



van Beuren Charitable Foundation Program Officer

The van Beuren Charitable Foundation, based in Newport, Rhode Island, seeks to recruit a Program Officer.

Overview

vBCF van Beuren Charitable Foundation (vBCF) is a Rhode Island-based private family foundation dedicated to investing in the quality of life and quality of place on Aquidneck Island and surrounding communities. Guided by a Board of Directors comprised of van Beuren family members who have deep familiarity with the community, vBCF invests its grants across four portfolios that support Healthy Lifestyles for all residents, Strong Starts for children and youth, Community Prosperity generated by economic opportunity and planning for the future, and Excellence in the Commons - those shared landscapes and built environments critical to quality of life and quality of place.

In 2016, vBCF adopted a strategic framework that intentionally seeks connectivity between its priority program areas, supports learning and adaption, and increases emphasis on impact. As a place-based funder, the spirit of partnership with their grant partners is critical to their success. Since its founding in 1986 by John A. and Hope H. van Beuren, the Foundation has made over \$100 million in grants and is one of the largest private foundations in Rhode Island. Its grantmaking and operations are guided by the core values of the van Beuren family: integrity, community, collaboration, leadership, and innovation. The Foundation's assets have grown from \$100 million in 2009 to \$250 million in 2019. The Foundation is staffed by a small, dedicated team of professionals in a supportive, high performing culture that values collaboration, continuous improvement, and collegiality.

For more information on van Beuren Charitable Foundation, please visit:

www.vbcfoundation.org

The Position and Context

In support of the connected portfolio approach, program officers operate primarily as generalists, working across the four portfolios. Each member of the team has their own unique experience and skills that they bring to bear in support of the whole team. The types of grants the Foundation makes range from operating support, project/program, capital, and occasionally loans. The Foundation's grants support planning, implementation, and learning from the work. Because the Foundation seeks to have an impact at the community level, they encourage and support collaboration when appropriate.

The work of vBCF is currently supported by a team comprising an executive director, a senior program officer, a grants and business manager, and a grants and administrative assistant. Program officers report to the Executive Director, who also carries grants across the various portfolios. Program officers help build and manage the grants pipeline, maintain communications with their grant partners, and articulate to the board and external partners what they learn from the initiatives they support.

van Beuren Charitable Foundation is guided by the strategic thinking and coaching of an engaged and knowledgeable Board of Directors.

Responsibilities - The program officer responsibilities span planning and strategy, grantmaking, relationships and leadership.

- Work with the Executive Director and the rest of the team to coordinate the Foundation's competitive grantmaking process and grants monitoring.
- Assess and cultivate funding opportunities that are consistent with the Foundation's portfolio priorities through a process of reviewing proposals, site visits, and other community engagement.
- Evaluate proposals and present to grants team recommendations for action on funding requests based upon strategic fit with portfolios; conduct due diligence; prepare written recommendations for and make oral presentations to the Grants Committee of the Board of Directors; monitor progress of grants made.
- Maintain current records within the Foundation's database.
- Help ensure compliance with grantmaking standards and legal requirement.
- Conduct research and prepare analytical reports/briefing papers, and work on special projects as assigned.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director and grants team in developing grantmaking.
- Work closely with community organizations, local leaders, and other funders to identify opportunities for further investment, technical assistance, and collaboration as they relate to the Foundation's mission, funding priorities and interests.
- Stay abreast of developments and potential partners in fields of interest to the Foundation.
- Maintain knowledge about current trend/issues impacting the Foundation's portfolios.
- Work to support grant partner projects, including where appropriate and feasible, participating in meetings, reviewing drafts of reports, and connecting grant partners to other resources.
- When warranted, work with grant partners to facilitate communications and information sharing among them, encourage collaboration, and deepen knowledge of the field.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The Program Officer will ideally possess the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

Professional Experience

- A bachelor's degree is required; graduate degrees in relevant fields are welcomed. vBCF also values life and work experiences that enrich a candidate's perspective on the Foundation's mission.
- A strong record of achievement with a minimum five years of relevant experience.
- An understanding of nonprofit organizational development.
- Field experience in programmatic areas relevant to vBCF's grantmaking. Versatility and a breadth of experience across more than one program area is preferred. An ability to see the connections between the four portfolios is essential.
- Exceptional management skills, deadline management, sense of responsibility and accountability.
- High degree of cultural competence, and experience in building collaborative relationships with and across diverse constituencies.
- An understanding of the operation and role of foundations is helpful; prior grantmaking experience is not required.

Analytical Skills

- Superior analytic and writing skills, including the ability to assess and synthesize complex information into a clear, concise summary.
- Experience in reading financial statements, assessing an organization's health and effectiveness through qualitative reports and in-person conversations and site visits.
- Intellectual curiosity, research, and networking skills.
- Informed judgement in the planning, design, development and evaluation of programs and/or real estate.
- Ability to monitor, analyze and visually depict impact, trends, and research—and translate into strategic recommendations.

Collaboration and Communication Skills

- Demonstrated ability to work nimbly and collaboratively as part of a team with a high volume of work.
- Ability to work comfortably and develop relationships with people who hold diverse perspectives.
- Fluency in Spanish is a plus.

Working Conditions and Physical Effort

- Ability and willingness to travel for site visits and other meetings (largely in Rhode Island, but occasionally also in New England and New York City)
- Staff operates out of the Foundation’s Newport office, located in a new open-plan workspace on the city’s historic waterfront.
- There are occasional evening meetings and out-of-town travel that may require weekend departures or arrivals.
- Program staff spend a substantial amount of time out in the community, engaging with partners and grantees.

Compensation and Benefits

The Foundation offers competitive compensation commensurate with experience, professional development opportunities, and an excellent benefits package. vBCF employment decisions are based on merit and business needs.

How to Apply

Qualified candidates should submit a resume and cover letter in Word or PDF format responding specifically to the experience and qualifications being sought to: Daniel Sherman, President, Explore Company at resumes@explorecompany.com. Refer to vBCF/PO in the subject line. No phone inquiries please.

van Beuren Charitable Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and invites individuals who bring a diversity of culture, experience, and ideas to apply.

All correspondence will remain confidential.