Job Title: Director of External Relations

Reporting To: Executive Director

Who We Are:

For generations, government policies and institutional choices have excluded many Americans from opportunities for education, employment, and wealth creation. Ending intergenerational poverty and building an inclusive economy—one that provides real economic opportunities for all communities—requires collaboration across sectors, as well as scientific evidence about what works and what doesn’t. Traditional research can take years, and the results often don’t reach those who need the information most—the people living with and working on these issues. The University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab solves this by working with policymakers, organizations, and communities to identify their most urgent and pressing challenges, co-generate evidence about what works, and translate that evidence into real policy changes that expand economic opportunity and improve lives.

Founded in 2015, The University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab conducts rigorous research that expands economic opportunity for people harmed by discrimination, disinvestment, and segregation. One of five Urban Labs based at the Harris School of Public Policy, the Inclusive Economy Lab is led by Pritzker Director Marianne Bertrand, Chris P. Dialynas Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the Booth School of Business.

We partner with policymakers, community-based organizations and others to identify their most urgent and pressing challenges, co-generate evidence about what works, and translate findings into policy changes that end intergenerational poverty. By identifying barriers to social mobility and racial equity and highlighting the programs and policies that have the most positive impact, our work creates aims to create greater economic opportunity. We specialize in evaluating programs with the potential to improve lives in four main areas: College and Career Success, Housing Stability, Financial Security and Quality Jobs.

The Role:

The Director of External Relations works with the Executive Director, Faculty Director, and Leadership Team to craft communications strategies; engage constituencies in media, government, academia, non-profit and community-based organizations, and other community groups; and identify and implement externally facing opportunities and initiatives to enhance the impact of the Inclusive Economy Lab’s work. The Director has primary responsibility for the external positioning of the Inclusive Economy Lab brand, including having key input on messaging, media relations, and engagement of government, non-profit, community, and other partners, as well as management and implementation of the external relations plans for the lab. The Director leads and manages the responsibilities dedicated to external relations and communications work as well as any external resources and is the primary liaison with Harris School of Public Policy and University of Chicago communications, media relations, and civic engagement teams. The Director of External Relations reports to the Executive Director and is a part of the Leadership Team.
Responsibilities:

- Leads the development and implementation of communications, government relations, and community engagement plans that support the overall strategic goals of the Inclusive Economy Lab as well as the goals of individual programs. Works with the Executive Director and program directors to identify and prioritize goals.

- Ensures that external relations strategies are communicated effectively to appropriate stakeholders both inside and outside the organization.

- Builds and maintains collaborative relationships with University communications, civic engagement, and federal relations staff in support of the Lab’s goals.

- Builds and maintains relationships with elected officials at the local and state level to raise the visibility of the Lab’s work with these audiences and advance the use of research evidence in the legislative process.

- Develops and manages a communications budget and oversees a stable of communications freelancers to support and execute on communications plans.

- Serves as executive editor for the organization’s website, blog, and social media. Ensures consistent voice across internal- and external-facing documents and program descriptions, including project two-pagers, presentation decks. Manages the Lab’s external relations calendar and coordinates internal and external newsletters.

- Oversees the organization’s response to inquiries from media. Grows relationships with key members of the media and with communications teams at other government, non-profit, and community partners.

- Identifies significant media and public policy issues that can be leveraged to support the Lab’s work and creates and implements plans to leverage them.

- Supports the Lab’s recruiting and fundraising goals in partnership with the Executive Director, People Operations Manager, program directors and University of Chicago Alumni Relations and Development staff. Develops customized donor engagement and recruitment materials, including annual/impact reports and customized thank you materials.

- Performs other related work as needed.
Experience:
7-10 years of external relations, public affairs, communications and/or media experience in public policy, political, research or non-profit organizations.

Competencies:
- Ability to engage thoughtfully with issues related to race, identity, and equity and work across difference required.
- Demonstrated experience working with communities that have experienced segregation and disinvestment.
- First generation college students and those with lived experience in communities experiencing poverty and disinvestment are encouraged to apply.
- Experience developing, managing, and improving external relations or communications plans.
- Keen understanding of traditional, digital, and social media outlets and their audiences and reach, and the ability to adapt organizations’ key messages to those formats.
- Strong track record of positioning an organization to achieve tangible outcomes in a competitive communications environment.
- Ability to simultaneously manage multiple projects with tight deadlines, including flexibly and quickly responding to unanticipated external relations and communications issues.
- Superior written and verbal communications skills.
- Ability to coach and support senior leaders as spokespersons.
- Experience working with electronic databases and communication systems (CMS and MailChimp is preferred)
- Knowledge of graphic design
- Ability to work a hybrid schedule both virtual and in-person
To Apply:

We seek a diverse pool of applicants who wish to join an academic community that places the highest value on rigorous inquiry and encourages a diversity perspective, experiences, groups of individuals, and ideas to inform and stimulate intellectual challenge, engagement, and exchange.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, protected veteran status or status as an individual with disability.

The University of Chicago is an Affirmative Action / Equal Opportunity / Disabled / Veterans Employer.

Please submit a resume and cover letter UChicago’s Workday system. Within the Workday system, this listing can be found by the position title or by the requisition number, JR16550.

If you have an active UChicago Workday account, you will need to complete the Internal Candidate application process. Simply log in to Workday and select the career worklet to begin.

External candidates should apply at https://uchicago.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/External.

If you have questions about the Workday system, please contact our Shared Services department at https://services.uchicago.edu.

Job seekers in need of a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process may contact the Shared Services Office by calling 773-702-5800 or by emailing sharedservices@uchicago.edu with their request.