

Executive Director

Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts

Who We Are

Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts is an innovative not-for-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to advancing a fair, accessible, and equitable court system in Illinois through collaborative, evidence-based solutions. Our focus areas are court transparency, decarceration and diversion, community autonomy, and economic accessibility. For nearly 30 years, we have fearlessly tackled systemic inequities in the courts—exposing flaws, fighting for transformative reform, and winning lasting changes that make the system work better for everyone.

Our impact speaks for itself:

- Co-led the successful campaign to end money bond in Illinois with the Pretrial Fairness Act.
- Pioneered court-watching programs and data-driven reports that have reshaped pretrial court practices and reduced incarceration.
- Secured landmark policy wins on compassionate release, court fines and fees, eviction, diversion, and more.
- Built powerful coalitions of community members, grassroots organizations, directly impacted people, and court stakeholders working to turn research into action.

Come help us deliver the next wave of court reform in Illinois!

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, but for full consideration, apply by February 20.

Who You Are

You have a deep mission alignment with Chicago Appleseed's vision for a fairer and more effective legal system and the ability to manage ongoing operations, build sustainability, and lead a team working to advance research-driven reform.

Requirements:

- Nonprofit/public interest leadership and collaborative managerial experience with a record of increasing organizations' growth/impact.
- Passionate commitment to providing anti-racist leadership and change work.
- Progressive fundraising record; demonstrated ability to successfully develop and execute fundraising strategies and tactics.
- Effective at appealing to public/private interests in Chicago, Illinois, and nationally.
- Degree or equivalent professional experience in law, legal system reform, public policy, public administration, or related field.
- Live in Chicago or the surrounding area, or are willing to relocate.

Desired Experience/Abilities:

- Experience contributing to or leading at least one significant policy/legislative campaign.
- Proximity or lived experience with the legal system and/or in the criminal legal domain.
- Familiarity with the legal services and advocacy landscape in Chicago and Illinois.

What You'll Do

The Executive Director is responsible for leadership of Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts, including:

- *Strategic & Operational Planning and Execution* – Develops and continually updates strategic goals and priorities; translates strategy into an operating plan, allocating limited resources to the most important initiatives for maximal strategic impact.
- *Fundraising & Development* – Owns the development and execution of the annual fundraising strategy; acts as the main fundraiser, grant writer, and donor liaison for the organization; continually builds and activates a network of important donor and funder relationships.
- *Staff Supervision & Organizational Oversight* – Supervises staff and supports rotating interns/fellows; engages with volunteers to support execution of all initiatives and programs.
- *Financial Management* – Supervises Operations Coordinator in all tasks related to financial management and IRS compliance, including the CRM; ensures compliance with the organization's status as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization; and works with accountants and auditors to complete audits and file all required forms.
- *Program Management, Research & Advocacy* – Supervises the Research Manager and other staff across all research initiatives and active programs; serves as lead advocate with legislators, stakeholders, coalition partners, and other decision-makers.
- *Communications* – Acts as the organization's main spokesperson; supervises staff/consultants in all tasks related to internal/external communications (e.g., social media/website needs, public-facing content, public relations and media).
- *Board Leadership, Development, and Administration* – Plans and facilitates meetings of the Chicago Appleseed Board of Directors and its committees; identifies and recruits new potential Board Members; engages with Board Members to align on program, research, financial, and other needs.

Salary, Benefits & Compensation Package

This is a full-time hybrid position. Any candidate for this position must be able to take in-person meetings in Chicago and be available to meet with staff/donors on a regular basis. The salary range for this position is \$90,000 to \$120,000, depending on experience and ability to demonstrate the competencies, background, and experiences listed above. Bonus and raise schedules for the Executive Director are solely discretionary by the Board of Directors. We offer competitive benefits, including PPO health insurance (employer-paid premium) and generous PTO: 15 paid vacation and 10 personal days per year, three all-staff breaks annually (5 days in July, 3 days in November, 10 days in December/January), and observe most federal holidays.

How to Apply

[Candidates should apply using LinkedIn's Easy Apply feature](#). Finalists will be required to provide a written statement, policy, or research paper they've developed to help our hiring team assess their understanding of systemic court reform issues, value alignment, and ability to communicate effectively.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, but for full consideration, please apply by February 20. Questions can be directed to jobs@chicagoappleseed.org.

Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to maintaining a diverse workforce. Qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, physical or mental disability, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, genetic information or testing, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation or status disabled veteran or any characteristic protected by law.