POSITION DESCRIPTION: Portfolio Manager, Education Excellence

ORGANIZATION

Founded in 2006, the Jacobson Family Foundation (JFF) supports nonprofit organizations in both the United States and Israel. JFF's model combines grant-making and pro-bono consulting with key strategic grantees. Its mission is to increase the success of nonprofit organizations with the highest potential to achieve breakthrough results on the most pressing problems facing the United States and/or the Jewish people. JFF does this by pursuing a venture philanthropy approach – identifying a highly selective set of grantees to support with meaningful funding and deep strategic engagement. The organizations that JFF believes are most promising have:

- Game changing ideas
- Excellent leaders
- Measureable results
- Sustainable approaches

The foundation is focused on nonprofits that address the following:

Outstanding Education (U.S. K-12)
- Dramatically alter student outcomes to the highest levels of achievement.
- Facilitate system changes necessary to accelerate adoption of effective policy and practice that impact student outcomes.

U.S. At-Risk Youth
- Keep troubled youth out of government custody by restoring families that can effectively and lovingly care for their children and catalyze system change leading to substantial improvements in accountability, transparency and outcomes of public systems responsible for troubled youth.
- Change at-risk youth’s life trajectory through life-changing coaching and mentoring.

Jewish Continuity
- Build American Jews’ affinity to their religion and culture, with priority on helping young people and young families affiliate.
- Increase opportunities and access to Jewish experiences, education and communities for secular Israel Jews so they can easily experience and reclaim their religion and culture.

Israel
- Build greater understanding of, support for and affinity to Israel among thought leaders and key sectors of the U.S. population through missions, advocacy and education.
- Help Israel strengthen the internal cohesion among citizens and build ethical committed leadership.

The Jacobson Family Foundation will also provide direct support in its local community of Massachusetts to assist families in need and help them improve their own lives. The strategy of JFF will be refined over the next few years based on its experiences and the input of the initial team. JFF is committed to identifying and providing meaningful support to the select set of nonprofits that achieve results and have the greatest potential to create large scale, sustained change.

The principles that guide its work are:

The Jacobson Family Foundation Trust
240 Newbury Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02116
Research, listen and learn: JFF recognizes that being informed about the problems and most relevant research is critical to success, and that it cannot be the leading expert on programmatic solutions. As a result, it puts a premium on developing relationships with experts and gathering their perspectives.

Clearly assess non-profits’ potential for impact: JFF believes that a clear mission and a programmatic approach that articulate a game-changing opportunity are the foundation for any major impact. However, non-profits must also have the following additional characteristics to succeed.

- **Excellent leaders:** Even the best idea is impotent without strong, capable and decisive leadership.
- **Measurable results:** While gathering definitive proof is not always possible, JFF invests based on results and believes that the most effective non-profit leaders manage their organizations with data on impact.
- **Sustainable approaches:** JFF believes that change requires many years and generally cannot be funded by JFF alone. JFF will look at a non-profit’s long-term financial and organizational sustainability up front.
- **Fit with efforts of other key players:** JFF values efficiency and recognizes that any change involves many individuals and organizations. It places a premium on interventions that are both distinctively effective and enhance the on-going efforts of individuals and organizations with similar goals.

Build organizations: JFF is clear that the agents of change are the non-profits it supports – not JFF itself. As a result, it identifies organizations with missions, strategies and capacity that are well matched with its goals and then provides organization-wide (not program-specific) support.

Go deep: JFF believes that focused attention and funding for a small number of organizations allow for the greatest possible results:
- High standards in selection;
- Clear investment hypothesis and ambitious goal setting;
- Meaningful financial investment;
- Focused consulting and implementation support;
- Strong, trusting relationships established over time.

Provide dogged support, strategic assistance and on-going coaching to grantee organizations, in particular:
- To clarify their theories of change and strengthen their business plans;
- To communicate their work powerfully to others;
- To provide “blocking and tackling” problem-solving, on-going advice and a safe haven for rigorous problem-solving;
- To advocate for them with other funders, decision-makers and political leaders.

**POSITION**

The Portfolio Manager, Education Excellence will be responsible for spearheading a portfolio of JFF’s grant making efforts in the area of education excellence, specifically focused on incubating and replicating high quality school models and identifying and scaling organizations providing critical support to these schools. S/he will report to the Senior Portfolio Manager.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Scour research and literature to become informed in JFF’s areas of concentration.
- Identify high prospect grantee organizations that fit with the foundation’s mission.
Manage all aspects of moving a potential grantee through the JFF due diligence process, which may include:

- Assessing the strength of an organization’s leadership, strategic plan, if one exists, and developing a project plan outlining how JFF may work with a potential grantee.
- Leading or co-leading strategic planning sessions, which may focus on issues like theory of change, model codification, strategic priorities, etc.
- Performing all necessary analyses, which may include benchmarking, financial modeling and competitive assessment.
- Developing or refining a strategic, business and/or implementation plan in partnership with the organization.
- Determining, in conjunction with the Senior Portfolio Manager, whether a grant should be pursued, and if so, how the grant should be structured, what the goals of the grant are and how success should be measured.
- Directing and supervising work of the Portfolio Analysts.
- Drafting a paper that makes the case for a grant to the trustees.
- Preparing the grantee to present in front of trustees.
- Developing and finalizing the grant agreement.

Build strong relationships with key stakeholders and engage them as collaborators in potential grants.

Maintain close positive relationships with grantees, demonstrating commitment to their success by problem solving, offering ongoing advice and eliminating barriers to their success. Foster strong working relationships, a high level of mutual trust and effective channels of communication with grantees.

Track grantee progress through site visits, data collection, evaluation and candid conversations. Keep the Senior Portfolio Manager and President apprised of grantee progress and seek assistance as needed to ensure grantee success.

Complete special projects either to build out the foundation’s knowledge in particular sub-areas relevant to the portfolio or manage longer strategic planning processes around new initiatives the foundation is helping to launch.

Represent JFF at meetings, conferences and other events.

Prepare communications and reports for trustees.

Develop, nurture and access a wide and deep network of operators, leaders, academics and philanthropists in the nonprofit space that will help identify high caliber emerging organizations with strong leadership as potential grantees.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Portfolio Manager, Education Excellence will identify great leaders and develop grants and partnerships that can affect systemic change and enable entrepreneurial organizations to grow and thrive. The hurdle to become a JFF grantee is high, and the Portfolio Manager must embody JFF’s high standard for excellence, rigor, passion and commitment, while working alongside grantees and providing support and skills to ensure their success.

Qualified candidates will possess:

- Strategic and business planning leadership and experience; experience at a top tier consulting firm.
- Operating experience in a district, nonprofit or other mission-driven organization.
- Analytical orientation with the ability to structure investment hypotheses, conduct the associated research, and assess programmatic, management and financial information; the ability to sift through information and unearth relevant implications and opportunities.
- Strong networking and relationship building skills.
- Understanding of the issue areas and populations served.
- A strong belief that education is a primary means to dramatically improve the life outcomes of children and that all children can achieve at high levels independent of their circumstances.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate with senior organizational leaders, collaborate effectively and interact with diverse organizations.
- A love of learning and achievement and the desire and skill to help others succeed.
- Facile and creative problem solving capabilities.
- A strong willingness to act, break down barriers and be part of the solution.
- Graduate degree; MBA preferred.
- Self-motivation, the ability to work independently, take initiative and solve problems.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and attention to detail.
- Good computer skills including Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Jacobson Family Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply for this position. All inquiries, nominations and applications are to be directed to jffassist@jacobsonfamilyfoundation.org. Applications should include a letter of interest and resume. Please indicate in your cover letter where you learned of the opportunity. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE. Salary is commensurate with experience.