PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR: Program Officer

THE ORGANIZATION

The Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation (“Farash Foundation” or “Foundation”) is a private charitable foundation established in 1988 by Max and Marian Farash. The Foundation is dedicated to the civic and religious communities of its founders who believed in the importance of education and knew the power of entrepreneurial creativity. It strives to make long-term and meaningful contributions in Monroe and Ontario Counties and in Israel. The Foundation serves primarily as a grantmaking organization, with half of its grants supporting Jewish Life, and the other half supporting secular activities in the greater Rochester area. The Foundation places its highest priority on endeavors designed to transform the lives of individuals and the work of organizations. Since its transition to a professionally staffed organization in 2011, the Foundation has invested more than $70 million in grants and program support, and its assets total more than $255 million.

The Farash Foundation employs a busy staff of eight including two Program Officers who report to the Director of Grants and Programs. The Foundation has an external reputation for responsiveness and professionalism, and an internal reputation amongst staff for collaboration and a common drive to make a positive impact. Each staff member recognizes that the Farash Foundation is a business with the power to transform lives and organizations only when supported by an energetic, engaged team that exercises vigilance in the execution of assigned goals and responsibilities.

The Foundation strives to make its grantmaking as powerfully transformative as it can be in honor of its founders and in accordance with its mission. While the Foundation focuses more tightly on the programs its trustees believe hold high promise to be the most transformative, it continues to provide smaller grants to organizations whose ideas are evident and compelling. The Foundation is committed to improving the quality of Jewish life through investments in Jewish education, leadership development, synagogue life, Jewish agencies, summer camping and Israel teen travel. The Foundation also places an emphasis on select programs of social importance in Israel and elsewhere in the world. Since 2011, the Foundation has significantly enhanced the cohesiveness of the Rochester Jewish community and has invested more than $25 million in a vision to make Rochester a great city for Jewish life.

The Foundation has also contributed in excess of $25 million in secular giving which has a primary focus within three categories: education, entrepreneurship, and arts and culture, with additional support for emergency repair, disaster relief, and off-cycle giving. To honor the legacy of Max and Marian Farash, who believed in the critical importance of education and the act of giving back, the Foundation supports local organizations that help to build and educate their communities. The Foundation’s investment in Jewish life in Israel’s impoverished neighborhoods mirrors the support it provides within immediate Rochester communities.
THE OPPORTUNITY – transform the lives of individuals and the work of organizations

The selected Program Officer will lead activities within the assigned portfolio, helping to transform impactful ideas into reality. The importance of the Farash Foundation’s work within the civic and religious communities of its founders can’t be overstated. The Program Officer will develop an expertise in the complex, inter-related issues within grantee projects as assigned, building a fact-based point-of-view on the probability of success of grantee requests and related projects. The Program Officer will have the freedom to perform original research on assigned projects, asking the thought-provoking questions that often lead to promising new ideas for exploration.

The next Program Officer to join the Farash Foundation must possess and activate the following traits to succeed in the role:

Strategy
After joining the organization, the successful candidate will first team with the foundation’s Director of Grants and Programs, staff, the trustees, and the community to develop and execute a multi-year strategy for transforming the lives of individuals and the work of organizations within the assigned portfolio and beyond. Rather than simply responding to individual grantee requests, the Program Officer will focus on directing the foundation’s resources towards the ideas, initiatives and programs that best achieve the objectives of the foundation’s strategic plan. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to employ original thinking to solve complex social problems.

Subject-matter expertise
Curiosity, research, and a fact-based approach will be second nature to the successful Program Officer. He/She will seek out best practices in other communities, absorb ideas from conferences, and stay on top of current research and trends, serving as a subject matter expert for strategies that address systemic challenges and foster a thriving, inter-related community. An outstanding Program Officer will be willing to advocate for taking calculated risks in pursuit of meaningful, lasting change.

Engagement
The Program Officer will be a visible driver of community engagement, developing trusting relationships with community leaders. Transparency, consistency, and clear communication are the tools he/she will use to build trust with grantees and members of the community who are working on related issues. The Program Officer will first seek to understand the perspective of the individuals who run relevant organizations and programs and will then strive to personally contribute to a shared pool of understanding.

Discernment/Vigilance
Funding resources are limited. The Program Officer will be counted on to have a firm grasp of the concept, outcomes, sources and uses of funds and financial viability of all grantee requests. He/She will apply a balance of skepticism, optimism and common sense to determine which projects have the best chance of achieving stated goals. He/She must be equally skilled at communicating declines and approvals without damaging important relationships. The Program Officer must remain focused on providing the Grants Committee and the Farash Foundation board with all the information needed to make a sound decision on grant and distribution requests.
Project Management and Flexibility
The Program Officer will serve as the focal point for all new grantee requests, ongoing management of an existing grant portfolio, and management of any ad hoc projects that reside inside or outside of the assigned portfolio. He/She will guide grantees through the proposal process, including assistance with budget projections and a plan for accountability against grantee goals. The Program Officer will also collaborate with foundation staff to ensure for the continuation of timely, compliant and effective grants management processes. With dozens of grantees to manage, attention to detail and the ability to quickly shift from one project to another is a must.

Who should apply?

This role should be of particular interest to individuals who have a passion for leveraging curiosity, strategic thinking and project planning to dramatically improve the lives of people and the impact of organizations in our community and beyond. If you have a discerning nature, a fact-based approach to solving problems and an ability to synthesize and summarize complex societal issues, this role is worthy of your consideration.

GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – (in concert with the aforementioned traits in action)

- Within six months, meet with the leaders and relevant staff of organizations within the assigned grant portfolio as step one of developing transparent, trusting relationships
- Proactively research demographics, initiatives, programs and concepts that have the potential to make the largest positive impact on issues and challenges within the assigned portfolio.
- Work with the Director of Grants and Programs, staff and the Board of Trustees to develop and execute strategies that achieve Foundation goals for the assigned grant portfolio. Maintain a continuous feedback loop with management, recommending timely adjustments to the plan as needed.
- Identify and regularly consult with experts in peer organizations with similar grant portfolios in other regions to learn best practices.
- Master the Foundation’s grant management software, Fluxx, keeping the system current with meeting notes, relevant grantee/grants updates and project information at all times.
- Monitor the portfolio for grantee challenges and risks and proactively develop strategies for intervention and risk mitigation.
- Continuously scan the region for synergistic partnership opportunities that could accelerate or multiply the impact of the foundation’s positive impact in the community.
- Leverage the talents of board trustees to assist in community outreach and relationship development.
- Employ an unbiased, fact-based approach to preparing and delivering presentations on the merits and risks of new proposals, ideas and projects as well as existing grants within the portfolio.
- Team with staff to create new policies and procedures that improve the speed, efficiency and/or effectiveness of the Farash Foundation’s endeavors.
CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess the following:

- A Baccalaureate Degree in a relevant area of study is required; Master’s Degree is a plus.

- A deep familiarity with Jewish life and values and the capacity to serve as a thought leader who can contribute substantially to the betterment of the Jewish community, as well as a strong understanding of and appreciation for the Foundation’s commitment to its secular priorities of education and entrepreneurship.

- A track record for developing and successfully executing strategic plans that achieve desired outcomes.

- Proven experience with building collaborations between organizations that achieve desired results.

- Strong project management skills, with proven success in measuring project progress, simultaneously moving multiple projects to fruition and being held accountable for results.

- Experience driving results by influencing the activity of others without direct supervisory authority.

- A clear, concise verbal and written communication style.

- A track record for developing creative solutions to chronic problems.

- Unquestioned professional and personal integrity.

This description is not meant to be an all-inclusive list of duties and responsibilities but constitutes a general definition of position scope. The Farash Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. All aspects of employment, including the decision to hire, will be based on merit, competence, performance and business needs.

HOW TO APPLY/MAKE INQUIRIES:

If interested, please submit a cover letter and resume to Patty Phillips at patty@clarityracm.com. In your cover letter, please explain the basis for your interest in the position and highlight relevant experience for the role.

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