



The Chicago
Lighthouse

Chief Financial Officer

Leadership Profile

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WittKieffer

The Opportunity

The Chicago Lighthouse seeks a dynamic, collaborative, and strategic executive to serve as its next Chief Financial Officer (CFO). This is an exciting opportunity to help lead a life-changing, high-quality organization based in Chicago, Illinois.

For 118 years, The Chicago Lighthouse has been a leader in comprehensive vision care and social services that improve the quality of life for patients, clients, and their families. The not-for-profit serves over 50,000 people each year and has been an invaluable resource for people who are blind, visually impaired, and Veterans. The Lighthouse provides education, low vision diagnosis and rehabilitation, assistive technology, and employment opportunities for people throughout Chicagoland. The CFO will be joining at an exciting time in the organization as The Lighthouse is poised for continued growth with plans to move from its current revenues of approximately \$60 million to \$100 over the next six to eight years.

This is an exceptional opportunity for an accomplished CFO to join the senior leadership team and provide financial and strategic direction to The Lighthouse. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, the new CFO will have the opportunity to influence execution of a long-range strategic plan, including continued business diversification and growth, assuring that organizational goals and financial sustainability are aligned. The CFO will oversee the strategic financial planning and reporting, budgeting, general accounting, operational and capital expenditures for The Lighthouse.

The ideal candidate will be a seasoned financial executive with strong business acumen, a pragmatic approach to problem-solving, and proven success in financial leadership roles for a multifaceted organization. The CFO will be a business partner who can assess the financial implications of new and existing opportunities and will also be willing to dig into the details and collaborate with others to achieve organizational goals. Strong communication and relationship skills are essential.

Organization Overview

Founded in 1906 on Chicago's West Side, The Chicago Lighthouse has been a pioneer in innovation across the areas of vision care, rehabilitation, education, employment, and technology for 118 years. Providing services to people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans, The Chicago Lighthouse serves more than 50,000 people each year.

The Chicago Lighthouse offers 40 unique programs and services that help clients optimize remaining vision, meet developmental and educational milestones, find employment and lead more independent lives. The Chicago Lighthouse's nationally prominent low vision clinic has become a world-class example of comprehensive rehabilitation and demonstrates the organizations evolving role as a pioneer in vision care innovation.

OUR MISSION

The Chicago Lighthouse serves people who are blind, visually impaired, otherwise disabled and/or Veterans, allowing them to reach the full potential of their lives. Our programs help build knowledge and lifetime skills, expand opportunities for employment and supporting career growth, and discover new approaches for the empowerment of our communities.

The Chicago Lighthouse Programs and Services

The Lighthouse offers over 40 programs and services to the blind and visually impaired. Signature programs include:

Sandy & Rick Forsythe Center for Comprehensive Vision Care: The Lighthouse's comprehensive approach to low vision care integrates multidisciplinary services in optometry, occupational therapy, psychological counseling, and clinical research. The Forsythe Center provides consulting with a low vision rehabilitation optometrist, followed by an individualized rehabilitation plan which may include recommendations for vision devices, technology, and/or supplementary Lighthouse services.

Sandy Forsythe Assistive Technology Center: Assistive Technology help individuals meet their accommodation needs both on and off the job. Tools for Living Store specialists can assist in selecting appropriate equipment and identify funding sources. Assistive Technology Specialists research new advances in technology to better address clients' needs.

Children's Development Center (CDC) is a private, non-public, specialized school recognized by the State of Illinois, serving students across Illinois school districts with a variety of educational needs and disabilities including vision loss, traumatic brain injury, autism, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. This therapeutic day school provides one-on-one attention and a high staff-to-child ratio, offering the support needed for students to access the common core curriculum and develop capabilities for increased independence.

Employment & Training: More than 70% of people between the ages of 18 and 65 who are blind or visually impaired are not employed. The Lighthouse employment and training programs aim to reduce this staggering statistic by providing support to clients in all aspects of their career development, from finding the right career path to preparing for an interview. In addition to working directly with clients, a dedicated team helps private and public sector employers develop appropriate adaptations when hiring or retaining employees who are blind, visually impaired or disabled.

Job Placement and Retention: Once job ready, staff work with clients on an individualized plan for employment to secure a competitive position, either in The Chicago Lighthouse or an outside business. For the first 90 days of starting a new job, staff meet with clients to discuss their progress and solve any issues that may arise to ensure long term success. The Chicago Lighthouse works with employers to find jobs and educate them about the types of tasks that can be performed by persons with vision impairments, other disabilities and Veterans. In addition, staff can perform work-site evaluations to assess the types of accommodations needed.

Adult Living Skills: Adult Living Skills (ALS) focuses on life skills training for adults who are blind or visually impaired with developmental disabilities. Program participants attend daily activities designed to develop self-sufficiency, increase independence and help them actively participate in today's society.

Independent Living: Independent living programs are designed to help clients overcome barriers to living life independently. The Lighthouse specialists on staff provide communication assistance, case management, advocacy, academic tutoring, adjustment counseling, Braille phone instruction and more.

Social Enterprise: The Chicago Lighthouse's Social Enterprise division offers a unique blend of mission and business. With operations in the areas of manufacturing, retail, and customer service they provide meaningful career opportunities for individuals who face barriers to employment. In addition, these operations serve as revenue streams to supplement other Lighthouse programs and services. This double bottom line model of social enterprise creates greater self-sufficiency and sustainability as an organization, allowing The Lighthouse to continually meet the growing and diverse needs of its patients, clients, and employees.

Social Enterprises include the following services:

Chicago Lighthouse Industries: The Lighthouse began producing wall clocks in 1977 for sale to the federal government. Today, they sell to federal, state, and municipal agencies, as well as to the commercial market. They have hand produced nearly seven million high quality clocks to date - each and every one built with pride by people who are blind or visually impaired.



Contract Management Services: The Contract Management Services Program (CMS) provides federal certification in contract administration, and high-growth professional career opportunities as contract specialists, for people who are legally blind. Employees of the CMS program fulfill contract closeout support services to federal government contracting offices that facilitate the return of unused contract funds to the government.

Contact Center Solutions: The Chicago Lighthouse comprehensive in-bound contact centers cover a variety of industries including medical scheduling, payment services, Veteran services, business compliance, and state contract services. These multiple customer care centers fulfill up to 20,000 customer calls each day, while making an impact by employing individuals who are blind, visually impaired, disabled, and Veterans.



The Chicago Lighthouse Huber Vision Rehabilitation Center expands the mission by bringing comprehensive vision care services to patients and clients in the north and northwest suburbs. The facility features state-of-the-art Christine & John S. Gates Family Low Vision Clinic offering optometry, psychological counseling, and occupational therapy services; a retail store offering the latest in assistive products and independent living aids, and an array of enrichment programs for all ages including classes and events specifically for children and seniors.

The Foglia Residences: Opening in August 2024, The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse, is a



76-unit development offering studio, one-, and two-bedroom apartments for income-eligible households. The property was designed to accommodate individuals and families with a priority for those who are disabled, including those who are blind and visually impaired.

The Foglia Residences is the first residential project serving people who are blind or visually impaired to be financed through Low Income Housing Tax Credits in the United States.

BlindSight Delaware Enterprises (BSDE), is a social business enterprise partnership, launched two years ago, between The Chicago Lighthouse and BlindSight Delaware (a 75-year-old organization serving people who are blind in the country's First State), BSDE employs 15 customer care agents, 20% of whom are mission-based, handling calls for the City of Wilmington and the state's Beebe Healthcare system. The vision is for BSDE to become the leading provider of contact center services in the region and for it to be a model for other social enterprises around the country.

Position Summary

This role requires a highly visible and resourceful leader with the ability to develop strong and trusting relationships with Lighthouse leadership, staff, and the board of directors. The CFO will have a strong partnership with strategy and operations and will interface in a very hands-on way with the financial aspects of service contracts and public grants, private contributions, manufacturing, education, clinical services, and other programs.

Reporting Relationships

The CFO reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer, Janet Szlyk, Ph.D.

Direct reports to the CFO include:

- Vice President of Finance
- Controller
- Medical Billing Manager

The CFO will have responsibility over a team of nine individuals.

Responsibilities

The successful Chief Financial Officer candidate will:

- Plan, develop, organize, implement, direct, and evaluate the organization's fiscal function and performance.
- Participate in the development of the organization's plans and programs as a strategic partner. Provides strategic analysis to the CEO on finance and budget, ensuring optimum resource allocation, fiscal strength, efficient and accurate financial reporting, and forecasting.
- Evaluate and advise on the impact of long-range planning, introduction of new programs/strategies and regulatory interaction and provide strategic financial input and leadership on decision making issues affecting the organization, including pension funds, risk management, banking and investment plans and decisions and lead preparation of long-range financial plan along with the CEO.
- Establish annual budget goals, guidelines, and budgeting procedures.
- Develop and advise on cost and reimbursement strategies.
- Evaluate business plans and potential business partnerships in light of The Chicago Lighthouse financial goals and mission, including tax, and other business implications and accounting treatment.
- Provide timely and accurate analysis of budgets and financial reports that will assist the President, Board and other senior directors and managers in managing their responsibilities and meeting agency goals.
- Encourage continued improvement of the budgeting process through education of department managers on financial issues impacting their budgets.
- Optimize the handling of bank and deposit relationships and initiate appropriate strategies to enhance cash position.
- Develop a reliable cash flow projection process and reporting mechanism which includes minimum cash threshold to meet operating needs of the agency.
- Lead preparation of consolidated and individual entity 990 tax returns.

- Lead and support Controller and Accounting team through year-end audit process.
- Enhance and/or develop, implement, and enforce policies and procedures of the organization with a particular focus on best practice systems that will improve the overall operation and effectiveness of the agency, including internal control systems to ensure that fiscal procedures are being followed and to minimize errors.
- Establish credibility throughout the organization and with the Board as an effective problem solver; be viewed as approachable and as a mentor to people regarding financial issues.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local legal, tax and audit requirements by researching new developments in these areas, consulting outside advisors, advising management of related potential risks, and filing appropriate reports.
- Build, develop, evaluate, and manage the accounting team so it can carry out needed initiatives with efficiency and effectiveness as a team, as well as provide individuals with professional and personal growth, as needed.
- Maintain liaison with private and governmental organizations, external auditors, bankers, attorneys, insurance brokers, investment advisors, donors, board members, agency staff and agency customers.
- Is recognized as a Senior Leader and may be asked to be responsible for management of the agency in the absence of the President and Chief Executive Officer.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- *Leads with Vision.* Anticipates future possibilities and translates them into strategies for The Lighthouse. Has the ability to look beyond the organization's current context for opportunity.
- *Aligns with the Mission of The Lighthouse.* Passion for helping others, in particular providing opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired to live their full potential.
- *Communicates Effectively and with Transparency.* Active listener who seeks ideas and input from others and has an accessible, relatable style. Encourages open, timely and transparent communication and the dynamic exchange of ideas.
- *Promotes Diversity & Inclusion.* Respects and appreciates what makes people different and looks for that in their team. Intentionally creates an environment where employees feel they can safely express themselves and where specific concerns can be raised with transparency and confidence.
- *Embraces Innovation and Transformation.* Creates and fosters an environment that advances innovation, transformation and calculated risk-taking and demonstrates unwavering commitment to the clients served.
- *Drives Results.* Consistently achieves desired results, even under challenging circumstances. Leads and drives high performance.
- *Collaborates and Integrates.* Recognizes the importance of partnerships, builds relationships (internally and externally), and works collaboratively with others (individuals and organizations) to meet shared goals.
- *Acts with Courage.* Possesses the internal fortitude to address difficult decisions and circumstances. Able to manage through conflict and to be comfortable with ambiguity.
- *Instills Trust.* Gains the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, authenticity, and consistency of actions. Acts in ways that others experience as forthright, genuine, and authentic and demonstrates a high degree of emotional intelligence.
- *Leverages Data in Decision-Making.* Understands what to ask for and how to interpret and leverage data and technology to make sound decisions.
- *Visible and Engaged Leader.* Exhibits comfort in any and all settings. Engages easily with individuals across the organization.

Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

- Bachelor's degree in accounting or finance required.
- Master's degree and/or Certified Public Accountant preferred.

Knowledge and Work Experience

- Minimum of ten years of finance or accounting experience required; non-profit experience preferred.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Strong organizational and interpersonal skills
- Strong computer skills, with Advanced or Expert level proficiency in spreadsheet formulation; knowledge of Sage Intact a plus
- Excellent analytical skills and attention to detail
- Ability to manage and complete multiple projects and demands within tight time frames, with little notice and with deadlines imposed by others.
- Hands on problem analyzer and problem solver
- Mentoring and teaching mentality
- Demonstrated success in developing business strategy, critical decision making and leading business operations.
- Experience with analyzing complex financial problems, formulating optional approaches to problem-solving, providing advice in an effective manner and recommending an appropriate course of action.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively build relationships, alliances, and partnerships with key internal and external stakeholders.
- Broad business acumen, with a strong financial orientation.
- Experience with financial and related operational information systems.
- Experience developing and delivering effective presentations to high-profile stakeholder groups, including executives and trustees.
- Ability to communicate exceptionally well, both orally and in writing, and to provide regular, clear, and concise communication to all levels of management, The Lighthouse board, employees, and other stakeholders.

Goals and Objectives

The new CFO will be an integral and respected member of The Chicago Lighthouse team and seen not just as a financial leader, but as a trusted executive leader and business partner. The CFO will be widely viewed as a collaborative leader and a “go-to” person throughout the organization by being visible, approachable, and working shoulder-to-shoulder with operations and business development leaders.

In no particular order, the following goals and objectives have been identified as specific priorities for this position:

- Listen and learn develop an understanding of The Chicago Lighthouse and its working culture and values by building relationships and becoming a known and approachable ally.
- Maintain high performance standards, service quality and financial integrity. Assess the financial organization's capacity, capabilities, and financial controls. Enhance financial planning and modeling for continued expansion and growth.
- In partnership with the CEO and senior leadership team, explore and evaluate strategic partnerships and innovative business models to sustain The Chicago Lighthouse's strategic goals and long-term financial health while positioning the organization for continued growth. Function as a credible and respected business strategist, working alongside the CEO and others to build and develop strategic partnerships that will translate to further growth and diversification.
- Develop a strong relationship with the various operational departments.
- Be seen as a holistic finance executive, understanding operational impacts of financial decisions, with the ability to educate others on financial matters.
- The CFO will need to quickly understand and embrace the strategic imperatives of The Chicago Lighthouse, as well as be responsible for implementing a metrics-driven approach to financial business planning.
- Ensure the finance team is appropriately staffed with the skills/competencies needed to support ongoing growth. Ensure stability across the team and maintain a culture of transparency, service, and responsiveness.
- Bring best practices and a commitment to standardization around the collection, storing and sharing of financial information. Ensure consistency in processes and data accessibility and reporting.

The Community

Chicago, Illinois



The City of Chicago, with a population of 2.5 million, anchors the third largest metropolitan area in the United States, almost nine million people. Located on the shores of Lake Michigan, it is a racially, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse community.

Greater Chicago is home to world-class medical facilities, museums, and performing arts organizations. It has two of the top 20 American universities—Northwestern University and The University of Chicago.

Chicago is also home to the internationally acclaimed Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera, renowned architecture, award-winning theater, distinctive cuisine, and much more. It is recognized across the United States and the world as a passionate sports town with five major sporting franchises - the Bulls, Cubs, White Sox, Blackhawks, and Bears.

Chicago offers residents and visitors:

- The Art Institute of Chicago, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum, Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, Adler Planetarium, and many other outstanding museums.
- More than 200 theaters including The Goodman and Steppenwolf.
- Two zoos in Brookfield and Lincoln Park.
- Seventy-seven community areas containing more than 100 neighborhoods.
- Twenty-six miles of largely protected beautiful lakefront designed by Daniel Burnham and 15 miles of beaches.
- Nineteen miles of lakefront bicycle paths.
- Five hundred fifty-two parks.

Grant Park, located in the heart of downtown, is home to the famous Buckingham Fountain. Award-winning [Millennium Park](#) is a center for art, music, architecture, and landscape design (see “The Bean” above). The [Chicago Botanic Gardens](#) is one of the country’s most visited public gardens; the Chicago Park District maintains two world-class conservatories in Lincoln Park and [Garfield Park](#);

For additional information on Chicago, one of the truly great places in the world to live, work, and play, visit: choosechicago.com.



Procedure for Candidacy

Please direct all nominations and applications to Adriane Willig or Taeler Kaufmann through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by [clicking here](#). Candidates can also find this portal via the WittKieffer website at www.wittkieffer.com and selecting the "Become a Candidate" button. Feel free to also send a resume to tkaufmann@wittkieffer.com.

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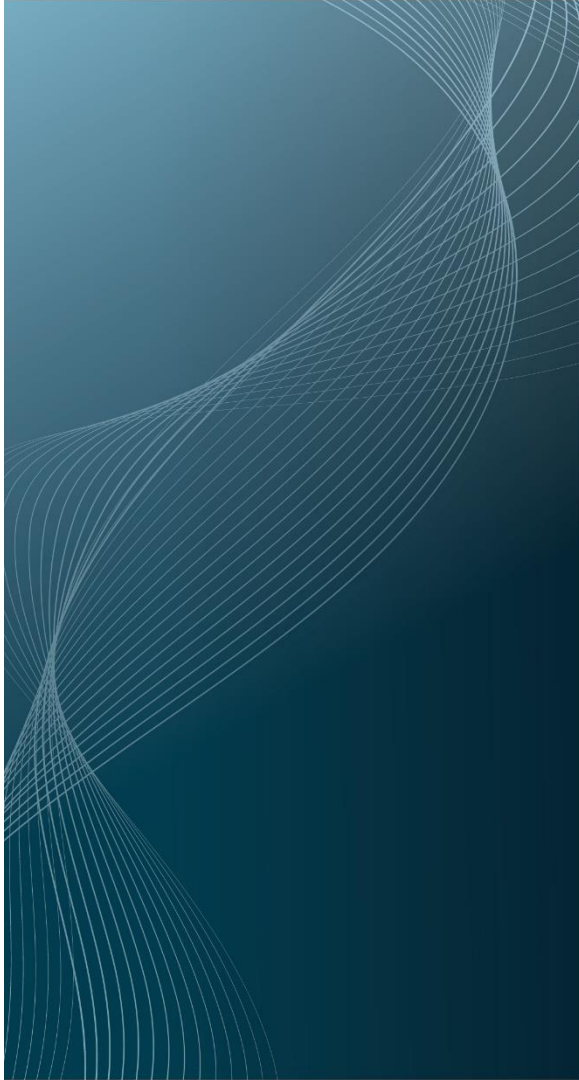
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The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired is an Equal Opportunity Employer in full compliance with local, state, and federal Civil Rights & Affirmative Action laws. The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired maintains a strong policy of accommodation and a consistent practice of employing qualified individuals with disabilities. All applicants will be afforded equal employment opportunity without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin or ancestry, citizenship status, age, physical or mental disability unrelated to ability, sexual orientation, military status, order of protection status or unfavorable discharge from military service.

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