



Stranahan Foundation Seeks Applicants for Program Officer Position

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION OF STRANAHAN FOUNDATION GRANT MAKING PROGRAMS

The Stranahan Foundation was created in 1944 by brothers Frank D. and Robert A. Stranahan, founders of the Champion Spark Plug Company in Toledo, Ohio. Today, the Foundation continues as a family-governed Foundation, with a Board of Trustees comprised primarily of family members who are descendants of Frank and Robert. The Board also includes some non-family members whose expertise is especially beneficial to our work. A strong team of professional and administrative staff support the Board in advancing the Foundation’s philanthropic mission.

Headquartered in Toledo, Ohio, the Foundation’s grant programs are national in scope, supporting nonprofits in communities all across the country. As of 12/31/2019, Foundation assets totaled approximately \$105 million (unaudited) and grants (for all programs combined) totaled almost \$5.3 million.

Following are brief descriptions of our two core grant programs, which are the heart of our work:

1. **Early Childhood Education Grant Program** is the tightly focused and strategic arm of the Foundation’s philanthropy. Our vision is that all children birth to five, particularly low-income children, will experience high-quality learning in early childhood that puts them on a trajectory for success in school and life. To advance this vision, the Foundation seeks to elevate the quality of teaching and learning in early childhood settings through 3 distinct types of grants that support:
 - Growing the reach of exemplary early childhood providers to enable them to serve more children or share their effective practices with other providers in the field.
 - Expanding & replicating proven professional development models designed to improve the skills, knowledge, & practice of early childhood educators.
 - Developing, piloting, testing, & refining innovative approaches to improve the knowledge, skills & practices of early childhood educators.

The Foundation’s professional staff conduct national outreach (to like-minded funders and early childhood experts) to surface potential grant opportunities. The Early Childhood Education Committee determines which organizations to invite to submit full proposals. Professional staff manages the grant making process and conducts (with assistance from the Foundation’s early childhood consulting firm as needed) the research and analysis required for the Foundation to make informed funding decisions.

Please note: Grant applications to the Early Childhood Education grant program are “by invitation only”, and therefore this program is NOT included in the information provided on the Stranahan Foundation website.

2. **Community Stewardship Grant Program**, which engages family members and Trustees (called Community Stewards) in the grant making process alongside professional staff, and encompasses a broad range of grant making priorities that include the five interest areas of human services; physical/mental health; arts/culture; education; and ecological well-being. More detailed information regarding these five priority areas can be reviewed at: <https://www.stranahanfoundation.org/main/grantmaking-priorities/> . Potential grant opportunities are identified by our Community Stewards in their communities across the country. The Community Stewardship Committee then determines which of these potential applicants to invite to submit a full proposal. Professional staff manages the grant making process and conducts the research and analysis required in order for the Foundation to make informed funding decisions.

In addition to its two core grant programs, the Foundation also offers *Small Grants/Immediate Needs* opportunities (up to \$5,000), available only to current and prior grantees. More information regarding this program can be reviewed at [Small Grants Immediate Needs](#)

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT: PROGRAM OFFICER

The Program Officer is a professional staff position reporting to the Stranahan Foundation CEO. The Program Officer will have responsibilities in each of the Foundation's core grant making programs:

- **Early Childhood Education Grant Program:** In connection with this grant program, the Program Officer will:
 - Develop and maintain a working knowledge of issues, trends and potential funding opportunities that are aligned with the Foundation's vision and priorities for the Early Childhood Education grant program. The Program Officer will also engage with current grantees to develop an understanding of their work, how that work advances the Foundation's early childhood vision and priorities, as well as capture and synthesize trends across grantees.
 - As this knowledge base and understanding is developed, the Program Officer will ultimately be assigned the responsibility of managing the Early Childhood Education grant portfolio, which includes: (a) working with the CEO to conduct outreach (to like-minded funders and early childhood experts) to surface potential funding opportunities; (b) engaging Early Childhood Education Committee members (who are interested in doing so) in site visits or teleconference meetings with applicants; (c) conducting the research/analysis and preparing written reports required to provide the Foundation with information needed to make informed funding decisions; and (d) monitoring funded programs, and assessing/reporting on grantee progress and success.

The Program Officer will work closely with the CEO and the Foundation's Early Childhood consulting firm (which has deep expertise in early childhood education) to develop the required knowledge base and carry out the responsibilities related to the Early Childhood Education Grant Program.

- **Community Stewardship Grant Program:** In connection with this grant program, the Program Officer will:
 - Manage a portion of the Community Stewardship grant making portfolio, which includes: (a) engaging individual Community Stewards in site visits or teleconference meetings with new applicants that have been suggested by the Steward; (b) conducting the research/analysis and preparing written reports required to provide the Foundation with information needed to make informed funding decisions; and (c) monitoring funded programs and reporting on grantee progress.
 - The Program Officer will also be responsible for providing staff support and managing the grant portfolio for the Ecological Well-Being Focus Group, which is a special interest group (comprised of several Community Stewards) interested in environmental grant making. The Program Officer may, from time to time, assist the Eco Group in identifying potential funding opportunities.

The Program Officer will work closely with the Foundation's Community Stewardship/Grant Program Liaison in carrying out his/her responsibilities related to the Community Stewardship Grant Program.

For all grant programs, the Program Officer will ensure that agendas and all meeting background materials are prepared, accurate and disseminated in a timely manner to all grant committees and task forces in advance of their meetings/teleconferences.

OVERVIEW OF DUTIES

For the grant making portfolios that are assigned to the Program Officer, duties include:

- Interfacing with grant applicants and grantees in order to develop an understanding of their work, the issues they are addressing and the needs of the organization. The Program Officer will also assist applicants and grantees in understanding the Foundation's grant making priorities, the application process and reporting requirements;
- Reviewing and analyzing grant applicant proposals, project budgets and the organization's financials. The review process includes conducting research, such as: consulting with appropriate key informants; reviewing relevant printed and web-based materials and information on file at the Foundation; preparing agendas, facilitating and documenting site visit or teleconference/Zoom meetings with applicant organizations (and when applicable, Community Stewards or grant Committee members);
- Analyzing information collected during the research process, identifying key issues and preparing staff reports to advise the Foundation in making informed decisions;
- Attending all committee or task force meeting(s) in assigned program areas to discuss research findings/analysis;
- Ensuring that grants administration staff member is provided with information required for the grants management database, including summary of the purpose of each grant request and the appropriate categorization (in the database) for the type of project being proposed;
- Preparing grantee progress reporting questions for the report templates to be completed by approved grantees, and establishing the reporting schedule for approved grantees;
- Preparing information required for Grant Agreements, including beginning/ending dates for the grant period; the grantee progress reporting schedule and any special conditions;
- Monitoring of grantee progress and expenditure of grant funds by reviewing the interim and final grantee progress reports and project income/expense reports, and bringing any issues of concern to the immediate attention of the CEO. If needed, works with CEO and grantee to resolve identified issues of concern;
- Responding to questions from grantees regarding required content of progress reports, and communicating with grantees if additional information (beyond their written progress reports) is required;
- Preparing written reports (for the CEO, committee members and Trustees) on grantee progress (after grantee has completed one grant year).

Provide support to assigned grant committees and task forces:

- Ensures that all meeting background materials are prepared, accurate and disseminated in a timely manner to all grant committees and task forces in advance of their meetings/teleconferences, and that committees and task forces have all of the information required for informed decision-making. When assigned to do so, take notes during meetings and prepare minutes following the meeting.

Be prepared to serve as back up for the grants administration staff member if needed:

- The Program Officer will be cross-trained (with the grants administration staff member) regarding tasks and processes related to maintaining the grants management database, online grant application system and online review system. This cross training will enable the Program Officer to serve as back up in the event that the grants administration staff member is unexpectedly absent.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Bachelor's Degree required. Master's Degree preferred

Experience: 5 to 7 years of work experience in a relevant role. Ideal candidate would have prior experience serving in a Program Officer or similar grant making capacity for a foundation. Candidates with experience in a variety of grant making program areas that have included early childhood education will be given priority consideration.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

- Familiarity with the nonprofit sector and grant making processes
- Ability and excitement to work as a generalist with a grant program that spans a wide range of priority areas of interest (i.e. Community Stewardship includes the priority areas of human services; arts; education; physical/mental health; ecological well-being), while at same time possessing the desire to learn deeply about key issues, trends and funding opportunities related to the Foundation's strategic grant program (i.e. Early Childhood Education)
- Capacity to objectively review and assess grant proposals
- Strong facilitation, interviewing and active listening skills, and ability to synthesize learnings
- Familiarity with and ability to review/assess nonprofit budgets and financial reports
- Excellent research and analytical skills
- Strong written and oral communication skills, including the ability to explain and synthesize complex issues clearly and succinctly
- Desire to work collaboratively as part of a small team of professional and administrative staff
- Ability to work effectively with diverse groups of stakeholders, from the Foundation's Board of Trustees to small, grassroots nonprofits
- Self-starter, with the capacity to work independently
- Ability to manage and prioritize multiple responsibilities simultaneously and ensure that deadlines are met
- Strong organizational skills with attention to detail and understanding of how details fit into a bigger picture
- Commitment to continuous learning
- Flexible approach to the work, with the desire to adapt and learn new or different issues and program areas as priorities established by the Board change or evolve over time
- Possesses integrity, sound judgement and decision-making skills
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office software and general computer literacy

Travel: In the future, travel will be required (to locales across the country) to meet with grant applicants and participate in professional gatherings. Currently, staff travel is temporarily halted due to Covid-19.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The Stranahan Foundation offers a competitive salary commensurate with background and experience as well as a competitive benefits package

TO APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM OFFICER POSITION

Please provide a resume along with a cover letter explaining how your past work experience aligns with the requirements for this position. Cover letter and resume should be emailed to resumes@stranahanfoundation.org by noon Eastern on July 31, 2020.

No phone inquiries, please. We appreciate your understanding.