

About the Resource Center

The Resource Center is a Chicago-based, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated in 1975 based on the guiding principle that we can take resources, both material and human, that society perceives as waste, and develop and foster better ways to utilize those resources. Our founder and president, Ken Dunn, has made a life and career out of this work, and our twenty-some employees work hard to make that principle a reality. We believe that these efforts truly contribute toward the progress of equality, justice, sustainability, and quality of life in the urban environment.

The Resource Center works in five main program areas: Residential and Commercial Recycling, Urban Agriculture, Food & Organics Composting, Perishable Food Recovery, and Creative Reuse. We currently operate from six facilities located throughout the City of Chicago. Today we run the largest non-profit recycling firm in the Chicago area, collecting materials from restaurants, universities, museums, condominium buildings, offices, and single-family homes. We have recycling drop-off and buy-back centers as well as a mobile buy-back program in which we purchase recyclable materials from public housing residents. Our current annual budget is approximately \$1.5 million. The Resource Center currently funds approximately 95% of all of its operations with income from program-related service fees, sales, or contracts, with the remainder coming from donated sources.

Our urban agriculture and composting activities go hand-in-hand. We grow fresh vegetables at City Farm, a once-derelict parcel of land that bridges the divide between Chicago's well-to-do Gold Coast neighborhood and its less-affluent neighbor, the disappearing Cabrini-Green public housing complex. That land, borrowed from the City of Chicago, wasn't always so fertile. When we first set up this farm, we sealed the surface with compacted clay and then laid down a layer of rich compost, produced at one of our own sites on the south side of the city. We sell our high-quality, naturally-raised vegetables to the finest restaurants in town at market rates, and to community members at affordable prices via our on-site market stand. We make our agricultural expertise available to gardeners, students, other farmers, and the general public. We are currently participating in plans for a large-scale food and organics composting facility to serve the Chicago area.

Our Perishable Food Recovery program recovers fresh, unprocessed food from sources such as grocery stores and farmer's markets, and then redistributes it to food pantries and shelters. With the Creative Reuse Warehouse, we strive to take in useable goods in larger quantities from businesses that would otherwise discard them. The items are warehoused for sale to the public, particularly teachers and artists.

General Description:

The Resource Center is seeking a Director of Urban Agriculture to manage and administer the day-to-day farming functions of its City Farms program and direct urban agricultural development to the full extent of the program's mission. As is common with most agricultural endeavors, the Director will be an "in-the-field" asset, as well as the manager and administrator of the program. Functions will also include managing a highly diverse staff of urban farmers, interns, and volunteers that work in Resource Center farm sites. The successful candidate will help to direct a physical expansion of the program to new farm sites, and will support and hire appropriate site managers and other site staff as the program grows.

The Director will work with the Resource Center President & General Manager to develop detailed business, funding, and operations plans, in order to develop new urban farms, community-focused sales and distribution systems, and community outreach and training programs. Most immediately this will include planning of the day-to-day and seasonal functions of the program in preparation for possible expansion into five acres beyond our current 1.25 acres.

To accomplish this, the Director of Urban Agriculture will bring significant agricultural and managerial experience to the position. The Director will work to increase the scope and scale of the urban agriculture program, while helping to clearly

articulate and accomplish our mission. Connecting and partnering with stakeholders, such as restaurant owners and chefs, funders, landowners, community leaders, activists, and the Resource Center Board of Directors, will be critical to the continued success of this program.

Entrepreneurship, dependability, and creative problem solving are key elements to working at the Resource Center. We strive to be at the leading edge of resource recovery and urban agriculture ideas, and with that comes a responsibility to be able to make our programs into viable models. A significant goal of the urban agriculture program is the development of education and outreach programs to help disseminate knowledge about our areas of expertise.

The ideal candidate will exhibit a strong dedication to the mission and sensibilities of the Resource Center, in addition to possessing all of the qualifications necessary to carry out the work. This position will be based at the Resource Center urban agricultural sites, with office space available at the Main Office 222 E 135th Place, Chicago IL 60827. It is estimated that the position will involve 80% field time (including both management and physical labor), and 20% office time, which will vary by time of year and other factors.

Essential Job Functions:

- Create weekly and monthly farm work plans with appropriate instructions and resources
- Maintain an unyielding commitment to customers, from the restaurants chefs to the neighborhood residents, both of whom support our efforts by buying our produce
- Coordinate closely with chefs before, during, and after each growing season
- Oversee all aspects of farm stand and farmer's market participation, from harvest planning to sales records and cash receipts
- Maintain complete vegetable production, equipment, and program financial records, and coordinate financial record-keeping with business office
- Create annual plans, including the following:
 - Annual program budget
 - Integrated crop plan that can predict estimated yields and set planting dates for an intensive, ecological, diverse vegetable system
 - Sales goals associated with monthly production
- Coordinate with (planned) education staff in the development of curriculum and training plans for volunteers, interns, and workshop attendees; as well as education programs to meet both the farm's and students' needs
- Acquire and use necessary resources to operate within the sustainability mission and budget
- Oversee maintenance and repair of program vehicles, equipment, and supplies
- Work with other Resource Center management staff to share resources
- Supervise timely and accurate customer invoicing and ensure collection of past-due invoices
- Actively pursue efficiency in work flows, procedures, and practices
- Hire and support program staff, including site managers, site laborers, program employees, and volunteers
- Plan and integrate additional social enterprises or connections with other food, agricultural, or local enterprises under the direction of the Resource Center President
- Attend work regularly and predictably

Other Job Functions:

- Provide assistance with coordination of recycling drop-off center operations
- Support Resource Center programming and fundraising events

Qualifications/Skills/Experience:

- Pluralistic and collegial point of view that allows for welcoming others' perspectives and fitting them into the common mission
- Ability to manage diverse groups of people including farm laborers, hard-to-hire trainees, youth, and professionals

- Degree(s) in natural resource management, agriculture, or associated field (agronomy, or agricultural economics desirable) and/or relevant agricultural experience. Prior success in planning and operating a farm is expected.
- Non-profit experience desirable
- Experience with community outreach or education
- Exceptional organizational and time management skills
- Dedication to the Resource Center's mission of environmental sustainability
- Familiarity with equipment maintenance desirable
- Ability to enjoy all aspects of the work, including repetitive tasks that are sometimes thought to be better left to those being supervised, or those with less commitment, skill, and understanding of the "big picture." It is precisely through such a broad understanding that the Director will be able to work with the staff and volunteers to communicate the importance of even the smallest task being done well.
- Dexterity and strength to be able to do physical work all day when required
- Ability to build consensus when possible and be decisive when necessary
- Technical skills
 - Expert ability with market garden growing and specialty foods wholesale to restaurants
 - Experience with winter growing
 - Intermediate background with Microsoft Office applications
 - Proficiency in high intensity vegetable production with associated business planning and bookkeeping
- Ability and willingness to work flexibly in a changing non-profit environment
- Ability to direct and maintain a safe, orderly, and productive work environment for all staff and visitors
- Valid driver's license and clean driving record

Accountability:

- Reports to President
- Coordinates closely with General Manager, business office, and other program managers

Expected Days, Hours, and Locations:

- This is a full-time, salaried, exempt managerial position.
- A minimum of five consecutive days per week, with flexible hours from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., is expected.
- The successful candidate will take ownership of the program and will seasonally arrive early and leave late to ensure success of the farm in all areas, particularly in production and in training of staff.
- The ability to travel to and work at urban agriculture sites located throughout the City of Chicago, as well as our main office at 222 E 135th Place, is expected.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The Resource Center is an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate against any employee or job applicant based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, or marital status. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, termination, promotion, transfer, layoff, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

To Apply

For consideration, please email a cover letter, résumé, and list of at least three (3) references to jobs@resourcecenterchicago.org, or mail these materials to the following address:

Attn: Director of Urban Agriculture Position
Resource Center
222 E 135th Place
Chicago, IL 60827.