



Curt's Café

<https://curtscafe.org>

Executive Director Opportunity Guide



Curt's Café improves outcomes for young adults living in at-risk situations through work and life skills training.

About Curt's Café



For a decade, Curt's Café (Curt's) has been a beacon of hope for young adults living in at-risk situations. Curt's currently operates two cafés in Evanston and Highland Park (Illinois), each serving the full range of barista-style coffee drinks, as well as breakfast and lunch items and catering services. The Cafés serve as the primary setting for Curt's workforce education program, providing life skills training, extensive wraparound social services, and job training and placement to Curt's students. Additionally, Curt's provides individual student support for completing educational needs, whether that means completing high school, receiving a G.E.D. or starting college. After graduating from the program, students are offered ongoing support, including post-placement support, and often return for additional mentoring.

Students who participate in Curt's programs are young men and women, ages 15 to 24, from Evanston, Lake County and the Greater Chicagoland; students are often in significant at-risk situations, facing multiple barriers to gaining critical skills leading to full-time employment. Many are housing or food insecure, single parents, and/or have had contact with the judicial system. They are often referred from local high schools, social service agencies, or other nonprofits.

Students thrive by participating in a multifaceted three-month program, which includes learning to work in multiple café capacities. While participating, students receive a stipend to support themselves and their families. As members of the Café staff, students learn far more than culinary techniques; they are provided with an individualized, needs-based plan designed to move their lives forward in positive directions, gain confidence, and become job-ready. As importantly, Curt's programs are focused on building community and a sense of social inclusion for students, founded on restorative justice principles. Curt's Café's success lies in not only restoring youth to the community, but community to youth. Programs are overseen by, among others, café managers who run each café's operations and provide job training and trained social service providers.

Since its founding ten years ago, Curt's innovative programming has empowered more than 550 young adults. In 2022, the two Curt's Café locations will serve 70 or more young adults. Curt's Café's success is reflected not only in the number of youth served, but in dramatically reduced recidivism rates for participants. For young adults who cycle through the court system, 86% of those released are sent back through the system within 3 years. By stark contrast, for students participating in Curt's programs the recidivism rate is only 5%.

The Opportunity: Executive Director



Curt's Café seeks its next Executive Director (ED) following the exemplary leadership of the organization's founder. Transitioning in the summer of 2022, Ms. Susan Garcia Trieschmann has been instrumental in the start-up and success of Café operations and social service programs over the past decade. Governed by an engaged Board, the Executive Director will oversee a 2022 organizational budget of \$1.3M across two locations (Evanston and Highland Park) and a staff of 20 including a strong leadership team. At this important stage in the organization's growth, the Board seeks a mission focused, passionate, creative and entrepreneurial Executive Director to lead the organization into the future.

The success of the Executive Director will be measured by growing the number of students served, strengthening the opportunities afforded to them, and by increasing revenue through grants, donor participation, and enhanced café and catering operations. In their first year, the Executive Director will work with a capable and enthusiastic team to strengthen Curt's Café's

sustainability, thereby enhancing students' experience by expanding opportunities for engagement with the community and building self-integrity in the process. The Executive Director will play a key role in expanding our donor base and ensure earned income contributes to the revenue mix supporting the financial health of the organization, which in turn allows for additional wraparound services and support of students who are currently in or have completed the program.

A natural leader, the next Executive Director will grow Curt's presence in the regional ecosystem, working to amplify existing efforts, foster collaboration, and ensure youth and young adults have every possible chance at future success. The Executive Director will also work to formalize Curt's operational model, ensuring that current and potential future locations are engaged in the fabric of local neighborhoods, bringing students and communities together as a center of workforce development training and community. The following areas will define Year 1 success for the new Executive Director.

Performance Objectives



Strategy and Leadership

- Lead, in partnership with the Board of Directors, Curt's Café through its next stage of growth, development, and continued excellence.
- Champion the organization's mission, interests, goals, and accomplishments to donors, prospective donors, employers, partners, government officials, and other stakeholders.
- Create, spearhead, and hold responsibility for the organization's overall revenue strategy.
- Collaborate with Café management and staff to develop strategic goals and tactics for increasing foot traffic and sales in the Cafés and in catering engagements.
- Keep programs in line with strategic plan goals, mission driven, and in support of student needs and Café operations.
- Serve as a champion of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace, programming, and in partnership opportunities.
- Ensure Curt's Café is a thought leader in the sector and communities it serves, broadcasting its voice on issues surrounding youth workforce development, restorative justice, and other complex and interlocking areas of expertise.

Fundraising and Revenue Development

- Serve as an articulate and passionate spokesperson for Curt's Café and as the primary relationship manager for key philanthropic and earned revenue partnerships.
- Build new and nurture existing relationships to boost long-term revenue strategies.
- Foster and nurture effective working relationships in the community to secure funding for wraparound services for students.
- Work with foundations, individual and corporate donors, and other philanthropy leaders to build the fundraising pipeline of support for Curt's Café.
- Inspire, provide training for, and be a strong partner to the Board, Advisory Board, and senior leadership team in creating an overall culture of philanthropy and to enhance fundraising activities.
- Originate new business development strategies to maintain a mix of earned and contributed revenue lines to support the operations.

Performance Objectives



Partnerships and External Affairs

- Maintain current and cultivate new networks of relationships with local government, community and business leaders in Evanston, Highland Park and their surrounding communities so as to maintain and increase the flow of students.
- Develop and oversee an outreach plan which will result in Curt's Café becoming a recognized leader in Youth/Young Adult and Workforce Development services in the region. Create and implement programs to meet the needs of the community and the students.
- Create strategies to promote Curt's Café as a center of community, encouraging awareness and usage of its space for events, meetings and other opportunities for gatherings.
- Provide collaborative leadership in maintaining a positive and productive working relationship among the Board of Directors, partner organizations and volunteers.
- Drive the development of new partnerships to integrate Curt's offerings alongside an array of services available to support youth/young adults as they enter adulthood and become strong, resilient members of their community.

Management and Operations

- Set a tone for the overall culture, in partnership with leadership staff, in the initial transition and into the future that keeps the welcoming and caring nature of interaction with students and Café customers at the core of the daily work and inspires staff to excel.
- Develop and maintain a thorough understanding of Café operations, policies and procedures while empowering the senior leadership to drive daily work at the cafés.
- Assess, develop and maintain a highly effective, productive and cohesive staff with both professional/technical expertise to manage internal operations.
- Lead and manage staff and students through lens of flexibility, openness to suggestions, and the ability to resolve/mitigate conflict based on principles of restorative justice.
- Develop an annual operating budget and ensure that the Café operates within budget guidelines. Regularly monitor budgets and cash flow statements and oversee regular reporting and accountability.
- Establish, track and report relevant program outcomes and metrics.
- Foster a healthy balance between Curt's Café's passion for its work and mission and the need to implement efficiencies and expand revenue/funding sources.

The Qualified Candidate

Curt's Café seeks an empathetic, passionate and insightful leader to engage both community members and students to drive the organization's vision forward.

The successful candidate will have an unbridled and deep-seated passion for changing the individual lives of young adults in at-risk situations. The next Executive Director will take a student-first approach, ensuring community-building and kindness are at the forefront of Curt's mission, exemplifying strong sensitivities to the lived experiences of the students. While a strategic business approach is an imperative, the ED will also embody a versatile set of skills and a "roll up your sleeves" mentality, noting that, when challenges arise, they may be required to jump into Café operations. A strong communicator who is able to engage a wide audience comprised of multiple stakeholders will excel in this role.

Exhibiting a passion for improving opportunities available to young adults in at-risk situations, the new leader will bring a strong background in cultivating and stewarding relationships with local business, civic, government and philanthropic leaders that advance the interests of Curt's Café and its students. The Executive Director must be able to assess staffing strengths and needs and implement organizational best practices, balancing focus on Café operations and wraparound services for students. The successful candidate will ensure an empowering operational structure for staff so the Executive Director can step out of the Café and into the community.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Passion for Curt's Café and its mission, augmented by demonstrated experience in similar programmatic and nonprofit service areas. Experience in the areas of workforce development or youth services/youth programming preferred.
- Progressive experience in leadership and management roles in a nonprofit or social enterprise mission.
- Prior experience working with youth and young adults in at-risk situations. Proven emotional intelligence and empathy to lead from a trauma-informed care (TIC) perspective.
- Demonstrated understanding of restorative justice and commitment to its principles when leading and building culture at Curt's Café.
- Proven ability to build strong external relationships with a variety of volunteers, public leadership, partner organizations and other stakeholders to increase organizational reach and resources for students.
- Experience in philanthropic strategy, fundraising and financial stewardship; ability to identify, cultivate, steward, and solicit donors.
- Proven success in building strong and productive work teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development.
- Lived experience in the paths of Curt's Café students would provide depth, perspective, and strength to candidacy.
- Restaurant management/catering experience or certification not required, but a plus.

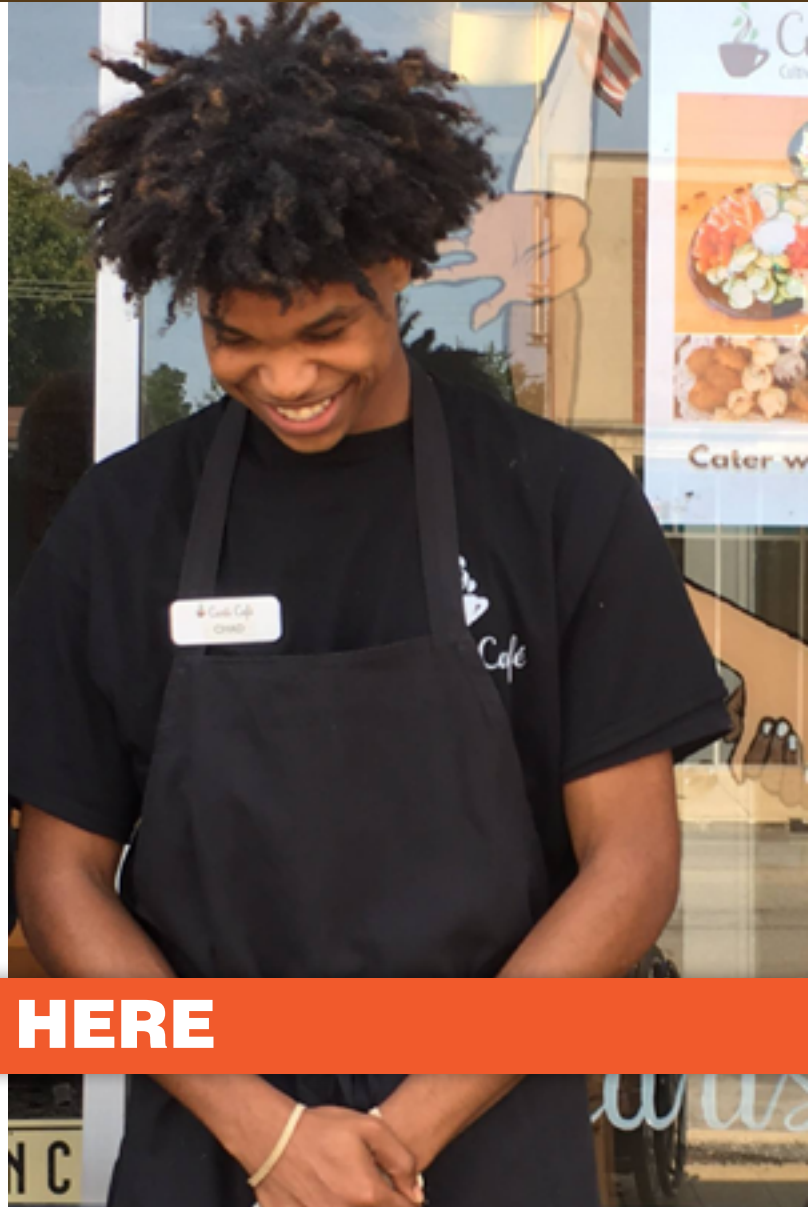


How To Apply

This position offers a salary range beginning at \$110,000 and standard benefits which include insurance, retirement, paid time off, etc.

COVID 19 considerations: Policies may be updated as warranted. Currently, employees must be vaccinated or participate in weekly tests performed onsite (at no charge). The Board and leadership prioritize the safety of our staff and customers and continually monitor and respond to public health recommendations. Current policies will be shared at the time final candidates are interviewed. Curt's is currently operating in a hybrid work environment, although our students and most staff are in the Café weekly. COVID-19 policies are subject to change based on current health advisories.

Curt's Café is an equal opportunity employer and provides employment without regard to race, religion, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, national origin, age, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.



APPLY HERE

To assure 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.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy (President and CEO), Laura Weinman (Vice President) and Katie VanderKlok (Project Manager) of KEES. Questions may be addressed to kvanderklok@kees2success.com.

About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.

