



JOB ANNOUNCEMENT
CHIEF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER
External Relations
(Internal and External)

For over 50 years, Legal Aid Chicago has provided free civil legal assistance to people living in poverty in metropolitan Chicago. Each year our attorneys, volunteers, and staff help resolve civil legal problems, including domestic violence, consumer fraud, and unfair evictions. Legal Aid Chicago was founded on the philosophy that all individuals are entitled to quality civil legal representation, regardless of their income. We work to ensure that poverty is not an impediment to justice by dismantling the legal barriers that perpetuate inequality. Legal Aid Chicago staff live our mission through our core values of equity, excellence, inclusion, kindness, and respect.

Legal Action Chicago collaborates closely with Legal Aid Chicago by executing on policy initiatives and engaging in complex litigation that furthers Legal Aid Chicago's mission to bring justice to people living in poverty and our communities.

POSITION

Legal Aid Chicago seeks a Chief External Relations Officer.

OVERVIEW

The Chief External Relations Officer (CERO) leads Legal Aid Chicago and Legal Action Chicago's fundraising and communication efforts, including law firm/corporate giving, fundraising and cultivation/stewardship events, individual and major gifts, donor relations, and government, foundation and corporate grants. This position also oversees communications and marketing plans and strategies, including public relations, media relations, online giving, social media and other digital communications, key messaging, and storytelling – ensuring that communications and fundraising activities complement and amplify each other.

Reporting to the CEO/Executive Director, the CERO oversees a team of nine including the Director of Development and Communications; Director of Government and Foundation Grants; Grants Manager; Development and Communications Coordinator; two Development Officers; and two Grants and Data Administrators. This team is responsible for raising over \$11M annually.

The CERO serves as a member of the Executive Team and is a key player in the development and execution of organizational priorities, including strategic planning, staffing and budgeting. The position serves as a liaison to Legal Aid Chicago's Governing Board and is the



responsible for the Board’s Development and Marketing Committee and Governance Committee. The CERO attends all Board meetings and all Board committee meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT LIMITATION

Leadership and Management

- Work in strong collaboration with the CEO/ED, the Deputy Director, and other Executive Team members to develop fundraising strategies to support agency activities
- Work with Executive Team members to create new programs and initiatives that are attractive to funders and consistent with our mission and organizational goals
- Develop and/or maintain systems and structures that provide support and accountability for the department and its activities
- Work with the CEO/ED, Deputy Director and Chief Legal Counsel to engage board members as active participants in fundraising
- Ensure that External Relations Department functions as a team that is respectful, flexible, creative, mission driven, and successful
- Hire, supervise, set goals with and for, and review the performance of External Relations Department staff, and provide strong support and guidance to the team

Fundraising/Development

- Oversee government and foundation grants
- Develop and oversee individual, major, and planned giving
- Monitor fundraising trends in the community and region and adapt as necessary
- Oversee special events to ensure goals are met for all fundraising events including working with Legal Aid Chicago’s Ambassadors Board
- Implement relationship development plans for donors of all giving levels and grow the base of individual giving for the organization
- Implement and oversee moves management strategies for major donors
- Bring forward ideas for new fundraising strategies, evaluate current plans, campaigns, and events and adjust or discontinue as appropriate

Communications

- Oversee a comprehensive communications plan that keeps Legal Aid Chicago supporters and partners informed, engaged, and enthused
- Oversee brand awareness and marketing strategies
- Support strategies to ensure the agency “speaks with one voice” in all communications, engaging program staff where appropriate
- Direct communications efforts to ensure that all production, coordination, and implementation of materials for events, program, public relations, and branding are carried out via print, electronic, and social media outlets



- Work with Legal Action Chicago staff on communication and media strategies for policy initiatives

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will possess:

- A minimum of ten (10) years of experience in institutional fundraising and/or marketing with increasing responsibility in managing others, preferably in the non-profit sector
- Demonstrated experience with multiple areas of giving such as annual fund, major gifts, campaigns, events, foundation and corporate support/sponsorship, government grants, planned gifts, marketing and communications
- Proven success in securing five- to seven-figure gifts; and building and stewarding relationships with individuals, corporations, foundations and public sector funders.
- Evident experience and success in building and/or managing a development staff and budgets to achieve strategic and annual goals
- Demonstrated skill of managing multiple fundraising initiatives, including major gifts, events, and grants
- Strong verbal and written communication skills with experience in development and marketing related writing
- Sound judgement and strong discretion in handling sensitive and personal information
- Superior interpersonal skills and ability to project professional competence, leadership capability, and personal maturity
- Ability to present in a convincing and professional manner and to inspire and generate enthusiasm among donors, volunteers, staff and stakeholders
- Demonstrated capacity to work as a member of an ambitious and successful management team
- Appreciation of the importance of civil legal aid and the civil justice system, commitment to Legal Aid Chicago's mission of equal justice for low-income people. Familiarity with the issues faced by poor people

EDUCATION

A Bachelor's degree required; an advanced degree is preferred

SALARY

Commensurate with experience. Legal Aid Chicago offers a comprehensive benefits package, including low-cost employer-paid health plan options, employer-provided group life and long-term disability insurance, fitness center access, generous paid time off, and much more.



TO APPLY

Send resume, cover letter, and the names and contact information of two professional references to resume@legalaidchicago.org. Put the phrase “Chief External Relations Officer” in the subject line of the email. No phone calls, please. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and the position will remain open until filled.

Legal Aid Chicago is firmly committed to creating a diverse workplace and is proud to provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants and therefore does not discriminate on the basis of creed, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age religion, marital or parental status, alienage, disability, political affiliation or belief, military or military discharge status, or ex-offender status. Applicants who have experiences with our client communities are encouraged to apply.