Executive Director

Care for Friends | Chicago, IL

The Opportunity

Care for Friends is seeking a strategic, relationship-driven Executive Director to lead the organization into its next phase of growth and impact.

With a newly opened community center, expanded programming across multiple sites, and strong momentum in fundraising and partnerships, Care for Friends is well-positioned for its next chapter. The Executive Director will build on this foundation—strengthening systems, deepening relationships, and expanding the organization's reach—while preserving the values and community that define the organization.

About Care for Friends

Care for Friends (CFF) is a volunteer-powered nonprofit serving individuals experiencing food insecurity in Chicago through a low-barrier, dignity-first model.

We bring people together through shared meals, access to clothing and essential services, and connections to housing, healthcare, and employment partners. With no sign-in requirements or barriers to entry, we serve individuals often underserved by traditional systems and create a trusted community where relationships come first.

Today, Care for Friends:

- Operates across multiple locations in Chicago (on both north and south sides of the city)
- Serves hundreds of meals each week
- Delivers groceries to families across 30 wards
- Connects guests to housing, healthcare, and workforce partners
- Annual operating budget: $615,000
- Volunteers engaged annually: approximately 2800

In 2025, Care for Friends opened a new community center in Lincoln Park featuring a commercial kitchen, dining space, and clinic—creating new opportunities to expand services, including mental health support and programming for youth and families.

The Role

The Executive Director is the primary leader of Care for Friends, responsible for executing strategy, leading fundraising efforts, overseeing operations, and serving as the organization's key external representative. The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors of the organization.

This is a **second-stage leadership role**: the foundation is strong, and the next leader will focus on building greater consistency, scalability, and long-term sustainability. The incoming Executive Director will partner with the Board to take the organization through its next phase of growth.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising & External Leadership (Primary Focus)

- Lead and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy across individual, corporate, foundation, and public sources
- Steward and deepen existing donor and partner relationships while expanding new funding opportunities
- Partner with the Board to meet and grow annual revenue goals
- Strengthen donor engagement, retention, and overall development infrastructure
- Manage existing annual fundraising events, grow the grants portfolio, and add at least one new fundraising program

Organizational Leadership & Operations

- Oversee day-to-day operations across multiple program sites
- Strengthen internal systems, processes, and financial management
- Supervise, support and mentor staff and volunteer leadership
- Ensure alignment with the organization's strategic priorities

Volunteer & Community Engagement

- Lead a thoughtful approach to engaging and unifying a diverse volunteer base
- Strengthen pathways from initial volunteer engagement to long-term involvement
- Support training, structure, and leadership development within the volunteer community
- Pursue opportunities to promote CFF in the community and media
- Serve as the public face of CFF

Partnership Development

- Maintain and deepen partnerships with housing providers, healthcare organizations, and workforce development partners

- Identify and build new partnerships to better serve guests and expand impact

Board Partnership & Governance

- Work closely with the Board of Directors on strategy, fundraising, and organizational development
- Provide regular reporting on financial performance, program outcomes, and strategic progress

---

Top Priorities in Year One

- Strengthen and scale fundraising to support organizational growth
- Fully operationalize and maximize impact of the new community center
- Energize and support a diverse and evolving volunteer base
- Build on existing partnerships, while identifying new opportunities for collaboration
- Partner with the Board to advance strategic priorities and long-term sustainability
- Maintain and expand organizational visibility in the community and public media

---

Who You Are

- A compassionate leader
- A successful fundraiser with a track record of managing and growing donor relationships and securing major gifts, grants, and/or corporate support
- 5+ years of nonprofit leadership experience (or equivalent), with a record of strengthening systems, processes, and infrastructure
- A strong relationship builder across donors, volunteers, partners, and community stakeholders
- An experienced partner for the Board of Directors
- Comfortable leading a volunteer-driven organization, including engaging and developing volunteer leadership
- Experienced supervising and developing a small staff (currently 4)
- A strategic thinker who is also willing to be hands-on in execution
- An excellent communicator
- Familiarity with issues of homelessness, food insecurity, or adjacent service populations preferred
- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent experience

Compensation & Details

- Salary range: In the range of $100,000 - $115,000 plus benefits

- Location: Chicago, IL (In-person presence generally expected during meal service programming, otherwise option to work remotely)
- Working Hours: Full time with flexible hours, which includes occasional evenings and weekends, and regular participation in program activities

---

A Final Note

Care for Friends has built a deeply valued community rooted in dignity, trust, and connection. The next Executive Director will honor and strengthen this foundation while evolving the organization's fundraising, operations, and partnerships to support continued growth and impact.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit a resume and cover letter to cffsearch@gmail.com by June 20, 2026 Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Care for Friends is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome and encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences, and we are committed to building an inclusive team that reflects the communities we serve.
