

Chief Equity and Learning Officer

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation seeks a highly collaborative, discerning, mission-driven social change leader committed to taking on entrenched challenges to be its first Chief Equity and Learning Officer (CELO). This person will have roles on the equity, program and management teams and report to the Executive Director. The CELO will lead the Foundation's efforts to promote **equity** in all its work, facilitate meaningful conversations and provide space for reflection. This position will take the lead on the Foundation's **learning** agenda. The ever-changing context of the country, the South, states and regions strongly affect grantee partners' work, for better or worse. It is critical for board and staff to stay abreast of these factors, listen to their grantee partners and adapt strategies accordingly. With humility and discernment, the CELO will manage **grantmaking** in defined regions or funding areas.

This **management** position will supervise some colleagues and work with staff on important decisions, including an iterative process to define respective roles and responsibilities and how each complements the others. In collaboration with the Communications Director, the CELO will contribute to public **communications** in service to the Foundation's commitment to transparency, its vocal support for policies beneficial to low-wealth communities, and its goal of leveraging sustained, thoughtful investment in the South. This is an excellent opportunity to be part of the change the South so urgently needs in this pivotal moment in history.

The Foundation

The Babcock Foundation's mission is helping people and places move out of poverty and achieve greater social and economic justice. Its footprint spans 11 Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. It is a family foundation with total assets of \$200 million and an annual grantmaking outlay of approximately \$9 million.

The Foundation is often described as a pioneer in Southern philanthropy, thanks to its supportive, trusting relationships with grantee partners; deep understanding of their contexts; and long-term general operating support for civic engagement, economic opportunity, and supportive policies and institutions. While some are skeptical about the prospect of social change in the South, the Foundation understands the region gave birth to the civil rights movement, and its grantee partners continue that legacy, making meaningful progress for low-wealth communities and people of color through boldness, patience and carefully curated strategies. The Foundation's vision is anchored in a belief in people, organizations and partnerships. It believes in centering grantees and communities, as the people closest to problems are best equipped to solve them, given adequate support and resources. The Foundation deploys patient, long-term investment and facilitates collaboration for greater impact on the systems that conspire to keep people in poverty: concentrated political control, disinvestment in public goods, extractive economic development and discrimination, especially structural racism.

Addressing these pervasive harms demands the Foundation deepen and clarify its commitment to racial equity. Board and staff are examining the history omitted from schoolbooks and reflecting

on ways it has helped or hindered them, asking partners different questions, and collecting new data about organizations and the communities they serve. They are also examining internal policies, from hiring to investing, the way they talk about the work, the vendors used, and even the hotels and restaurants they patronize. The addition of a Chief Equity and Learning Officer reflects this commitment, as this person will take the lead on the organization's efforts to more thoroughly embed racial equity in its work and culture.

This is an exciting time for the Foundation. New board and staff members are bringing fresh perspectives, and the organization is adopting more shared leadership and collaborative decision-making processes. The team is a deeply committed, collegial and enthusiastic group with the potential to carry on and even explore new approaches to achieving its mission.

In pursuit of its mission, the Foundation employs the following approaches:

- *Place-Based*: An understanding and clear focus on place is central to the Foundation's ethos. MRBF underwrites not so much a grantee and its mission but its context (social, political) and how it affects its work.
- *Multiple and Layered Strategies*: The Foundation understands there is no single approach to poverty alleviation; rather, investments in multiple organizations and networks over time using complementary strategies informed by an understanding of place are most effective.
- *Network Approach*: Networks of people and organizations that bring a diverse collection of strategies, capacities and perspectives achieve greater impact. The Foundation supports efforts to develop leaders and connect them to other potential partners and funders.
- *Engage with Multiple Tools*: The Foundation deploys 100 percent of its financial assets (grants, program-related investments, and market-rate investments); uses its intellectual and reputational capital to leverage investments from other foundations; engages in strategic communications and looks for opportunities to convene grantees and other partners for peer learning.
- *Learn Deeply*: Reflecting on and capturing lessons from grantee partners and sharing them broadly are important facets of the Foundation's work that guide its strategies.
- *Build Capacity*: The Foundation aims to enhance every facet of healthy organizations through long-term general support and attention to organizational development.

Progress along all three of the Foundation's pathways of change guides its priorities for investing money, time, relationships and learning:

- *Economic Opportunity*: The Foundation looks to provide individuals with ladders of economic opportunity that include work supports, job training, and connections to employers seeking skilled, living-wage labor. Others include access to non-predatory financial services, local control of community assets and tools to encourage entrepreneurship and new business models.
- *Democracy and Civic Engagement*: The Foundation recognizes the importance of people developing knowledge, skills, networks, and motivation to build democratic systems that can challenge entrenched structures. Key strategies toward these outcomes include

community organizing, leadership development, inclusive community planning, voter education, and get-out- the-vote efforts.

- *Supportive Policies and Institutions:* For communities to thrive, for-profit and nonprofit institutions and all levels of government must foster cultures and adopt policies that open doors to economic opportunity and democratic participation for low-wealth people. Supportive institutions can bring new resources to the table, effectively implement policy, and leverage political will. Strategies toward these outcomes include research, strategic communications, advocacy, and community organizing.

Responsibilities

Racial equity

- Manage the organization's **equity** efforts, particularly racial equity, in collaboration with the Executive Director.
- Support and participate in the equity leadership team and ensure regular staff input into our racial equity efforts.
- Lead think, facilitate and design learning and other processes that advance racial equity in the organization and our program work.
- Manage the equity workplan and related consultants as needed.
- Monitor and support the equity culture as defined by the staff.

Learning

- Manage the organization's **learning agenda** in collaboration with the management team and in consultation with the program team.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director on board and staff learning.
- Lead think, design and facilitate learning opportunities that advance our shared understanding of key issues related to our work.
- Document learning as appropriate in collaboration with the Communications Director.
- Manage the organization's learning workplan and related consultants as needed.

Grantmaking

- Develop the Foundation's relationships in specified states/regions in the Southeast to identify grant and investment opportunities, develop and nurture funding partnerships and other networks to advance the Foundation's priorities and understand the economic, political and social context.
- Respond to inquiries for grants and program-related investments (PRIs); interpret the Foundation's policies; offer assistance beyond grant seeking, including referrals, networking and general counsel.
- Review proposals, conduct due diligence, reach consensus with the Chief Strategy Officer for grant recommendations, write recommendations and present them to the board.
- Monitor grants and PRIs for technical assistance, impacts and lessons learned.

- Represent the Foundation in networks and at conferences and meetings; stay abreast of the philanthropic field and the Foundation's program areas through conferences and other professional activities.
- In collaboration with the Communications Director, engage in strategic communications that advance the goals of the Foundation.

Management

- Supervise the Program Associates in their support of Network Officers and their other work to advance the goals of the Foundation.
- Serve on the management team and bring issues to its attention to ensure policies and systems support the Foundation's mission and goals.
- Model a transparent organizational culture where ethical policies are understood and lived out by all staff.
- Communicate and exhibit a commitment to equity in all internal and external Foundation relationships.

Qualifications

- Undergraduate degree; master's degree preferred
- 8+ years of nonprofit management experience related to the Foundation's priorities
- Commitment to the mission and values of the Foundation and a commitment to equity, particularly racial equity, with a willingness to proactively learn about it and integrate it into all aspects of the work
- Experience in an organizational setting leading or making major contributions to efforts to advance racial equity
- Experience with and commitment to collaborative management and teambuilding
- Experience building relationships and fostering alliances among diverse people to accomplish goals
- Respect for the dignity and abilities of all people
- Experience with and trust in collegial decision making, coupled with ability to work independently, flexibly and with good humor
- Keen analytical skills, ability to learn and synthesize new information quickly
- Ability to use instinct and intuition effectively in building relationships and making decisions
- Ability to handle multiple assignments and meet deadlines; ability to pay attention to accuracy and detail while thinking broadly
- Excellent written and oral communications skills
- Commitment to the Southeastern United States
- Ability to travel

Location and Compensation

While the Foundation is based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, it will consider allowing the CELO to telecommute from elsewhere in its footprint, preferably near an airport. The position will require significant time in Winston-Salem for at least the first 12 months. The Foundation

will offer financial assistance to accommodate this requirement. MRBF is about to begin an organizational conversation about permanent and full-time telework for some positions.

This is a permanent, full-time position with a starting salary range of \$105,000-\$135,000 and a generous benefits package. MRBF takes a values-based approach to determining salaries. It examines the Council of Foundations' salary survey and other philanthropic sector data, salaries for positions of comparable experience and complexity at similar regional foundations, and those of its partner nonprofit organizations.

To Apply, Inquire or Nominate

Inquiries, nominations and applications may be made [here](#). If unable to apply online, applicants may mail their resumes and cover letters to:

Kahn Lee, Managing Associate
Martens Roc, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, working to promote racial equity and challenge oppression. The Foundation is dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse and pluralistic staff committed to working in a multicultural environment.