Policy Principal

Position Profile

Chicago, IL (hybrid)
The opportunity

This is an exciting opportunity to work for the comprehensive planning organization in the third-largest metropolitan area in the country and help improve public policies for the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning developed and is implementing ON TO 2050, northeastern Illinois’ long-range comprehensive plan. The plan identifies three overarching principles — inclusive growth, resilience, and prioritized investment — that inform all ON TO 2050 recommendations and the agency’s work.
Our vision
An inclusive and thriving region.

Our mission
To serve the people of the region by driving innovation, fostering shared action, and advancing toward a common vision.

Our core values

Serve with passion. We are passionate about serving the people of metropolitan Chicago. We build public trust by being good stewards of public resources and proactively sharing information.

Pursue equity. We are guided by the principle that everyone has a right to opportunity and a high quality of life. We work to realize equity for all.

Foster collaboration. We believe inclusion and collaboration strengthens our work. We seek out the voices of those who often go unheard or face barriers to public participation.

Lead with excellence. We lead on issues that advance the region. We believe in the power of data and the story it tells. We identify and share solutions and inspire others to adapt them for their communities.

Drive innovation. We are driven by the desire to find more efficient methods to achieve the most impact. We do this by seeking new solutions to old problems, taking calculated risks, and daring to try them.

Position overview

About you
You are a natural problem solver, a collaborative leader, and an expert in transportation infrastructure, public funding and finance, or transportation equity. You have a passion for public service and a commitment to creating an inclusive and thriving region for the 8.6 million people of northeastern Illinois. You welcome the opportunity to address complex challenges, demonstrate your technical capabilities, and enjoy engaging a variety of stakeholders.

About the position
The Policy Principal will oversee research, analysis, and strategy to support development and implementation of ON TO 2050, the agency’s regional plan. This position reports to the Deputy Executive Director, Plan Implementation and Legislative Affairs. Managing a team of staff, the principal will develop reports, communicate findings, and engage a broad array of internal and external stakeholders.

The Policy Principal will lead and contribute to quantitative and qualitative policy analysis, including of transportation, transit, freight, land use, and other relevant public policy issues facing northeastern Illinois. They will lead development of applied planning and policy solutions to meet these challenges at the regional scale. The principal will play a key role in CMAP’s efforts to implement the policies and programs outlined in the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Across these projects and tasks, the Policy Principal will emphasize and implement the recommendations of ON TO 2050 and execute on the IIJA provisions.
The position is open until filled, with applications being reviewed on a rolling basis.

Status

Regular full-time position, 37.5 hours per week; exempt FLSA status.

Location

Chicago, with a hybrid work environment at the Old Post Office 50 percent of the time.

The Policy Principal will be responsible for the following essential functions and activities:

- Directs policy development and analysis efforts to implement the ON TO 2050 plan and IIJA policies, as well as evaluate legislative proposals or regulatory developments at the local, state, or federal levels.

- Directs the analysis of transportation infrastructure, public funding and finance, transportation equity, and other policy topics related to the intersection of land use and transportation.

- Leads and monitors project management efforts to achieve desired outcomes and meet required deadlines.

- Engages stakeholders through project-specific outreach, presentations to relevant CMAP committees, and participation in regional groups.

- Manages contracts and oversees the work of external contractors or consultants.

- Manages project budgets to ensure appropriate expenditures for timely completed work and services rendered.

- Attends or leads meetings and conferences with inter-agency working groups, partners, or stakeholders; participates in regional groups; presents technical materials to CMAP committees and external stakeholders.

- Informs the agency’s annual budget and work planning processes or other strategic planning exercises by aligning policy goals and planning objectives with ON TO 2050 priorities.
In addition, a successful Policy Principal will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Knowledge of public policy and urban and/or regional planning practices, and an understanding of environmental, social, land use, and transportation considerations in planning.
- Demonstrated aptitude for effectively managing projects.
- Skills in research, data collection and analysis, and technical writing.
- Skills in using spreadsheets, and skills or familiarity with statistical analysis and geographic information systems (GIS).
- Ability to read, understand, and explain substance of policy research and legislation.
- Ability to analyze programs and develop recommendations for improvement.
- Ability to conduct detailed research and prepare reports and findings.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with CMAP staff, associates, community or civic leaders, public officials and staff, partner agencies and organizations, and the general public.
- Skills in writing and communication; ability to effectively communicate technical information to external and internal audiences orally, in writing, and in presentation form.

The ideal candidate will have the following education and experience, or an equivalent amount of training, education, and experience:

- Bachelor’s degree in public policy, urban planning, public administration, economics, engineering, data science, or related field. Master’s degree preferred.
- Minimum of eight years of progressive experience in public policy analysis or related field.
- Demonstrated experience directing or supervising high-performing staff.
Working conditions

- Hybrid working environment (office and remote).
- Prolonged periods of concentration and computer use.
- Prolonged periods of sitting.
- CMAP requires all employees to declare their vaccination status upon hire. The agency reserves the right to enforce and/or amend this policy in compliance with federal and state mandates or as it deems necessary. Your acceptance of an offer of employment means that you understand and agree to comply with this policy.

Supervisory responsibilities

The Policy Principal will supervise Associates, Analysts, and Senior Policy Analysts.

Policy Principal
Compensation and benefits

Minimum starting salary is $95,841.00, commensurate with experience. Benefits include:

- Paid time off, including vacation, personal days, sick time, and 12 holidays annually
- Health, vision, dental, and disability insurance and AFLAC (supplemental insurance)
- Flex time
- Parental leave
- Gym membership reimbursement
- Professional development opportunities, including certifications/licenses and association dues, conferences/trainings, and tuition reimbursement
- Deferred compensation (457 plan)
- Retirement savings plan through Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF service credits may be eligible to transfer)
- Flexible spending accounts
- Employee assistance program

To apply

At CMAP, when we say we serve everyone in the region, we mean everyone. To do that well, we need a workforce that’s representative of our diverse region. Accordingly, CMAP is committed to pursuing equity and creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace. We have and will continue to hire and promote great people from a wide variety of backgrounds because it makes our agency and our work stronger. If you share our values of serve with passion, foster collaboration, drive innovation, pursue equity, and lead with excellence; and you share our enthusiasm for building a thriving and inclusive region, we invite you to apply for a position at CMAP.

Submit a cover letter and resume here.

CMAP is an Equal Opportunity Employer that recruits and hires qualified candidates without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, or veteran status.

About CMAP

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is our region’s comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners are implementing ON TO 2050, a long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. Visit cmap.illinois.gov for more information.