
BR. DAVID DARST CENTER
FOR JUSTICE & PEACE SPIRITUALITY & EDUCATION

Executive Director

Chicago, IL

CLASSIFICATION

Full-Time, Exempt

REPORTS TO

Board of Directors

POSTED

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About the Br. David Darst Center

The Brother David Darst Center is a social justice education and retreat center located in Chicago. Founded in 2002 as a ministry of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, the Darst Center provides transformative social justice retreats and immersion experiences grounded in the Lasallian tradition and Catholic Social Teaching. Through our programs and partnerships with local community organizations, participants gain a deeper understanding of the complex realities of injustice and obtain tools to take action. Our primary program is an immersion retreat experience for high school and college students, but we welcome retreatants of all ages. The program explores five “burning issues”: homelessness, food insecurity, education, criminal justice, and immigration, which we address through encounter, direct service, social action, education, reflection, and outreach. We seek to inspire an active and engaged faith, a commitment to serve, and a passion for social change.

Position Overview

The Executive Director (ED) serves as the chief executive of the Br. David Darst Center, responsible for translating the board’s vision into organizational strategy, sustainable operations, and long-term institutional health. The ED provides leadership that is collaborative, transparent, and grounded in the Center’s values of Human Dignity, Inclusive Community through Relationship, & Solidarity and Stewardship.

The Executive Director is first and foremost an organizational leader and builder, someone who develops the people, systems, and partnerships that allow the Darst Center’s mission to flourish at scale. The ED ensures that the Center’s capacity grows beyond any single individual, including themselves.

Core Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Partner with the Board of Directors to develop, refine, and implement the Center’s strategic direction.
- Translate mission and values into operational priorities, organizational goals, and measurable outcomes.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for growth, partnership, and long-term sustainability.
- Bring emerging challenges and opportunities to the board proactively, with clear options and recommendations.

Board Partnership and Governance

- Serve as the primary staff liaison to the Board of Directors and its committees.
- Coordinate board meeting preparation, including agenda development and timely distribution of materials.

- Provide regular, transparent reporting on organizational finances, programs, and strategic progress.
- Support board recruitment, orientation, and ongoing engagement.
- Ensure compliance with Illinois nonprofit governance requirements and organizational bylaws.

Fundraising and Financial Stewardship

- Lead the Center’s development strategy, including individual giving, foundation grants, and institutional partnerships.
- Personally cultivate and steward relationships with major donors, foundations, and community funders.
- Oversee annual budget development and ongoing fiscal management.
- Lead or support capital campaigns, including building acquisition or improvement initiatives, with transparent donor communication.
- Ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements and nonprofit accountability standards.

Staff and Organizational Development

- Recruit, develop, supervise, and retain a high-performing staff team.
- Foster a workplace culture consistent with the Center’s values: Human Dignity, Inclusive Community through Relationship, & Solidarity and Stewardship.
- Establish clear roles, performance expectations, and professional development pathways for all staff.
- Build organizational systems and structures that distribute capacity and reduce dependence on any individual.

Operations and Facilities

- Oversee effective day-to-day operations across administration, programs, and facilities.
- Steward the Center’s physical space, including maintenance planning and capital improvement prioritization.
- Develop and sustain policies and processes that support organizational effectiveness and scalability.

Community and External Relations

- Serve as a visible, credible ambassador for the Darst Center in Chicago’s nonprofit, faith, and civic communities.
- Build and maintain partnerships with aligned organizations, funders, and community stakeholders.
- Represent the Center’s mission and values in public communications and community settings.

Qualifications

Required

- A bachelor’s degree is required; advanced study in nonprofit management, organizational leadership, theology, or a related field is preferred.
- Demonstrated leadership experience in a nonprofit, faith-based, or mission-driven organization.
- Proven success in fundraising, donor cultivation, and development strategy.
- Strong communication, relationship-building, and collaborative leadership skills.
- Experience working with or reporting to a governing board.
- Financial management competency, including budget development and oversight.
- Deep alignment with the Darst Center’s values: Human Dignity, Inclusive Community through Relationship, & Solidarity and Stewardship.

Preferred

- Familiarity with contemplative, spiritual formation, or restorative practice communities.
- Background in organizational development, systems thinking, or change management.
- Experience with capital campaigns or facility stewardship.
- Familiarity with evaluation frameworks, logic models, or outcomes measurement.

Leadership Competencies

Relational Intelligence	Builds authentic trust with staff, board, donors, and community partners; navigates complex interpersonal dynamics with care and clarity.
Strategic Vision	Thinks systemically and long-term while remaining grounded in day-to-day operational realities.
Accountability with Compassion	Holds self and others to clear expectations while leading with empathy, dignity, and respect.
Transparent Communication	Listens actively, communicates openly, and adapts approaches for different audiences and contexts.
Capacity Building	Consistently invests in people and systems rather than centralizing work in themselves.
Mission Alignment	Embodies the Center’s spiritual and relational values in all aspects of leadership and decision-making.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary range and benefits to be specified by the board. The Br. David Darst Center is committed to equitable and transparent compensation practices.

Base Salary	\$80,000, commensurate with experience
Healthcare	100% of employee health insurance premiums paid by the Organization
End-of-Year Bonus	Eligible for an annual bonus approved tied to demonstrated contributions to organizational growth and sustainability
Paid Time Off	15 days vacation, accrued at 1.25 days per month
Paid Sick Leave	12 days per year, accrued at 1 day per month
Retirement	403(b) retirement account contribution
Paid Holidays	16 paid holidays including MLK Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving + Day After, and Christmas Eve through New Year’s Day

How to Apply

Please submit a resume, cover letter, and three professional references to the Board Search Committee at search@darstcenter.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.