

Position Description
Executive Director, Private Family Foundation, Boston, MA

Background

A Boston-area philanthropist seeks an Executive Director who will be a partner in helping shape, grow and manage a dynamic family foundation.

Founded five years ago, the Foundation makes grants primarily in three areas: arts, education, and fighting against food insecurity, predominantly in the Greater Boston area. There is a strong value on creativity, amplifying the voices of others, and encouraging those helped to pay it forward. The Foundation is managed presently by its Founder with a lean support staff. A small board – which will grow over time - makes funding and policy decisions for the Foundation.

While the Founder will continue to be actively engaged in the Foundation's work, she is seeking to put day-to-day operations in the hands of a reliable, capable, and enterprising leader. The ED will assume responsibility for managing the staff team and will work closely with the Founder to achieve the Foundation's philanthropic objectives – freeing the Founder to engage in creative and external-facing work. Success in the position during the first year will be determined in large measure by the quality of partnership that is forged between Founder and the ED.

The ED will plan and direct all operational and administrative activities for the Foundation. The ED will organize, analyze, set priorities and provide necessary information to the Founder and trustees to support informed decision making.

We are seeking a mature, secure professional who can develop a deep understanding of the Founder's goals and works in service to those goals, committed to continuous, open communication with the Founder and others.

The successful candidate will be a person who values personal responsibility and accountability and is closely aligned with the initiatives of the Foundation. They will thrive in a start-up environment and will have experience in philanthropy in one or more of the Foundation's program stated areas.

This is a full-time position based in the Foundation's Boston office, with occasional local and national travel when needed. Because of the close partnerships inherent in the work, the position is not well-suited for remote work.

The ideal candidate will be an experienced professional with a deep understanding of the potential and uniqueness of family philanthropy; a person of great discretion, superior written and verbal communication skills and sound judgement as they pro-actively carry-out the mission of the Foundation.

Key Responsibilities

Management and Administration:

- Responsible for management, hiring/firing and evaluation of staff, supporting their growth and development in the work while promoting an office culture that is highly professional with an emphasis on teamwork and mutual support.
- Promote and maintain open lines of communication between the Founder, Board, grantees, staff, and outside advisors.
- Ensure that any written products developed in the office meet the highest standards.
- Track all the Foundation's activities and enterprises, their progress, challenges, and impact.

Strategic Planning:

- Partner with the Founder and trustees to conceptualize, design and execute special initiatives that go beyond routine grant making.
- Work with the team to translate high level strategic direction into operational plans.
- Support the Founder as a thought partner and strategic planner who translates ideas into action.

Grant making:

- Ensure the existing grant process is aligned with the Foundation's vision and priorities and executed according to stated values.
- Manage the staff to ensure that grant process goals are attained.
- Participate in the proposal review process; assess and make recommendations for changing the process as needed.
- Over time, work with trustees and Founder to assess and adjust giving priorities and areas of interest.

Board Governance:

- Develop strong working relations with Founder and Board members.
- Oversee the preparation of the agenda and board book for quarterly trustee meetings; ensure that trustees have all the information and materials needed to make sound decisions.
- Report grant activity summary to Board on regular basis.

Financial and Legal Compliance:

- Work with staff to coordinate the foundation's annual audit and preparation of its tax returns.
- Ensure that systems are in place to meet compliance requirements for audit and tax purposes.

Promotion of Philanthropy and External Relations:

- Maintain a visible profile for the Foundation in the community by participating in events, seminars, and conferences.
- Demonstrate and educate staff and grantees regarding best practices.
- Identify and build relationships with prospective partners who can execute and advance the work.
- Attend site visits and conferences as appropriate

Qualifications, Experience, Attributes:

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities:

- Ten or more years of experience working within philanthropic organizations, including at least 5 years of experience managing a team.
- Outstanding management skills to build relationships with the donor, staff, trustees, and grant seekers.
- Experience building and managing teams, and the ability to mentor and develop junior staff.
- Commitment to discretion and privacy.
- Working knowledge of nonprofit financial statements and tax returns.
- Demonstrated interest in at least one of the Foundation's stated program areas: arts, education, and food insecurity.
- Strong capacity to create and manage project tracking and other systems; a builder of checklists and routines that keep work on track and moving forward.
- Enjoys managing several projects simultaneously.
- The ability to set and keep to priorities and manage time well.
- Able to draft and edit docket materials, grant making documents, and other internal and external communications that are clear and accurate.
- Comfortable representing the foundation and donor at events or meetings.

- Fluent with technology to prepare presentations, communicate, and build partner relationships.

The Process:

If interested in this position, please submit a letter outlining your qualifications and a resume to Debra Whitney of Ballentine Partners LLC at dwhitney@ballentinepartners.com. Applications will be held in the strictest confidence and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

The Foundation is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. We are committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions are based on merit, needs, individual qualifications, and job requirements, without regard to race, color, religion or belief, national, social or ethnic origin, sex, age, physical, mental or sensory disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital, civil union or domestic partnership status, past or present military service, or genetic information, family or parental status, or any other status protected by law.