

Kimberlee Guenther, Ph.D.

Experienced community-based researcher and educator, focused on community development, cultural institutions and philanthropy. Her passion is harnessing expertise from all levels, ranging from community residents to senior executives, to develop impactful and responsive strategies that address social issues. She is skilled at bringing diverse groups together to engage in dialogue and new learning experiences, and utilize a variety of qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools to improve programs and processes.

Kimberlee Guenther, Ph.D. serves as vice president of community impact at United Way of Metro Chicago. She joined United Way as the Manager of Research and Evaluation in 2013, and now leads the organization's community impact program funding and Neighborhood Network initiative. As a steward of United Way's grantmaking and community engagement, Kimberlee wholly embodies our mission to build strong neighborhoods.

Prior to joining United Way, Kimberlee was a community-based researcher, combining arts programming and ethnography at The Field Museum and the Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University. Raised in the northwest suburbs with a deep appreciation of Chicago's architecture and culture, this experience opened her eyes to the incredible power of community knowledge and creativity.

Kimberlee earned her undergraduate degree in sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, a master's degree from the University of Connecticut, and a Ph.D. in sociology from Loyola University Chicago. Her doctoral research focused on public housing redevelopment and community resident leadership in Chicago and Sydney, Australia.

After years of formal education, Kimberlee's favorite pastime is still learning – through books, travel, and museums – though the art and science of baking is a close second. She lives in the University Village neighborhood.