



JOB SPECIFICATION

ORGANIZATION: The Joyce Foundation
POSITION: Education Program Manager
LOCATION: Chicago, IL

BACKGROUND

The Joyce Foundation is a Chicago-based foundation that undertakes innovative and effective grantmaking in the areas of education, employment, environment, gun violence, money and politics, and culture. The Foundation's grantmaking focuses on improving public policies in order to improve the quality of life for people living in the Great Lakes region. The Foundation has a staff of 25, is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors, and holds assets totaling approximately \$750 million. The Foundation distributes approximately \$38 million in grants annually to organizations that combine creative ideas for broad, systemic change with a strong strategic sense of how to make change happen.

The Education Program

Since 2004, the Joyce Foundation has focused the majority of its \$8 million annual grantmaking budget on policy-oriented efforts to improve the quality of teachers in high-need schools, while also promoting high quality charter schools and early childhood education. The Foundation and its grantees have worked especially hard in recent years to focus national, state, and district policy conversations on the importance of getting effective teachers in every child's classroom and on specific promising ways to do that by strengthening teacher recruiting, hiring, support, evaluation, and compensation systems.

The Foundation is driving education change in three Great Lakes communities--Chicago, Minneapolis, and Indianapolis--by funding projects and grantees that will shape district, state, and federal policies around the Foundation's focus issues of teacher quality, charter schools, and early literacy. In addition, the Foundation funds organizations that shape the national conversation on teacher effectiveness, charters, and early reading for a range of activities: conducting research and evaluation, writing papers, convening thought leaders, developing model policies and systems, providing technical assistance to policymakers, carrying out public education campaigns, and advocating for research-based reforms. Through these efforts, the Joyce Foundation hopes to push these issues to the top of the education agenda for state and national policymakers and political leaders.

For more information, please visit www.joycefdn.org.



OPPORTUNITY

As a key member of The Joyce Foundation's grantmaking team, the primary role of the Program Manager is to develop and manage a portfolio of investments in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Indianapolis that work to close the achievement gap by improving the quality of teachers in schools that serve low-income and minority children, strengthening early reading approaches, and promoting innovation. The Program Manager will build on the excellent work done to date and ensure that the Foundation continues to make vital contributions on these issues in the future.

The Joyce Foundation made recent notable investments that include: startup funding and leadership for Advance Illinois, which has led the state's recent, ambitious K-12 reform effort; early and ongoing funding for the New Teacher Project for research documenting how existing policies and collective bargaining agreements fail to identify, reward, and retain good teachers; seed support for Teach For America to develop a program that supports alumni who want to pursue careers in education policy and advocacy; and early support to Teach Plus to help reform-minded teachers in Chicago and Indianapolis speak out on state and district policy changes that would help transform the teaching profession and retain outstanding teachers in the schools that need them most.

The Program Manager will report to the Vice President of Programs and manage a small program team. S/he will be part of a dedicated, high performing Foundation team that is committed to creating a portfolio of transformative, high-leverage investments.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Program Manager will have responsibilities in the following areas:

(1) Program Development

- Define the program's policy goals, intermediate objectives, priority activities, and benchmarks for measuring progress and relate those goals to the Foundation's overall mission;
- Monitor the field: reading, attending meetings, developing relationships so as to understand emerging issues, research, political, and technological developments that affect the program;
- Ensure that the program's strategy takes into account potential policy opportunities and policy context, barriers to success, and capacities of prospective grantees including gathering interested parties to inform program development;
- Develop a grants budget that prudently maximizes program goals;

- Solicit proposals that are consistent with the program's strategy and goals through a process of reviewing letters of inquiry, site visits, and other meetings;

(2) Proposal Evaluation and Project Oversight

- Evaluate proposals to determine if: the proposed project is consistent with and could further the policy goals of the program; the applicant has the staff, resources, policy opportunities and strategy to carry out the proposed project successfully; the applicant has identified realistic benchmarks for measuring success; and the applicant enjoys a reputation for reliability and high-quality work among experts, policymakers, journalists, and other funders and nonprofits active in the field;
- Present at proposal review meetings recommendations for action on funding requests and the reasons for the recommendations;
- Lead conceptualizing, drafting, and/or editing major communications to the Board, including grant write-ups, program overviews, and separate policy papers;
- Work closely with current grantees to ensure their work is of the highest quality and impact, adding value where possible;
- Monitor projects and grant reports for fulfillment of terms of the contract, for legal compliance, and to extract lessons for further work and apply those lessons to program development and proposal evaluation;

(3) Management of Program Team

- Meet with program team members – an Education Program Officer and an Education Program Assistant – to develop performance plans and their implementation; provide appropriate feedback on performance in annual review; provide training, mentoring, and oversight for program team;
- Provide leadership in and coordinate planning and implementation of strategic directions; track program budget and ensure that program team is on track with goals and benchmarks set in planning process; ensure that schedules for program development and proposal review are adhered to and that deadlines for board book preparation, providing materials for other foundation functions such as communications, and other tasks are met;

(4) External Relations

- Serve as the Foundation's lead representative on education issues in relationships with other grantmakers, prospective grantees, and other not-for-profits, policymakers, and the media;

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Expanding Leadership Capacity in Public Education

- Ancillary activities that advance the goals of the Foundation (convening meetings, leadership in funder organizations and other professional associations, etc.);

(5) Internal Relations

- Communicate strategy recommendations, grant recommendations, and progress toward achieving goals to our Board of Directors; collaborate with other team members and with other colleagues; oversee the contribution of support staff to the efforts of the program.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will have:

- Ten or more years of professional work experience, which includes team/project leadership, portfolio management, and/or business development;
- Strong analytical and strategic capabilities: the capacity to understand complex issues and organizations and the ability to conceptualize, conceive, coordinate, manage, implement, and evaluate strategies and projects;
- A track record of successfully leading people and projects;
- Experience creating, influencing or analyzing education policy at the district, state or national level;
- A deep grasp of education issues in this country and the national education reform landscape; familiarity with human capital/teacher effectiveness issues is desirable;
- Ability to devise workable scenarios for bringing initiatives to scale;
- Superb writing skills;
- The energy and perseverance necessary to find opportunities for high-leverage investments and the judgment and organizational savvy required to assess their probability of success;
- Influence and negotiation skills to ensure that high impact grants are approved by the Board of Directors and supported by program team and Foundation staff;
- The personal presence and communication skills to represent the Foundation in diverse forums and organizational relationships;
- Demonstrated personal commitment to the cause of improving urban public education systems coupled with the determination to find creative ways to improve upon traditional structures;
- The ability to commit to 25-35% travel;
- A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree with a graduate degree highly preferred.



TO APPLY

Please submit a thoughtful cover letter and resume via our website:
<http://searches.k12searchgroup.com/>.