

PREVENTION FIRST

CSAC Program Specialist

POSITION SUMMARY

This position helps lead the coordination and implementation of the Chicago Strategic Action Council (CSAC) project to advance substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion for Chicago's youth. Serving as the primary liaison among stakeholders, partners, and internal teams, the role ensures alignment with the Collective Impact model and Theory of Change. Key responsibilities include managing timelines, facilitating collaboration, translating complex concepts into actionable strategies, and developing resources to meet grant deliverables and drive measurable systems change. In addition to primary responsibility for CSAC, the position supports the Chief Development Officer and contributes to selected departmental and organizational initiatives that advance Prevention First's strategic priorities.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Translate complex concepts into clear, accessible language and actionable insights to facilitate understanding among diverse audiences. Effectively distill technical or abstract information into frameworks, recommendations, or strategic plans that support decision-making, collaboration, and implementation.
- Orchestrate the coordination and execution of CSAC project activities, ensuring alignment with goals and objectives. This may include facilitating training exercises, building consensus across workgroups, and more.
- Oversees a wide variety of activities to facilitate the effective implementation of project strategies, ensuring they are carried out efficiently and effectively; engages in partnerships to execute strategic initiatives of the project; ensures objectives in substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion among Chicago's youth are central to the work of the grant.
- Apply the principles of the Collective Impact model and Theory of Change to guide program development, stakeholder collaboration, and strategic initiatives. Ensure these frameworks are effectively implemented to drive measurable outcomes and support long-term systems change
- Facilitate the efforts of various CSAC stakeholders (e.g., community organizations, schools, and prevention service providers) as they implement the CSAC's theory of change and common agenda through workgroups, convenings, town halls, and other activities, ensuring goals and objectives are met.
- Manage project timelines, analyze and monitor progress, and adjust plans as needed to meet project milestones and deliverables and to achieve optimal results.
- Supports selected departmental and organizational initiatives, as assigned, through research, planning, stakeholder coordination, development of project materials and timelines, implementation activities, and follow-through to support successful completion of assigned objectives.

PREVENTION FIRST

- Act as the primary liaison between CSAC members, external partners, and collaborators to ensure effective communication and partnership; foster collaboration to assist stakeholders in completing project tasks and meeting deliverables.
- Coordinate meetings, workshops, and training sessions, ensuring logistics and resources are appropriately managed. Assist in identifying and securing appropriate consultants; provide general guidance to and work with consultants to ensure programs are in accordance with the identified needs.
- Compile and disseminate project reports and updates to stakeholders, highlighting progress, challenges, and successes.
- Develop resources, tools, and documents—including presentations, guides, and training materials—to support program goals and stakeholder engagement. Collaborate with the Communications team to ensure materials are visually engaging, brand-aligned, and accessible through effective graphic design and messaging.
- Assist in managing and analyzing project data to inform decision-making and strategy adjustments.
- Monitor and track project expenditures and assist with budget management to ensure financial accountability; obtain and process invoices; prepare travel vouchers, contract requests, and other required documents for approval.
- Represents Prevention First on various internal, regional, and community-based committees; attends meetings, conferences, and other events; participates in all internal staff meetings, organizational retreats, and planning meetings.
- Demonstrates commitment to valuing diversity and equity and contributing to an inclusive working and learning environment.
- Operates basic office equipment and presentation technology; utilizes communications and conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, Teams, etc.), internet access, internet search capabilities, PowerPoint, and other programs as needed; operates a motor vehicle. Prepares various reports and documents, including activity reports, quarterly and annual reports, etc.

POSITION QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's degree in Education, Community Health Services, Social Work, Data Management, or a related field with a minimum of three to five years of related experience in violence prevention, youth development, facilitating or delivering trainings, project management coordinating technical assistance, strategic planning and performing related tasks; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job.

DESIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Facilitation Skills – Ability to bring about an outcome (such as learning) in large groups, small groups and one-on-one scenarios.

PREVENTION FIRST

- Goal Oriented - Ability to focus on a goal and obtain a pre-determined result.
- Interpersonal - Ability to get along well with a variety of personalities and individuals; ability to build inclusive partnerships that bring together a diverse array of stakeholders to engage in authentic collaboration.
- Creative - Ability to produce new concepts, ideas, and innovative solutions.
- Excellent Communication Skills – Ability to organize and convey ideas clearly in writing and verbally.
- Critical Thinking – Ability to analyze and evaluate an issue in order to form a judgment.

ABOUT PREVENTION FIRST

Prevention First is a nonprofit and the leading organization for knowledge-building and the dissemination of evidence-based prevention strategies. Our mission is to equip communities with resources and support to build pathways that prevent substance misuse and promote safety and lasting well-being for all through training, education, and partnerships. Since 1980, Prevention First has provided training, technical assistance, and resource materials to thousands of schools, community groups, parents, and youth. We specialize in building the capacity of practitioners to build and sustain effective community coalitions to prevent substance abuse, develop comprehensive strategic prevention plans, and select and implement appropriate evidence-based prevention strategies. We are funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and offer our services throughout the state.

We offer an exceptional benefits package to our full-time employees (80% and above):

- Paid Time Off Accrual System (eligible day 1)
- Paid holidays
- Medical, dental & vision
- 401(k) plan (eligible after 90 days, vested after 1 year)

This is a full-time, FLSA-exempt position reporting to the Chief Development Officer. It is located in our Chicago office, with possible remote work opportunities. The salary range is \$55,000 - \$58,250.

Prevention First is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We're committed to having an inclusive and transparent environment where every voice is heard and acknowledged. We are dedicated to equality and believe deeply in diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, national origin, and all the other unique characteristics that make us different.

APPLICATION

We strongly encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply. Please e-mail your cover letter and resume to humanresources@prevention.org.