

**The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation**  
**Research & Evaluation Officer, College Access and Success Program**  
Omaha, Nebraska

## **ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

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The **Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation** is seeking a **Research and Evaluation Officer** to support the **College Access and Success Program** for immediate hire. The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation is a private grant-making foundation based in Omaha, Nebraska. With assets in excess of \$3 billion, it is among the largest foundations in the United States. The Foundation's College Access and Success (CAS) Program enables underserved populations in Nebraska to attend college in-state at no cost. Scholarship support provided by the CAS Program is the Foundation's longest-standing initiative, reflecting its commitment to equal access to higher education. The Foundation's other programs support access to family planning services and reproductive choice, in the U.S. and globally.

A hallmark of the Foundation's culture is to constantly challenge itself and grantees to "think big" while doing so critically and carefully – by questioning, testing, learning, and putting that learning to use. The Foundation has built an environment in which staff are not afraid to fail or change course in light of new information. Moreover, the Foundation approaches investments as partnerships, which they pursue thoughtfully and with humility.

The Research and Evaluation Officer (REO) would be an integral member of the R&E Unit, with a focus on supporting the College Access & Success team program. The Foundation is committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion through its programs, collaborations, and research, as well as in the workplace.

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

The Research & Evaluation Unit drives learning across the Foundation by providing technical support and guidance to the U.S., Global, and College Access and Success Programs. The R&E Unit enhances the quality and effectiveness of the Foundation's grant-making by guiding research and evaluation idea-generation and conceptualization, helping partners think through methodological and analytic approaches, and providing strategic guidance on the utilization of evaluation results. Typical R&E tasks include providing technical assessments and study design recommendations; helping Programs and grantees formulate research questions and hypotheses; and analyzing data in support of programmatic decision-making. Additionally, the R&E Unit is engaged with the Programs to commission expert external evaluators to assess the potential impact of major areas of grant-making. As a part of this effort, the Unit serves as the technical interface between external evaluators, Program staff, and grantees. The R&E Unit itself does not carry out original research, conduct evaluations of Foundation projects, or publish original research.

The R&E Unit values diversity and is working to incorporate an equity lens into the way it works internally and externally. The Unit is committed to creating a physical and intellectual environment that is welcoming and values different perspectives and experiences. In recent evaluations, all partners were included in regular communications, mutual decision-making on the evaluation design, and open discussion regarding the dynamics of the relationship and the best way for everyone to work together.

## **COLLEGE ACCESS & SUCCESS PROGRAM**

The CAS Program awards over 1,000 new scholarships to Nebraska high school students each year. The Program also supports the Thompson Scholars Learning Communities at the three University of Nebraska (NU) campuses, which are living and learning environments for scholarship recipients at NU. The CAS Program oversees the scholarship award process; collaborates with community partners and stakeholders; and ensures that underserved populations across Nebraska can take advantage of the opportunity to apply for a scholarship. Since its inception, the scholarships provided by the CAS Program have supported over 10,000 Nebraska students through college.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE RESEARCH & EVALUATION OFFICER**

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The R&E Unit is eager to bring on board a Research and Evaluation Officer with an exclusive focus on supporting the work of the CAS Program. Reporting to the Director of Research and Evaluation, the REO will:

### ***Provide strategic guidance and technical expertise to the CAS Program.***

The REO will partner with the CAS Program team to maximize its ability to make data-driven decisions. S/he/they will answer programmatic research questions using Foundation resources and data and identify when external resources are needed. S/he/they will also provide technical assessments and recommendations to the CAS Program team related to study design, methodologies, and analytic approaches. Related work of the REO will include: developing and reviewing new study proposals and related documents; providing administrative feedback on financial and narrative reports and contracts; conducting quantitative analyses on internal scholarship application data; cleaning, packaging, and sharing internal scholarship application data collected during students' application process with external research partners; preparing written reports and presentations documenting internal analyses; and facilitating discussions about findings from internal data analyses and external studies.

### ***Monitor and leverage learning across research studies.***

The REO will oversee research studies carried out by external partners, ensuring that they meet milestones and objectives and that their work products meet the Foundation's high standards. S/he/they will provide technical feedback on manuscripts and presentations. S/he/they will advise the research teams on research design and instrument development and ensure that the right questions are being asked throughout the course of the studies. Additionally, the REO will facilitate opportunities to bridge relationships with external partners and leverage learning across studies.

### ***Steward relationships with external evaluation partners and college stakeholders.***

The REO will help foster a collaborative relationship between evaluation partners and college stakeholders. S/he/they will model clear and transparent communication and ensure that the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are reflected in all partner engagement.

### ***Share CAS Program lessons learned with the education sector.***

The REO will identify opportunities to disseminate key lessons from the Foundation's work. S/he/they will review relevant academic and policy-related literature on educational equity, access to higher education for underserved students, college retention and graduation, and other related subjects. S/he/they will engage in relevant networks and attend conferences and meetings on higher education topics. S/he/they will also assist in planning and coordinating research meetings with external partners and college stakeholders.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- A commitment to ensuring equal access to higher education and creating opportunities for underserved populations.
- A commitment to the values of racial justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and an interest in engaging with colleagues and partners from an array of racial/ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, ages, cultures, nationalities, genders, and sexual orientations; ability to articulate personal dedication to racial justice and equity.
- Expertise/knowledge of higher education systems (e.g., organization, structure, governance, social contexts) and working with underserved populations preferred.
- At least one-year post-doctoral or a master's degree and three years professional experience designing and conducting research and/or evaluation experience in education or a closely related field.
- Strong quantitative analysis skills, including an understanding of the concepts and applications of descriptive and inferential statistics, regression analysis, and experimental design. Fluency with modern statistical packages (e.g., Stata, SAS, R, SPSS) and experience programming in statistical packages is preferred.
- Strong qualitative analysis skills, including an understanding of design and analysis of interviews, focus groups, and document content analysis.
- Exposure to or understanding of Learning Communities or Improvement Networks preferred.
- Excellent writing, editing, analytic, and oral communication skills, including the ability to collect, review, synthesize, and present information and findings to diverse audiences with myriad perspectives.
- A proactive and engaging personality and an interest in seeking out answers and connections. Demonstrated ability to work closely with team members, establish relationships, and promote a sense of community.
- Intellectual curiosity and an ability to succeed in a demanding environment. Personal integrity, high professional standards, and an ability to establish mutual accountability and respect.
- Energetic, collaborative, flexible style. Strong emotional intelligence. Sense of humor and collegiality
- A willingness to travel as needed, with an expectation of approximately 15-20%.

***Please note that non-U.S. citizens must have a valid U.S. residential or work permit.***

## WHAT WE OFFER

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The Foundation offers a unique opportunity to engage with talented and passionate staff and partners from around the world. Staff have flexibility to ensure a healthy work/life balance within a friendly and non-bureaucratic environment. The Director of Research and Evaluation creates opportunities for professional growth and development, finding new ways for staff to continuously expand their learning. Salary is

competitive and commensurate with experience. The Foundation offers a full and generous benefits package, including medical/dental insurance and a retirement program. Relocation benefits are available.

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and actively seeks individuals who can offer broader perspectives to our organizational thinking and culture. We value all dimensions of diversity and seek to model the equity and inclusion that we want to see in the world.

## TO APPLY

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The Foundation is conducting this search with assistance from Allison Kupfer Poteet, Cara Pearsall, and Catherine Seneviratne of [NPAG](#). Candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Please send a detailed cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position to: [stbf-reofficerCAS@nonprofitprofessionals.com](mailto:stbf-reofficerCAS@nonprofitprofessionals.com). In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

The R&E team is committed to establishing an equitable process for soliciting applications, advancing candidates, and extending offers of employment. As part of the application process, top candidates will have the opportunity to have a “culture interview” with a Foundation staff member who is not directly involved in the hiring process. The purpose of this meeting is to give candidates an opportunity to learn about Omaha and the Foundation’s work culture in a relaxed, pressure-free environment.

*STBF is an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or belief, disability, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by law. Black, Indigenous, Latino<sup>[1]</sup> and other people of color, and LGBTQ people are strongly encouraged to apply.*

[1] Although not explicitly included here, R&E acknowledges that “Latinx” and “Latine” are terms used to denote gender neutrality.