

A BETTER CHICAGO

Director of Communications

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

A Better Chicago is a venture philanthropy that invests in the most promising nonprofits helping children escape poverty. We're a supercharger. We have provided more than \$65 million in unrestricted funding and management support to help the nonprofits in our portfolio grow. Our donors want to make pivotal, well researched investments that lift the outlook for our city.

We believe that education is the best route out of poverty. But too many Chicago children, particularly on the South and West Sides, lack the resources to learn and thrive. In order to succeed, they need programs that support their academic and social growth, while keeping them safe and meeting their essential needs.

While traditional philanthropies focus on established nonprofits, A Better Chicago aims to find and nurture promising early initiatives, or ones just beyond that stage that are on the cusp of expansion. Often, they are run by local leaders who live or grew up in the communities they serve. We employ a venture capital approach: We raise money from donors who want to maximize their impact, and we invest in innovative youth-serving nonprofits that have the potential to expand exponentially. We vet them rigorously before investing, and our continued support depends on them meeting mutually agreed milestones. As with a venture capital fund, our goal is for our investments to eventually flourish without us. We provide unrestricted funding, renewed annually based on performance. We also provide ongoing guidance and resources to help nonprofits grow. This includes funding or in-kind support for specific needs, such as strategic planning, marketing and communications, executive development or hiring. Our administrative expenses are covered by our board, ensuring that every donor dollar is deployed to the nonprofits we support.

When founded in 2010, A Better Chicago was modeled after a venture capital fund that could build a more equitable city by breaking the cycle of generational poverty. Chicago is one of the most segregated large cities in America: One in four children here lives in poverty, with Black and Latinx youth on the city's South and West sides most affected. Three in four Chicago Public Schools students rely on schools for their primary source for meals.

A Better Chicago's mission is to fight poverty through opportunity, creating an on-ramp for youth to the middle class. As of 2023, A Better Chicago's investment portfolio includes 28 nonprofits that support children from cradle to career.

Key elements of A Better Chicago's model include:

- ***Rigorous due diligence:*** A Better Chicago carefully screens organizations and only funds those that have strong leadership, a compelling program model and a demonstrated commitment to outcomes measurement.

- **Adding value:** It takes more than just money. A Better Chicago provides strategic support in areas like business planning, executive search and leadership development—all of which are critical to building strong organizations and achieving meaningful outcomes.
- **Results:** A Better Chicago's team works tirelessly so that every dollar raised has the maximum possible impact. The organization openly shares its performance because it believes in accountability. It's part of how A Better Chicago is transforming philanthropy.
- **100% impact:** A Better Chicago's board of directors and leadership council cover all of our administrative costs, so 100 percent of all donations are supporting our portfolio of outstanding nonprofits.

Since launching in 2010, A Better Chicago has made compelling progress:

- Raised over \$65 million to invest in Chicago's most effective nonprofits
- Reviewed close to 1000 organizations and built a portfolio of 28 high-performing organizations
- Developed partnerships with leading professional services firms to help grantees tackle their most pressing strategic and operational challenges
- Created an Emergency Relief Fund that has invested nearly \$2.5 million to support 47 local initiatives during the COVID19 pandemic
- Launched and implemented the \$7.5M Chicago Design Challenge to accelerate learning recovery and address the mental health challenges of youth most affected by the pandemic

OUR COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

A Better Chicago is committed to advancing racial equity and ensuring Chicago youth are economically mobile and thriving in education, career, and life. Given this nation's longstanding history of systemic inequity, we focus our efforts on funding and scaling ideas that expand opportunities for Black and Latinx youth, with particular emphasis on those ideas coming directly from the communities we serve. Our commitment is reflected in our strategic investment priorities, as well as our business operations, as we work to measure the impact of our portfolio investments, staffing, and contracting.

We are devoted to aligning our policies, practices, and resources to foster equitable opportunity for all. As we continue in our mission to build a Chicago where low-income, Black, and Latinx youth can thrive, we are also dedicated to building an anti-racist organization in which all of our stakeholders feel empowered to learn about and dismantle barriers to opportunity. We know this work is complex, but our commitment is durable, and we intend to be an active and engaged participant in the necessary work to elevate solutions for creating a more just and equitable world.

For more information, please visit www.abetterchicago.org.

ABOUT THE POSITION

A Better Chicago seeks an enthusiastic, thoughtful and detail-oriented professional to drive the organization's communications initiatives. Reporting to the Chief Marketing and External Affairs Officer (CMEAO), the Director of Communications will assist in the development and implementation of an integrated communications strategy that engages A Better Chicago's multiple constituencies through building increased understanding of and commitment to the organization's model, impact, and brand.

Why this is your dream job:

This is an ideal opportunity for candidates seeking a hands-on role at an entrepreneurial and innovative venture philanthropy. Serving as a lead external relations team member provides an unmatched opportunity to deploy your marketing, communication and project management skills, leveraging a network of nonprofit and philanthropic leaders and peers. Additionally, the Director of Communications will play a critical role in driving A Better Chicago's next phase of growth, significantly increasing our ability to break down barriers to academic and career success for young people in every neighborhood and zip code in Chicago.

Why this is a challenging job:

A Better Chicago is a fast-paced, highly entrepreneurial organization that maintains high standards and ambitious targets – all with a lean team. Each member of A Better Chicago's team relishes the opportunity to roll up their sleeves to be a part of building something great. A successful Director of Communications will be passionate about providing opportunity for young people in Chicago and will be excited to collaborate on a multifaceted communications and marketing strategy that will take A Better Chicago's work to the next level. The ideal candidate has stellar written and verbal communications skills, the capability to apply insights and data to improve campaign outcomes and a strong desire to learn. The Director of Communications will play a critical role in supporting A Better Chicago's thought leadership and brand awareness strategies, with responsibilities ranging from creating content for traditional and social media to developing donor-focused communications to implementing digital fundraising campaigns.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Set and guide A Better Chicago's communications strategy and assist with development of metrics and goals to monitor the strategy's effectiveness
- Write thoughtful and engaging speeches, case studies and opinion pieces for the A Better Chicago executive team
- Keep abreast of current events and trends, both internally within A Better Chicago's portfolio and externally in education and philanthropy, to inform the development of content that is meaningful, timely, and provocative
- Produce high-value campaigns, digital/print content, and public relations opportunities all with the goals of increasing ABC's presence and credibility, capturing new audiences, and deepening connections with existing supporters
- Spearhead messaging and collateral development for end-of-year and online campaigns (i.e., graduation and back to school campaigns) leveraging multiple media and strategies to target and drive the engagement and retention of donors in partnership with the development team

- Assist with messaging and collateral development for annual and themed campaigns leveraging multiple media and strategies to target and drive the engagement and retention of donors in partnership with the development team
- Manage and provide thought leadership and guidance to select communications, design, and event vendors for A Better Chicago
- Support the Chief Marketing and External Affairs Officer in implementing a media relations strategy that enables awareness and comprehensive coverage of A Better Chicago's impact and accomplishments

Specific tasks include but are not limited to:

- Writing press releases, op eds, and other thought pieces that showcase A Better Chicago's progress towards fighting poverty with opportunities for youth
- Understand the current landscape of issues (e.g., poverty, education, essential needs) and policies in order to advance and highlight A Better Chicago's mission
- Lead content creation meetings to gather content from the Portfolio and Impact & Innovation teams and to update the portfolio team and Impact & Innovation teams on how content will be utilized
- Manage and update A Better Chicago's website, digital and social media
- Create informative and engaging news updates that are distributed to A Better Chicago's stakeholders
- Lead content development for end-of-year and digital campaigns
- Lead outlining and developing our annual Investor Report
- Lead production of promotional videos, including identifying and gathering content

CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

The ideal candidate may bring experience from the civic, public, and/or private sectors and will possess the following qualifications and attributes:

- Deep commitment to A Better Chicago's mission to invest and scale up high-performing nonprofit organizations that are creating opportunities for low-income Chicagoans to break cycles of poverty
- Strong interest in education and education-related issues and policy
- Excellent understanding of K-12 education, college access/success, early childhood education, social-emotional learning, and/or careers/workforce development
- Outstanding research and writing skills along with the ability to adapt style to communicate effectively and concisely across a variety of traditional and digital media channels and with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Bachelor's degree in journalism, communications, marketing or related field preferred
- 5-10 years of professional experience
- Self-starter able to manage up, prioritize, multi-task, and meet deadlines in a fast-paced environment
- Highly organized, with exceptional attention to detail
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to influence others, regardless of role or seniority
- Adept at Microsoft Office Suite applications such as PowerPoint and Word
- Demonstrated commitment and track record of excellence across A Better Chicago's values:
 - **Courage:** *We proactively step up to challenges, make tough decisions and act decisively. We say what we believe, even if it's unpopular*

- **Empathy:** We respect and seek to understand a diverse range of perspectives from our teammates, partners and the communities we serve
- **Judgment:** We make wise decisions despite ambiguity. We cut through noise to focus on the most important issues
- **Drive:** We bring an ownership mindset and hold ourselves accountable to delivering results. We have a bias toward action
- **Innovation:** We develop creative solutions that enable us to overcome obstacles and achieve more for Chicago's youth
- **Stretch:** We get better every day through feedback, reflection and growth
- **Self-awareness:** We work to understand our abilities, our growth opportunities and the impact of our actions on others
- **Positive attitude:** We bring energy, optimism and a sense of possibility to our work, especially in difficult times
- **Teamwork:** We support our colleagues to be their best. We work collaboratively to solve problems. We put our team above ourselves

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

Salary range begins at \$100,000 and is commensurate with experience.

A Better Chicago offers an excellent benefits package, which includes:

- Medical, dental and vision insurance
- Short-term and long-term disability insurance
- 401K plan with company contribution
- Significant paid time off, including three weeks of vacation, five sick days, and 16 days off for public holidays and office closure
- A Better Chicago currently operates within a hybrid work environment, with 2 days in office per week set as the baseline expectation. From time to time, staff may be required to be in the office more frequently, as workflow dictates.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

October 15th, 2023

TARGETED START DATE:

January, 2024

LOCATION:

Chicago, IL

TO APPLY, SEND COVER LETTER AND RESUME TO: careers@abetterchicago.org

A Better Chicago is an equal opportunity employer and actively invites candidates from diverse background

