

Program Officer

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The [Powell Foundation](#) is a private family foundation dedicated to catalyzing progress in public education through bold and collaborative grantmaking and initiatives. Recognizing the importance of promoting conditions necessary for children and youth to thrive, the Foundation also invests in the arts, conservation, and human services. The Foundation prioritizes funding organizations that serve residents in Harris, Travis, and Walker Counties. The Foundation is incorporated in Texas and governed by a board of eleven directors comprised of two generations of the Powell family and three independent directors. It is served by a small staff located in Houston.

ABOUT THE POSITION

The Powell Foundation (PF) seeks an experienced non-profit professional to join our team as a Program Officer. The Foundation seeks to recruit individuals with superior interpersonal skills, a respectful and analytical approach to the work of grantees and partners, and a proven ability to work effectively as part of a team. The successful candidate will have a keen understanding of K-12 public education and an awareness of the role arts and conservation play in a holistic public education experience. They will also have exceptional skills in working and communicating effectively with others, empathy and understanding of the challenges faced by nonprofits, and a deep commitment to ensuring children and youth, particularly those furthest from opportunity, receive an excellent education and access to opportunities that prepare them for lifelong success. Together, the team of program officers, community partners and a hands-on, multi-generational family and its independent directors pursue quality grantmaking that enables communities to thrive through the distribution of more than \$20 million in grants per year. This position is based in Houston, Texas.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

The Program Officer's role includes the following:

Grant Portfolio Management

- Actively work to advance the Foundation's mission; develop, monitor, and evaluate a portfolio of grants designed to address key issues in K-12 public education, arts, and conservation.
- Maintain information about current and prospective grantees in the Foundation's grant management system to enable knowledge-sharing .
- Play a lead role in shaping the future direction and strategy of the K-12 public education portfolio.
- Proactively cultivate catalytic opportunities for the K-12 Public Education Portfolio that have the potential to foster positive change in the community and advance the Foundation's goals; conduct extensive outreach and rigorous due diligence to identify and support impactful grantees.
- Maintain the arts and conservation portfolios, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities, fostering relationships with grantees, and being responsive to opportunities for impactful investments.
- Consider the needs of grantee organizations and intentionally build and maintain relationships with existing

and prospective grantees; act as a trusted advisor to both new and existing grantees.

- Prepare grant recommendations and materials to support the Grant Committee's review and subsequently the Board's grantmaking decisions; prioritize grant requests in coordination with the Foundation's strategic priorities.

Evaluation, Impact, and Strategy

- Develop criteria and structures for measuring the quality and potential impact of grant requests; triangulate programmatic and organizational data from multiple sources to assess the strength of grant requests against the criteria.
- Monitor the progress and results of the Foundation's grantmaking initiatives; identify key learnings, take action, and make adjustments to improve results and amplify the Foundation's impact within its three geographies and four giving areas.
- Test key assumptions about the Foundation's grantmaking strategy and approach, incorporate lessons into future decision-making, and share key findings with the Foundation and the broader public.
- Contribute to various strategic projects, especially as it pertains to grantmaking strategies.

Learning and Leadership

- Engage with key leaders in the Foundation's fields of interest to develop and deepen programming ideas and initiatives.
- Connect and convene grantees, organizations, and colleagues in the sector to amplify knowledge sharing and impact.
- Provide thought leadership in the field, including sharing promising practices related to impact, sustainability, and scalability within the Foundation's giving areas; initiate Foundation-led convenings and collaboration opportunities.
- Explore and advance the Foundation's role beyond grantmaking, including serving as a capacity builder, convener, and catalyst to drive systemic change and amplify impact.
- Maintain strong, positive working relationships with the Board and family; be responsive to questions and provide assistance as needed.
- Lead other projects at the request of the Director of Program and Executive Director; participate in and execute other Foundation duties as assigned to support the team and organization.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCE DESIRED

The ideal candidate for the position will have at least 8 - 10 years of professional experience, including leadership at a systems level and a background of working collaboratively within a team. The successful candidate must demonstrate humility, strong communication skills, strong cultural competence, with a commitment to improving communities.

Specifically, the successful candidate will demonstrate:

- A strong commitment to the mission of the Powell Foundation and passion for the work of its grantees.
- Familiarity with the nonprofit, philanthropic, and/or foundation sectors within Houston, Austin, and/or

Huntsville.

- Depth of knowledge and expertise on various aspects of K-12 public education; appreciation for the arts, conservation, and their impact on the success of students in K-12 system.
- Experience working across systems to design and implement solutions and policies that drive sustainable, structural change and improve outcomes at scale.
- A drive to support a positive organizational culture conducive to learning, growth, and continuous performance improvement.
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills; communicates in a clear, concise, logical, accurate and grammatical manner (written and verbal) at all times.
- Strategic thinking and analytical skills to develop evidence-based theories of change and assess the soundness and alignment of grant requests.
- Ability to navigate ambiguity with confidence, synthesizing complex or unclear information to develop clear, strategic direction and actionable plans.
- A demonstrated track record of independently preparing high-quality materials for meetings.
- A “roll up one’s sleeves” attitude and an excellent customer service orientation.
- Strong project and time management skills; ability to think independently and initiate action; must thrive working under deadlines and handling multiple tasks without sacrificing attention to details
- Cultural competence and respect for the communities in which the Foundation impacts.
- An understanding of community context and key issues that play an especially acute role in public education and within the Foundation’s giving areas, including but not limited to disparities along lines of race, gender, income, language, and ability.
- An impeccable reputation for integrity and judgment; strong ethics and trustworthiness; ability to maintain confidentiality and use discretion.
- An orientation toward servant leadership, including strong active listening skills and the ability to tailor communications to diverse audiences.
- A proven background as a team player who strives to understand and deliver excellent customer service to internal and external customers.
- Self-awareness and growth mindset; commitment to being a lifelong learner and giving and receiving professional feedback in the spirit of growth and improved performance.
- A drive to consistently go above and beyond to achieve at high levels and inspire others to do the same.
- Comfort working in a small office environment.
- Proficiency in computer skills and familiarity with database systems.
- A Bachelor’s degree with at least 8-10 years of related work experience.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates should [apply here](#). **Letters of interest will be received until March 31, 2025.** Applications will be reviewed as they are received so early applicants will get a priority review. We will contact those candidates who most closely match the requirements. We thank you in advance for your interest.

The starting salary range for this position is \$105,000-\$115,000, depending on prior experience and skills. This is a full-time position (40 hours/week) based in Houston, with an appreciation for flexibility in schedule and work from home one day per week. A comprehensive benefits package, including paid medical, dental, and vision benefits; generous paid-time-off (PTO); a retirement savings plan with up to 4% match; and an annual professional development stipend, is offered to all full-time employees.