

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Director, Systems Change
Battle Creek, Michigan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a leading national philanthropy helping communities create the conditions children need to thrive, is seeking nominations and applications for a **Director of Systems Change**. In recent years, the foundation has sharpened its focus on improving conditions for vulnerable children. Systems Change investments constitute the foundation's national body of work that advances the mission of the foundation in three key focus areas: thriving children, working families, and equitable communities.

Working in close partnership with the Vice President for Program Strategy, the director will oversee the foundation's work to influence and promote conditions that lead to transformational and systemic change for children and families. This work includes strategy implementation, priority setting, collaboration and knowledge sharing across the foundation with other directors, and relationship development with grantees, external partners and stakeholders.

The ideal candidate will be a visionary leader with deep knowledge of the role philanthropy can and should play in systems change, including and especially the dismantling of structural racism. He/she/they will have significant experience in grantmaking strategy with a specialty in content areas that target the wellbeing of children. Economic equity, food systems, education quality and health equity are preferred areas of expertise grounded in the foundation's DNA of community engagement, leadership and racial equity. The new director will also be a seasoned manager skilled in empowering highly talented individuals to seek out innovative ways to drive toward the mission. He/she/they will have experience in program alignment and evaluation and will leverage their expertise into knowledge sharing opportunities across the foundation.

Success in this role requires significant leadership experience (10+ years) in regional or national grantmaking, an anti-racist approach to the work of grantmaking and a demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for emergent trends in grantmaking. The ideal candidate will be an innovative, energetic leader, who is excited about the opportunity to balance work as a senior manager, strategist and thought-partner. He/she/they will be a talented communicator who is able to build rapport, trust and transparency internally and externally. The director will build positive relationships especially among the grantmaking team while acting as a bridge between program staff and senior leadership. He/she/they will be a strong public communicator who seeks knowledge, first and foremost, from grantees but also engages in thought-partnership with national partners and stakeholders.

This search is being conducted by [NPAG](#). Application instructions can be found at the end of this document.

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

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.

SYSTEMS CHANGE PARTNERSHIPS

Children are at the heart of everything at the Kellogg Foundation; with the goal of lasting, transformational change for children. As the sixth leading grantmaker in the US, WKKF recognizes that children live in families and families live in communities. Therefore, the foundation’s areas of focused work – thriving children, working families and equitable communities – are dynamic and always interconnected.

Achieving strong outcomes for children happens by connecting what families need – at home, in childcare settings, at school, at work and in their communities. As a foundation, WKKF uses a variety of change-making tools – grantmaking, impact investing, networking and convening. With the support of the Systems Change team, and in partnership with other areas of the foundation, grantees and partners create conditions that lead to transformational and structural change for children and their families.

The Systems Change team manages national grantmaking for the foundation, which focuses on the three essential and interconnected areas of the foundation’s work:

- **Thriving Children:** WKKF supports a healthy start and quality learning experiences for all children.
- **Working Families:** WKKF invests in efforts to help families obtain stable, high-quality jobs.
- **Equitable Communities:** WKKF wants all communities to be vibrant, engaged and equitable.

The program officers of the Systems Change team work together to partner with leaders across the country to create impact in each of these program areas.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NEW DIRECTOR

The new director will join and lead an extraordinary team of individuals passionate about improving the wellbeing of children through partnerships that advance healthy families, equitable communities, high quality early childhood education and racial equity. This is a national team that is closely connected to place-based work that spans across Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Orleans, Haiti, and Mexico. The new Director of Systems Change will lead the grantmaking strategy and team development through the following challenges and opportunities:

Lead grantmaking strategy across Systems Change portfolio

The new Director of Systems Change will collaborate with program officers in three program areas (early childhood education, economic security and health equity [maternal child health, food systems and health access]) to ensure grant proposals meet the goals established within each area and align with the mission and values of the foundation (leadership, community engagement and racial equity). He/she/they will work with team members to implement approaches that promote innovative grantmaking, strategic alignment with other teams and internal efficiency from first points of contact with potential grantees to approval and on to execution.

Build and maintain robust relationships with leadership across foundation program areas

As the new director works within the Systems Change team he/she/they will also collaborate closely with vice presidents and directors across the foundation to promote cross-content knowledge development and transfer; ensure the work of the Systems Change team advances

programmatic goals; partner on strategy with the goal of grantmaking alignment and integration; and evaluate grantmaking performance and impact.

Manage a diverse and talented team of program officers across the Systems Change team

Given the interlocking nature of the program areas and teams within the foundation’s investments, the new director will need to model and execute interpersonal communication strategies that promote transparency and collaboration within and across teams. Success will rely on the director’s ability to develop robust, trustful relationships; cultivate opportunities for staff to share and deepen knowledge across the content areas; and foster a culture of accountability and rigor.

Represent the foundation to external stakeholders and grantees

The new director will be expected to engage the wider community in opportunities to partner on sector-wide engagements as well as campaigns to scale impact via strategic grantmaking alignment. He/she/they will also partner with the Vice President of Program Strategy to design the optimal speaking and conference calendar. The director will also spend significant time engaging with grantees within the Systems Change partnerships. In this capacity the director will serve as an ambassador to grantees, learning about their goals and impact, assessing their needs and guaranteeing transparency and responsiveness on behalf of the Systems Change team.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be first and foremost committed to the foundation’s mission and will have a deep and nuanced understanding of the structural forces that impact the wellbeing of children. She/he/they will be distinguished as a leader in regional or national philanthropy and a tested, successful manager.

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

- At least 10 to 15 years of progressive experience in grantmaking or a related field with demonstrated expertise in strategy development and priority-setting in support of the wellbeing of children, racial equity, economic equity, health equity, educational equity, or a related field;
- Experience shaping strategy in partnership with senior leadership and program officers with the ability to translate strategy into priorities and goals. A thorough understanding of how to leverage best practices in collaboration to achieve program alignment across an organization;
- 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 expertise and experience in innovative grantmaking practices including and especially program evaluation, strategic alignment, and grantee communication;
- 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;
- Exemplary public communication skills and experience participating in national and regional convenings as a panelist or keynote;
- 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 leading 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 with 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 40 percent of time; regular attendance on-site at the Battle Creek headquarters to facilitate interaction and synthesis of the grantmaking programs is required.

TO APPLY

More information about the W.K. Kellogg Foundation may be found at wkkf.org.

Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word or PDF format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to:

WKKF-DSC@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.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.