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## MELVILLE CHARITABLE TRUST

### **Executive Director Boston, MA**

#### **The Search**

The Melville Charitable Trust, an innovative and highly respected foundation dedicated to supporting solutions to prevent and end homelessness, seeks a dynamic new Executive Director. Since its inception in 1990, the Trust has invested more than \$90 million in grants and Program Related Investments. It has pioneered models of supportive housing and community solutions and advanced important and far-reaching policy, research, and advocacy initiatives locally and nationally.

Today, with an endowment of \$135 million, the Trust is the largest foundation in the United States exclusively devoted to preventing and ending homelessness, and its influence reaches far beyond the dollars it grants. It is a complex organization, serving as a catalytic grantmaker, convener, and national voice on supportive housing, while operating its own model programs and real estate investments in Hartford, Connecticut.

This is an exciting opportunity to provide vision and creative leadership to a vital philanthropic institution well positioned for continued impact. The Executive Director reports to a five-member Board and oversees a staff of four based in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Executive Director must bring a demonstrated commitment to the mission of the Melville Trust along with a record of strategic leadership in mission driven organizations, ideally ones that are involved in issues of homelessness, affordable housing, mental health, community revitalization, and/or related issues. There is a preference for candidates with varied experiences across sectors and disciplines. The role calls for experience with policy and advocacy initiatives, a track record of building effective partnerships, and strong financial and management acumen. The Executive Director is an important public spokesperson in the field and must have outstanding communication skills. Experience reporting to a governing board is strongly preferred, and grantmaking experience would be an asset.

Isaacson, Miller, a national retained executive search firm based in Boston, is assisting the Melville Trust in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the search firm as indicated on the last page of this document.

## **Background**

The Melville Charitable Trust was established in 1990 by the estate of Dorothy Bigelow Melville. Although Mrs. Melville placed no specific strictures on how the funds of the Trust should be devoted, its founding board – under the leadership of Mrs. Melville’s son Frank Melville – identified homelessness as its initial focus. Over the more than two decades since then, the Trust has sustained this singular focus, with the conviction that homelessness is a solvable social issue and that safe, accessible, and affordable housing is an indispensable part of the solution. To date, the Trust has focused primarily on providing housing with services, “supportive housing,” believing it is a smart, humane, and cost-effective way to fight homelessness. It has become one of the leading local and national voices for supportive housing as a solution to homelessness and has made great strides in helping make the case to policymakers and communities nationwide.

## **Connecticut Activities**

The Melville Trust first began its work in Connecticut – its “petri dish” – by working to develop supportive housing programs in Connecticut that could serve as models throughout the country. In 2003, through real estate investments and program development, the Trust took a hands-on approach to addressing the causes and symptoms of poverty in the Frog Hollow neighborhood of Hartford, Connecticut – a community within several blocks of the Connecticut State Capitol that has long suffered from disinvestment and lack of opportunity. The Trust’s investments, both grants and Program Related Investments (PRIs), have resulted in greatly improved local capacity and sustained neighborhood stabilization. Today Frog Hollow boasts an acclaimed fine dining restaurant, over 100 renovated units of affordable housing, a year-round farmer’s market, a performing arts space with artists’ studios, and most recently a social enterprise training kitchen and café, which serves as a catering and retail sales business for the community and beyond.

The Trust itself currently holds four separate real estate-based PRI’s in Frog Hollow, each separately incorporated. These are: 1) the Lyceum, a historic 16,000 sq. ft. building which the Trust purchased and renovated as a home for conferences and educational programs; 2) New Song (the Billings Forge Complex) with residential and commercial space; 3) New Deal, consisting of six multi-family houses; and 4) Firebox, the restaurant located within the Billings Forge Complex. The Trust also created and incorporated a property management company which is currently inactive, replaced by a third party company on contract to the LLCs. The nonprofit Partnership for Strong Communities, a Connecticut policy advocacy and research organization founded and largely supported by the Melville Trust, operates from offices in the Lyceum and manages the facility’s programming and operations. The nonprofit Billings Forge Community Works, similarly founded and supported by the Trust, operates the education, arts, and farmers market programs from its offices at Billings Forge.

Management of the Trust’s PRI’s in Connecticut is complex and hands-on, requiring significant oversight by the staff of the Foundation. The Trust is currently examining how best to oversee and structure these investments in the future to ensure their efficient management and maximum impact and to free Melville Trust staff time for other endeavors.

In Connecticut, the Trust has also provided major, sustained operating support for such organizations as the Connecticut offices of the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the National Alliance on Mental Health, Connecticut Legal Services, and Connecticut Voices for Children, in

addition to the Partnership for Strong Communities, which was founded by the Trust and traditionally chaired by the Trust's Executive Director. This highly effective network of organizations has been instrumental in Connecticut, helping it become a national exemplar of state homeless policy.

### **National Activities**

Early on, the Melville Trust recognized that local philanthropy, in this particular case in Connecticut, could not be the sole source of funding for the creation of supportive housing. It was clear that federal as well as state government had major roles to play in creating housing opportunities for the most vulnerable. As a result, funding national advocacy, education, and technical assistance increasingly became a critical piece of the Trust's strategy. Today, the Foundation engages with such national partners as the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC), National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. These collaborations have promoted the development of hundreds of thousands of units of supportive housing for chronically homeless and for disabled individuals and have spurred major and innovative state and federal legislation to address the housing crisis faced by millions of low-income people. For example, in January 2011 the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Act, conceptualized and promoted by Trust grantees, was signed into law by President Obama. This Act authorized up to \$1.5 billion in expenditures to support affordable supportive housing and community integration for low-income people with disabilities.

In 2004, the Trust helped to create Funders Together to End Homelessness as a philanthropic affinity group. The group incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization in 2010, housed at the Melville Trust, with a Trust member on its board. Today, Funders Together is rapidly building a membership base of foundations and corporations across the country dedicated to building "a national network of funders who are committed to solving homelessness through leadership, education, and advocacy; strategic collaboration and grantmaking; and effective promotion and replication of best-practice models in their communities and across the nation."

Through its comprehensive approach, the Melville Trust has been effective beyond its expectations in changing public thinking about the ways to consider and end homelessness. Its conscious strategy has been to move policy, decision making, and the structure of government and philanthropy away from emergency palliative responses and toward proven, lasting, and cost effective alternatives. It intends to continue to support innovations at the local, state, and federal level. Working with an expanding network of like minded grantmakers, the Trust looks to a future where philanthropy's investments will be significantly leveraged by improved public systems that permanently end homelessness as it is known today.

### **Organization and Finance**

The Melville Trust is a registered New York charity, with the Bank of America as Trustee. Decisions are made by a five-member Board, including two members of the Melville family. The Board meets quarterly and members serve on the boards of some of the Trust's grantees.

The Trust's office is currently located in Boston, MA and it also maintains a meeting room at the Lyceum in Hartford, CT.

The Trust has an annual operating budget of just under \$1 million and a staff of 5, including the Executive Director, who travel back and forth between Boston and Connecticut. Reporting directly to the Executive Director are the Chief Operating Officer, Senior Program Officer, Finance Specialist, and Executive Assistant. For its real estate investments, the Trust also works with a Connecticut-based property management company.

In 2011, the Trust made grants of \$5.3 million and PRI's of \$522,000 (consisting of additions to capital investments within the LLCs).

### **Leadership Transition**

For most of its history, the Melville Trust was led by G. Robert (Bob) Hohler, a bold and creative activist with a long career of public service. Hohler's unexpected death in June, 2011, was a great shock and loss to all who knew and worked with him and especially to his colleagues and partners at the Trust. Awarded the 2009 Distinguished Grantmaker of the Year by the Council on Foundations, Hohler was a mentor to countless foundation and nonprofit professionals. Under his innovative leadership, the Melville Trust was able to "punch above its weight" through its multiple roles as funder, collaborator, convener, advocate, social entrepreneur, and program manager.

Ann Woodward, the Trust's Chief Operating Officer, is currently serving as Interim Executive Director. She has chosen not to be a candidate for the permanent role.

Bob Hohler's successor at the Melville Trust will inherit a strong and vibrant organization, well positioned for its next era of leadership. Board and staff alike are justifiably proud of all that has been accomplished, and no one proposes a radical change in direction or purposes. Nevertheless, this leadership transition offers an exciting opportunity to step back and take a fresh look at the Trust's goals, funding strategies, and operations. Over time, the new Executive Director will be expected to lead the Board and staff in reflecting together on where the Foundation has been and where it might best focus its work in the future.

### **Executive Director**

The broad objectives for the Executive Director are as follows:

- Provide focused imaginative leadership to the Melville Trust so that it builds upon and continues its record of leveraged, innovative, and impactful philanthropy.
- Assess the Trust's current mix of activities and strategic relationships, including the challenge of serving in the dual role of grantmaker and operating foundation. Work with the Board to strike the right balance among local and national initiatives.
- Ensure that the Foundation stays agile and responsive to changing conditions, new trends, and unexpected challenges. With the Board and staff, explore the possibility of new focus(es) and partners for the Trust, now that the case for supportive housing as a solution to homelessness is widely accepted. Develop new initiatives, strategies, and partnerships that are as creative and successful as the best of the Foundation's past.
- Strengthen the Trust's use of strategic communication to further its goals and that of its grantees and stakeholders. Raise the visibility of the work and serve as an articulate credible spokesperson for the Trust, circulating widely.

- Create ever closer linkages between the Trust’s Connecticut grantmaking and local social enterprise activities and its state and national advocacy efforts.
- Work closely with and help structure and inspire the work of the Board as it continues to evolve as a governance body and as new members are appointed. Keep Board members well informed about the Trust’s ongoing activities and provide them with concise information to make sound decisions.
- Maintain, cultivate, and nurture strong strategic and collaborative relationships with national and Connecticut-based networks, partners, and organizations.
- Exercise sound fiscal and administrative management and work to ensure that resources are available for new programmatic opportunities. Ensure that all the Trust’s activities comply with legal requirements.
- Retain, attract, and develop the strongest possible staff. Draw upon the considerable staff expertise already in place and assess what additional staffing may be required in the Trust’s next phase of work. Provide strategic direction and counsel to staff directors at the Trust-sponsored programs.
- Reinforce a culture of transparency, collaboration, open communication, accountability, and results.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

For this pivotal role, the Melville Trust seeks a leader with demonstrated and sustained commitment to working for the public good, most likely through a diverse career in nonprofit leadership. The greater and broader a candidate’s knowledge of and experience in the field of ending homelessness and its causes, the better, and experience working across sectors and disciplines is preferred. A strong grasp of public policy is important as is an understanding of the role of the nonprofit community in driving change. Experience reporting to a governing board is strongly preferred and grantmaking experience would be an asset.

An ideal candidate will bring the following professional experiences and personal attributes:

- Passion and demonstrated commitment to the Melville Trust’s mission to prevent and end homelessness.
- Track record of strategic leadership and effective management of a mission-driven organization, ideally during a time of opportunity and transition.
- Entrepreneurial spirit and drive. An eye for innovative opportunities and a willingness to take calculated risks coupled with a commitment to rigor, accountability, and outcome measurement.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills. Comfort with public presentation and service as a spokesperson.
- Experience developing policy and advocacy initiatives both locally and nationally, as well as pragmatic understanding of how to build a movement for progress and change. Strong networks and breadth of contacts in the policy and advocacy spheres.
- Demonstrated experience building and sustaining collaborative networks and alliances and

working effectively in partnership with community groups, nonprofit organizations, and other funders.

- Respect for the grantee community and the importance of its strong partnership with the Trust. Experience as a foundation grantee preferred.
- Laser focus on responsible stewardship of the Trust's resources. Strong skills in administration, financial management, budgeting, and planning.
- A record of building and supporting a positive work environment and a high functioning team, as well as the ability to mentor, delegate, and encourage initiative and independent thinking.
- An outgoing, open personality with strong interpersonal skills. Tenacity, pragmatism, energy, patience, and good humor.

*It is expected that the Melville Trust will keep its offices in Boston. Outstanding candidates who need to live elsewhere will have the opportunity to make the case for a different location, easily accessible to Hartford, CT.*

More information on the Trust can be found at: <http://www.melvilletrust.org/>

### **To Apply**

Resume, with cover letter and list of references, may be sent in confidence to:

**Karen Wilcox, Vice President & Director**

or

**Rebecca Swartz, Senior Associate**

**Isaacson, Miller**

**263 Summer Street**

**Boston, MA, 02110**

**617-262-6500**

[melville@imsearch.com](mailto:melville@imsearch.com)

*Electronic submission of material is strongly preferred.*

*Applications submitted by the middle of May will be assured full consideration.*

**March 26, 2012**