Announcement:
Program Officer position
van Beuren Charitable Foundation, Newport RI

About 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 our grant partners is critical to our 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, we 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 our grant partners, and articulate to our board and external partners what we learn from the initiatives we 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.

1. 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 requirements
   • 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 strategies that will have a strong impact on the foundation’s portfolios

2. 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

Important Skills and Qualifications
Education/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.

Application Process

To apply please send a PDF cover letter and resume to elynn@vbcfoundation.org with “PROGRAM OFFICER (Last Name)” in the subject line, no later than February 7, 2020. Only applications submitted to this address will be considered. vBCF will treat applications in a confidential manner.