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required
- At least seven years of experience in nonprofit management and fundraising in progressively responsible roles, with a minimum of five years in leadership or management
- Experience and affinity with direct solicitation of individual donors is essential
- Proven experience with fundraising, staff supervision, and project management
- Strategic thinker, with the ability to develop, implement, and sustain traditional and creative fundraising strategies
- Experience overseeing corporate, foundation and government grant programs, including grant calendars, deliverables, and funder stewardship
- Proven ability to manage a strong and effective work team
- Strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills
- Ability to represent the organization effectively and professionally to a wide variety of audiences
- Ability to cultivate and sustain relationships and work effectively with a wide variety of constituencies, including staff, program children, organizational supporters, current and potential donors, board members, and community partners

Qualifications

- Outstanding organizational and time management, delegation, and follow-up skills
- Ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively across departments
- Thorough understanding of the population of youth served by Friends of the Children and the mission of the program; experience with youth-serving organizations preferred
- Experience with one or more fundraising database programs
- Self-starter, motivated and able to take initiative
- Valid Illinois driver's license and safe driving record

Work Environment

As an external facing role, this person will be out connecting with existing or prospective donors but will also be on site at the West Loop office managing a team and supporting the executive director. Friends — Chicago's policy allows two days of remote work each week with flexibility for off-site meetings.

The role requires regular travel to other sites in the Chicago metro area, some of which may not be wheelchair accessible or accessible by public transportation. Occasional evening and weekend work is required for events and donor engagement. The workplace is a smoke- and drug-free environment.



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Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this position is $150,000 to $165,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Friends — Chicago offers a competitive benefits package that includes medical, dental and vision insurance; life insurance; three weeks of paid vacation; two weeks of paid sick time; and a 401k program with employer matching up to 4% after the first 90 days of employment.





Friends of the Children — Chicago is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Decisions and criteria governing the employment relationship with all employees are made in a non-discriminatory manner, without regard to race, ethnicity, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, citizenship status, military service, marital status, order of protection status, handicap, disability, or any other factor determined to be unlawful by federal, state, or local statutes.

Application Process

The search is being conducted by TWB Fundraising.

To apply, please submit a resume and cover letter via: **https://bit.ly/FOTCDevelopment**

Inquiries and questions will be held confidentially and may be directed to **Rebekah Silverman**, at **rsilverman@twbfundraising.com**.

No calls, please.

