



Blind Service Chicago



Development Director Opportunity Guide

Mission: To inspire and empower those who are blind, visually impaired, and print disabled through all phases of life with personalized service.

Blind Service Chicago provides ongoing free assistance and support to help its clients manage their lives independently and with dignity.

About Blind Service Chicago



Founded by Mrs. Gottfried D. Bernstein in 1924, Blind Service Chicago (AKA Blind Service Association) has been providing nearly a century of service to Chicagoland adolescents and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Mrs. Bernstein launched Blind Service Chicago after recognizing there were few resources available for blind children after World War I. She began reading stories to children in her home. As word spread, others in the neighborhood, including adults, sought Mrs. Bernstein's help with reading materials. Realizing that she couldn't personally satisfy all the people who asked for her help in reading printed material, she called on her synagogue to donate space, and her friends to donate their time to read aloud.

In 1930, Mrs. Bernstein and her friends incorporated and decided to establish a permanent home in Chicago's Loop where reading help would be accessible to all who needed it within the Chicago area. Relocating proved fruitful as it attracted those who were blind and low-vision at a time when Braille texts and other accessible materials were largely unavailable. Also with this move, Blind Service Chicago was able to steadily recruit more volunteers and extend its programs and services.

Since its inception, Blind Service Chicago has continued to grow. Today the organization has an annual budget of \$1.3 million. Owing to the dedication of over 100 trained volunteers, more than 300 blind and low-vision people use BSA's services annually. Blind Service Chicago offers a variety of programs and services, including reading and recording, computer training and technology support, and peer-led empowerment groups. Many volunteers have been with BSA for more than ten years.

The Opportunity: Development Director



Blind Service Chicago's first Development Director will be responsible for building and executing a comprehensive fundraising plan that ensures BSA continues to have the financial resources needed to build capacity and fulfill its Mission. Joining a highly collaborative and amiable staff, the Development Director will promote the organization's brand and Mission in a way that reaches and significantly broadens the donor base of Blind Service Chicago.

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Development Director will be responsible for the planning and implementation of a comprehensive and coordinated fundraising strategy, including embracing a relationship-based model of philanthropy; inspiring and garnering major gifts; securing matching funds; identifying innovative funding opportunities; establishing and marketing planned giving opportunities; and researching and writing grants that have a high likelihood of success.

Principal Responsibilities

- Partner with the Executive Director to establish BSA's fundraising priorities
- Develop an Annual Development Plan and Budget to assure a steady stream of revenue
- Cultivate major gifts through relationship-building, engendering trust, and steadily increased giving
- Initiate and effectively manage donor prospecting, stewardship, communications, and ongoing interactions
- Identify, qualify, and acquire new sources of funding (corporate, foundation, donor-advised funds)
- Write carefully selected grants and fundraising proposals
- Monitor, evaluate, and report on funded grants
- Establish a state-of-the-art donor tracking system to maximize results
- Initiate and manage annual and special appeals
- Manage small and large donor-focused events with the intent to engage donors further in the work of the organization as well as build a robust giving pipeline
- Work diligently to meet agreed-upon monthly and annual activity and revenue-producing goals, and be purposeful about every visit, communication, and the desired outcome for each "touch"
- Oversee the development of solicitation materials related to fundraising
- Manage special projects and fundraising events as assigned

The Qualified Candidate



Blind Service Chicago seeks its first Development Director to lead the fundraising efforts for the organization. This position demands an exceptional development professional with at least ten years of hands-on experience closing \$50,000 to six-figure gifts and grants. The successful candidate will relish the opportunity to create an innovative and vibrant development plan and program.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Demonstrated passion for Blind Service Chicago's mission and vision
- A keen understanding of a relationship-based model of philanthropy
- Creative, self-starter attitude, with the desire to get out of the office and build external relationships
- Deep understanding of Development strategies and best practices
- Career track record that shows stability with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships culminating in overall success
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in a related field a plus; CFRE Certification highly desirable
- Dedicated focus on deliverables
- Ability to work in a collaborative and diverse environment, where all ideas are heard and considered



How To Apply



Our search partner, KEES, has provided us with marketplace research to set the salary range. The range spans up to \$135,000, commensurate with experience. Blind Service Chicago offers an excellent benefits package, a generous PTO policy, a friendly and diverse office environment, and a commitment to dignity and respect in the workplace.

Blind Service Chicago provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, genetic information, marital status, parental status, pregnancy, lactation, national origin, age, disability, status as a veteran or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law. Blind Service Chicago is proud to be an equal-opportunity workplace and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment. Blind Service Chicago is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and is actively seeking and encouraging applications from women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and/or people who are LGBTQ+.

To ensure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email.

ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. All candidate-submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Laura Weinman, Vice President, and Randi Blasutti, Project Manager of KEES. Questions may be addressed to rblasutti@kees2success.com.

APPLY HERE



About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams and dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public entity sectors. A woman-owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.



More about Blind Service Chicago's Services



Reading and Recording

The heart of Blind Service Chicago is the Reading and Recording Program. Blind Service Chicago is unique in that it is the only agency in the U.S. providing one-on-one personalized service. Volunteers read to clients in the privacy of dedicated reading studios, in the client's home, or via the Internet or phone. Volunteers read anything from textbooks and academic material, professional journals, novels, magazines, nonfiction, the Internet, and of course, mail. Volunteers commit to and sign a Confidentiality Agreement, so privacy and discretion are always maintained.

Scholarships

Blind Service Chicago grants scholarships totaling \$30,000 annually to college, graduate school, and vocational school scholars who are blind or have low vision. Individual scholarships of up to \$3,000 are awarded.

Youth Programs

In cooperation with Chicago Public Schools, Blind Service Chicago's Youth Program reaches out to blind and low-vision youth with a variety of offerings. Every summer, youth aged 12-17 have the opportunity to participate in Pathways. A robust month-long endeavor, this flagship program provides daily living skills, a host of recreational activities, art and music, and cultural events.

Vision Expo

Blind Service Chicago's annual Vision Expo showcases products, services, and resources available to members of the blind and low-vision community, as well as providing expert speakers on several relevant topics.

Print Disabilities

Those with a print disability such as dyslexia or other physical limitations such as Parkinson's Disease, brain injury, paralysis, or Multiple Sclerosis, that prevents the holding of a book or other printed materials, will find Blind Service Chicago a valuable resource when reading independence is no longer possible.

Computer and Technology Support

Blind Service Chicago has recently acquired state-of-the-art computers with the latest in adaptive technologies. During the summer of 2023, dedicated computer and smart phone training will be offered by expert professionals. Blind Service Chicago's brand-new phone system is certified for both blind and deaf users.

Empowerment Groups

Blind Service Chicago has several peer-led Empowerment and Special-Interest groups facilitated by those who are blind or with low vision. The groups meet monthly or as agreed upon.