



**Program Officer – Mississippi & New Orleans Programs
Jackson, Mississippi**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), a leading philanthropic force helping communities create the conditions children need to thrive, is seeking nominations and applications for a Program Officer for its U.S. Southern Programs, serving Mississippi and New Orleans. In recent years the foundation has sharpened its focus on improving conditions for vulnerable children, concentrating on three key factors of success and their intersections: education and learning; food, health and well-being; and family economic security. WKKF partners closely with community stakeholders and policy makers to co-create a network of organizations working together to advance economic stability, racial equity, and community and civic engagement, while increasing access to quality education, healthy food, and medical care for children and families in need.

Working in partnership across the two team offices for U.S. Southern Programs led by Director Rhea Williams-Bishop and with WKKF national staff, the Program Officer will provide leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of program efforts that nurture opportunities for achieving positive systemic change for better education, health, and economic outcomes for children and their families throughout Mississippi and New Orleans. The Mississippi & New Orleans team works in offices in Jackson and New Orleans and is a critical place-based team at the foundation. Particular areas of interest related to WKKF priorities include early childhood and education systems, employment equity, racial equity and equitable economic development. The Program Officer will screen and recommend grants for funding, conduct site visits, manage and monitor a portfolio of grant programs aligned with the foundation's strategic framework, and collaborate within the programs team and across the foundation to develop a more interdisciplinary approach to grantmaking. The Program Officer will maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees and act as a spokesperson for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, effectively communicating the foundation's goal of partnering with communities to improve the well-being of children and their families.

The ideal candidate will have expertise and leadership experience in the areas of early childhood education, maternal and child health, employment equity, or economic development, and will be committed to the values and mission of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Familiarity and experience with the grantmaking process is a plus. She/He/They will have a deep and comprehensive understanding of program execution and development. The Program Officer will have the cultural fluency to curate a portfolio reflective of needs of leaders in Mississippi specifically, and to be responsive to local mores and longstanding grassroots leaders. She/He/They will possess a strong team orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to adapt quickly to change, and success working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds.

The search is being conducted with assistance from Katherine Jacobs and Erica Nicole Richardson of NPAG. Please see application instructions at the end of this document.



HISTORY AND MISSION

In 1930, breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg donated \$66 million in Kellogg Company stock and other investments “to help people help themselves,” launching the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The foundation began its work in Michigan, but by the 1940s had expanded its work internationally and was breaking ground in areas such as rural children’s health, “mainstreaming” children with disabilities, and the development of the healthcare profession. By its 50th anniversary, the foundation was among the world’s largest private philanthropic organizations. Its mission reflects the foundation’s core priorities of thriving children, working families, and equitable communities, and the dynamic connection between the three:

“The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.”

To advance this mission, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation created a framework supported by an innovative matrixed organizational design to prioritize investment decisions and maximize effectiveness toward achieving the desired ends and improvements for children and their families. This new framework supports disciplined choices toward targeted outcomes and stronger alignment across programs. It is a focused and networked approach to strategic programming that relies on close cross-foundation collaboration and agile teams to leverage human capital and knowledge resources to positively impact vulnerable children, families, and communities. Across bodies of work, the foundation implements an array of change-making tools – grantmaking, impact investing, contracting, networking, and convenings – to ensure progress. A commitment to racial equity, community engagement, and leadership development are woven into each endeavor as essential to the creation of a social context in which all children can thrive, particularly the most vulnerable.

For more information on WKKF, please visit: www.wkkf.org.

THE U.S. SOUTHERN PORTFOLIO: MISSISSIPPI & NEW ORLEANS

The foundation’s relationship with grantees in Mississippi and New Orleans dates back to 1942, and is rooted in eliminating educational disparities, poor health outcomes, pockets of poverty, and the enduring racial inequities that impeded children’s healthy development and limit opportunities for their parents. Grants in Mississippi are concentrated in the cities of East Biloxi, Jackson and Sunflower County. The foundation’s work in New Orleans intensified in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, as they joined those rebuilding the city. Grants are made New Orleans-wide through a racial equity lens; focusing investments on creating a *child-centered city* with high quality early-education and child care, engaged parents and community, healthy food and safe communities, and economically secure families.

Grantee Highlights:

Healing with a Groove (Delta State University)

Launched in 2013, Healing with a Groove uses music to facilitate opportunities for young men of color in the Mississippi Delta to learn songwriting, audio engineering and music technology through the creation and production of original musical works that promote racial healing and understanding.

**Community Foundation of Greater Jackson, LLC**

This partnership helps to advance the goals of Better Together Commission by creating a core supporting structure to provide management and oversight of an education transformation initiative for Jackson Public Schools.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History encourages in-depth learning and engagement in celebration of the National Day of Racial Healing by supporting admission to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, Museum of Mississippi History and Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center.

Best Babies Zone Hollygrove, LA

BBZ is a collaborative, “place-based” effort to bring together four sectors – health care, early care and education, economic development and community systems – to address the social determinants of health and improve birth outcomes.

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

This partnership increases the number of workshops and trainings for educators to build skills regarding effective family engagement strategies and assists low-income children and children of color in New Orleans with improving reading achievement levels by supporting the PRIME TIME program and Full Circle Network.

Liberty’s Kitchen, Inc

This partnership enables the organization to achieve its mission of providing youth in New Orleans a path to self-sufficiency through food service-based training, leadership and work-readiness programs by providing general operating support.

For more information on W.K. Kellogg Foundation, please visit: www.wkkf.org.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE PROGRAM OFFICER

The new Program Officer will join an extraordinary team of individuals who are passionate about eradicating social disparities and improving well-being for all children. She/He/They will also be part of a closely connected cross-disciplinary team executing the foundation’s place-based work that spans across Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Orleans, Haiti, and Mexico. WKKF place-based teams strive to improve conditions across these diverse places by sharing best practices and aligning resources, approaches, and assessment of grantmaking to drive solutions for systemic social change.

The new Program Officer for Mississippi & New Orleans can expect to engage in the following challenges and opportunities:

- ***Provide leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of program efforts that are aligned and integrated with the unified mission and vision of the foundation.*** The new Program Officer will develop a strong network of key stakeholders, policymakers, community leaders, and grantees that support the foundation’s mission and inform and advance its work in Mississippi and New Orleans. She/He/They will expand and deepen the foundation’s work in early childhood education, economic development, maternal and child health, racial equity, and/or employment equity, shaping the work and supporting communities to enhance the well-being of children and families in the region.



- ***Collaborate with and support prospective and existing grantees in developing funding strategies, requests, and plans with a focus on change making relevant to policy and advocacy.*** The Program Officer will provide robust technical assistance to grantees including conducting site visits and consulting on model development, partnership negotiations, leadership capacity building, and coaching. She/He/They will use culturally sound public and interpersonal communication strategies to model and strengthen formal and informal engagements with grantees. She/He/They will identify and recommend grantmaking opportunities that leverage WKKF investments for maximum impact in creating systemic change and maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees, ensuring mutual understanding of WKKF program direction, goals, and expectations.
- ***Create learning communities and collaborative networks amongst grantees and partners, develop and manage learning and evaluation components for grants, and cultivate a wide breadth and depth of knowledge about trends, practices, and issues relevant to early childhood education, economic development, racial equity, maternal and child health, and/or employment equity.*** The Program Officer will work closely with WKKF's Learning and Impact team to incorporate assessment components into program efforts to measure progress and impact. She/He/They will document and circulate lessons learned from grant investments, networking meetings, and other foundation-related activities. She/He/They will work collaboratively to identify and prioritize the highest value knowledge and learning from the foundation's grant investments and networking meetings.
- ***Build public and policy goodwill and awareness of issues affecting vulnerable children and families.*** The program officer will recognize that learning is a multi-directional process and will approach internal and external relationships with a learning posture. She/He/They will collaborate across the foundation and with the communications team to cultivate and share the foundation's knowledge and learning among peers, grantees and other key audiences. The Program Officer will serve as a credible, articulate representative and spokesperson for the foundation and will communicate the foundation's strategic direction and funding interests to various audiences, internal and external to the foundation.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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

- A minimum of eight years of significant relevant work experience in early childhood education, economic development, racial equity, or employment equity; familiarity in maternal and child health and experience with the grantmaking process are a plus; Master's degree in a field relevant to the portfolio is preferred;
- Demonstrated flexible, multidisciplinary thinking required to address key issues facing children and families in the region: infant mortality, poverty, un/underemployment, racial discrimination; and the drive to shape and inform the work based on the immediate issues and opportunities found in communities; understanding of the broad social and economic forces that affect communities and families and shape programming efforts; holistic and multi-dimensional approach to leadership development, organizational change, and community transformation;
- Sophisticated understanding of educational and economic disparities in Mississippi and its related policy landscapes and the enduring legacy of racism; ability to navigate successfully the different legal, social, and political forces at play through the federal, state, and local governance systems in Mississippi; and/or



knowledge of financial systems and economic mobility policy and practices that leverage diverse models and effective strategies for economic security particularly among underserved communities;

- Expertise in philanthropy's role in policy development to sustain program success and the current trends, movements, and best practices in developing policy to advance and magnify philanthropic investment and capitalize on emerging opportunities;
- Extensive and nuanced cultural fluency with deep, trust-filled relationships in relevant communities across the region served by U.S. Southern Programs. Experience collaborating with grassroots leaders and clear understanding of the needs of local constituencies.
- Capacity to develop and implement impactful programs and effectively communicate conceptual program frameworks to grant-seekers and trustees; deep and comprehensive understanding of program design and development, systems, networking, and community change;
- Demonstrated success in forging and stewarding partnerships with the private sector, government agencies, foundations, policymakers and stakeholders in economic development, education, and community organizations in support of children and families;
- The knowledge and sensitivity to effectively work with and support vulnerable communities including appreciation for historical context, discernment of relationship nuances and power dynamics, and understanding of social, racial, and ethnic realities;
- Demonstrated ability to develop and implement programs that have impact; ability to think globally while working locally, representing WKKF to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way and with a selfless manner focusing on values and the greater good;
- Successful experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team and working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds; willingness to set aside a personal agenda in favor of organizational and/or community goals and objectives;
- Strong relationship building and communication skills; the ability to have authentic dialogue around sensitive issues including funding priorities, WKKF expectations, and community concerns; highly developed emotional intelligence and active listening skills, and the ability to use interpersonal and political skills in collaborative, diplomatic ways;
- Excellent writing, editing, analytical, and oral communication skills including the ability to collect, review, synthesize, and present information and findings;
- Ability to multitask and meet deadlines within designated timeframes, as well as demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities; strong organizational skills and exceptional attention to detail with the ability to work both independently, take initiative, and contribute ideas for enhancing performance;
- An optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, and patience necessary to work within a transformative environment; and

Ability to travel approximately 50 percent time is required; regular attendance on-site at the Battle Creek headquarters to facilitate interaction and synthesis of the grantmaking programs is required.



APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

This search is being assisted by Katherine Jacobs and Erica Nicole Richardson of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of the search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format) and where you learned of the position should be sent to: WKKF-POSP@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 W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.