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COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY

Position Guide

Executive Director

www.communityrenewalsociety.org/

COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY

POSITION: Executive Director

REPORTS TO: Board of Directors

LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois

VISION STATEMENT

The Beloved Community where all God's children flourish and live in dignity.

MISSION

Inform and bring people of faith and congregations together, in partnership with communities, coalitions, interfaith organizations, and civic leaders, to intentionally and decisively transform society toward greater social justice at the intersection of racism and poverty.

ABOUT COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY (CRS)

Community Renewal Society (CRS) is a progressive, faith-based organization that works to eliminate race and class barriers. Founded in 1882, CRS informs, organizes and trains both communities and individuals to advocate for social and economic justice.

As an interfaith organization, CRS has always reflected the spirit of the Congregational Church that founded it. (The Congregational Church was the predecessor denomination to the United Church of Christ.) Congregationalists were strong in their belief of the civil rights of all people, and the Congregational Church was comprised of black and white Americans who were active supporters and workers in the faith. Some of its earliest activists were Congregationalist attorneys who came to the legal aid of the Amistad prisoners in 1839, leading to their acquittal and freedom.

Since its earliest days, CRS has focused on the social and spiritual needs of Chicago's most vulnerable populations, ranging from European immigrants in the late 19th century to today's victims of racism and economic injustice.

Today, CRS works to draw people of faith together across race, geography, age and denomination to transform systems of racism and poverty in the Chicagoland area through investigative journalism, congregational organizing, policy advocacy, and building capacity in member churches and leaders. CRS' theory of change connects four primary components: public engagement, public will/opinion, civic demand and public policy/practice change.

Public Engagement. For citizens or organizations to act on an issue, they must first be aware of the issue, its importance, its causes, its consequences and viable solutions to it. Effective public engagement is intertwined with building knowledge and understanding. CRS' newsmagazine, [*The Chicago Reporter*](#), surfaces issues and provides insightful analyses into pressing social concerns.

Public Will/Opinion. Awareness of a problem rarely compels people to take action to resolve it; resolution flows from a belief that the problem should and can be solved. Having raised awareness of an issue with constituents, CRS works with them to identify, analyze and test solutions, and to develop strategies that will lead to the adoption and implementation of those solutions. This includes research into best practices and legislative initiatives, identification of potential barriers as well as likely allies, an assessment of contextual issues that offer opportunities to promote change and creating an organized network of constituents interested in and willing to act on the issue.

Civic Demand. Having determined that change is necessary on an issue, organizing staff guide and assist constituents and coalition partners in using their knowledge and skills to demand that policymakers act to reach clearly articulated and agreed upon outcomes. The newsmagazine presses these leaders to respond to the challenges outlined in our work. Community members are no longer overlooked bystanders but rather citizens claiming their full rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

Public Policy/Practice Change. Experience has demonstrated that creating and implementing new policies or programs does not always lead to the outcomes advocates had articulated and policymakers agreed upon, for a variety of reasons. CRS monitors the implementation and impact of the policy or program and, in doing so, holds the policymakers and public agencies accountable for its success.

To achieve its mission to transform society toward greater social justice at the intersection of racism and poverty, CRS:

- Works purposefully on multiple interconnected issues, principally housing, jobs, a just economy for the State of Illinois, criminal justice, and the rights of returning citizens;
- Works with a cross section of communities and leaders, engaging them in these critical issues;
- Examines and proposes improvements in current public practices;
- Exposes the direct relationship between reducing racial and economic inequities and the long-term economic health of our region;
- Holds government accountable for its role in breaking down race and class barriers and making the region work for all its residents.

THE OPPORTUNITY

During its most recent decade, CRS has made significant contributions in the public policy sphere. Through its work in the *Chicago Reporter*, CRS was the key force driving public scrutiny and regulation of subprime mortgages and of abuse occurring in nursing homes. The CRS Organizing and Policy departments achieved major legislative victories in criminal justice and criminal justice reform, and in expanding opportunities for people who have served their debts to society. Most recently, CRS has driven measurable progress in Chicago police accountability through three ongoing initiatives. As CRS celebrates its 135th anniversary, its members and supporters must begin to engage a younger generation to help bring forward the message and the fight until racism is

eradicated and justice is achieved in the beloved community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The next Executive Director will have the opportunity to continue and build upon CRS' distinguished record of legislative and policy achievements. The Executive Director will have the opportunity to cast a vision of CRS' work at the intersection of racism and poverty during a time when both racism and divisiveness have found renewed support in our land. He or she will complete and follow through on a recent audit of CRS' internal culture so that the mission of CRS can be lived both internally and externally.

The next Executive Director will strengthen internal and external communications regarding focus and method to build relationships and collective impact. He or she will invest in leadership development of the CRS staff, board and community leaders to harness each team member's passion towards the common good. The next leader also will be able to make deliberate strides in establishing an internal culture of both transparency and accountability, so that all members of the CRS team can dedicate their efforts towards attaining the goal of social justice for all.

Finally, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to manage, lead and grow this \$3.5 million faith-based organization in a sustainable fashion and to continue to develop its board in a manner that will strengthen the organization.

POSITION SUMMARY

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will inspire, lead and work with a highly dedicated staff, committed volunteer leaders and member congregations to work toward community goals.

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall leadership of CRS' efforts throughout the metropolitan area. The Executive Director is the key "face" of the CRS to its many publics and has primary responsibility for programs and managing the organization. The position also has a responsibility for communications and, with the board, sets and implements the strategic plans for the organization.

The Executive Director will lead, inspire and coordinate the efforts of the team including overseeing and empowering their productivity, teamwork, accountability, and professional development. Developing close, effective working relationships with the entire team will be critical to the success of the Executive Director and of the organization.

Today, CRS has nearly 25 full and part-time staff members and a budget of \$3.5 million, which all come together to support three major programming areas:

Organizing

CRS' Organizing Department networks congregations to overcome the barriers of poverty and racism. For decades, activists in member congregations have come together across racial, ethnic, geographic and socioeconomic lines to shape public policies that foster hope and create opportunity for all Illinois



residents. The Organizing Staff works to provide organizing and advocacy training, mentoring and guidance, information and materials. A Policy and Organizing Committee, representing members churches and members of the elected Board of Directors, makes decisions about the legislation and campaigns to be implemented over the course of the year.

Policy



Its Policy Department works with their congregational leaders and Issue Team members, community coalitions, and elected officials in state and county legislative bodies to develop and pass legislation that advances justice, primarily in the areas of economic justice, criminal justice, and tax reform. The Policy Department also provides training and current political context for

our member congregations as they carry out their responsibilities as citizens and persons of faith.

The Chicago Reporter

Founded on the heels of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, *The Chicago Reporter* confronts racial and economic inequality, using the power of investigative journalism. Its mission is national but grounded in Chicago, one of the most segregated cities in the nation and a bellwether for urban policies.

**THE CHICAGO
REPORTER**
Investigating Race & Poverty Since 1972

CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek a proven leader with a deeply-rooted passion for racial and economic justice. The next executive director must have a keen sense of vision and must be able to inspire and unite people towards a common goal. This person will have demonstrated skills in building trust and positive culture among staff, board and member organizations, and he or she will be able to demonstrate unquestionable caring about the mission, the employees and the work of Community Renewal Society.

We seek a relational leader who has strong familiarity and a good understanding of Chicago politics, relationships and communities. He or she must have solid relationships in the Chicago community and, as a strong communicator, shall bring both vision and voice (spoken and written) to the work of CRS.

CRS seeks a leader who appreciates and is comfortable with interactions in a broad variety of settings and communities, especially communities of faith and diversity. Candidates should have the ability to communicate effectively with staff, board, churches and church members, as well as with government officials and private donors. Candidates should be natural networkers and team builders who relish the process of inviting and building communities of creativity and support for this important mission.

The Executive Director will also be comfortable with fundraising, especially in sharing the vision and fostering productive relationships with donors, foundations and other CRS

supporters. Although experience in organizing is not required, an understanding of organizing, policy work and development are needed. The ability and capacity to lead and understand the mission, function, and impact of an organization like CRS is essential. Although a ministry background is not required, a faith motivation, background and orientation are a must.

The ideal candidate will have management experience in a not-for-profit setting. He or she will have strong business and financial acumen to sustainably manage the organization. Further, the successful candidate will know how to engage people in meaningful ways; he or she will know how to demonstrate compassion and help people feel heard, and yet will also hold them as team members accountable to goals and mutual expectations. Demonstrated strengths in both leadership and management are needed to be successful in this position.

CRS has recently completed a strategic planning process as well as an internal culture survey, and we seek a leader with exceptional skills in the execution of a plan and with skill in building a team, building trust and providing ongoing clarity and focus for the organization. This leader will have the ability to develop a long-term vision for the future direction of Community Renewal Society, as it relates to the Strategic Plan.

Key Goals articulated in the Strategic Plan are:

- **Strategic Pillar One: Evaluation, Alignment, And Integration**
To focus, unlock and further leverage CRS' incredible potential to target organizational resources for strategic ends.
- **Strategic Pillar Two: Leadership and Leader Development**
To focus, unlock and further leverage the incredible leadership potential and potential to pioneer new leadership models within the organization.
- **Strategic Pillar Three: Constituency Development**
To focus, unlock and further leverage the potential of CRS' constituencies to build a high impact, multi-racial organization.
- **Strategic Pillar Four - Bi-Directional Focus**
To focus, unlock and further leverage the potential of CRS' member congregations to affect change in their communities and beyond.

To apply, please send a current resume and letter of introduction to Kittleman & Associates, LLC at <https://www.kittlemansearch.com/community-renewal-society/>

For more information about Community Renewal Society,
please visit www.communityrenewalsociety.org.