



DIGITAL INCLUSION DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Working Title: City of Chicago Digital Inclusion Policy Fellow

Hours/Week: 40 hours

Appointment: 2-year term-limited appointment

APPLICATION

A cover letter and resume are required for consideration for this position. The cover letter should be included in the same document as your resume and should specifically address your interest in digital inclusion policy and highlight related skills and experience.

OVERVIEW

As part of an ongoing effort to expand broadband access to students across Chicago, through a partnership between the City of Chicago Mayor's Office and United Way under the Chicago Connected program, we are seeking a Digital Inclusion Policy Fellow to support digital inclusion efforts in the City. The Fellow will be housed within the Mayor's Office with supervision from top City officials and staff. The Fellow will be responsible for exploring and potentially implementing programs that will offer universally accessible high speed internet. The Fellow will also be tasked with convening partners, developing methods to track and evaluate City-efforts, and identifying and incorporating best practices for digital inclusion in Chicago.

The City is currently in a dynamic time, with many challenges facing a multifaceted population and many more opportunities on the horizon. Barriers related to internet access have led to an incredibly significant number of families throughout Chicago not having broadband internet access at home. The goal of the position is to provide strategic research and policy support to city staff while offering in-depth skills and training working in city government. The role may involve the technical implementation and management of a City-wide internet accessibility program or programs. The Fellow may participate in professional conferences, national training and networking events.

CHICAGO CONNECTED

The City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, Kids First Chicago, and the civic philanthropic community have recognized a historic opportunity to eliminate internet accessibility as a barrier to digital learning. According to US Census data, one in five children in Chicago lack quality internet access – which equates to roughly 100,000 kids across 60,000 households. This barrier disproportionately hurts Chicago's low-income families and students of color. In fact, in some south and west side Chicago neighborhoods, over 1 in 2 children under the



age of eighteen lacks access to internet. With COVID-19 forcing schools to adopt remote learning for the summer, and with the permissibility of in-person instruction at-risk in advance of the 2020-2021 school year, the students who were already the most vulnerable to falling behind will now face even more challenges relative to their peers. Without swift action to close the “Digital Divide”, we will witness a widening of the achievement gap.

The future vitality of Chicago’s economy depends on the education of our young people. It is in the best interest of the public and private sectors, as well as the City’s philanthropic community, to help ensure digital educational equity. This is a problem that can only be solved through generosity, ingenuity, and resilience — strengths that are built into the fabric of our great City, and strengths that can compel us to confront digital inequities head-on. Chicago Connected will be one of the largest and longest city-run internet accessibility program in the country aimed at closing the digital divide for students. The program is primarily focused on high-speed, fixed-line, household internet access, at CPS-recommended speeds, ensuring access to the CPS remote learning platform. Chicago Connected will not impose any additional fees (no installation, equipment fees, taxes, etc.) on families. The initiative will also deliver WiFi “hotspots” to support homeless students and other vulnerable student groups.

The Digital Inclusion Policy Fellow will play an instrumental role in the day to day management of this program as well as the broader effort across the City to connect as many Chicagoans as possible.

RESPONSIBILITIES

This position will be housed in the Mayor’s Office with additional oversight support from the rest of the Chicago Connected program staff. The Digital Inclusion Policy Fellow will have responsibilities in a number of areas, including development of knowledge about Chicago’s access to broadband internet, convening stakeholders to identify and align assets, identifying opportunities and best practices to improve digital equity and inclusion, using data to track, analyze and evaluate impacts over time, and dissemination (along with other possible duties). This person will:

- Act as a project manager for moving forward the Chicago Connected program as well as a phase II process for expanding internet accessibility more broadly to Chicagoans
- Act as a central home for information and understanding of Chicago’s Inclusion Ecosystem – including systems related to connectivity, tools and training – and develop an easy-reference “grid” of available digital inclusion resources
- Connect with City agencies to identify opportunities to integrate internet connectivity components into projects



- Research local and national regulatory & policy barriers that limit Chicagoans' access to broadband
- Research local opportunities to increase internet connectivity
- Act as a convener of the multitude of partners involved in digital inclusion efforts in Chicago, and in concert with partners work to effectively/efficiently connect and grow the digital inclusion resources available to Chicagoans
- Develop methodology to track and evaluate Chicago digital inclusion efforts, and the impact of effort and best practice integration over time
- Conduct analysis, prepare presentations, produce reports, memos and briefs, and develop MS Excel models
- Communicate and share openly their work on an ongoing basis (e.g., city blog posts, community presentations & feedback sessions)
- Work with Chicago Connected program management team to enhance communications and coordination across efforts
- Other duties as assigned

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master's degree in data analysis, public policy, computer engineering, information technology or other closely related field or equivalent related experience
- At least 2 years of work experience in a related field (information technology, policy engagement, data management)
- Demonstrable interest in digital inclusion policy
- Significant knowledge of IT and digital inclusion policy and concepts
- Strong data analysis skills with MS Excel and other statistical analysis software
- Thorough understanding of program evaluation concepts and practices
- Experience working in team-based setting and with diverse groups
- Personal commitment to high quality work
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written
- Ability to think critically and creatively
- Detail oriented and entrepreneurial
- Ability to multi-task and prioritize efforts across multiple simultaneous projects
- Ability to work both as part of a team and individually while meeting deadlines

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience working on city government initiatives
- Experience working with city, state and federal-level datasets
- Experience leading projects or programs from concept through implementation