



Program Director Position Description

About Open Books

Mission

To transform lives through reading, writing, and the unlimited power of books

History

Open Books is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on child and family literacy in Chicago. Open Books launched in 2006 with a simple idea – to collect used books and sell them to support youth literacy in Chicago. Since then, Open Books’ programs have boosted the skills and confidence of thousands of Chicago youth, from birth to 12th grade, as readers and writers. From among the book donations Open Books collects – nearly 2 million books annually – staff and volunteers work with parents, teachers, schools, and other community-based organizations to grant books to youth that have limited access. To date, across Chicago, Open Books has impacted nearly 45,000 children and youth through its literacy programs and granted over 1 million carefully-curated books across the city. Our bookstores are community hubs that not only support local neighborhoods but also give all Chicagoans access to affordable books.

Core Values

Open Books’ core values work in tandem to guide everything we do, including Board recruitment and management. As mutually-reinforcing beliefs, these values serve as our north star as we serve children and families through formative literacy experiences.

- **Accountability:** We fulfill the commitments we make to ourselves and those we make together with communities, admit our shortcomings, and learn from our mistakes.
- **Collaboration:** We commit to listening to and working with others, as well as acting to meet the needs we identify together as a means of collective impact.
- **Empowerment:** We seek, through literacy experiences and resources, to amplify the voices, talents, and stories of others, especially those who are marginalized and often overlooked.
- **Ingenuity:** We take creative risks by using new ideas to tackle challenges and evolve how we serve others.
- **Respect:** We value the dignity, humanity, and diversity of perspectives of all individuals and work to reflect this in all our interactions.

Open Books stands against hate and discrimination in any form. We exist in solidarity with all communities and peoples impacted by the injustices of racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and bigotry. We commit to creating barrier-free education experiences, rooted in literacy, and encourage feedback from anyone in the Open Books family as to how we can continually improve toward a more just environment.



Position Summary

Open Books seeks a dynamic leader passionate about literacy in the City of Chicago to serve as its next Program Director. In collaboration with the leadership team and program staff, the Program Director will develop, oversee, and direct strategies to increase book access, kindergarten readiness, grade level reading, and independent reading among families in specific under-resourced communities. The Program Director will build and lead a dedicated team to implement practices and evaluate progress towards those goals.

Job Type: Full-time

Reports to: Managing Director

Position Responsibilities

- Envision, plan, and direct strategic literacy programs in alignment with Open Books' mission
 - Create strategies and goals to increase youth literacy skills in North Lawndale and other specific communities on the West, South, and Southwest sides of Chicago
 - Oversee the development and dissemination of resources to support pre-readers, early readers, and independent readers
 - Research methodologies and outcomes as related to strategies and goals
 - Plan and implement evaluation methods and reporting, and make adjustments as necessary
 - Work collaboratively across departments to maximize potential for book access
- Develop key high level strategic partners to maximize collective impact of Open Books Programs
 - Identify and collaborate with external partners, committees, and collaboratives, among others to support literacy objectives in specific communities
 - Create relationships with key stakeholders in the educational and related fields
 - Represent Open Books at relevant meetings, conferences, councils, and community events
 - Create and seek opportunities to build the Open Books brand as a leading literacy organization
 - Maintain awareness of community educational challenges and opportunities
- Build and direct a team of program staff to implement programs
 - Manage team members with emphasis on achievement against our mission and in line with our core values
 - Encourage and support the professional development of all program team members
 - Oversee the creation and updating of engaging, relevant curriculum in line with goals
 - Design and oversee systems and methods to create greater access to books, through granting opportunities and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program
 - Collaborate on the development of community-based literacy supports, programs, and messaging as part of Open Books North Lawndale Reads campaign
- Contribute to the overall direction and efficacy of Open Books as part of the leadership team
 - Collaborate with leadership team to hone mission and values as they relate to literacy
 - Exemplify leadership to both internal and external stakeholders
 - Empower team members to achieve goals



- Create annual budgets for the refinement and expansion of new and existing programs
- Assist in identifying, and executing, on potential funding opportunities

Qualifications

- Passion for promoting child and family literacy and empowering communities; has a deep commitment to Open Books' mission and values
- At least five (5) years of education experience, either in nonprofits or classrooms
- Innovation and creativity in developing new programs and refining existing ones
- In depth understanding of literacy best practices, especially as it relates to pre-readers and emerging readers
- Strong communication and presentation skills, and ability to communicate across organizational departments
- Detail orientation in managing multiple programs and goals
- Strong interpersonal skills that effectively engage diverse external partners
- Previous management experience in developing team members
- Appreciation and focus for continuous growth and improvement (both individual and organizational)

Work Environment

- Administrative headquarters in Chicago's West Loop, as well as Open Books Pilsen
- Typical week is Monday – Friday, 8 hours per day
- Periodic evening and weekend opportunities and obligations related to programs and special events
- Family-friendly and flexible atmosphere
- Opportunities for professional development and growth

Compensation & Benefits

- Base salary between \$70,000-\$75,000 for full-time employment
- Competitive benefits, including health and dental insurance
- Voluntary vision and life insurance, and participation in 401(k) plan
- 24 paid-time-off (PTO) days, in addition to federal and other holidays
- Multiple parental leave options

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please send your updated resume and cover letter to hire@open-books.org.

Open Books is committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness and seeks to create a pluralistic community. Open Books is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) and complies with the spirit and law of anti-discrimination protections to foster a diverse workforce. Members of historically excluded groups, including but not limited to people of color, women, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.