Jesus Ayala Jr.

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Summary

Impact-driven nonprofit leader with 10+ years of leadership experience, proven ability to lead high-performing, cross-functional teams in ambiguous environments, implement evidence-based programming, and build operational infrastructure to drive mission-aligned results. Skilled in advising senior leadership and governing boards through data-informed insights, policy navigation, and stakeholder engagement. Deeply committed to education equity, transparency, and driving student-centered impact.

Experience

MetroSquash, *Chief Operating Officer,* Chicago, IL 09/2025 – Present

$3 Million nonprofit providing holistic, out-of-school-time supports, including squash instruction, academic enrichment, and life skills development, to youth from opportunity-rich communities

- Elevated to Chief Operating Officer to oversee organizational operations across programs, staff, data, and compliance, ensuring alignment between strategy and day-to-day execution

MetroSquash, *Chief of Program Strategy & Operations,* Chicago, IL 08/2023 – 08/2025

- Serving as strategic advisor to CEO in developing, implementing, and refining operational strategies to define, clarify, and achieve mission-aligned student outcomes across all programming departments
- Leading 5 diverse Program Directors across 2 sites to support 20+ staff members in delivering high quality Academics & Enrichment, Squash & Fitness, Postsecondary Access & Completion, and Social Work programming to over 350 students with annual department budgets totaling over $500k
- Coaching 5 Directors through programmatic and team challenges, drawing on my own leadership experience to provide empathetic guidance and build confidence among new and emerging managers
- Drafting organizational executive dashboard and creating a workplan to validate 15+ metrics and define the process for collecting data, calculating outcomes, and assessing our performance
- Developing and fostering a data-driven organizational culture by operationalizing tools and practices, designing and leading data-focused professional development weeks, and creating structured opportunities for continuous improvement through regular performance analysis and reflection
- Building out Salesforce Instance, as Salesforce Administrator, building reports and dashboards to track program outcomes, providing actionable insights for CEO and Board of Directors
- Leading compliance, data management, and reporting efforts for awarded grants *(i.e. from IDHS, DFSS, Carnegie Foundation, All for Kids, etc…)* ensuring adherence to funding requirements
- Liaising with 35+ Board of Directors, leading the Program Committee, to provide programmatic updates, align strategic initiatives with organizational goals, and invite authentic collaboration
- Operationalizing hiring process, promoting equity and care, while redesigning onboarding protocols to provide clarity on roles and equip new staff members with the knowledge and resources to succeed
- Reviewing organizational policies and practices to identify opportunities for better alignment with intended impact while identifying inefficiencies to remove barriers and support all staff

MetroSquash, *Director of College & Careers,* Chicago, IL 10/2021 – 08/2023

- Defined key success metrics and built infrastructure for College & Careers programming, enabling clear, measurable, and evaluative assessments of our outcomes through Salesforce Dashboards
- Managed College and Careers programming, and 2 employees, across two sites serving over 140 diverse students, including 11th graders through postsecondary alumni
- Overhauled department goals to better address evolving student needs in pandemic and post-pandemic postsecondary landscape ensuring student engagement and retention
- Led weekly director, manager, and departmental level meetings to define priorities, set weekly goals, ensure alignment, and collaborate on student and programmatic challenges
- Managed an annual budget of over $100k, an increase of 100% from previous year

MetroSquash, *Manager of College & Careers,* Chicago, IL 12/2020 – 09/2021

- Managed and coached 2 Coordinators to support over 100 students with college and career success
- Identified, and responded to, gaps in college completion and internship placement supports
- Reviewed, approved, paid, and reconciled over $60,000 in scholarship requests (~76% Increase)
- Drafted organization's first, annual alumni survey to assess, and guide, long-term program outcomes

One Million Degrees, *Manager of College Partnerships,* Chicago, IL 06/2019 – 12/2020

$4.5 million nonprofit providing holistic academic, financial, personal, and professional supports to City Colleges of Chicago students, empowering them to achieve economic mobility and career success

- Managed partnerships and scholarship program logistics at three City Colleges Campuses ensuring program fidelity, consistent data tracking, and upholding quality of program delivery
- Oversaw a team of 4 Program Coordinators to ensure scholarship compliance of 250 Scholars and coached the team through student persistence and engagement challenges
- Facilitated dozens of professional development workshops and team meetings, tailoring content to meet the diverse needs of our students and staff
- Logged and analyzed student data, utilizing Salesforce, to make data-driven decisions to better guide program decisions and enhance program delivery and success
- Led out on Program Coordinator hiring conducting resume reviews, phone screenings, and in-person interviews, ensuring a transparent and fair hiring process honoring all candidates

One Million Degrees, *Program Coordinator,* Chicago, IL 01/2018 – 05/2019

- Managed logistics and student compliance for scholarship program at Richard J. Daley College
- Motivated and empowered over 65 community college students to persist, flourish, and graduate
- Connected OMD Scholars to over $2,084 in supplemental grants (~112% increase)
- Connected OMD Scholars to 116 private tutoring hours (~74% increase)

City of Chicago, *Mayoral Fellow,* Chicago, IL 06/2017 – 08/2017

Chicago's Executive Office responsible for citywide policy, strategic initiatives, public services, and community engagement, serving over 2.7 million diverse residents from 77 community areas

- Partnered with multiple city departments and fellows to research and develop policy proposals
- Assisted with the Municipal ID program by engaging pharmacy benefit managers to secure best partnership, offering resident discounts and providing user data for the city
- Collaborated with others, including multiple city departments, to update and evaluate the City of Chicago's Winter Snow Plan, ensuring accurate documentation of current best practices

Education

University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, Chicago, IL Expected May 2028
Master of Business Administration
Edwardson Civic Scholar - Full-Tuition Scholarship

Illinois Institute of Technology's Stuart School of Business, Chicago, IL December 2017
Master of Public Administration
GPA: 3.90, *summa cum laude*

Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL May 2014
Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Music
GPA: 3.73, *magna cum laude*

Achievements & Leadership

- **Candidate, Campaign Chair, & Treasurer**, Jesus Ayala Jr for Chicago Students 2024
- **Five Drivers of Team Effectiveness Certificate**, Chicago Booth Center for Leadership 2024
- **ALL Fellow**, Academy for Local Leadership Chicago 2023
- **Evanston Scholars Mentor**, Evanston Scholars 2023
- **Coordinating a Dynamic Post-Secondary School Counseling Certificate**, NACAC 2023
- **Chicago College & Career Advising Credential Graduate**, Chicago Jobs Council 2021
- **Democratic Presidential Delegate**, Democratic National Committee 2020
- **Thesis Reader & Approver**, Northwestern University 2020
- **ASPA Outstanding Student Award**, Illinois Institute of Technology 2018
- **Community Representative & Secretary**, Jones College Prep Local School Council 2018
- **Community Representative**, Jones College Prep Local School Council 2016
- **College & Career Connections Mentor**, Mikva Challenge 2018
- **OMD Success Coach**, One Million Degrees 2017
- **Treasurer & Secretary**, Fruteria Lina 2017
- **College Access & Success Mentor**, Chicago Scholars 2016
- **Corps Member**, City Year Chicago 2015