



## Illinois Coordinator for the Great Lakes Regional Food Business Center

JANUARY 2024

### Who Are We?

Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) was founded in 2002 as a coalition became a 501c3 nonprofit in 2011, and added full-time staff in 2017. CFPAC connects people across Chicago's food system to build equitable networks and to advance food justice and food sovereignty.

### Our Mission & Vision

We envision a food system where residents of all races, genders, and social identities have the right to produce and access food through community-driven, ecologically regenerative, and economically resilient processes. We address gaps in today's food system using an incubator model to initiate solutions that build an equitable future for systematically marginalized, local farms and food businesses. We specifically focus on dismantling structural racism in the food system and lifting up food policies that support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. We champion food leaders who equitably represent Chicago's tapestry (race, class, gender, social identity) by connecting them within our network to take leadership roles, lead policy conversations, and establish greater capacity for equitable solutions. We prompt grassroots action for food system equity by creating space for leaders to connect, facilitating conversations around policy and solutions, and addressing systemic barriers to food equity and food access. To that end, please visit [www.chicagofoodpolicy.com](http://www.chicagofoodpolicy.com) to learn more.

### Position Overview

The Program Coordinator for the Illinois Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) is a brand-new position for CFPAC. The overarching goal of the Great Lakes Regional Food Business Center (GL RFBC) program is to bolster the resilience of local and regional food systems while promoting the growth of businesses owned by individuals from underserved communities.

The scope of work for this role is focused on three key objectives of the Great Lakes Regional Food Business Center program:

- 1) **Coordination:** Support strategic planning, formalize network of supply chain stakeholders, coordinate with USDA, collaborate with other Regional Food Business Centers, outreach to underserved communities and businesses.
- 2) **Technical Assistance:** Coordinate business technical assistance providers to support small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses and food value and supply chain coordination, focusing on market and business development and managing financial resources.





- 3) ***Capacity Building:*** Support and coordinate resources to meet emerging regional needs and support food businesses working toward expansion and other investments.

This role will primarily be an external-facing position working with the external partners to CFPAC while in close coordination with the CFPAC team and the Food Justice community. The Program Coordinator will travel across the state of Illinois and the region to develop and sustain relationships to better understand the barriers and opportunities for local farms and small food businesses, particularly those run by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Expected travel is approximately 5-9 days each month (20-30%).

The Illinois Regional Food Business Center Program Coordinator position is supported by the USDA Great Lakes Midwest Regional Food Business Center (GL RFBC) cooperative agreement led by Michigan State University (MSU). The GL RFBC has partners in MI, IN, WI, and IL with CFPAC serving as the IL lead.

For more information on the Great Lakes Midwest Regional Food Business Center Program, please visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/GLM-RFBC/about>.

### **Objectives You're Here to Meet!**

- Provide highly-relational expertise in local food and small business support.
- Engage and listen to develop a deep understanding of the obstacles, barriers, and evolving needs of producers and small food entrepreneurs.
- Develop a portfolio of resources to provide a network of technical assistance support, workshops, trainings, and other resources to support growth and sustainability in their businesses.
- Anticipate market changes, policy effects, and community needs to proactively build support and resources.
- Be a subject matter expert on local food producers and entrepreneurs and represent their voice at the GL RFBC, IL food system convenings, and other related conferences and meetings.
- Build and nurture collaborative and strategic relationships within GL RFBC, technical assistance providers, and CFPAC staff.

### **Position is Accountable for...**

- Launching IL network and collaborations supporting the Great Lakes Regional Food Business Center (GL RFBC).
- Connect regularly to engage local food producers and businesses to understand their needs.



- Connect business technical assistance providers to GL RFBC TA awards, data tracking, and other supports.
- “business builder grants” personalized business development
- Serving as a collaborative thought partner with CFPAC Team helping with the success of implementation and expansion efforts.
- Supporting meetings between public departments, agencies, and other partners to address barriers and opportunities for producers and food businesses.
- Implementing and maintaining detailed workflows within scope of work that fulfill grant deliverables and reporting requirements.
- Supporting GL RFBC efforts in the development and publication of related reports, communication, social media, resources, guides, and public educational content.
- Assist with supporting related events, like the Buyer/Supplier Mixers, Good Food Vendor Fairs, and the annual Chicago Food Justice Summit.
- Represent the GL RFBC at conferences and other opportunities that arise.
- Support the efforts and administration of working groups, committees, and coalitions relevant to GL RFBC, supply chain development, and support for producers.

### **Desired Knowledge & Experience**

- Commitment and passion to food justice & equity - including understanding the root causes of racial and social inequity in power and control over food systems.
- Extensive knowledge of local, sustainable and healthy food systems– including food production, urban and sustainable agriculture, and community development.
- In-depth understanding of U.S. agriculture, food production, and distribution systems, community food systems, and small food entrepreneurship
- Experience in coordinating, facilitating, and/or organizing meetings, events, trainings, and workshops.
- Ability to work productively and collaboratively in a highly autonomous environment.
- Relational approach to your work, and a mindfulness to uphold and steward our values, and add to our culture!

### **Bonus If...**

- Experience in providing support or technical assistance to small businesses or social enterprises
- 3-5 years of experience in community food systems development

### **Essential Qualifications...**

- Use of a personal vehicle for trips across the state to food businesses and producers
- Valid Driver’s License
- Active vehicle insurance



## Desired Competencies

- **Relationship Management:** Ability to effectively build, sustain and navigate varying relationships across multiple stakeholders and partners
- **Organization/Planning:** Excellent time management ability; able to effectively balance and prioritize multiple projects and initiatives with various stakeholders
- **Self-Starter:** Highly self-motivated with a knack for moving projects forward primarily independently and also when working within a collaborative team setting.
- **Adaptability:** Ability to react positively to change and remain productive in a changing environment. The capacity to change one's actions, approach, or decisions based on new information or a new situation.
- **Resourcefulness:** Ability to find efficient and innovative ways to overcome challenges, optimize resources to improve or create, and present solutions to every obstacle.

## Total Rewards Package

Salary range is \$65,000 - \$70,000 based on experience and qualifications for the role; we will not be able to accommodate asks to go above this range. CFPAC is proud to offer a premium benefits package starting day 1, with 100% employer-covered health care through Blue Cross Blue Shield for employees, fully covered vision and dental insurance for employees, a generous annual professional development allowance, approximately 30 accrued PTO days in addition to over a dozen paid holidays, and 401k with employer-match.

Chicago Food Policy Action Council is a semi-distributed team, providing individual and team collaboration work spaces at our Loop office. We host mostly hybrid meetings for staff to attend in person and virtually. However, we do expect this position to live in Illinois with availability for in-person partner meetings, events, and staff gatherings.

## How to Apply

Please submit your resume and a one-page cover letter tying your experience to specifics in the job description to [Hiring@chicagofoodpolicy.com](mailto:Hiring@chicagofoodpolicy.com) with the subject line "RFBC Program Coordinator". Please note, as a small, people-centered organization, our communication in response to you may be slow while we carefully and thoughtfully evaluate each candidate.

Priority will be given to applicants who submit materials by **February 19, 2024**.

## Equal Opportunity Employer

Chicago Food Policy Action Council is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color,



sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal, state, or local laws.

This policy applies to all employment practices within our organization, including hiring, recruiting, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, leave of absence, compensation, benefits, training, and apprenticeship. CFPAC makes hiring decisions based solely on qualifications, merit, and business needs at the time.

**We strongly encourage all who are interested to apply, regardless of whether or not you meet all of the listed qualifications!**

Studies show women and BIPOC candidates are less likely to apply unless they check every single box. We are committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and uniquely talented team reflecting the beautiful tapestry of Chicago and the world. If you are excited about this opportunity but your experience doesn't match up perfectly, please consider applying anyway.