



Search for Executive Director, Climate Impact Lab
University of Chicago, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth
Chicago, Illinois

THE SEARCH

The University of Chicago seeks a highly knowledgeable and strategic senior leader to serve as the Executive Director of the Climate Impact Lab (CIL or “Lab”) in the [Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth \(ICSG\)](#). The Executive Director will lead a world-class team to guide a high-impact, interdisciplinary research enterprise at the forefront of climate science and policy.

The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth (ICSG) is a groundbreaking initiative that brings together faculty from across the University to advance society’s understanding of our energy and climate future. ICSG integrates insights in energy markets and policy, climate systems engineering, and energy technology to generate transformative ideas, while also fostering the next generation of energy and climate leaders through innovative educational programs.

A flagship initiative of the ICSG, the [Climate Impact Lab](#) convenes leading climate scientists, economists, data engineers, and risk analysts to quantify the impacts of climate change sector-by-sector and community-by-community across the globe. With a research scope covering more than 25,000 geographic regions—comparable in size to U.S. counties—the Lab’s team of over 25 experts produces rigorous, evidence-based estimates of how climate change affects mortality, agricultural productivity, labor, energy demand, coastal flooding, and more. The Lab is also deeply engaged in policy and media efforts to ensure its findings drive meaningful action around the world.

THE ROLE

The Executive Director will be responsible for determining, managing, and successfully executing the next stage of the Lab’s development at a critical moment of opportunity. Competitive candidates will have a proven record in research management and administration, partnership development, policy engagement, fundraising, outreach, and staff management. The Executive Director will manage a team of professional staff and external partners responsible for scientific research projects and outreach activities. They will also ensure compliance of research activities with institutional, state, and federal regulatory policies, procedures, directives, and mandates. They will manage the production of articles, reports, and

manuscripts, and present research findings at meetings and/ or conferences in collaboration with Lab partners.

This is a senior-level position that works closely with [Professor Michael Greenstone](#) and other Lab leadership to develop all aspects of the Lab's strategic planning, including research support, programming, and outreach and communications. As a key public face of the Lab, the Executive Director is expected to play an active role in global discussions to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change and the climate mitigation and adaptation policies that can confront the challenge.

The University of Chicago has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed as indicated at the end of this document.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will hold the following responsibilities:

- Develops and executes strategic planning to grow the Lab's brand and its influence on climate impacts research, policy, and adaptation, in line with Lab leadership's goals and vision.
- Serves as the Lab expert on climate adaptation use cases and user base for Lab research, policy, and products. Leverages climate adaptation experience and existing network of adaptation practitioners to design, establish and execute the climate adaptation practitioner pillar, including its strategy, body of work, and on-the-ground engagement.
- Oversees work conducted by external partners focused on 1) product development and 2) practitioner engagement. Ensures coordination between those two pillars and the research pillar. Accountable for Lab-wide outcomes and deliverables, such as a new data platform, driven by effective collaboration between those three areas of work.
- Working with a team of University of Chicago development and operational professionals, engages in a fundraising strategy, meets with potential funders, and writes proposals to secure new sources of funds to enable rapid growth in multiple countries and industries.
- Collaborates with Lab research leadership and University of Chicago communication professionals to develop strategic plan for growing the Lab's thought leadership on climate impacts research and climate adaptation. Ensures research is properly integrated into the Lab's outreach strategy and includes robust digital marketing campaign.
- Produces a steady stream of original, creative, and timely content, including white papers, policy briefs, etc., through research, data analysis, and collaboration with climate adaptation practitioners.
- Forms strategic relationships with key partners in governments, non-profits, foundations, multilateral aid agencies, and the private sector to amplify communications impact, applications of the Lab's research, and policy dialogue, particularly in low- and middle-income countries across the globe.
- Engages with policymakers at every level of government and a variety of industries to ensure that the Lab's research is used to create meaningful policy and procedural changes.
- Oversees all operational activities of the Lab that are managed day-to-day University of Chicago operations professionals, including overall Lab budget, all financial activities, such as financial

analysis and reporting, accounts receivable/payable, and procurement, and the activities of staff working on the Lab at the University of Chicago, including data analysts and outreach staff.

- Represents the Lab and its research to audiences, including policymakers and adaptation practitioners, at conferences and other events, television and other media interviews, podcasts, etc.
- Provides leadership for a Center with senior management and serves as a liaison to academic departments, professional organizations, and administrative units of the University.
- Manages related teams. Establishes department priorities, may be responsible for managing the center budget, allocating resources, and executing strategic plans.
- Performs other related work as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- College or university degree in a related field required.
- At least 5-7 years of relevant experience working in the climate space, preferably in a similar policy, adaptation, and/or research environment in a university, government, or not-for-profit organization.
- Highly knowledgeable in climate research and familiar with climate policies and adaptation practices in the U.S. and globally with a background in global economic development and/or climate/environment research.
- Demonstrated program management experience implementing environmental data-driven projects, such as leading reports, writing white papers, and/or building compelling data visualizations.
- Demonstrated public speaking experience on related topics with a public track record of giving presentations and/or on-the-record interviews.
- Experience hiring well-qualified, diverse, motivated staff in research, policy, and capacity-building roles, supervising their work, and helping in their career development.
- Building and maintaining strategic partnerships as well as having a willingness to fundraise. Partnerships could include engaging with governments, philanthropies and/or the private sector.
- Comfort in managing team members with differing sets of technical expertise, e.g. those with software, atmospheric science, and/or economic backgrounds.
- Evidence of strategic planning; align tactical work efforts with strategic vision.
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with external collaborators, funders, journalists, policymakers, researchers and other important constituencies.
- Excellent oral and written communication and public speaking skills, including the ability to translate technical ideas into non-technical content.
- Creating and maintaining a collegial work culture that emphasizes teamwork, results and good work-life balance.
- Superior interpersonal skills and work effectively with a wide range of individuals and constituencies in a diverse professional environment.
- A quick, self-learner with the ability to initiate, organize, prioritize and complete multiple, high-level projects; meet tight deadlines; and work effectively with minimal supervision in a fast-paced environment.
- Demonstrated sound judgement, solve problems and make effective decisions.
- Excellent organizational and analytical skills with a high level of accuracy and sharp attention to detail.

- High degree of enthusiasm, energy, and creativity.
- A high level of confidentiality and discretion.

COMPENSATION

The pay range for this role is \$175,000-200,000. The included pay rate or range represents the University's good-faith estimate of the possible compensation offer for this role at the time of posting.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters and three professional references should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-chicago-institute-climate-and-sustainable-growth/executive-director>.

Please note that in order to be considered complete, the University of Chicago also requires that you fill out an application through their Workday system: https://uchicago.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External/details/Executive-Director--Climate-Impact-Lab_JR30539

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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Isaacson, Miller

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