

The Nathan Cummings Foundation
Independent Trustees

Independent Trustees

The Nathan Cummings Foundation

About the Nathan Cummings Foundation

The Nathan Cummings Foundation (NCF or ‘the Foundation’), is a multigenerational family foundation committed to creating a more just, vibrant, sustainable, and democratic society. NCF seeks nominations and applications for two Independent Trustees to serve the Foundation’s Board of Trustees.

NCF believes it can make significant progress in repairing breaches in the social fabric, and building bridges across differences by directing time, energy, and resources towards creative problem solving, new models of thinking, and by lifting up innovators with disruptive ideas rooted in and representative of diverse communities. With a firm commitment to finding solutions, NCF works to address the root causes behind these challenges. NCF is proud of its spirit of innovation, and believes it is strongest when it collaborates with allies, grantees, and peer funders.

Located in New York City, NCF holds assets of approximately \$450M, with an annual budget of about \$25M, and a current staff of 17. Rooted in the Jewish tradition of social justice, NCF’s mission has explicitly named a commitment to democratic values and social justice; supporting the most vulnerable, respecting diversity, promoting understanding across cultures, and empowering communities. While NCF’s work is primarily concentrated in the United States, it also supports efforts of visionary leaders and work advancing a shared society, peace, and equality in Israel.

The Foundation owes its existence and inspiration to Nathan Cummings, who rose from impoverished beginnings to become the founder and guiding force of the Sara Lee Corporation. He inherited a spirit of sharing and a sense of community from his immigrant parents, and transmitted these values to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who now contribute their time and energy to the Foundation.

The active and deeply committed Board is comprised of third and fourth generation members of the Cummings family as well as five Independent Trustees that include the President & CEO. Board members bring a deep commitment to social justice and diversity. The Board and staff actively work to create a collaborative culture. Staff and Board members bring an ethic of openness, support, and professional nurturing. For more information on the Nathan Cummings Foundation, please visit www.nathancummings.org.

The Focus of the Nathan Cummings Foundation

Guided by the belief that all life is interdependent, NCF aspires to shape a society that lives up to America's promise and measures its success by how it treats those who have the least. Leveraging all its assets, knowledge, and tools to make change, NCF is focused on finding solutions to the two most challenging problems of our time – the climate crisis and growing inequality – and aims to transform the systems and mindsets that hinder progress toward a more sustainable and equitable future for all people; particularly women and people of color. The Foundation has established a strong track record as a leader and innovator in the philanthropic community with a legacy of commitment to social justice philanthropy.

The Foundation invests in four integrated focus areas that, together, advance a vision of a healthy planet and a healthy democracy:

- Accelerate a just transition to a more **inclusive clean economy** where communities on the frontlines are creating solutions to the climate crisis, and where prosperity for all people is not at odds with a healthy environment
- Advance **racial and economic justice** by working to reverse generations of concentrated wealth and racialized power to get to the root causes of inequality, standing with those who are marginalized and criminalized, and building the power of working people
- Amplify **voice, creativity, and culture** to build radical empathy, nurture compassion, and shift narratives about race, class, gender, ethnicity, power, and how we care for the planet
- Leverage NCF's influence as an investor and grant maker to increase **corporate and political accountability**, activating investors and businesses as allies, advocates, and leaders on climate and social justice

In addition to grantmaking, NCF engages in a range of [Shareholder Activities](#), seeking to promote progress on climate change and inequality leveraging its role as an institutional investor with a substantial endowment. The [Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellowship](#) extends this impact by supporting three visionary leaders every year to pursue an innovative project to address a challenge related to climate change or inequality. For more information about the Foundation's mission, values, and principles, please visit the [NCF DNA](#) section of the website.

Going forward, the Foundation will take risks, and adopt unorthodox thinking to disrupt conventional definitions, close political divides, and generate new possibilities and alliances. To those ends, NCF is expanding organizational capacity, building a culture to support progress toward ambitious long-term goals while remaining flexible with regard to means and tactics.

The Opportunity

During a moment of growth and evolution, the Nathan Cummings Foundation seeks two Independent Trustees to join the Board of Trustees. Independent Trustees will understand the full potential, power, and impact of a foundation to use its leadership, grantmaking, and endowment to address the Foundation's focus areas. They will bring their extensive professional and personal expertise to the Board to advise on governance, strategy, capacity building, and other Foundation priorities.

With a commitment to philanthropy as a vehicle for advancing social good and a passion for the mission of the Foundation, Independent Trustees will complement and broaden the skills, experiences, and expertise currently reflected on the Board. They will prioritize service to NCF as one of their top priorities, fully participate in the work of the Board, and serve as a representative of the Foundation.

NCF is deeply committed to inclusive leadership across the Board and staff. As a family foundation, the Board, leadership team, and staff interact often and collaborate to advance the Foundation's goals. Board members have strong relationships with the staff members and join conferences and site visits in the field to maintain firsthand engagement with the work. Collaboration between the staff and Board is core to NCF's work.

Specific Information on Independent Trusteeship:

- Being an active, engaged Trustee of NCF requires a time commitment of at least 12-15 days annually
- Independent Trustees attend and participate in all NCF Board meetings, Education Days, and Board Retreats
- The NCF Board meets three times annually (one meeting alternates yearly as a retreat). Meetings involve two-day blocks of time (on both weekends and weekdays) and advance preparation
- Trustees serve on Board and Foundation Committees, as appointed. Independent Trustees chair the Governance and Nominating Committees and may chair other committees during their term. Committees meet regularly by conference call and occasionally in person
- Trustees make site visits and/or participate in conferences, forums, conference calls, and other activities that deepen their knowledge of the Foundation's grantmaking priorities and opportunities, and where they may engage as informed representatives of the Foundation
- These learning experiences are in addition to Foundation-organized activities such as annual retreats, annual education days, or site visits made in the company of a Program Director or other member of the Foundation staff
- The majority of travel is domestic; however Board meetings or trips can take place in Israel or other international locations; travel and meetings may also be on evenings and weekends

- NCF Trustees may participate in the Board Recommended Grants Program, through which they can allocate up to \$50K* in grants that fall within the Foundation's guidelines
- Foundation-related expenses are reimbursed to Trustees. There is no direct compensation for serving on the NCF Board

Independent Trustee Profile

NCF welcomes Independent Trustee candidates who have a knowledge of, and passion for, social and economic justice and addressing climate change. As an organization deeply committed to diversity of experience and ideas, NCF values the wide range of personal and professional backgrounds and perspectives that are represented on its Board. Ideal candidates will have a diverse range of experiences in their background, combining work in the private, public, philanthropic, and/or nonprofit sectors.

With incoming Independent Trustees, there is a priority in identifying candidates that can bring professional and lived experiences that are currently underrepresented on the Board of Trustees.

The Board places significant importance on demonstrated skills to function as a Trustee and fiduciary in decision-making, collaboration, goal setting, communication, and board governance. These skills include the following professional and personal qualities and characteristics:

Passion for the Mission and Values of the Nathan Cummings Foundation

The Independent Trustees will be fierce believers in social justice and will be energized by the mission and values of NCF. They will approach the work with strong values of open-mindedness and service with a commitment to integrity. Bold thinkers, they will embrace ideas that challenge the status quo, and draw on creative problem solving, engaging the Board and staff in a constructive, collaborative fashion. They will find inspiration in NCF's dedication to learning, and will actively seek opportunities to increase their knowledge. Fully committed to serving NCF, they will be active Trustees and engage fully in Board meetings, Board Retreats, Education Days, and other site visits and conferences. Effective Trustees will also offer a strong fit with the Board's culture of collaboration, values-driven decision-making, transparency, creativity and entrepreneurship, and respect for a wide range of voices and perspectives.

Relevant Expertise and Experience

As active contributors to the Board and NCF staff, Independent Trustees will bring a diversity of expertise, experience, and ideas to conversations. They will demonstrate a deep appreciation of, and respect for, the privilege of serving as a steward of resources

* Amount may vary

for the greater good. Financial acumen, internal governance experience, and demonstrated problem-solving abilities will be highly prioritized. Independent Trustees will ideally bring experience as a leader and expert in one or more of the Foundation's focus areas, with the ability to engage networks on behalf of the Foundation. Areas of expertise that would be attractive include governance, finance and/or impact investing, community and economic development, philanthropy, and racial justice.

Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Competency

Independent Trustees will embody humility, practical wisdom, objectivity and partiality, and good judgment in difficult decisions. Effective listeners, they will bring high intellect, a good sense of humor, and a wide-ranging curiosity to their work as Trustees. Embracing NCF's family-like organizational culture and philosophy as a learning organization, they will demonstrate sensitivity to the dynamics of a multigenerational family philanthropy, and have the ability to partner successfully with other Trustees and staff. This includes the ability to effectively and authentically interact with a diverse range of stakeholders, give and receive critical feedback, and work well in teams. They will enjoy the prospect of mentoring family members as they become increasingly engaged in the Foundation's activities.

Leading Through Influence

Collaborative in nature, Independent Trustees will exhibit a thoughtful approach to working with fellow Trustees and NCF staff. They will develop strong relationships and partner with Board members and staff, and enjoy serving and working with people from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds in furtherance of the Foundation's mission. They will respectfully push the boundaries of NCF's work and challenge the perspective of others to encourage mindful risk-taking, innovation, and proactivity in NCF's grantmaking and shareholder activism. Independent Trustees will have a comfort level with the Jewish heritage of NCF and an appreciation for the importance of these issues to the Foundation and the family.

Contact

Koya Leadership Partners, an executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Molly Brennan and Melissa Madzel are leading this search. To express your interest in this role, please submit your resume and a thoughtful letter of interest [here](#). Questions and recommendations may be directed to NCFTrusteeSearch@koyapartners.com. All nominations, inquiries, and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

The Nathan Cummings Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented applicants.

About Koya Leadership Partners

Koya Leadership Partners, a member of the Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—**The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World**—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

For more information about Koya Leadership Partners, visit www.koyapartners.com.