Job Description

TITLE: Director of Community and Strategic Initiatives
REPORTS TO: Executive Director
DATE REVISED: March 5, 2020

SUMMARY
Friends of the Chicago River seeks a director of community and strategic initiatives to lead current and new projects to help Friends achieve our vision of the Chicago River system as a healthy blue-green corridor of public open space that benefits people and wildlife. The director of community and strategic Initiatives manages the day to day activities of the education and outreach team at the same time as he/she implements programs and partners with the executive director, director of conservation and policy, planning director, and development director to advance our strategic agenda and build organizational capacity.

The director of community and strategic initiatives should be an experienced, creative leader who can build partnerships and expand Friends’ outreach to enhance public awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help improve the health of the Chicago River system. Internal audiences include volunteers and members. External audiences include the general public, community and stewardship groups and organizations, river stakeholders, and visitors to the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum.

An essential member of Friends’ leadership team, the director of community and strategic initiatives is responsible for direct management of three mid to upper level staff and plays a key role in monitoring and measuring programmatic success. As the only organization exclusively dedicated to improving the Chicago River, Friends seeks an individual who is committed to the environment and views the river as an important part of the history, culture and future of the Chicago region.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management
- Lead and inspire the education and outreach team and provide cohesion and strategic vision for Friends’ outreach, education, and community engagement efforts across program areas
- Be a frontline relationship builder to enhance, deepen, and expand current relationships, partnerships that create new support and impact
- Directly supervise Bridgehouse director, ecology outreach manager, and volunteer and events associate.
- Help establish long range strategic goals, plans and policies to engage with corporate leaders to help achieve organizational priorities.
- Partner across programs to inspire ongoing assessment and evaluation of project and program outcomes and develop strategies to measure success
- Provide leadership on organizational efforts to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion
• Build structure, metrics, and plans around programs and initiatives to measure and evaluate success across programs
• Assist with development and facilitation of annual organizational planning

Programming
• Develop and implement long-term and annual plans for strategic initiatives including Litter Free Chicago River, Overflow Action Days, and the River Volunteer Stewardship Program
• Provide vision, leadership, and direction for Friends’ outreach and education programs including Chicago River Day, Chicago River Schools Network, McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, River Action Days, the paddling program and other volunteer initiatives
• Serve as lead partner for Centennial Volunteers, a multi-organization collaboration
• Oversee the program team and coordinated review and assessment of annual and grant funded goals and outcomes
• Ensure that Friends’ suite of outreach opportunities are thoughtful and strategic, and that they build on each other to engage more community members in Friends’ mission
• Manage community outreach requests

Funding
• Work with the development team to fund education and outreach activities, including developing grant proposals and reports and corporate and major donor outreach
• Secure sponsorship for Chicago River Day
• Provide strategic assistance for development activities across all programs
• Oversee all education and outreach grants and budgets, monitor success programmatically and financially
• Directly develop and manage at least eight program areas

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS
• The right candidate will have a master’s degree in community relations, environmental education, ecology, or related field with at least 10 years’ experience in community outreach and strategic program development, no less than five in a leadership position
• The candidate must have experience managing budgets, managing programs, overseeing staff working on a multitude of different programs, program evaluation, cultivating donors, and grant writing

In addition, the candidate must be organized, flexible, self-directed, entrepreneurial, be willing serve with alacrity, and possess:
• Demonstrated success in building, managing, and growing meaningful relationships with a diverse range of constituents
• Effective communications skills
• The ability to work with diverse groups and individuals, and enthusiasm for connecting with people from a variety of backgrounds
• Excellent presentation, writing, and instructional skills
• A high level of integrity, professionalism, and a creative, responsive style with strong
attention to detail and follow through, and the ability to work independently and as a team player

- An ability to work on multiple projects at once and build new projects from the ground up
- An unwavering commitment to improving the environment

**BENEFITS**

Friends offer excellent benefits including generous paid leave, medical and dental insurance, and a retirement match after two years of employment. Salary commensurate with experience. Friends of the Chicago River is an equal opportunity employer.

**TO APPLY**

Please send your resume and cover letter as PDF files describing: 1) your interest in this position, 2) the ways in which you satisfy the qualifications specified above, and 3) salary requirements, to the attention of Margaret Frisbie, Executive Director via email to jobs@chicagoriver.org, subject line: Director of Community and Strategic Initiatives or mail to Friends of the Chicago River, 411 S. Wells, #800, Chicago, IL 60607.

No applications will be considered without a personalized cover letter detailing the applicant's specific interest in this position. NO CALLS, PLEASE.