

Position Profile

Executive Director
The Dresher Foundation
Harford County, MD

The Dresher Foundation seeks an experienced foundation leader with the desire to lead a vital philanthropic resource in Harford County. This position supports the work of the Dresher Foundation whose mission is to strengthen the capability of others to improve lives, primarily in Harford County.

The Organization

The Dresher Foundation was founded in 1988 by James Thomas Dresher and Virginia Morgan Dresher. Charitable giving had always been a part of the Dreshers' lives, but they were not visible philanthropists. Known as a man of integrity, Jim Dresher was unpretentious, quiet and humble. He earned his wealth through a long and successful business career that began during the Great Depression. Jim and Virginia created the Dresher Foundation to serve several of their goals: use their wealth for philanthropic purposes and create a vehicle to bond their family for generations to come.

All granting decisions are made by the Board of Trustees, comprised of the founders' adult children and spouses and, more recently, their grandchildren. Virginia was the first president of the Foundation and maintained a leadership role in the foundation throughout her life. Within the next few years their great-grandchildren will begin joining the board.

Approximately two million dollars is distributed annually through four giving cycles. Each Board member has one vote and all decisions are made democratically. The family enjoys being together and values family harmony over all else, and prefers to maintain a degree of unanimity. The Dreshers are a close-knit family, enjoy their privacy (in the legacy of the founder), and understand they are fortunate for the opportunity to help others in the community where most of them live.

Many years after the passing of both Jim and Virginia, the Foundation honors their legacy and values by continuing to support some of their favorite causes. The Foundation focuses grantmaking primarily on human service organizations located in Harford County, MD.

The opportunity and responsibility to use the Dresher Foundation's resources wisely for the good of society is the legacy Jim and Virginia Dresher left to the family that they loved. The family believes that giving locally means being able to see first-hand the results and the difference it is making in people's lives, which they find very satisfying.

The Dresher Foundation has a 14-member Board comprised of the second and third generation descendants of Jim and Virginia. The day-to-day operations are managed by the Executive

Director, who is currently the only employee of the foundation. The outgoing Executive Director is retiring at the end of the calendar year after 19 years of service to the Foundation.

The Position

The Executive Director (ED) reports to the multi-generational family Board and has responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. S/he assists the Board in preserving the mission, vision and values of the foundation and represents the Foundation to external constituencies. The ED is the primary contact for grantees and potential grantees and is an important conduit of information about the needs within the county.

Key Responsibilities

The Executive Director is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Foundation. Primary responsibilities include:

- Represent the Foundation to the general public and the charitable community;
- Develop and maintain appropriate gift giving initiatives;
- Work with organizations seeking the Foundation's support, including site visits before and after grants;
- Design and implement the Foundation's operational programs;
- Review and screen proposals and inquiries;
- Plan and implement Board meetings and prepare all support materials;
- Prepare and maintain reports on the Foundation's activities and maintain official records of the minutes and other Foundation documents;
- Monitor the progress of grant recipients, including all appropriate follow up;
- Maintain the grants management database: and
- Provide continuing education and training for Trustees and Trustee candidates and encourage the active involvement of the Trustees.

The Executive Director provides leadership both inside and outside the Foundation, continually increasing the mission impact. Toward these ends, our near-term priorities for the next 12-18 months include:

- Become familiar with the family, each individual family member and the Foundation;
- Get to know the county and the current grantees;
- Understand the workings of our Foundation and understand our approach;
- Understand and respect the protocols we have put into place;
- Keep current with national and local trends in philanthropy;
- Develop a level of trust that ensures the family that their ongoing value of privacy will be respected and safeguarded; and
- Spend time with the outgoing Executive Director to understand the grant cycles and other internal workings of the Foundation.

Experience and Attributes

Ideal candidates for this position must have a passion for our mission and a strong desire to lead this foundation with the family's best interests in the forefront. S/he must excel at balancing internal management with external impact and visibility, and must ensure that the foundation maintains its focus on the founder's values. The ideal candidate will bring a variety of experiences and attributes to the organization, including:

- Seven+ years' of progressive senior level Foundation leadership and management experience, including experience working with and for a Board of Trustees;
- Integrity, a value system consistent with the Dresher family, high emotional intelligence, and the ability to be a neutral party in high-level Trustee decision-making conversations;
- A circumspect approach with a high level of discretion and the ability to maintain the privacy of the family and its level of integrity in its decision-making processes;
- A strategic thinker, able to view the community's needs from a big picture perspective;
- The ability to present factual information and have a neutral stance on decisions that the family makes about funding;
- Strong relationship builder and communicator, including well developed written and oral communication skills;
- The Foundation outsources its Chief Investment Officer (CIO) function. The ED serves as an advisor to the Finance Committee and should be generally knowledgeable about investing. Accounting functions are handled by an in-house part-time bookkeeper.
- An understanding of the nonprofit sector with a proven capacity to work in collaboration and negotiate complex relationships;
- A deeply principled person of integrity and strong ethical values, who listens, is thoughtful, accessible, engaging, with the ability to make people feel comfortable in his/her presence;
- Intellectual curiosity, rapid learning, and willingness to grow through on-going education;
- Strong organizational skills and active participation in integrated database management;
- Tech savvy and experience with the usual office software environment; and
- BS/BA degree required.

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

Application Process

To apply, e-mail resume, cover letter and salary requirements search@dresherfoundation.org.
For all other inquiries, please contact Catrese Brown at catresebrown@gmail.com.

The Dresher Foundation is an equal opportunity employer.