

POSITION: PORTFOLIO ASSOCIATE

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

A Better Chicago is a nonprofit venture philanthropy fund devoted to changing how Chicago fights poverty by investing in bold ideas that create opportunity for our youth. Driven by the core beliefs that education has the power to change everything and that charity as usual doesn't work, A Better Chicago invests in and supports a select portfolio of high-performing nonprofits that are putting low-income students on a path toward high school, college and career success. Through its approach to selecting and supporting outstanding organizations, A Better Chicago seeks to improve opportunities for young people while setting an example of how philanthropy can drive compelling results at scale.

Current challenge and A Better Chicago's solution:

Despite decades of reform efforts, only 18% of Chicago Public School freshmen are graduating from college by the age of 25, and even fewer enter a career with a family-sustaining wage. In response, A Better Chicago is harnessing best practices from the public and private sectors to find, fund and scale a portfolio of high-performing nonprofit organizations that puts low-income students on a path to high school, college and career success. Through a combination of funding and management support, A Better Chicago is providing Chicago's most effective nonprofits with the financial and intellectual capital to thrive.

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 operating expenses, so 100% of all donations are directly invested in our portfolio of outstanding nonprofits

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

- Raised over \$30 million to invest in Chicago's most effective nonprofits
- Built a founding board, leadership council, impact council and high-performing staff
- Reviewed 700+ organizations and built a portfolio of 11 high-performing organizations
- Developed partnerships with leading professional services firms to help grantees tackle their most pressing strategic and operational challenges

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

ABOUT THE POSITION

A Better Chicago seeks a Portfolio Associate to support its impact-focused partnerships with grantee organizations. Working hand in hand with the Portfolio Director, the Portfolio Associate will help to build strong relationships with A Better Chicago's grantees, develop and maintain a bench of high-caliber external partners (e.g., independent consultants, firms) to provide capacity-building support to grantees, and play a lead role in producing robust grantee performance assessments.

Why this is your dream job:

For the rising star who is eager to put their analytical mind and natural curiosity to use to truly make an impact by supporting best-in-class Chicago nonprofits, this is the job for you. This role provides an unmatched opportunity to 1) develop a deep understanding of the Chicago nonprofit sector; 2) operate at both a 100- and 1,000-foot view to support individual grantee organizations and identify trends across high-performing organizations; 3) engage (and learn from) a select group of high-caliber nonprofit leaders; and 4) work with an amazing and collaborative team to take on new challenges and achieve ambitious goals.

Why this is a challenging job:

A Better Chicago is highly entrepreneurial and maintains high standards and ambitious targets. Each member of A Better Chicago's team relishes the opportunity to roll up their sleeves to be a part of building something great. Critical to this role are an ability to flexibly support the Portfolio Director as needs arise and to bring an "ownership" mindset to tasks big and small. With a lean team and a growing portfolio, the Portfolio Associate will need to be comfortable juggling numerous, and sometimes competing, priorities and managing up to ensure work is being completed efficiently and with the rigor and quality expected at A Better Chicago.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Support efforts to establish deep partnerships with portfolio organizations

- Partner with Portfolio Director to set an aligned vision of long-term success with grantees, developing key documents to reflect shared goals and priorities
- Manage quarterly check-in process with grantees, ensuring reports are submitted, preparing meeting materials, attending check-ins with Portfolio Director, and capturing key takeaways
- Develop quarterly portfolio newsletter, collaborating with other program team members to source relevant updates and resources to share with grantees
- Collaborate with Portfolio Director to solicit and incorporate feedback from grantees

Oversee efforts to provide grantees with high-quality management support

- Build and maintain A Better Chicago's cadre of management support partners (e.g., consultants, firms), vetting new companies and stewarding existing relationships
- Collaborate with Portfolio Director and grantees to execute management support projects, developing requests for proposals, identifying best-fit partners, and executing contracts
- Partner with Portfolio Director to create cross-portfolio learning opportunities (e.g., professional learning communities, workshops), helping with content development and logistics
- Develop process to assess quality of management support projects to ensure perspective on partner strengths, weaknesses and performance is maintained on an ongoing basis

- Manage process for approving new management support projects to ensure the team consistently invests in high-impact areas and maintains a holistic view of portfolio needs
- Conduct monthly financial forecast and reconciliation to ensure expense projections and internal records are up to date

Play a critical role in conducting recurring grantee performance assessment

- Partner with Portfolio Director to regularly review grantee progress and status to maintain up-to-date perspective on grantee outcomes, growth, aspirations and long-term potential
- Support Portfolio Director in developing extensive data-driven investment recommendations for grantees, synthesizing progress and updates to draft and iterate on recommendations
- Work with Portfolio Director and Director of Communications and Engagement to develop key external materials to share updates on grantee performance and progress (e.g., web content)
- Support Portfolio Director in preparing materials for board meetings, as necessary

Contribute to ensure a stronger organization as a whole

- Embrace A Better Chicago's values and set an example by living them in day-to-day work
- Curate a bi-weekly synopsis of relevant news to share internally, ensuring the team maintains a solid understanding of the landscape and current events
- Collaborate with the program team to develop content for bi-weekly board newsletters
- Provide critical project management support to ensure program team is on track in quarterly and annual cycles and against discrete projects, as needed

REPORTS TO: Portfolio Director

CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS:

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

- Deep commitment to A Better Chicago's mission to drive socioeconomic change through investing in organizations and schools creating high-quality educational opportunities for low-income Chicagoans
- 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.*
- Skills and experience:
 - Bachelor's degree
 - 2+ years of professional experience working in challenging roles with increasing levels of responsibility, which may include relevant experiences in academic and/or internship settings
 - Excellent written and verbal communication skills
 - Excellent listener who can concisely synthesize information
 - Self-starter able to prioritize, multi-task and meet deadlines in a dynamic, fast-paced environment
 - Highly organized, with exceptional attention to detail
 - High-level thinker who can connect the dots across different areas to anticipate challenges and determine solutions
 - Excellent interpersonal skills
 - Ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances
 - Adept at Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

Salary is competitive and 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. Paid time off includes three weeks of vacation, five sick days and 16 days off for public holidays and office closure. A Better Chicago is also committed to providing all staff members with frequent opportunities for meaningful, individualized professional development.

TARGETED START DATE: May 2019

LOCATION: Chicago, IL

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

A Better Chicago is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes candidates from diverse backgrounds.