



POSITION DESCRIPTION



EDUCATION DIRECTOR BOSTON, MA

ORGANIZATION

The Jacobson Family Foundation (JFF) is a private family foundation in Boston whose mission is to increase the success of nonprofit organizations with the highest potential to achieve breakthrough results on pressing problems facing the United States and the Jewish people. The foundation 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 it funds have game-changing ideas, excellent leaders, measurable results, and sustainable approaches.

JFF is focused on nonprofits that address the following four issue areas:

Outstanding Education (U.S. K-12): Continue to build on its work to eliminate the achievement gap in Massachusetts (and in the future in Baltimore) while developing new work to provide a world-class education to students in targeted communities, dramatically altering their academic performance towards the highest levels of achievement, to demonstrate that high achievement is possible for a broad swath of our nation's youth and to create the public will to reach for excellence as our educational goal.

- Expand and spur autonomous schools (i.e. charters, contract schools, etc.) whose students achieve at high levels, and propel the efforts of non-charter public schools to reorient around high achievement.
- Encourage and incubate innovation aimed at advancing high achievement.
- Facilitate a community of practice among implementers to foster learning and experience sharing in the field.
- Shift the conversation toward high achievement and eliminate growth barriers via advocacy efforts aimed at building public support, educating key influencers, and informing reform efforts.

At-Risk Youth (U.S.): Change the life trajectory of at-risk youth by providing high quality coaching and mentoring and restoring families that can effectively and lovingly care for their children.

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Jewish Continuity (U.S. and Israel): Build American Jews' affinity to their religion and culture, with priority on helping disconnected young people and young families affiliate, and increase opportunities and access to Jewish experiences, education, rituals and communities for secular Israeli Jews so they can easily experience and reclaim their religion and culture.

Israel Support and Cohesion (U.S. and 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, and help Israel strengthen social cohesion among its citizens.

JFF also provides direct support in its local community of Massachusetts to assist families in need and help them improve their own lives.

The principles that guide its work are:

- **Research, listen and learn:** While being informed about the target issue areas is critical to JFF's success, its leaders recognize that they cannot be leading experts on programmatic solutions. As a result, they place a premium on developing relationships with experts and gathering their perspectives.
- **Carefully assess potential for impact:** JFF focuses on four critical characteristics that are the basis for any major impact:
 - Game-changing ideas: JFF seeks out organizations with missions and programmatic approaches that offer game-changing potential.
 - 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 believe that the most effective nonprofit leaders manage their organizations with data on impact.
 - Sustainable approaches: Given that change typically requires many years and generally cannot be funded by JFF alone, the Foundation looks at a nonprofit's long-term financial and organizational sustainability.
- **Build organizations:** The agents of change are the nonprofits JFF supports, not JFF itself. As a result, JFF 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. This manifests itself in its high standards in grantee selection; clear investment hypotheses and ambitious goal-setting; meaningful financial investments; focused



consulting and implementation support; and strong, trusting, and enduring relationships with grantees.

- **Provide dogged support:** By providing grantee organizations with strategic assistance and on-going coaching, JFF supports their efforts to clarify their theories of change and strengthen their business plans; communicate their work powerfully to others; problem-solve rigorously as issues crop up; and build relationships with other funders, decision-makers and political leaders.

POSITION

Reporting to the President, the Education Director (Director) will build and drive JFF's substantial body of work in education. S/he will be charged with developing a portfolio of grants in pursuit of the foundation's specific goals. This work will include significant initiatives in building schools and models that provide actionable proof points for scale. The role centers on identifying great leaders and providing support to help their organizations increase their impact in significant and sustainable ways.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Identify – through networking with leaders in the space (e.g., nonprofits, academics and other foundations) and scouring industry literature and research – high caliber organizations with strong leadership to be potential grantees.
- 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 and strategic plan and program model,
 - Developing a project plan for how JFF might work with the organization if it were to become a grantee and if they required strategic or implementation support.
 - Performing all necessary interviews and analyses, which may include benchmarking, financial modeling and competitive assessment.
 - Determining, in conjunction with the President, if a grant should be pursued, and if so, its structure, goals and success measures.
 - Drafting a paper that makes the case for a grant.
 - Leading strategic planning sessions, with potential focal issues including theory of change, model codification, opportunities for growth and funding if a grantee needs this support.
 - Building strong relationships with key stakeholders and engaging them as collaborators in potential grants.
 - Developing or refining a strategic, business and/or implementation plans in partnership with the organization, encouraging both creativity and rigor as it identifies its own goals.



- Maintain strong working relationships, effective communication and a high level of mutual trust with grantees to meaningfully contribute to their multi-year success by:
 - Providing general problem-solving support.
 - Helping them execute against and refine their strategic plans.
 - Building their capacity through coaching and wide-ranging assistance in eliminating barriers to success.
 - Collaborating with partners and co-investors and creating leverage beyond the actual funds awarded.
- Develop and implement strategies to source innovative ideas that could be nurtured or incubated through competitions, prize grant structures, etc.
- Work collaboratively with sister organization, Strategic Grant Partners on sourcing, strategy and grantee development.
- Track grantees progress in relation to their goals and relative to JFF's broader portfolio and strategy. Build perspective through site visits, data collection, evaluation and candid conversations. Keep the President apprised of grantee progress and seek assistance as needed to ensure grantee success.
- Evolve and refine JFF's education strategy to ensure substantive progress is made against our goals.
- Represent JFF at meetings, conferences and other events.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The hurdle to become a JFF grantee is high, and the Education Director must embody this high standard for excellence, rigor, passion and commitment.

Qualified candidates will possess:

- Deep expertise in education reform. Experience in advocacy and policy, a plus.
- Operating experience in a nonprofit or for-profit organization.
- Extensive strategic-planning experience; experience at a top-tier consulting firm helpful.
- Proven ability to manage team members and to manage productive external relationships.
- Out-of-the-box thinking with facile, creative problem-solving capabilities and a strong willingness and inclination to act; someone who thrives in an environment of change.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct research and to analyze, interpret 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, particularly in education. Demonstrated ability to collaborate effectively and to interact with diverse organizations.
- Acute prioritization skills and structured thinking abilities.



- A love of learning and self-reflection; a strong curiosity about a multitude of subjects.
- Self-motivation and a proactive attitude; the ability to work independently, take initiative, break down barriers and solve problems. Willingness and desire to “get your hands dirty.” JFF is a flat and lean organization that prides itself on getting the job done as efficiently as possible.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and attention to detail.
- Solid computer skills including Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Graduate degree, particularly MBA, preferred.

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 JFF’s search firm, The Dubrof Group, at JFFEdDir@dubrof.com. Applications should include a letter of interest and resume in MSWORD. Please indicate in your cover letter where you learned of the opportunity. **NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.** Please note that only those candidates invited for screening will be contacted.