



CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

ABOUT START EARLY

Since its beginning in 1982, Start Early has persistently pursued a mission to advance quality early learning for families with children, before birth through their earliest years, to help close the opportunity gap. For many children, the odds are stacked against them before they are even born, and the impact lasts a lifetime. This is particularly true for those living in communities left under-resourced by decades of historical and institutional racism. The global coronavirus pandemic only further highlighted and exacerbated these inequities. Through direct service programs, professional development solutions, and research and policy efforts, and leveraging a growing body of scientific evidence about early brain development, Start Early is building capacity at every level, within homes and classrooms and across programs and systems, to develop and refine effective solutions towards equitable early childhood experiences. Private dollars are used to apply that science to develop innovative programs, and then leverage public funding to support their implementation and replication. Start Early's ultimate vision is that every U.S. community has a comprehensive, equitable prenatal-to-five system that ensures that all children – regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic situation, geography, or ability – enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Start Early is a national organization headquartered in Chicago, with offices in Seattle, Washington, D.C., and Springfield, Illinois, and remote employees nationwide.

Start Early:

- Serves children and families directly through birth-to-five education centers as well as through its network of voluntary home visiting programs.
- Integrates the latest research and best theories into program development efforts and, through publications and other resources, ensures that knowledge is translated into understanding that

Programs

- [Early Learning Programs](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Policy and Advocacy](#)
- [Connecting Communities](#)

Key Facts

- **\$101M** budget for FY22 (includes public & private revenue)
- **\$33M** in private revenue raised in FY22
- **350 full time staff** across the organization
- **22-person** Development department
- **4,000 children** served in birth-to-5 programs in Illinois
- **298,486 professionals** reached in FY22 through our professional learning solutions and the Head Start National Center for Parent, Family and Community Engagement.

Visit



leads to action – in homes, schools, state legislatures, and on Capitol Hill.

- Trains community-based early childhood professionals and designs and develops models, curricula, education materials, and other programs that help close the opportunity gap and have positive long-term returns on education, income, health, and social behaviors.
- Advocates for state and federal funding for early childhood services across the country and partners with advocacy organizations in 17 states and Washington, D.C. to build their capacity to advance policy change and increase public investments in effective birth-to-five programs indirectly reaching over 6.5M children.
- Actively and intentionally centers equity and, in partnership with key early childhood partners, providers, and families, addresses structural racism in the early childhood system to address historical access, quality, and opportunity gaps that disproportionately impact under-resourced communities.

We invite you to learn more at www.startearly.org

THE POSITION

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is a new role which represents an exciting opportunity to build capacity for next-level fundraising by the industry leader in the early childhood space. The CDO should be a confident, skilled listener and an equity-focused, results-driven leader who will provide overall leadership and strategic direction to meet Start Early's annual and multi-year private revenue and strategic goals. The CDO oversees all development programs which include philanthropic gifts from individuals (from annual giving, major giving, and planned giving), foundations, donor advised funds, and corporations.

This proven leader will focus on developing and growing fundraising programs and initiatives, ensuring effective integration and collaboration across the organization and fidelity to Start Early's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts. In addition to playing an active role in donor cultivation and solicitation, this individual will serve as an inspiring, visionary leader who will expand the current high-performing Development team into a fully national effort, centered on principles of equity and anti-racism, that maximizes new opportunities across foundation, individual, corporate, and other emergent revenue streams.

The CDO serves as a member of Start Early's Executive Team and reports to the President. The CDO will lead a full-time staff which includes three direct reports: the Vice President, Development; the Managing Director, Strategic Advancement; and the Vice President, Educare Learning Network. To facilitate workplace flexibility and encourage travel, this individual may work remotely, ideally in a metropolitan city with a major airport.



MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Within the first 12 to 18 months, the CDO will achieve the following major objectives:

- Plan, develop, and implement a visionary, long-term strategic plan for Development that centers fundraising at the organization as part of the annual strategic and budget planning cycle
- Work closely with the Chief Marketing Officer to better translate organizational and programmatic strategy into compelling fundraising opportunities to grow and diversify the donor portfolio
- Center DEIB in Start Early's fundraising, from what is being pitched, to how materials are presented, to diversifying the donor base
- Optimize the structure of the Development department and partner with the Business Development Operations team to manage progress of more robust and efficient fundraising program based on metrics, analytics, and best practices
- Collaborate closely with the President and Managing Director of Strategic Advancement to ensure existing donor relationships are maintained, and begin to transition ownership to Development

RESPONSIBILITIES

The CDO will have the following primary responsibilities:

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Develop and implement a visionary, strategic development plan along with the infrastructure needed to support a sustainable, growing, comprehensive fundraising program and increases the pool of individual and corporate prospects and donors significantly, particularly in regions outside of Chicago, while centering Start Early's DEIB commitments.
- Lead, build, inspire, and support a high-performing development team with clear portfolio assignments, ensuring strong moves management and increasing donor retention and engagement.
- Serve as a strategic advisor and thought partner to Executive Team, Development staff, and volunteers in terms of prospecting, cultivation, and donor strategy.

PHILANTHROPY

- Cultivate a culture of philanthropy across the organization that reflects Start Early's DEIB commitments and anti-racist stance and that can be a model in the philanthropic sector, ensuring that all staff understand the role they play in helping to advance the organizational vision.
- Articulate the organization's work in a way that is motivating to a wide range of donors and empowers fellow staff to communicate funding priorities by developing a strong "case for



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support” for the organization and key programs with clear, distinct impact stories that will resonate with funders.

- Directly manage a portfolio of Start Early’s top funders, focusing on a pipeline of six- and seven-figure prospects.
- Establish clear business development goals that position staff to grow large and diverse donor programs across revenue streams.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Serve as an advocate for the Development team at leadership tables; collaborate with other department leaders and communicate Development’s vision, scope, and key priorities so that other divisions of the organization are developing strategies that are aligned with Development’s.
- Partner with the Vice-President, DEIB and with members of the Development staff and program teams to advocate for new, innovative, cutting-edge approaches to fundraising that center equity and maintain awareness of emerging trends in the sector.
- Partner with Chief Marketing Officer on shared vision and strategies for external relations and collaborate in the execution of projects such as the online giving program and mid-level giving program to ensure a healthy pipeline of new donors into the organization.
- Manage Board giving; in partnership with the Chief Marketing Officer, work with the Strategic Advancement Committee of the Board and fully leverage member involvement; collaborate with Board members to identify, qualify, and engage prospects.
- Oversee revenue tracking in partnership with Chief Financial Officer; collaborate with Finance team to ensure dollars are managed well and that donor intent is honored while also making sure organizational needs are met.
- Provide high-level oversight for special events, including Start Early’s annual luncheon, fully leveraging opportunities to engage donors and prospects.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will possess most of the following qualifications:

- At least seven to ten years of senior-level leadership experience managing successful comprehensive fundraising teams, with a track record of building and scaling development programs, particularly in the area of individual major gifts and/or corporate partnerships.
- Ability to tap into and expand upon a national network of donors.
- An entrepreneurial mindset that brings fresh perspective, takes risks, and makes new recommendations, respecting the history of how development has functioned previously but understanding what emerging best practices in fundraising look like.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills with storytelling acumen and the ability to



translate complex information into widely accessible and donor-friendly materials.

- Strong mentorship and team leadership skills with the ability to cultivate an environment in which staff are set up to succeed.
- A mindset of abundance that fosters collaboration between Start Early and partner organizations and facilitates collective fundraising for shared objectives.
- The ability to work in a highly collaborative environment and seek input from a wide variety of sources, including actively seeking and hearing perspectives outside of one's own, while also balancing that with firm decision-making skills.
- DEIB expertise; demonstrated success incorporating equity into all aspects of the fundraising process and an ability to access new funders who prioritize DEIB principles and who represent diverse backgrounds.
- Experience with analytics and with using data to inform strategy.
- An understanding of how to craft strong relationships in a remote environment and forge cross-departmental camaraderie, particularly between Program and Development colleagues.
- The ability to bring others along in promoting a strong organizational vision within a rapidly evolving environment.
- Confident yet humble in presenting themselves on equal footing with other executive leaders and donors.
- A knowledge of public grant opportunities with an understanding of how to best leverage those revenue streams.
- Solid financial management skills with experience in fundraising and budget analysis, forecasting, and planning.
- Technological proficiency, including experience with donor management fundraising software applications, calendar management, and database entry.
- Ability to travel as necessary and attend program and fundraising activities as needed, including evenings and weekends.
- A bachelor's degree or equivalent relevant experience is required.

We recognize that few candidates might meet every single piece of knowledge, experience, or education listed here. Research shows that women and people of color, among many other historically excluded groups, are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. Start Early is dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace, so if you're excited about this role but your qualifications don't perfectly align with everything in the job description, we still encourage you to apply!



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The annual salary range for this position is \$250,000 to \$300,000. Start Early offers a generous benefits package that includes comprehensive health plans, commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, 401(k) contribution, six months of paid parental leave, a holistic wellness program, paid volunteer days, a professional development program, and much more.

APPLICATION

Start Early has retained Campbell & Company to conduct this search. The team for this project includes Joey Scheiber, Abigail Husain, and Kris McFeely.

To be considered for this opportunity, please send a letter of interest and resume to:

Abigail Husain

Associate Consultant, Executive Search

abigail.husain@campbellcompany.com

(312) 436.2348 direct



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Start Early is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to our core values by creating an inclusive environment for all staff.