



JOB DESCRIPTION: PROGRAM OFFICER FOR STRONG LOCAL ECONOMIES



The Surdna Foundation, a New York City-based family foundation, seeks a Program Officer for its Strong Local Economies Program. The Program Officer will report directly to the Program Director for Strong Local Economies.

Created by John E. Andrus in 1917, the Foundation has assets over \$800 million and an annual grantmaking budget of more than \$32 million. Governed by a Board of Directors that includes fourth and fifth generation family members, the longstanding values of the Andrus family - practicality, modesty, excellence, and an appreciation for serving those in need - underlie all of Surdna's work. The Foundation has three grantmaking areas: Sustainable Environments, Strong Local Economies, and Thriving Cultures.

The Strong Local Economies program aims to create communities of opportunity with strong and sustainable local economies that include a diversity of vibrant businesses and sectors, and improves residents' livelihood and access to quality jobs and training within a region through two lines work:

Creating Economic Opportunities: supporting and creating robust economies and good jobs for all residents

Connecting People to Opportunities: building communities that connect residents to economic opportunity

The Strong Local Economies Program has a budget for the coming year of \$9.5 million and typically makes between 35 to 45 grants annually. Following [program guidelines](#), grants will focus on: implementing physical development and land use strategies that link affordable housing and transportation to quality job opportunities; mobilizing constituencies and developing new leaders and advocates; advancing public policy at the local, state and national level and innovative approaches to economic development, regional planning, and community revitalization.

The Program Officer will be part of a three-person team led by a Program Director and staffed by a Program Associate. This position reports directly to the Program Director and has joint supervisory responsibilities for the Program Associate. The Program Officer works closely with the Program Director on all aspects of the program, including both day-to-day operations and broader program strategy development.

Program Officers contribute to programmatic ideas and participate actively in grantmaking by seeking, developing, and recommending grants and administering projects in the program area. In addition, we expect our Program Officers to have expertise and knowledge in one or more of the elements of the grantmaking program to help build networks among funders as well as grantees around issues that need attention, communicate and advocate for social change, and develop partnerships to multiply the impact of Surdna's grant-making investments.

The Surdna Foundation has a staff of 25, all based in its Midtown Manhattan offices. The work environment is designed to be collegial across programs and to encourage information sharing and collaboration that builds on each other's ideas. At the same time, program staff have considerable autonomy and are expected to be able to balance responsibilities to the Foundation, to their program and to each other.

The Foundation provides grant support for efforts at the national, state, metropolitan, and local levels to realize more just and sustainable communities throughout the United States. We invest in the exchange of ideas across networks of people, institutions, and places with the intent of seeding innovative projects, programs, and policies and bringing them to scale across the country. We seek a balance of grantmaking opportunities that include efforts to: demonstrate the effectiveness of specific, targeted projects, practices, and models; advocate for and implement federal, state, and local public policies; and empower, mobilize, and develop leadership in communities and agencies to encourage civic participation.

A successful candidate will demonstrate an eagerness to engage in ongoing assessment of the Strong Local Economies Program's priorities under the leadership of the Program Director, and to work with the Sustainable Environments and Thriving Cultures programs to develop cross programmatic opportunities that ultimately help achieve the goal of creating just and sustainable communities.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Maintaining a breadth of knowledge, including research, about current trends, emerging issues, policy interventions, and innovations in the program's areas of focus to enhance the effectiveness of program strategy and understanding of staff and board.

Monitoring and tracking ongoing grants and initiatives, including evaluating and reporting to staff, board, and external colleagues on performance.

Working closely with other programs at Surdna and facilitating cross-program collaboration.

Reviewing, assessing, and proactively cultivating grantmaking opportunities, assisting grantees in improving proposal quality. Recommending grants for funding by soliciting peer reviews and providing critical analysis of project strengths, weaknesses and risks.

Conducting site visits of pending and active projects.

Helping to plan and implement learning opportunities for grantees, staff, and board, including an annual grantee conference.

Working with and managing external consultants.

Assisting with institutional efforts to enhance the sustainability of Surdna's internal practices.

Assisting in external communications: developing Web site content, newsletters, public presentations, and articles as appropriate.

Developing partnerships with other institutions to extend the impact of the Foundation's grantmaking.

Tracking and contributing to the development of best practices among funders.

Qualifications

Strong record of achievement and relevant experience in the nonprofit, public, or private sector. A minimum of 6 years in the field and interdisciplinary experience favored.

Substantive knowledge of the fields and issues (economic and community development, planning, housing, transit oriented development, workforce development and public policy/administration) related to at least one of the Strong Local Economies Program's goals. Advanced degree in related field strongly preferred.

Excellent leadership, strategic thinking, and planning skills.

Outstanding communication (speaking and writing), interpersonal, organizational, language and computer skills.

Energetic, flexible, self-starting team player with a direct, honest, and respectful approach to problem solving, and ability to foster collaboration and contribute to a strong sense of community among staff and board.

Must thrive when working under deadlines, have strong project, time, and budget management skills, and be able to handle multiple tasks simultaneously without sacrificing attention to detail.

Familiarity with a fast-paced, entrepreneurial environment and a willingness to share in both "big picture" thinking and administrative tasks.

An appetite for and sensitivity to working with diverse communities across race, class, ethnic, political and geographic boundaries.

Good and compassionate listener and a sympathetic participant with grantees.

Willingness to travel up to 30% of the time.

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with previous experience.

Excellent benefits.

[Please click here to submit resume and cover letter](#)

No phone calls please.

A first review of applications will occur on May 20th, but applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

The Surdna Foundation is an equal opportunity employer, committed to an inclusive work environment, and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates for this search.