



Executive Director

About Gardeneers

Gardeneers is a Chicago based nonprofit organization whose mission is to cultivate customized school garden programs to ensure that each space and the students and communities who care for it connect with healthy food and grow to their full potential. Founded in 2014, we now sustain 19 school gardens, primarily on the south and west sides of Chicago. From Spring through Fall, we work with more than 1500 elementary and high school students on a weekly basis, teaching about nutrition, community, and nature through hands-on lessons in the garden. After experiencing much success in our first five years, Gardeneers is in an exciting time, moving out of “start-up” and into growth and realignment. We are re-thinking and innovating what our future looks like and are excited to bring on the new leader that will help take us there.

Position Description

Gardeneers is seeking a dynamic, values-driven, communicative, and collaborative leader as Executive Director. The Executive Director leads strategic growth and development toward accomplishing the mission of the organization. In partnership with the Gardeneers Executive Board, staff, school and community partners, the Executive Director is responsible for implementation of the Gardeneers Logic Model through organizational programming and operations, ensuring long term financial sustainability and advancement of the vision and mission of the organization.

The Executive Director will seek funding and partnership opportunities that will pave the way for Gardeneers to deepen and expand our impact across Chicago communities. The ideal candidate will possess a commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, access and belonging, as demonstrated through career, educational and life experience. The position reports directly to the Gardeneers Executive Board Chair. Estimated start date is December 2019.

RICHARD LEVY, CHAIR HON. RICHARD M. DALEY MARK R. GROSSMANN KAREN MALKIN
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Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director will provide strategic leadership and direction for accomplishing current programming and operations, and will explore new opportunities for organizational growth and sustainability:

Organizational Leadership

- Articulate and promote a clear strategy and vision for advancing the impact of Gardeneers' mission
- Set annual organizational goals aligned with our mission and guide Board, staff, school and community partners in navigating growth opportunities to deepen our impact
- Ensure the effective implementation of the organizational Logic Model
- Embed values of equity, diversity, access and belonging across policies and procedures of fundraising, organizational systems, and program implementation; champion the importance and value of a diverse and inclusive environment
- Lead and manage the Gardeneers Leadership Team with a focus on creating leadership opportunities for staff, integration across teams and function areas, and addressing organizational (Board, staff, schools and community partners) feedback

Financial Oversight and Fundraising

- Create and manage organizational annual operating budget to successfully carry out organizational mission, activities, and commitment to diversity, equity, access and belonging
- Oversee all financial and fundraising activities, including the Annual Gala, to ensure long-term financial stability for Gardeneers; report on status of financial health and revenue planning to Executive Board, and take proactive action with planning for cash flow or revenue gaps
- Maintain and cultivate relationships with existing and new funders; advise the Development Director on fundraising strategies for diversifying revenue streams; contribute to prospecting, grant writing, proposal submissions and reporting
- Maintain a culture of philanthropy, both for Board and staff
- Set the tone for appropriate work standards, ensure an equitable and healthy work environment, and foster a spirit of collaboration, trust, and team building within Gardeneers staff
- Supervise leadership team, providing clear direction through work plans and accountability measures; conduct regular communication and check-ins to problem-solve and plan for growth

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- Develop and nurture a strong Executive Board to inform and guide good decision-making for Gardeneers current and future strategy and direction
- In collaboration with the Board Chair, plan and execute quarterly Board meetings and committees, and maintain frequent and regular communications

Partnership and Outreach

- Maintain an open line of communication with network stakeholders; listen and incorporate feedback in strategic decisions
- Seek out and facilitate new partnerships and collaborations to promote and strengthen Gardeneers mission. Ensure demographic and geographic diversity in the network's partnerships and communities engaged
- Guide development and implementation of successful PR and outreach strategies to raise Gardeneers profile and expand community and political support

Other Duties and Responsibilities

- Prepare for and participate in Gardeneers staff meetings and events; attend partner meetings as needed
- Travel, likely limited, but as needed for conducting the duties of the position and for representing Gardeneers at related conference or networking events
- Complete organizational reporting and compliance items as required by all staff to monitor and track progress and activities

Education and/or Experience

- Advanced degree in public health, nutrition, agriculture, nonprofit management, public administration or related fields, or five years equivalent work experience, plus;
- Minimum of seven years in a senior management position, including experience with the following:
 - Program ideation and development
 - Fundraising and donor relationship management
 - Financial planning and budgeting
 - Staff management including performance reviews
 - Interacting with and incorporating perspectives from a diverse set of stakeholders, including groups most impacted by systemic inequities, communities of color, education-focused organizations, corporations, government agencies, and policy makers

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Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

- Passion and interest in Gardeneers mission, vision and the associated activities
- Knowledge or experience in food systems, child nutrition, food and agriculture, public health, and education
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills, including public speaking and addressing media
- Skilled relationship builder, collaborator and facilitator, able to successfully work with Board, staff, community members, and partners
- Proven entrepreneurial skills
- Strong content knowledge in racial and social equity principles and capacity and deep passion to apply and advance equity in Chicago; experience considering the impacts of the work on multiple communities, including communities of color and other historically marginalized communities affected by systemic inequities
- Strategic, systems thinker
- Self starter with excellent time management and organizational skills
- Comfortable working under pressure, deadlines and competing priorities

Organizational Relationships

The Executive Director reports directly to the Gardeners Board Chair, and leads, in partnership with that Chair, the rest of the Board. Additionally, the Executive Director leads and supervises the Leadership Team (Director of Programs, Director of Finance and Operations, Director of Development, and Director of People and Partnerships).

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time (40+ hours per week), exempt position that includes benefits. Salary is commensurate with experience. Other benefits include \$300/ month towards healthcare, 10 days starting PTO, 14 paid holidays off, work from home opportunities, and flexible schedule.

Physical Demands

This position requires at least eight hours or more per day either at a desk (responding to emails, developing materials or being on the phone), attending meetings inside and outside of the office, attending conferences and workshops, or speaking at public forums. Additionally, this position requires donor and volunteer school garden site visits; some of which are actually hands-on volunteer events in our gardens.

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Work Environment

This position requires a deep understanding of, or ability to learn about the Chicago philanthropic community. Additionally the Executive Director must be rooted in the landscape of the Chicago education system and be familiar with systemic food inequities in the city. While performing the responsibilities of the job, these work environment characteristics are representative of the environment the employee will encounter: a basic office environment, visits to funders, schools, and partner meetings and therefore requires that candidate to be local to Chicago or the near Chicago suburbs.

To Apply

To apply for this position **please email May Tsupros and the hiring committee at [hiring@gardeneers.org](mailto: hiring@gardeneers.org) by July 31st, 2019 with the subject line: "ED Candidate".**

Applications must include the following to be considered:

- Cover Letter
- Resume
- Three professional references
- Short answer (500 word limit): Please describe your vision for the future of Gardeneers and the growing food movement in Chicago. What is your personal connection to our mission, the communities with which we work and/ or other historically marginalized communities impacted by systemic inequities?

Gardeneers is an "at-will" and equal opportunity employer. Applicants and employees shall not be discriminated against because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender (including pregnancy and gender expression) identity, color, marital status, veteran status, medical condition, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance.

Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified disabled applicants may participate in the application process. Please advise in writing of special needs at the time of application.

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