

CITY BUREAU

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

<https://www.citybureau.org/>

The Organization:

City Bureau is a Chicago-based media lab reimagining journalism as a direct service to democracy. We equip people with skills and resources, facilitate critical public conversations, and produce information that directly addresses people's needs. We also make an impact nationally by supporting and convening organizations in other parts of the United States and across the world to grow and strengthen participatory media as a field. Our work is rooted in a belief that an equitable information system is the foundation for a just democracy, and our long-term vision is a world in which every community is equipped with the tools it needs to eliminate information inequity and further liberation, justice, and self-determination.

Amid a deep crisis in local journalism, City Bureau is a leader in developing new models to meet information needs. Founded in 2015, City Bureau has grown rapidly from a volunteer organization hosting free workshops out of a Woodlawn coffee shop to a nonprofit with four programs, more than 20 full time staff, serving hundreds of people in Chicago communities, and supporting locally run participatory media programs in 11 cities across the United States, with plans to support 50 by 2026.

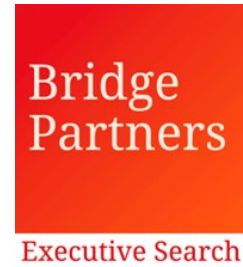
Our Chicago-based programs and our national Documenters Network have garnered national and global attention, and secured support from local and national funders. In 2020 we received the 5 years \$10M Stronger Democracy Award. We see tremendous opportunity in the years ahead to deepen our impact, fundraise for long term sustainability, and expand City Bureau's reach and engagement both in Chicago and nationally. After 8 years run by a team of co-executive founders, and based on deep reflection on what kind of leadership will serve our work, we're hiring our first Executive Director to collaborate with our staff, board, and community in defining our next era of growth and evolution.

The Role:

Location: Chicago, IL

Reports to: Board of Directors

Application and selection deadline: Our hiring committee will begin reviewing applications in mid-October. The ideal start date is January 2024.



The Opportunity:

Lead City Bureau, an award-winning visionary organization, in a pivotal moment of growth and evolution as we reimagine local media as a public good. Our next leader will forge a sustainable path forward for our team as we equip people in Chicago and across the country to meet the information needs of their communities.

Our Chicago Programs

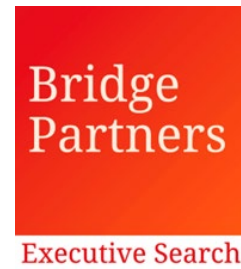
We run three interrelated journalism programs in our home city of Chicago that equip people with knowledge, skills, relationships, and opportunities to make change in their communities. Our work has earned accolades from local and national journalism organizations, influenced city and state policy and, most importantly, directly impacted the lives of the people who we train, engage, and reach with our work. Our fellowship program has trained more than 150 civic reporters whose journalism includes multimedia storytelling, interactive tools, workshops and information resources. We host a series of free workshops—the Public Newsroom—designed to support organizing around critical information needs in Chicago by providing resources, sharing skills, and fostering discussion. And through our local Chicago Documenters program, we've trained more than 1,000 Chicagoans to cover local public meetings and engage in civic engagement and reporting projects, creating points of access that allow anyone to participate in the production of journalism while also establishing a powerful new mechanism of public accountability. Our Chicago programs prioritize impact in Chicago's historically disinvested BIPOC neighborhoods, and we track metrics accordingly to evaluate success.

Taken together our Chicago programs are a multi-pronged approach to achieving a more inclusive, accessible, and responsive local media ecosystem.

Our National Impact

City Bureau's national Documenters Network creates participatory civic infrastructure by equipping organizations across the United States to launch their own Documenters programs as the foundation for inclusive and equitable local civic ecosystems. Local Documenters programs train and pay community members to attend and annotate government meetings, harnessing their collective knowledge, relationships, and capacity to create a powerful new information resource. Local Documenters programs supported by City Bureau have collectively trained over 2,000 people who have covered more than 5,000 public meetings and have paid out more than \$500,000 to local Documenters.

Our Documenters Network team helps launch and onboard new programs, supports existing programs through programmatic and technology services, and is building a thriving, connected multi local network of Documenters programs. With 11 current Documenters programs across the country and plans to expand in the coming years, we aim to lead the rapid development of a new cornerstone of civic life in the United States that makes local government more transparent, accessible, and participatory.



In addition to building this core infrastructure for participatory media, we play an active role in conversations about the future of local media by sharing our practices and lessons learned and advancing the case for a more democratic approach to meeting community information needs.

Priorities:

- Lead staff, board, and community stakeholders to develop City Bureau's next strategic plan beginning in 2025
- Manage, develop, coach, and support our team to implement the strategic plan
- Grow City Bureau's brand recognition in the Chicago area and the field more broadly in order to extend our impact and make the case for participatory media
- Build accountable relationships with foundations and donors to resource our next phase of growth
- Advance the case for broad-based participatory civic media in Chicago and across the country

Responsibilities:

Strategic, collaborative, and inclusive executive leadership

Hiring our first Executive Director means empowering a singular role to keep our whole team focused on big picture long-term impact—guiding the creation of our next strategic plan and managing our team to implement it with clear vision, communication, and accountability. We're looking for an experienced leader who has guided an organization through such changes before.

We also want to carry forward many of the strengths of the collaborative ethos that has gotten us to this point. City Bureau strives to practice inclusive decision making, and we trace many of our best strategic decisions to moments of collective insight where a group can see possibilities individuals cannot. We'll look to the Executive Director to continue and deepen that practice by basing their decision making on broad input from our team and community.

As Executive Director it will be your role to:

- Work with senior directors to create and execute our next multi-year strategic plan (implementation begins in 2025)
- Lead, coach, develop, and retain City Bureau's leadership team, bringing out the best decisions and insights from their diverse perspectives
- Lead the team in allocating resources towards the strategic plan through multi-year and annual budgets, and ensure CB has the operational structures, systems, and tools to do its best work
- Steward a supportive, transparent, and equitable work culture with clear growth opportunities that attracts, retains, and invests in talented staff
- Build relationships with other leaders to support organizational partnerships that keep our work rooted and meaningful

- Build effective mechanisms for broad input into executive decision making and model collaborative methods of working, making decisions, and fostering culture
- Actively engage with our community through City Bureau programs and events, focus groups, and attending community events
- Cultivate and support a strong Board of Directors that is aligned with our mission and connected to our communities

Fundraising and revenue development

City Bureau is entering our next phase in a strong financial position. At the same time, we face critical choices about how to gather and allocate resources for sustainable long-term impact. Our Executive Director will be our lead fundraiser, responsible for ensuring we have the resources to execute our next strategic plan and achieve systemic change.

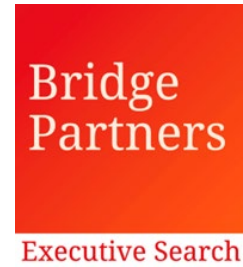
We'll look to our Executive Director to:

- Develop a multi-year fundraising and earned-revenue development plan that grows diverse revenue streams
- Continuously engage current and potential funders, clients, and partners and dynamically articulate the organization's vision and programs
- Build relationships with donors and foundations rooted in partnership, clarity, and mutual accountability
- Support the creation of and monitor an earned revenue plan for services we provide to mission-aligned organizations
- Own annual fundraising and revenue targets and report to the board on progress

Case making, thought leadership, and movement building

When the City Bureau started 8 years ago our approach was on the margins of conversations about journalism. Today, we are a leading national voice in the rapidly growing field of participatory media. We believe the years ahead are a critical window of opportunity for making the case for more equitable and democratic approaches to civic information. Our Executive Director will play a primary role in making this case to the communities we serve, our peers in the field, and the public at large.

- Represent City Bureau publicly through speaking engagements and press appearances
- Write about City Bureau's work from a leadership perspective
- Support initiatives to grow City Bureau's brand recognition in both the Chicago area and nationally
- Organize and participate in coalitions and networks to both spread and refine our vision for the future of civic information



Qualifications:

A personal relationship to City Bureau's mission

- You are in tune with the daily on-the-ground reality of our communities and the structural and historical context of our mission. You speak and make strategic decisions from a foundation of relevant, practical, and lived experience
- You are deeply experienced and knowledgeable in at least one aspect of City Bureau's work: democracy, civic engagement, journalism and local media, or community organizing and power-building
- You have consistently and deeply engaged in work to strengthen the communities of which you are a part—including outside of official and/or elite spaces

Note: While this position is Chicago based, we are open to candidates from other places. Strong candidates will 1) understand—and have practiced—deep community engagement in their own community, 2) be excited to learn about our local context in Chicago, and 3) be ready to trust and support our local staff to meet our Chicago communities' unique needs

Reflections from our staff:

"Someone who will be accountable first to the communities we serve"

"Brings a concrete power analysis"

"Brings an understanding of human development"

Dynamic, responsive, and accountable leadership

- You have an extensive track record leading teams and organizations to innovate for systemic change
- You lead by building collaborative teams and helping them bring out their best ideas, making tough calls when needed but leaning heavily into collaboration to drive results
- You equip and prepare your senior leadership team with clear expectations and support and then trust them to lead in their areas of expertise
- You are an adaptable leader able to lead a distributed local-national team in a hybrid remote-in-person work environment
- You're experienced at incorporating broad input into key decisions; you know how to include perspectives at every level of the organization, right-sizing opportunities for feedback to make effective decisions
- You model humility and accountability by being transparent about your own processing, learning, and areas of growth
- You lead and design process with an awareness of power dynamics, including both organizational hierarchy, and dynamics of race, gender, and class

Reflections from our staff:

“Honesty and clarity in communication. What room are we in? Decision making? Brainstorming?”

“Someone practicing humility constantly”

“Experience building shared leadership structures in an organization”

“The main characteristic for an ED is accountability.”

Stellar communication and presentation skills

- You are well-practiced and comfortable presenting in high-stress situations at the front of the room, on the phone, and in intimate conversations
- You're able to engage, move, and convince people through speeches, conversation and writing
- You listen to understand, cultivating curiosity about the perspectives of both allies and adversaries
- You can clearly articulate the unique insights of our communities/program participants to our partners in the field, and vice versa
- You do not shy away from making direct, bold, ambitious asks

Reflections from our staff:

“A communicator who can carry the message of our work.”

“Strong instinct for adapting messages and style for different kinds of audiences.”

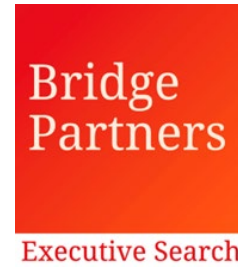
Experience developing and implementing strategy that achieves systemic change

- You've guided or directly shaped a multi-year strategic plan aimed at structural change and can apply those lessons immediately
- You set achievable short-term goals that contribute to an ambitious long-term vision
- You think holistically about program impact, balancing rigor with nuance, and empirical data with the messiness of real life

Reflections from our team:

“Someone who is able to vision growth and stability at the same time”

“Sees three to five years down the line”



Experience managing relationships with partners, donors, founders, board members, and other stakeholders

- You are skilled at building relationships of trust that enable organizational partnerships—people believe in your organization because they trust you
- You’ve developed your own network in previous roles and are ready to leverage it for City Bureau’s mission
- You know the power of holistic, long-term relationships and put in the work to maintain them

Reflections from our team:

“Someone who understands that relationships are the foundation of our work.”

Salary and Benefits:

- \$165,000-\$195,000 annual salary
- Benefits package including health care, dental, vision, life insurance
- Relocation support available
- Employer sponsored 401k plans, with 100% employer match up to 4% of salary
- Year-round 4.5 work weeks; in summer months we have 4-day work weeks
- Annual technology and work tools allowance
- Professional development allowance
- 15 days paid vacation, not including health days
- 11 company holidays each year, which may be exchanged for employees who celebrate other holidays
- A culture of intentional professional development and organizational learning, including for our most senior leaders

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City Bureau is an equal opportunity employer committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

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If you or someone in your network is interested in exploring this opportunity, please submit your resume to:

Ryan Whitacre
Partner, Bridge Partners
Ryan.Whitacre@bridgepartnersllc.com

Debbie Tang
Partner, Bridge Partners
Debbie.Tang@bridgepartnersllc.com