

## **Position Description Program Officer Bush Foundation**

The nationally recognized Bush Foundation, one of Minnesota's largest private foundations with \$845 million in assets, seeks a new Program Officer for their staff of twenty-two dedicated professionals. This Officer, a visionary strategic thinker with passion, drive, and creativity, will work together in a dynamic, congenial team environment to develop new ways of thinking in grantmaking, with the ultimate goal of strengthening vibrant communities and vital leadership.

### **Background**

In 1953, Archibald Granville Bush, chairman of the executive committee of the 3M Company, and his wife, Edyth Bassler Bush, brought their many philanthropic efforts into focus by establishing the Bush Foundation, based in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Foundation reflected their desire to respond to charitable and educational needs in Minnesota. As the Foundation grew, it expanded its focus to a variety of grant areas and its geographic scope to a three state region. Nonetheless, the founding impulse continues to drive the work of the Foundation. While the last fifty years have brought significant changes to the area—cultural, technological, economic and demographic—the core mission of the Bush Foundation has stayed on the course the Bush family originally established.

The Bush Foundation strives to improve the quality of life in its geographic region by making grants that help strengthen organizational, community, and individual leadership. Across its grantmaking programs, and in a variety of ways, the Foundation creates opportunities for people who may lack them. The Foundation pledges to fulfill its mission with integrity and respect for its grantees. The effectiveness of its activities is measured by hallmarks of enhanced leadership, sustained progress, and thriving communities. The Foundation is committed to identifying, developing, and fostering the vital leadership required to build and sustain vibrant communities. As a private, independent grantmaker, it invests its resources in those individuals and organizations that have strengthened and can continue to enhance its communities' well-being.

The Bush Foundation now serves regional communities as an independent grantmaker with a special focus on the needs of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota by making grants to nonprofit organizations and providing fellowships to individuals in those states. In 2005, the Foundation distributed \$2.9 million in individual fellowships and \$30.3 million in grants that ranged from \$50,000 to \$2 million. The distribution in grants included a \$5 million effort to support three historically black educational institutions (Tougaloo College in Mississippi and Xavier University and Dillard University in New Orleans) that suffered losses in the Gulf Coast disaster. Since 1953, the Foundation has provided almost \$700

million in grants to strengthen the work of nonprofit organizations in the areas of arts and humanities, education, and human services and health (including ecological health), and in fellowships to support the work of individual leaders, medical doctors, and artists. The Foundation has made efforts to strengthen leaders outside of urban centers, particularly in rural and tribal communities. In addition, the Foundation has supported out-of-region projects originating from or serving ethnic and racial minorities, such as the United Negro College Fund, historically black colleges and universities, and fully-accredited tribally-controlled colleges. The Bush Foundation is a member of the Minnesota Council on Foundations and the national Council on Foundations, subscribing to the Minnesota Council's Principles for Minnesota Grantmakers.

### **Current Situation**

The Bush Foundation has had a significant regional role in fostering vibrant communities and vital leadership. The Foundation has pioneered development of training programs for caregivers of infants and toddlers in each of the states in its region. It is nationally recognized for its work in faculty development at colleges and universities in the region, and at accredited tribal colleges and private historically black colleges and universities. It is also particularly known for its three Fellowship programs that provide grants to individuals for leadership development, artistic creativity, and medical programs that enhance the lives of those who live in the region.

A fifteen-member Board of Directors governs the Bush Foundation, with a President leading and managing the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. The President oversees a staff of 22 in the areas of program, business services, and administrative services. The Foundation's income derives from assets given by Mr. and Mrs. Bush in the early 1970's, primarily 3M stock. Since then the investment portfolio has been diversified and has grown to more than five times its original value. The market value of the Foundation's assets has increased to \$845 million as of March 30, 2006, up from \$732.45 million at November 30, 2004. Grantmaking in 2006 is currently projected at \$40 million.

The Bush Foundation is currently developing a more strategic approach to its grants. The Bush Foundation has put together strategies for weighing the merits of grant requests, looking at five specific attributes of communities: economic vitality, sustainable environments, health and well-being, arts, and cultural diversity. This shift is leading to a greater amount of impact grantmaking, where the Foundation looks to support new ideas and new ways of thinking, with the goal of strengthening communities.

### **Specific Role**

The new Program Officer is an exciting new position coming at a time when the Foundation is implementing a new strategic approach to grantmaking that will benefit the lives of families in the Northern Midwest and strengthen the collaborative efforts of local, state, and regional groups. This position reports directly to the President of the Bush Foundation, and

works closely with other program staff to identify, develop, and foster the work of grantees. For a detailed list of current grantees, please check the Foundation's website:

[www.bushfoundation.org](http://www.bushfoundation.org).

The Bush Foundation seeks a visionary strategic thinker with imagination, energy, and experience to contribute leadership in all aspects of the Foundation's "program work", including grant review, program development, planning, and assessment. The new Program Officer must be passionate about Bush goals, with a particular talent for creating and developing new initiatives for communities and gradually transforming its current practices to ones that are more strategic and goal-oriented. This official will work collaboratively in a vibrant, congenial team environment. This individual must have a deep understanding and empathy for people in all circumstances. To gain the trust of various and diverse communities, the Program Officer must be an exceptionally good listener and have strong networking abilities. The new officer should have outstanding writing and presentation skills, be articulate, able to be flexible in any type of environment, and capable of making dispassionate judgments.

Some of the duties of the Program Officer include:

- Participating in the Foundation's efforts in programmatic development, evaluation, and assessment;
- Reviewing proposals and writing memos summarizing the recommendations of the program staff;
- Supervising program consultants;
- Serving on a Letter of Inquiry team;
- Contributing to strategic planning initiatives related to these responsibilities;
- Taking responsibility for presenting selected areas of Bush work and outcomes to philanthropic colleagues, grantees, and the general public;
- Contributing to Foundation learning by sharing information from grant and professional experiences;
- Participating in staff meetings, convenings, and other group meetings to chart the directions of the Foundation.

### **Major Objectives**

The Bush Foundation expects the new Program Officer to accomplish the following major objectives over the next 12-18 months:

- Build and strengthen grantee communities in a manner consistent with the mission, goals, and strategic plan of the Bush Foundation;
- Help identify, develop, and foster innovative programs and services that nurture and support vibrant communities;
- Maintain an active intellectual and creative engagement in broad fields supported by the Foundation, in particular as these aid in advancing the mission and strategies of the Bush Foundation and its grantee communities.

## **Professional Qualifications**

The following qualifications are preferred in the new Program Officer:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university;
- Significant experience working in a nonprofit organization, a grantmaking foundation, or experience working as a partner with such organizations;
- Demonstrated success in recognizing and building networks of stakeholders in communities without regard to their socio-economic status;
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively as a team member and as a generalist, contributing to the growth and success of organizations;
- Strong analytical skills for evaluating strategic and operating plans for organizations and experience analyzing financial statements and organizational budgets;
- Ability to identify and evaluate areas or strategies where resources can have significant impact;
- Ability to combine research and advocacy with practical engagement in supporting local and regional initiatives and putting ideas and creativity to work in support of positive change;
- Proven self-starter and quick study who can work independently;
- Superb verbal and written skills, with an ability to listen to and to respond to a wide spectrum of grantees from different social and cultural backgrounds;
- Strategic thinker who is flexible and has sound judgment.

## **Personal Characteristics**

The following characteristics are preferred in the new Program Officer:

- A team-building, collegial approach to work;
- Unselfish with a congenial disposition;
- Interpersonal and communication skills remarkable for their clarity and accuracy;
- Drive, coupled with energetic, entrepreneurial leadership qualities;
- High degree of comfort working cooperatively and developing networks with people from different social and economic backgrounds, from the corporate boardroom to the local homeless shelter;
- Well-organized and self-sufficient, able to manage time and work under pressure;
- Healthy respect for colleagues and employees;
- Goal-oriented, project-oriented, and achievement-oriented;
- Personal and professional integrity and honesty;
- A warm, personal style with a good sense of humor.

## **Compensation**

An excellent and competitive compensation package is offered with salary negotiated, in part on qualifications and experience.

## **Application**

If you are interested in this exciting new opportunity, please forward a curriculum vitae and supporting material immediately to:

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## **Inquiries**

The Bush Foundation requests that all communications regarding this position be directed to the Boulware Group.