



concordia
place



Chief Program Officer

Opportunity Guide

concordiaplace.org

About Concordia Place



**Concordia Place
disrupts social
inequities through
top-quality education,
enrichment, and
experiences.**

Concordia Place, a Chicago multi-site nonprofit on the north side, provides a range of educational and enrichment programs for people of all ages, including early childhood education, after-school care, and teen leadership programs. With 4 Early Childhood centers across Chicago and a 5th in planning mode, a growing home visiting program, and a teen leadership program that provides opportunities for 173 youth, Concordia Place disrupts social inequities through access to top-quality education, enrichment, and hands-on experiences that include all children, teens, and families—together. By proactively addressing key social and economic needs, Concordia Place provides services that support well-being and maximize potential, helping communities thrive and remain vibrant.

Rooted in a philosophy of holistic development and community partnership, Concordia Place is dedicated to maximizing impact through innovative programming, fiscal responsibility, and a deep commitment to the diverse neighborhoods it serves. To make the programs affordable for all, Concordia Place takes pride in combating economic segregation by providing sliding tuition scale options and select services for free. In 2023, the Board selected a new Chief Executive Officer to help create a vibrant new future. [Grace Araya](#) has evolved Concordia Place in her first two years and looks to the community for where to say, "Yes." Under her leadership, Concordia Place has enrolled over 200 New Neighbors and secured funding to serve an additional 76 families in the Home Visiting Program.

Operating on a \$10.5M budget, Concordia Place offers a comprehensive and intergenerational suite of programs designed to support the full lifecycle of human potential, from infancy through young adulthood. Their foundational Early Childhood Education & Care programs, offered across multiple accredited centers, provide high-quality, year-round, play-based learning for children aged six weeks to five years, supported by a sliding tuition scale to ensure accessibility for diverse families. Beyond early education, they support children aged 5-12 through the school-age 365 program with safe after-school care and summer camp that includes homework help and skill-building activities. For adolescents, the Teen Leadership program (ages 13–18) is a crucial pathway, offering no-cost, year-round "earn and learn" opportunities, such as the Culinary Leaders and Ruckus Entrepreneurs initiatives, which equip teens with essential, practical and social-emotional competencies for academic achievement, career readiness, and community engagement.

About Concordia Place

During fiscal year 2025, 63% of the children enrolled at Concordia Place received public support or reduced costs due to the sliding scale and discounts up to 50%. Senior and Board Leadership have been solid stewards of resources, and Concordia Place has always operated from a stable financial position. Operating cohesively as an organization, Concordia Place continues to grow and expand, opening new programs and centers in new communities. As our communities evolve, so do the markets and populations we serve. This demands strategic, forward-thinking planning to ensure Concordia Place's sustainability and long-term growth. With individuals of diverse faiths, backgrounds, and cultures, Concordia Place is a team and a family united by a shared mission and vision.

Inspired by faith, Concordia Place envisions bigger and better tomorrows where rich diversity strengthens learning and growth for all. Putting faith into action through service to all neighbors, Concordia Place works to instill in them a sense of community, purpose, and possibility. Rooted in the Gospel message of God's grace for all people, faith in Christ is a lens through which to view and evaluate all actions.



Concordia Place Programs

Early Learning and Preschool: cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development for children 6 weeks to 5 years old at 4 education centers with bilingual classrooms.

Home Visiting: one-on-one meetings 2x a month with parent/guardian, their child, and an early childhood development expert.

School-Age 365: blending recreation with education, after-school enrichment and summer camp use Illinois learning standards to keep children learning all year.

Teen Leadership: year-round program to build practical and life skills that drive academic, career, and personal achievement.

The Opportunity: Chief Program Officer



Concordia Place seeks its first Chief Program Officer (CPO) to be a pivotal, executive role created to serve as the primary strategic partner to the CEO. This energetic leader will be the chief architect of Concordia Place's mission delivery, responsible for translating the organizational vision into tangible, high-quality, and scalable program strategies. The CPO provides executive oversight for the entire multi-site, intergenerational program portfolio, including Early Childhood Education, the School-Age 365 program, Teen Leadership initiatives, and Home Visiting services. The successful candidate will be responsible for implementing plans that drive efficiency, innovation, and impact in alignment with Concordia Place's mission to support children and families.

Grace Araya joined Concordia Place in 2023 as its new visionary and forward-thinking President and CEO. The Board has tasked the entire team with driving growth and expanding the organization's mission, essentially to say "Yes" where needed, in a responsible and strategic design. To support these goals, Concordia Place is introducing the role of Chief Program Officer (CPO). The CPO will play a crucial role in strengthening the organization's programming strategy to ensure resources are optimized and operations are cohesive.

The CPO will be directly responsible for the daily leadership of the organization's programs. Reporting to the President and CEO, the CPO will initially manage 4 direct reports, including the Vice President of Program Services, the Director of Quality Assurance, the Director of Teen Programs, and the Home Visitor Manager. This leader will implement plans to both stabilize and capitalize on the current enterprise while ensuring that internal processes and programs are optimized in the first 12-18 months. The CPO will provide partnership and input to the CEO, while co-creating future paths of serving youth and the community with leadership at all levels of the organization that are rooted in best practices.

Concordia Place Guiding Principles and Core Values

- Faith in Action
- A Place of Yes
- A Place for All
- A Place of One
- A Place of Excellence

Performance Objectives



Strategy and Execution

- Collaborate with the President and CEO to execute the organization's strategic plans, focusing on creating strong, efficient, and revenue-positive internal operations.
- Drive initiatives forward related to the strategic plan and ensure constant visibility of strategic objectives to all site staff, leadership, and the Board.
- Lead, develop, and motivate program leaders at all levels, often without direct authority, to ensure leadership and site teams are optimized with both professional/technical expertise and operational talent.
- Support the Vice President of Program Services in elevating service quality and program offerings across all locations, setting benchmarks for excellence and inspiring the current team to achieve higher standards.
- Build and oversee systems to track key outcomes and measure long-term program impact; utilize data to drive continuous improvement and communicate results to funders, partners, and the Board.
- Design, oversee, and continuously improve program delivery to maximize positive youth outcomes and ensure high levels of family satisfaction across all age groups.
- Partner with the CFO to meticulously manage all program budgets and resources, ensuring fiscal accountability and monitoring financial performance against targets.

Performance Objectives

Efficiency and Optimization

- Lead change management efforts to ensure the successful implementation of new initiatives, processes, and policies, updating practices where necessary and presenting new approaches that meet current marketplace needs.
- Review all operational policies and procedures to determine relevance, areas for improvement, and ensure Concordia Place excels in efficiency.
- Identify and implement best practices and innovative solutions to drive organizational growth and optimize efficiency.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to drive organizational effectiveness.
- Monitor industry trends and innovation, ensuring the data on outcomes and program delivery is accurate, analyzed effectively, and translated into clear, actionable recommendations.
- Evaluate the existing external vendor and contract relationships at Concordia Place. Determine which services should be maintained and identify opportunities for re-evaluation and potential in-house execution.



Team Management and Leadership

- Collaborate with organizational and site leadership to ensure alignment of goals with the overall strategic plan.
- Mentor and develop team members, supporting their personal and professional growth.
- Support the Leadership Team in evaluating and implementing a performance accountability approach to all work and processes.
- Coach and develop the team to ensure solid delivery on key organizational metrics and KPIs. Direct supervision of four roles will be a part of the first-year portfolio with intentional investment in learning and growing as a team.
- Promote a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.



The Qualified Candidate

Concordia Place seeks its first Chief Program Officer (CPO), who will play a key role in realizing the organization's strategic growth in the years ahead, in a newly created role to support strategic plan implementation. The CPO will serve as a key member of the senior leadership team focused on balancing mission-related commitments to high-quality, accessible service delivery with prudent fiscal management. Further, the CPO will help pursue growth in line with the strategic plan while attending to mission, quality, expense management, and revenue generation opportunities.



Don't check off every box in the requirements listed above? Please consider applying anyway! Studies have shown that underrepresented communities — such as women, people of color, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and immigrants — are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet every single qualification. Concordia Place is dedicated to building an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible workplace that fosters a sense of belonging — so if you are excited about this role but your experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to consider still applying.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Proven track record of implementing successful plans that align with organizational strategic direction, leading to growth and impact.
- Agility and nimbleness; quickly analyze input and make recommendations and decisions.
- Strong analytic and strategic-thinking skills, with a demonstrated ability to create, implement, and monitor complex plans and then translate those plans into goals and concrete strategies.
- Career track record that shows stability and growth with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships, culminating in overall success.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills that will be leveraged to persuade peers, staff, and partners to accept new ideas and processes.
- Find value, purpose, and opportunity in working for a faith-inspired organization; Concordia Place is a social service mission (aka SMO – social ministry organization) of Concordia Lutheran Church that serves everyone regardless of any religious beliefs or affiliation.
- Minimum of 5 years of progressive leadership experience in managing comprehensive, multi-site social service, youth development, or educational programs, with at least four (4) years at a senior executive level (VP, Executive Director, or equivalent).
- Given the diverse Chicago communities served by Concordia Place, bilingual proficiency (e.g., Spanish/English) is preferred, but not required.
- A master's degree, or higher, is preferred in a relevant field such as Early Childhood Education (ECE), Educational Leadership, Business Administration, or a closely related field of study.

How to Apply

Compensation for the Chief Program Officer has been competitively benchmarked. The position offers a highly competitive salary range in the \$140,000s, commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Concordia Place promotes the hiring and employment of qualified individuals without regard to actual or perceived race, color, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, religion, order of protection status, marital status, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, citizenship status, military status or unfavorable discharge from military service and all other grounds prohibited by federal, state, and local laws, regulation, and ordinances. Concordia will also provide reasonable accommodation to the sincere religious beliefs and practices and/or known physical or mental limitations of any otherwise qualified team member or applicant for employment, unless the accommodation would impose undue hardship on our operations.

APPLY HERE

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. Applications that include a specific Cover Letter are considered more favorable. KEES utilizes a 4-step screening process, the first of which is the formal Candidate Application. Applications are reviewed by the KEES team and advanced through various stages of inquiry and confirmation. Applications with specific cover letters will be given priority consideration, on a rolling basis, by December 12. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the search. Based on the timing of your specific application, you are welcome to reach out for information on the timeline.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy, President and CEO of KEES, and Senior Project Manager, Randi Blasutti. Questions may be addressed to rblasutti@kees2success.com.

About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a woman-owned nonprofit executive search firm dedicated to creating diverse teams with dynamic leadership in the nonprofit and public sectors. We offer a comprehensive range of services, including executive search, leadership development, compensation analysis, interim staffing, and HR support.

Launched in 2013, based on decades of prior work by the Founders, KEES is a leader and noted pioneer in DEIB-focused executive search and culture building. KEES is noted for bringing dynamic and under-radar candidates to the table, regularly placing industry veterans and first-time leaders alike. Recognized for two years in a row on the Hunt Scanlon Nonprofit Top 65, KEES leaders are sought-after experts in search, leadership development, and often first-time roles. To learn more, visit us at www.kees2success.com.