



Program Events Manager

Full-Time Position Announcement

Chicago, Illinois

DESCRIPTION

Merit School of Music seeks a Program Events Manager to take the lead in bringing our programmatic events to life. From concerts and recitals to auditions and competitions, this role sits at the heart of what our students and families experience at Merit. You'll work closely with colleagues across the organization to plan, coordinate, and execute events with care and precision, while also supporting events beyond the program team.

Reporting to the Director of Program Operations, this is a great fit for someone who's energized by the details, thrives in collaborative environments, and genuinely cares about being part of a community-centered mission. A passion for upholding the dignity of everyone we interact with, and for Merit's mission to provide access to high-quality music education, is a must. If you have a background in music and event production and are looking for meaningful, varied work, we'd love to hear from you.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Merit School of Music is a nationally accredited community music school headquartered in Chicago's West Loop, with additional branches in Chicago's Old Town and South Shore neighborhoods. Merit's primary goals are to help young people transform their lives and experience personal growth through music by providing access to sustained participation. For more than 45 years, Merit has been home to a diverse community of talented young musicians and has served as a springboard for them to achieve their full musical and personal potential. Our 125+ passionate and experienced teaching artists provide access to high-quality music education, engaging between 2,500 and 3,000 students annually through programming at three branches and in 25+ schools and community centers across the Chicago region.

Merit students, who reflect Chicago's socioeconomic and ethnic diversity, have the rare opportunity to learn together, dream together, teach each other, and broaden their horizons as they build inspiring lives through music. Merit develops musicians and equips young people with the tools they need to excel in life; virtually 100 percent of Merit graduates attend conservatories or colleges, with 50 percent choosing to study music at the postsecondary level.

Merit School of Music is committed to building a world where historically underrepresented groups can attain access to quality music education. Simultaneously, Merit endeavors to be an organization that genuinely reflects Chicago's richly diverse community. Merit is dedicated to being an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and anti-racist organization and continually examining our efforts in this area.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

The Program Events Manager reports to the Director of Program Operations.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

Performance and Event Logistics - approx. 75%

- Lead production of Merit's annual program events, including concerts, recitals, auditions, and competitions across all three of our branches, in close collaboration with Merit's Director of Program Operations and key stakeholders across departments.
- Plan, schedule, and communicate event details with the program team to keep everyone aligned and prepared.
- Support the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI) team with event planning and staffing, including masterclasses, juries, auditions, and their annual fundraiser.
- Own the logistics that make events run smoothly: scheduling, AV requests, stage plots, and front-and back-of-house coordination.
- Partner with the building operations team to communicate and coordinate setup and teardown needs.
- Coordinate and support student and parent volunteers at Merit events.

Ongoing Program Logistics - approx. 15%

- Work regularly with the building operations team to ensure programmatic needs are met, and spaces are reserved and utilized effectively.
- Establish and maintain room setup standards for the academic year and summer sessions across departments.
- Develop and maintain standard operating procedures for events and building use.
- Other duties as assigned.

Cross-Department Event Support - approx. 10%

- Lend your expertise to Merit's development and marketing teams for annual events, including the Gala, other fundraising events, and recruitment activities.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

What You Bring

- Experience in event management for an arts organization.
- Proven ability to work both collaboratively and independently across projects.
- Hands-on experience with stage management or back-of-house coordination for performing ensembles or organizations.
- Comfort and confidence with audio/visual (AV) technology.
- A genuine track record of being organized, reliable, and detail-oriented.
- Strong communication skills that affirm and uphold the dignity of multiple stakeholders, including staff, teachers, and families.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office 365 (Outlook, Word, Excel) and room reservation software or similar database systems.



Bonus Points

- Bilingual fluency in English and Spanish or Mandarin.
- Experience working in a nonprofit setting.

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in music, theater, production, or a related field, or 1-3 years of relevant professional experience.

SCHEDULE

This is a full-time, overtime-exempt position with an expected minimum of 37.5 hours per week. The role is hybrid, with 1-2 remote days and 3-4 in-person days per week, depending on the time of year.

In-person availability is important for this role. During peak event seasons (December and March through May), expect some evenings and weekends. Saturdays are also part of the regular schedule during the academic year. We're committed to giving plenty of advance notice for all of this. Remote days are coordinated with the Director of Program Operations. A typical academic year schedule could look like the following:

Tuesday-Wednesday - 9:30am-5:30pm (in-person)

Thursday - 9:30am-5:30pm (remote)

Friday - 9:30am-5:30pm (in-person)

Saturday - 9am-4pm (in-person)

TECHNOLOGY IN HIRING

At the Merit School of Music, we believe in a human-centered recruitment process. While our team occasionally leverages generative AI tools to assist with administrative tasks, such as formatting job descriptions or summarizing interview notes, we do not use algorithms, automated screening software, or AI platforms to evaluate, rank, or screen applicants. Every application and hiring decision is reviewed and made entirely by human hands and minds.

COMPENSATION AND APPLICATION

Merit offers a comprehensive employee benefits package, including the following items:

- Salary of \$50,000 based on experience.
- The first 90 days of employment are considered a probationary period. Employees are eligible to participate in Merit's employee benefits package 30 days from the date of hire, following the first of the month. For example, an employee starting on August 2 would begin their insurance benefits on October 1.
- BCBS medical insurance (HMO and PPO options), Delta Dental (HMO and PPO) with 80% of employee premiums and 50% of dependent premiums paid by Merit.
- EyeMed vision care and Mutual of Omaha voluntary life insurance coverage are offered at the employee's expense.
- One day of paid time off (PTO) earned for each month worked during your first year. One and a half days earned per month in your second year. The annual PTO accrual continues escalating through the seventh year of employment.



- One hour of paid sick leave earned per 40 hours worked, according to the Chicago Paid Sick & Safe Leave Ordinance.
- Eight paid holidays plus a company-wide paid winter break (Christmas through January 2).
- Following one year of employment, you will be eligible to participate in Merit's 401(k) plan, including a 3% employer contribution.

Further information on our benefits package and employee policies is available upon request.

To apply, please upload your resume detailing your relevant experience and qualifications for this role [using this link](#). Please apply before **Monday, June 22, 2026**. Materials should be compatible with Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF.

ALAANA/BIPOC people, trans and gender nonconforming people, and women are encouraged to apply.

For more information about the Merit School of Music, please visit www.meritmusic.org.

Merit School of Music is committed to enhancing the diversity of our musical community, recognizing that by providing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for our students, we are preparing them for personal and professional success in an increasingly multicultural and global society. The Merit community recognizes its responsibility to create and sustain a learning and working environment where difference is valued and equity and inclusion are practiced.