



Director of Book Operations

Position Description

February 2025

Start Date: May 2025

About Open Books

Open Books transforms lives through reading, writing, and the unlimited power of books. Since inception, Open Books has impacted tens of thousands of Chicagoans, primarily children (birth – 12th grade), through in- and out-of-school literacy programs and the provision of free books via an increasing number of channels. Open Books' programs have boosted the skills and confidence of thousands of Chicago children, from the newborns who receive books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to the first and second grade readers in the Reading Buddies program. Open Books envisions a Chicago where all children have a chance to develop the reading and writing skills they need to feel confident and flourish on their academic journeys and beyond.

Open Books approaches its work with an equity lens and addresses the barriers that make access to books and literacy programs uniquely difficult for children and families in Chicago's resource-withheld neighborhoods. Ten priority neighborhoods served by Open Books include: North Lawndale, Austin, W./Garfield Park, Pilsen, Little Village, Englewood, Belmont Cragin, W./Humboldt Park, and Hermosa.

Open Books is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with the spirit and law of anti-discrimination protections to foster a diverse workforce.

About the Position

Open Books seeks an enthusiastic and strategic logistics and retail leader passionate about reading and equitable literacy education in the City of Chicago to serve as its Director of Book Operations. The Director of Book Operations contributes to the Open Books mission and vision through strategic direction and leadership of the organization's warehouse and retail operations. This includes strategic development, oversight and direction of all Open Books bookstores, warehouse and ecommerce operations, book acquisition initiatives and projects, and book distribution models to support the sustainability, growth, and impact of the Open Books mission. The Director of Book Operations is responsible for ensuring that literacy placemaking through the Open Books bookstores and warehouse supports the activation and reflection of the organization's mission, vision, communities, and impact goals. They lead the Book Operations team which is composed of booksellers and logistics professionals.

The Director of Operations serves as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, modeling organizational leadership excellence and a spirit of collaboration within and across all departments according to Open Books' core and DEAI values and practices. The ideal candidate for this role is mission-centered, a

strategic thinker and creative problem-solver, and possesses the ability to balance multiple needs, workstreams, and projects simultaneously and across locations. They also demonstrate strong values of DEAI, wellness, and fostering an inclusive workplace. They will join a team of 28 staff members who seek to transform lives through reading, writing, and the unlimited power of books.

The Director of Book Operations reports to the Executive Director.

Core Responsibilities

Book Operations

- Design, direct, and evaluate book acquisitions systems and workflows including but not limited to, onsite book donation receipt at the warehouse, bookstores, books bins, and donation pick-ups.
- Design, direct, and evaluate book sorting and distribution systems and processes to ensure equitable and timely distribution of book donations across Open Books education and community engagement programs, e-commerce, and bookstores; collaborating with all departments to understand book inventory needs.
- Partner with the Director of Development and Communications on coordination of book acquisitions efforts as they relate to book drives, book-buys, and other targeted, external book acquisition partnerships and donations.
- Develop and manage strategic and contractual relationships and partnerships with landlords, vendors, and other members of the bookselling community.
- Ensure safe and up-to-date vehicle management and maintenance for all Open Books vehicles, including the Open Books Booksmobile.
- Ensure general facilities management of Open Books bookstores and warehouse.
- Partner with the Director of Development and Communications Team to ensure effective, welcoming, and supportive warehouse volunteer training and experiences.
- Oversee the management and maintenance of all Book Operations software and technology (retail and warehouse).

Retail Operations

- In partnership with the Executive Director, design and implement innovative, community-responsive bookstore models and designs which promote the mission, values, and practices of Open Books, bolster customer connections to our work, and enhance customer experiences and reading interests through strategic curation.
- Develop, direct, implement, evaluate, and oversee all earned revenue strategies and activities, including in-store, e-commerce, and off-site events, ensuring earned revenue goals are achieved.
- Partner with the Development and Communications Team to develop effective retail marketing strategies and collateral; ensure training and implementation of retail marketing strategies in-store, off-site, and at POS; ensure collaboration among and between booksellers and the Marketing Manager.
- Track and provide monthly, quarterly, and annual revenue projections, trends, and variance reports to the Executive Director and Director of Finance and Administration as needed or requested.
- Direct and oversee the e-commerce systems, activities and strategies.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director and Director of Finance and Administration on the earned income projections for the annual budget.

- Partner with the Director of Finance and Administration on the preparation and execution of the annual inventory audit.
- Partner with the Director of Community Engagement on in-store public and community events.
- Lead the project management of Independent Bookstore Day, directly partnering with the Director of Community Engagement and the Development and Communications Team.
- Lead the project management and execution of tabling at Printers Row Lit Fest for the warehouse and bookstore tables.
- Partner with the Development and Communications Team on store volunteer management and training; ensure effective, welcoming, and supportive store volunteer training and experiences.

Management and Leadership

- Model leadership excellence among all Open Books staff and uphold Open Books core values, policies, and procedures.
- Direct and manage the Book Operations team, leading and coaching a staff of up to 15 across coordinators and managers, with direct supervision of 2 managers.
- Develop and manage work plans for direct reports and conduct mid-year and annual reviews.
- Develop and implement an annual professional development plan for the Book Operations team.
- Ensure effective design, implementation, and documentation of processes, protocols, strategies and best practices to best support internal workflow and reflect the mission and values of Open Books.
- In collaboration with the Director of Finance and Administration, develop and manage the Book Operations department budget.
- Serve as a member of the Senior Leadership team, helping to drive organizational strategy and organization-wide efforts, and act as an advisor to the Executive Director.
- As a senior leader, support and foster cross-departmental communication and collaboration.
- Support organizational expectations, efforts, initiatives, processes, and training regarding DEAI.
- Participate in internal (*e.g.*, staff meetings, program execution) and external events (*e.g.*, conferences).
- Serve as a staff liaison for at least one Board of Directors Committee.
- Help ensure the overall health, vitality, and positive morale of Open Books.
- Uphold and regularly demonstrate the [core values of Open Books](#): Accountability, Collaboration, Empowerment, Ingenuity, and Respect.

Data and Reporting

- Provide bi-weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports and updates to the Executive Director, Director of Finance and Administration, and Books Ops Teams (as appropriate) on sales and inventory goals, progress, and activities.
- Provide ad hoc reports as needed or requested.
- In partnership with the Executive Director, lead the development and execution of evaluation tools regarding effectiveness of book operations strategies, models, processes, and initiatives.
- Support Development and Communications team in impact storytelling efforts and reporting as well as evaluation of volunteer experiences and training.

Qualifications

- Strong belief in the importance of literacy and literacy education
- Enthusiastic about and committed to Open Books' mission and programs

- Minimum of five (5) years of retail and/or logistics management experience, or comparable experience. Experience working across multiple locations is a plus.
- Minimum of five (5) years experience managing and developing a team; values in promoting inclusive workplaces and work/life balance
- Experience in strategic design and development
- Strategic thinker, creative problem-solver and solutions-oriented.
- Experience creating, implementing, training and evaluating systems, policies and procedures.
- Strong communication and presentation skills.
- Models values of collaboration and demonstrates ability to manage and promote cross-departmental collaboration.
- Detail oriented; strong ability to manage multiple projects, workflows, and goals.
- Strong interpersonal skills that effectively engage team members and diverse external partners.
- Appreciation and focus for continuous growth and improvement (both individual and organizational).

Work Environment

- On-site work across all Open Books locations with work-from-home time available. Typical work week is Monday – Friday, 8 hours per day.
- Periodic evening and weekends due to obligations related to events and bookstore staffing needs
- Attendance required at special retail and program events including Independent Bookstore Day, Printers Row Lit Fest, and Open Books Slide Into Summer and Lit Fest
- Family-friendly and flexible atmosphere
- Opportunities for professional development and growth

Compensation & Benefits

- Base salary of \$88,500 in addition to competitive benefits, including health and dental insurance
- Voluntary vision and life insurance
- Voluntary participation in the organization's 401(k) plan
- Generous paid time off (in excess of several federal and other holidays)
- Flexible, family-friendly work environment