



Senior Associate for Opportunity Youth Strategies Position Description

Background

Thrive Chicago (www.thrivechi.org) organizes the ecosystem of youth-serving organizations and drives collective action to make real, systemic changes for Chicago's most at-risk youth. Recently, Thrive's focus has been three critical milestones in the cradle to career pipeline: high school graduation, college completion, and employment. Thrive developed a complementary strategy to support Chicago's 60,000 Opportunity Youth (OY) – 16-24-year-olds who are out of school and out of work. In 2016, Thrive launched the OY Working Group, a group of 30+ public and private leaders, which developed citywide recommendations to reconnect Chicago's OY to school and work. In March 2017, the OY Working Group unveiled a citywide campaign with a collective goal of reconnecting 10,000 OY to school and work by 2020, along with a set of ten recommendations and an action plan to achieve this goal. Since then, Thrive has convened practitioners, funders, community partners, public sector leaders, and youth to drive concrete strategies in the following areas: (1) launching neighborhood-based Reconnection Hubs, (2) increasing the number of young adults in Learn & Earn pathways, (3) supporting direct partnerships between community-based organizations and employers around Pathways to Careers, and (4) engaging Chicago 100K Opportunities Initiative employers to connect OY to entry-level jobs. In May 2018, Thrive held a second annual OY Summit and released an impact report sharing new data on Chicago's OY population and highlighting progress made towards the collective goal.

Thrive serves as the local backbone in Chicago of the national 100,000 Opportunities Initiative (www.100Kopportunities.org). The 100K initiative aims to be the largest employer-led coalition in the country focused on Opportunity Youth and is currently active in eight demonstration cities. Since 2016, Thrive and its partners have hosted a series of hiring fairs through 100K to connect OY to entry-level, private sector employment. These events have drawn over 6,100 youth and over 50 employers, resulting in over 2,000 conditional job offers. Through this initiative, Thrive has worked closely with partners to test innovative practices and tools to recruit, prepare, and connect OY to entry-level jobs through these events. Moreover, the initiative has developed a track record with employers willing to offer onsite job interviews and make on-the-spot job offers. In 2018, Thrive is supporting the execution of three community-based hiring fairs, funded by the City of Chicago and modeled after the past 100K fairs.

Job Summary

As an integral member of Thrive's dynamic and growing team, the Senior Associate for Opportunity Youth Strategies will work with key partners to support Thrive's OY strategies aimed at reducing the number of Chicago youth not in school or working. The Senior Associate will work closely with the Thrive Director of Opportunity Youth Strategies to drive forward the work in this portfolio, including: Reconnection Hubs, Learn & Earn, Pathways to Careers, and 100K Opportunities. This position will serve as the primary point of contact and project manager for the wide range of stakeholders engaged in these workstreams. Stakeholders include: public institutions, community based organizations, funders, and employers. This skilled project manager will be flexible in supporting the needs of Thrive's OY workstreams, ensuring the timely and effective completion of deliverables associated with them. This position will also serve as the primary coordinator of Thrive's 100K initiative activities and liaison to 100K employers in Chicago. The Senior Associate will work with rest of Thrive team to ensure that all these activities align with and leverage the rest of Thrive's work.



Responsibilities

Responsibilities include but will not be limited to:

Opportunity Youth Strategies

- Support Thrive's Director of Opportunity Youth Strategies in executing ongoing work by filling a variety of roles including the coordination of meetings, events, and community presentations.
- Develop and cultivate relationships with employers and community stakeholders, including practitioners in the education, faith, nonprofit, philanthropic, and civic sectors.
- Provide technical assistance, project management support and develop process improvement methods and tools as necessary to Reconnection Hub partners in the Roseland community.
- Support Reconnection Hub partners in other communities through facilitation of meetings to develop unified action plans to support planning and implementation of this intervention.
- Support facilitation, relationship building, and execution of interventions related to Thrive's Learn and Earn workstream.
- Support facilitation and project management of the Chicago Pathways to Career Community of Practice consisting of the four key partners supported by Aspen's investment.
- Support execution of the Aspen Fund for Youth Connectivity grant deliverables.
- Work closely with Thrive staff to create and implement clear and timely communication strategies for various partners including members of different Thrive stakeholder groups, Thrive Leadership Council members, public institutions, education and non-profit partners.
- Manage to agreed upon action plans to ensure on time completion of all tasks, propose adjustments to timeline if needed.
- Travel and participate in national Opportunity Youth convenings as needed.
- Assist with grant reporting related to Thrive's OY workstreams.

100K Opportunities Initiative

- Lead the project management, and operationalization all aspects of Chicago's 100K Initiative in partnership with other initiative stakeholders.
- Serve as liaison and connector of Chicago 100K employers and youth facing agencies.
- Provide technical assistance to three community organizations delivering hiring fairs for OY in 2018 and ensure timely collection of data and information from partners organizing the fair.
- Travel and participate in national convenings associated with the initiative as needed.
- Serve as the day-to-day contact for national funders and partners supporting 100K (i.e. Aspen Forum for Community Solutions, Schultz Family Foundation, Starbucks, Jobs for the Future).
- Work closely with the Thrive Director of Opportunity Youth Strategies to ensure 100K activities align with and complement broader OY initiatives whenever possible.
- Manage grant reporting related to the 100K initiative.
- Represent the 100K Initiative at different youth employment initiatives and employer engagement initiatives, such as Reimagine Retail Chicagoland



Qualifications and Skills

- Passionate about realizing Thrive Chicago’s vision: Chicago is a city where all succeed in education, career, and life.
- Bachelor’s degree required with at least 5 years of relevant work experience.
- Demonstrated ability to manage the scope, requirements, deliverables, timeline, and resource needs of complex, multi-stakeholder projects. Knowledge of project management fundamentals and experience managing projects are essential.
- Strong meeting facilitation skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills. Must be an effective communicator with multiple audiences, including community based organizations, foundations, researchers, and educators. Must be able to communicate technical information to a wide variety of audiences.
- Strong strategic thinking skills.
- Be self-motivated, able to take initiative, and have a positive personality.
- Strong sense of emotional intelligence
- Good organizational skills and high attention to detail required.
- Advanced skills in Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint preferred.
- Employer relationship management skills preferred.
- Familiarity with collective impact and non-profit sector preferred.
- Knowledge of education and workforce development systems in Chicago preferred.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary and benefits will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

Application Instructions

Please submit a resume/CV and cover letter to info@thrivechi.org with YOUR LAST NAME and “Senior Associate for OY Strategies” in subject line. We will review applications on a rolling basis, so it is to your advantage to apply as soon as possible.

Thrive Chicago believes in equal employment opportunities for all, regardless of color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or any other legally protected classification. Thrive’s policy is to hire and promote the most qualified applicants and to comply with all federal, state and local equal employment opportunity laws.