



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Chief Operating Officer

Leadership Profile

November 2024





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Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Executive Summary

Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, a 46-year-old human and social service agency located in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, is seeking a full-time chief operating officer. Reporting directly to the executive director, the COO will oversee the operational and administrative health of the organization to support its long-term objectives and ensure it can effectively and efficiently deliver services to the Sunset Park Community.

This newly created position will be responsible for developing a strategic plan for operations and overseeing day-to-day operations across the organization. The successful candidate must be able to interact with staff at all levels in a fast-paced environment while remaining flexible, proactive, resourceful, and efficient. The COO will have responsibility for ensuring that the Center for Family Life's (CFL) operations, including Human Resources, Information Technology, Data Management, Facilities, Risk Management, Funder Audits, and the administrative team are functioning effectively. To succeed, the COO must be a collaborative and inclusive manager.

The Center for Family Life has an annual budget of \$26 million and employs 160 full-time and 220 part-time personnel. The Center's programming includes:

- **Family and Community Support Programs** — Family counseling including Preventative Counseling and Mother Cabrini Counseling programs, family service coordination and referral including Healthy Families and Immigrant Families Programs, the Promise NYC Daycare Subsidy Program, and Community Study Circles.
- **Youth and Community Development and School Partnerships** — Afterschool and summer camp, Life Lines Community Arts Project, Sunset Park High School partnership, college access and retention, Leaders-in-Training, summer youth employment, and multigenerational neighborhood centers.

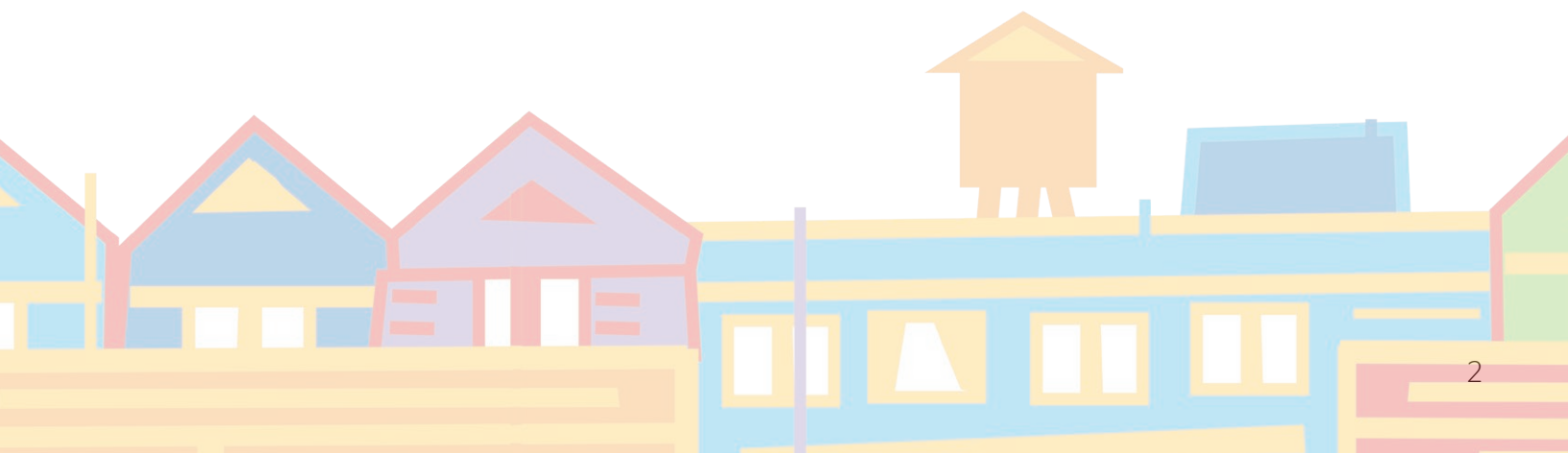


- **Economic Well-Being Programs** — Food pantry, benefits access, legal services, free tax filing, financial counseling, adult employment, ESOL classes, cooperative business development, and programs to support new arrivals.

Building on the Center’s wide range of services and programs in 11 locations in Sunset Park, near- and long-term priorities for the COO include:

- **Assess Existing Operational Systems** - Partner with staff to learn about and assess existing operational systems in the HR, IT, Data Management, Facilities, Insurance, and Audit areas of the organization.
- **Lead through Transition** - Partner closely with organizational leadership, staff, and the board, to help smoothly shepherd CFL through a significant leadership transition from co-executive directors to a single executive director.
- **Develop and Implement Operational Systems Organization-Wide** - Partner with staff to build and implement systems and policies to ensure the smooth operations of the Center.
- **Develop an Evaluation and Assessment Strategy** - Ensure that the effects of CFL programs are documented and measure the short- and long-term impacts of programs.
- **Ensure Coordination, Integration, and Efficiencies across Program and Administrative Functions** - Work with staff to identify and implement strategies that promote cross-departmental collaboration and efficiencies in the operations of the organization.

We invite you to submit applications, inquiries, and nominations to Center@Brettsearch.com. Details on how to apply can be found at the end of this document.





Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Overview of the Position

The COO will serve under the Center's executive director, shaping this new role that will oversee and implement a dynamic vision for all of CFL's administrative, business, and operational matters. The COO will spearhead a forward-thinking strategy for developing and maintaining systems across the organization to support CFL's important community- and school-based programs. The COO will be expected to work closely with CFL's invested and committed staff and its board of trustees. This is a unique opportunity for an energetic and creative professional to take overall leadership and management responsibility for the centralized operations of the organization at a pivotal moment in CFL's 40-plus-year history.

Among the most important strategic priorities for the COO will be:

- Assessing, building, and implementing systems across the organization;
- Promoting and ensuring coordination and integration across program and administrative functions;
- Developing policies and procedures that optimize Center for Family Life's operational, planning, and budget formulation process in partnership with the finance director; and
- Partnering closely with the executive director on all aspects of organizational stability and sustainability.

The COO is a new position that reports to the executive director and supervises staff responsible for Human Resources, Information Technology, Data Management, and Facilities. The COO is also responsible for coordinating insurance assessment and renewal, as well as funder-required auditing processes. In addition, the COO will work closely with the director of finance on all intersections between operations and finances, including with an outsourced financial management partner.

Leading the talented Operations team, the COO will inspire and support excellence within the department. This role requires a leader who is capable of driving change, uses data and metrics proficiently, and effectively implements systems and efficient policies and procedures. Taking advantage of the latest technology, the COO will streamline processes to ensure the most efficient operational systems are implemented. Through strategic leadership and innovative operational management practices, the COO will contribute significantly to Center for Family Life's success and sustainability. In this newly created position, the COO will be stepping into an organization that has been delivering first-class service for more than four decades. Until recently, the Center's operations and financial functions were managed by a larger organization. In 2021, the Center became an independent organization responsible for all back office functions. The COO will ensure a smooth

transition to new or improved management systems while building on CFL's legacy of accomplishment in the Sunset Park neighborhood.

The COO must come to the job with extensive experience as an administrator and with proven leadership skills. In addition, the COO must possess a keen sense of the multiple challenges currently facing nonprofits and the communities they serve, especially those specific to an organization of Center for Family Life's size and complexity. A demonstrated commitment to shared governance is essential, as are the interpersonal skills required to lead change and implement efficient and effective policies across a large and diverse organization. The COO will prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion and serve as a model for the organization by cultivating an atmosphere that welcomes and celebrates all aspects of diversity. Excellent communication skills will be required for success in the COO role, as well as the ability to work collaboratively and promote a culture of collegiality and innovation.

The COO will join Center for Family Life at a time of great opportunity as the organization assesses existing and new opportunities to support the Sunset Park community. In this context, the COO will continue efforts to assess and build the necessary systems to best support CFL's work, including:

- Facilitating cross-departmental collaboration and strengthening internal communications with staff.
- Effectively partnering with the director of finance to realize the strategic operational and finance goals and objectives of the Center.
- Cultivating clarity, trust, alignment, and accountability across the organization.
- Designing and implementing scalable solutions necessary to support current and future programs.
- Implementing risk reduction strategies in the Center's operations and collaborating with the director of finance to manage risk through coordination of insurance renewal processes and timely execution of both health and liability insurance contracts.
- Ensuring departments have the operational support needed to accomplish their best work, including advocating on their behalf and clearing bottlenecks as needed.
- Working closely with the fundraising and grants management department to help ensure the Center has the money it needs to fund its operations.
- Closely monitoring key operational metrics, ensuring CFL consistently meets and exceeds established targets.
- Partnering with the executive director, the director of finance, and the Center's management team.
- Working closely with relevant board committees, notably the facilities, audit, and finance committees.
- Leading and managing teams in responding to periodic program audits.





Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Opportunities and Challenges

The Center for Family Life is excited to build on its 40-plus years of accomplishments as it transitions to a new streamlined organizational model.

The Center's current co-executive director, Julia Jean-Francois, will be transitioning to a re-envisioned executive director role, and the COO will report directly to her. The transition from co-directors to a single executive director model is a component of a strategic plan to secure CFL's future as an anchor resource for the people of Sunset Park and a nationally recognized leader in innovative community service. It will require a strategic reorganization of the Center's structure and operating functions, and the COO will play a lead role in creating, implementing, and refining those changes.

The COO will be expected to maintain the Center's current high level of operational excellence while also creating new, more efficient models and procedures to deepen the impact of the Center's work. As an established leader in the social services sector in Brooklyn, the Center already has a large footprint and significant community impact. The organization's leadership is looking to expand and enrich its programming to more comprehensively serve the Sunset Park community. To do so, the Center needs the talents of an exceptional COO who can maintain existing operations while simultaneously experimenting with new, optimized ways for the Center to function successfully.

The best candidates for the COO role will understand and be committed to the Center for Family Life's mission: to develop community-based programming that responds to the critical social, economic, and developmental needs of children, adults, and families in Sunset Park. Effective and clear communication, coupled with a strategic vision to advance operational excellence organization-wide will be key components of success in the role.

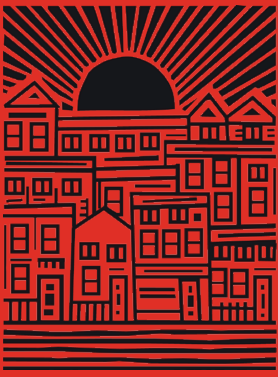
The new COO will be expected to make lasting transformations at Center for Family Life guided by detailed analysis and assessment of existing policies and procedures. A record of demonstrated leadership and achievement in a complex, constantly shifting social services environment is of the highest importance, in addition to a leadership style that balances communication, accessibility, collaboration, and decisiveness.

CFL is well-established and financially stable. Building on this, **near-term priorities include:**

- **Assess Existing Operational Systems** – Partner with staff to learn about and assess existing operational systems in the HR, IT, Data Management, Facilities, Insurance and Audit areas of the organization. This includes understanding the roles and responsibilities of these departments and areas.
- **Lead through Transition** – Partner closely with organizational leadership, staff, and the board, to help smoothly shepherd CFL through a significant leadership transition from co-executive directors to a single executive director. This includes facilitating knowledge documentation and transfer.

Long-term priorities include:

- **Develop and Implement Operational Systems Organization-Wide** – Partner with staff to build and implement systems and policies to ensure the smooth operations of the Center. This includes developing crisis response protocols.
- **Develop an Evaluation and Assessment Strategy** – Ensure that the effects of CFL programs are documented and measure the short- and long-term impacts of programs.
- **Ensure Coordination, Integration, and Efficiencies across Program and Administrative Functions** – Work with staff to identify and implement strategies that promote cross-departmental collaboration and efficiencies in the operations of the organization.



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

How Success for the COO Will Be Defined

For decades, Sunset Park has been a first destination for waves of new immigrants from around the world and a place where families living in poverty strive to gain economic stability and social networks as they build new lives in the United States.

The best candidates for the COO role will understand and be committed to the Center for Family Life's mission: to develop community-based programming that responds to the critical social, economic, and developmental needs of children, adults, and families in Sunset Park. Effective and clear communication, coupled with a strategic vision to advance operational excellence organization-wide will be key components of success in the role.

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Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The competitive candidate will be an experienced, innovative operations executive who is looking to make a meaningful impact on the Sunset Park community. They will embody the Center for Family Life's commitment to collaboration, respect, and humility.

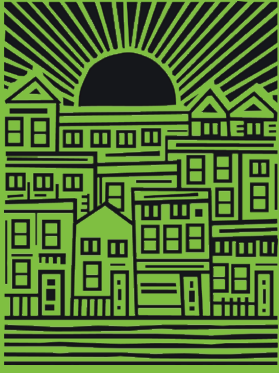
Required Qualifications

- A genuine appreciation for and commitment to the Center for Family Life's mission.
- Minimum 15 years of overall professional experience combined with an executive-level background, including a minimum of 10 years of supervisory experience.
- Demonstrated record of success leading, building, and implementing operational systems and policies.
- Knowledge of HR, IT, data management, and facilities management.
- Demonstrated ability to set clear priorities, delegate, and guide investment in people and systems.
- Outstanding team-building skills with an ability to communicate and work effectively with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- A high degree of professionalism in dealing with diverse groups of people.
- Bachelor of Arts or related degree.

Preferred Qualifications

- Senior operating experience at a similar-sized organization.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills: the warmth and ability to interact effectively at all levels of the organization.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Depth of knowledge and experience adhering to both federal and state laws relating to social services.
- Active affiliation with a broad range of professional networks and organizations and ongoing community involvement.
- Strong organizational awareness and a proven ability to learn to navigate the decision-making structures within a complex organization.
- Advanced degree: MBA or MPA preferred.





Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

About Center for Family Life

Overview

In 1978, Sisters Mary Paul Janchill and Geraldine Tobia, both Sisters of the Good Shepherd with extensive social work and community development experience, came to Sunset Park, Brooklyn, with a belief in the dignity of families and the value of living in community. Out of a six-month-long needs assessment came a commitment for sponsorship by St. Christopher's Home (now SCO Family of Services), a nonprofit social services agency, and a decision to open Center for Family Life in Sunset Park and to provide intensive family-centered services.

Since its founding, Center for Family Life has garnered significant media attention and earned numerous accolades. Early on, the Center was the subject of a Time magazine cover article by Roger Rosenblatt in December 1985. Among the awards received by Center for Family Life is the Family Honors Award, conferred by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, an Excellence in Educational Initiatives Award from the Brooklyn Borough President's office, and the Coming Up Taller Award at the White House.

Its work has been documented in a book by Peg McCartt Hess, Brenda G. McGowan, and Michael Botsko entitled *Nurturing the One, Supporting the Many: The Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, Brooklyn*; in a documentary called "A Brooklyn Family Tale" about the Center's relationship with a struggling family and in another short film called "Why Can't We Be a Family Again?", which was nominated for an Academy Award.

Mission Statement

The Center's mission is to promote positive outcomes for children and adults in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, through the provision of a comprehensive range of neighborhood-based family and social services. Sunset Park is a densely populated, low-income neighborhood with a large percentage of recent immigrants. As such, the Center offers access to resources that families need to thrive, including family counseling; cultural, educational, and recreational programs at neighborhood public schools; adult and youth employment programs; and an emergency storefront for food and advocacy. In partnership with the Sunset Park community, CFL provides opportunities for personal development, enriches neighborhood residents' quality of life, and nurtures relationships that sustain families and support youth in becoming confident, capable adults.

Poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, and limited access to employment are a few of the enormous challenges confronted by Sunset Park residents. The Center for Family Life has witnessed the powerful human struggle to overcome such challenges, as well as the creativity and resourcefulness of the residents who form its vibrant community. The Center's work is rooted in daily, lived experience and guided by a vision of families and social institutions in an ever-evolving cycle of mutual sustenance and collaborative growth. The Center believes that the social inequity affecting the residents of Sunset Park is deeply unjust. As inequity is eliminated in our community, human potential becomes limitless.



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Key Organization Facts

Since 1978, the Center has grown with the Sunset Park neighborhood, responding to emerging needs with effective programs in counseling, employment, education, the arts, and recreation. Today, its services engage nearly 19,000 people each year at 11 community locations.

Financial and Operational Highlights

- The Center's annual budget is \$26 million.
- The Center's operations are primarily supported by public funding, with a combined support of \$21.5M from New York City and state. CFL is also supported by private foundations, individual donations, and fee-for-service contracts.
- During FY 24, Center for Family Life served 18,981 clients.
- The Family Counseling Program served 240 families through its NYC Administration for Children's Services contract.
- Center for Family Life school-based programs are offered in partnership with 10 neighborhood schools.
- In FY 24, CFL served 67,500 meals to 7,500 individuals in 3,406 households.
- In FY24, CFL facilitated \$2,446,797 worth of benefits to 1,960 households in FY24, an increase of more than 63% from the previous year.
- Through the end of June 2024, CFL's Self-Employed Tax Preparation program filed 314 returns resulting in \$427,070 in refunds, \$308,993 in EITC, and \$177,203 in CTC and/or additional CTC.
- In FY24, 214 participants from CFL's job readiness and job search programs were hired, with an average starting wage of \$18.06 an hour.

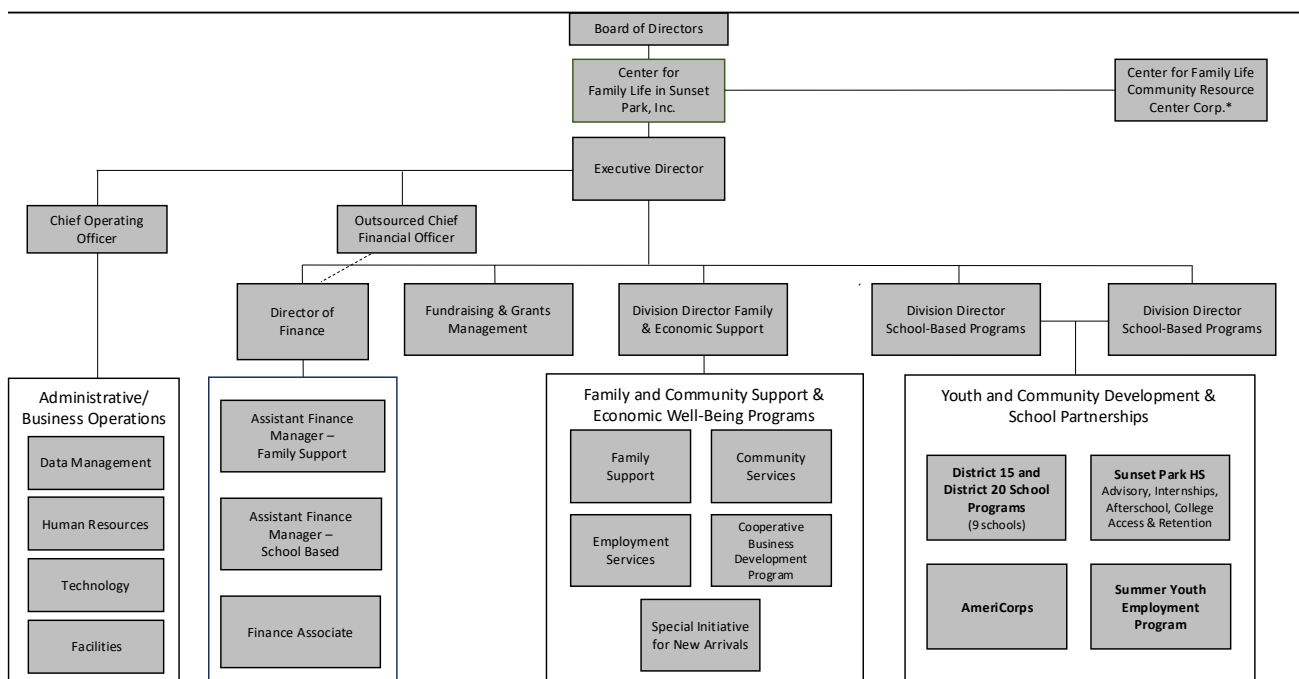
To learn more about the Center for Family Life and its significant impact, please visit the [website](#).

Leadership

Julia Jean-Francois, LCSW, Ph.D. (Incoming executive director & current co-executive director)

Current co-executive director Julia Jean-François oversees the Center’s Family and Community Support and Economic Well-Being Programs. Together with co-executive director Julie Brockway, she oversees all administrative operations, fundraising, and Board relations at Center for Family Life. Before joining the Center in 2003, she was director of operations at the Puerto Rican Family Institute. She has been a lecturer in research methods at Rutgers University and New York University in their graduate social work program. Julia received her BA from Barnard College, her MSW from NYU, and her Ph.D. from the Columbia University School of Social Work. In December of 2025, she will assume the role of executive director as CFL moves from a co-directorship to a single executive director.

Organizational Chart (Post Leadership Transition)



* CFLCRC owns the 443 39th St building



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Procedure for Candidacy



Brettschneider Executive Search is assisting the Center for Family Life in this search. All applications, confidential nominations, and inquiries should be submitted to Center@BrettSearch.com. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing how the candidate's results specifically relate to some of the themes in this profile.



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

Center for Family Life is committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse organization that is representative of the state of New York through inclusive excellence and equal opportunity. Center for Family Life has a commitment to access and equity. As an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution, we are working to support an agenda to foster a community that both values and promotes the varied voices of our community and staff. The organization encourages candidates who will contribute to the cultural tapestry of the Center for Family Life.

The salary range for this position is \$150,000 to \$175,000 annually. The Center has a generous benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance, as well as paid time off.

Final compensation will be determined based on factors including experience, skills, and qualifications.