



Learning Officer New York, NY

Executive Summary

The Ford Foundation seeks applications and nominations for the position of Learning Officer to join the Office of Strategy and Learning to facilitate and support cross-programmatic learning at the Ford Foundation, and to contribute to organization-wide efforts that enhance an internal culture of learning. The Learning Officer will also support and strengthen the Foundation's thought leadership and service to the fields of philanthropy and social justice.

Founded in 1936, the Ford Foundation is guided by a vision of social justice to address the underlying drivers of inequality, which it sees as the defining threat of our time. With headquarters in New York and ten regional offices across the globe, the Foundation stewards a \$12 billion endowment, making over \$500 million in grants annually and across a range of areas such as civic participation, arts and journalism, and natural resources management.

In 2016, the Ford Foundation formally established the Office of Strategy and Learning (OSL), demonstrating its commitment to building and sustaining a culture of learning across the organization. The OSL team provides critical support to the program teams on strategy development and refinement and drives organization-wide learning to advance the Foundation's social justice mission of reducing inequality. Reporting to and working closely with the Director of Strategy and Learning, the Learning Officer will develop and lead a range of activities including curating learning events and facilitating cross-programmatic discussions, serving as a critical thought partner to the program teams.

The ideal candidate is a seasoned facilitator with deep experience developing learning agendas in a fast-paced, complex environment across a wide spectrum of issues. They will demonstrate strong command of adult learning methods, a commitment to social justice, and extensive knowledge of the field of US-based and international grantmaking, with a particular focus on the Global South. The Learning Officer will be a dynamic and engaging influencer with highly effective relational skills, superior intuition, and judgment to effectively support the work of a range of internal and external stakeholders.

The Ford Foundation has retained the assistance of Allison Kupfer Poteet and Cara Pearsall of the national search firm NPAG in this recruitment effort. Instructions on how to submit nominations and applications can be found at the end of this document.

For more information on the Ford Foundation, please visit the Ford Foundation website, www.fordfoundation.org.

Advancing a Culture of Learning

Since its establishment in 2016, the OSL team has played a critical role in supporting programs on strategy development and driving learning among program teams. The Learning Officer will strengthen Ford's culture of learning by supporting programs to draw lessons from inside and outside the foundation in



order to refine Ford's work, build on empirical evidence to understand how social change happens, and in turn share lessons back out with the field.

Opportunities and Challenges for the Learning Officer

Reporting to and working closely with the Director of Strategy and Learning, the Learning Officer will work with program teams to develop, curate, and lead a range of activities that support a culture of learning and continuous growth and disseminate learning with the field. They can expect to engage the following core opportunities and challenges:

- Facilitate and support cross-programmatic learning at Ford. This includes supporting communities of practice, task forces, convenings, learning reflection meetings, foundation-wide sessions, and other learning events.
- Help define what learning can mean throughout the organization and share this framing externally.
- Proactively identify areas for learning through relationship building with staff, conversations, and documents on strategies and grantmaking. Tailor learning agendas to the needs and time commitments of staff. Adjust in real time based on feedback and receptivity.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to design events and practices that enable adults to learn.
- Work closely with Strategy and Learning team members, including the Strategy and Evaluation Officer, to ensure that strategy, evaluation, and learning are mutually reinforcing.
- Support the development of systems and processes that enable greater learning, reflection, and strategy development. Work closely with program and operations staff to ensure that all that learning is seamlessly integrated in with the operational work of the Foundation.
- Identify and liaise with internal and external experts who can help strengthen and inform cross-programmatic learning both within Ford and for philanthropy more broadly.
- Share information via writing and speaking opportunities that help to synthesize what and how Ford is learning. Help Ford to become a model for supporting transparent learning in philanthropy.
- Identify ways to support regional learning that can be independent of the New York office.
- Collaborate with program staff, operations, and leadership within Ford, as well as with external constituents, serving as a substantive and reputational ambassador for the Foundation.
- Supporting the Office of Strategy and Learning as it identifies its own strategic priorities and opportunities for reflection and learning.
- Play an external leadership role in the fields of philanthropy and social justice as an advocate for effective learning.



Qualities of the Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- BA/BS plus eight to ten years of experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience, in facilitation, adult learning, or a related field. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred.
- Extensive experience in the development of dynamic learning agendas that are tailored to the unique needs of internal stakeholders. Robust facilitation skills for meetings, dialogues, and working sessions, including the ability to identify patterns, make connections and capture & synthesize information.
- Deep knowledge of the field of US-based and international grantmaking. Familiarity with the challenges and opportunities of working across multiple regions, particularly in the Global South.
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice with expertise in advocacy and social change work in both a US and Global South context.
- A dynamic influencer with highly effective interpersonal and relational skills, including a demonstrated ability to work successfully across complex, matrixed teams and with roles at multiple levels.
- High emotional intelligence with the ability to provide nuanced support to team members on issues that may be challenges or points of opportunity. An engaging, accessible and flexible style that builds trust and confidence across diverse team cultures and priorities. A natural collaborator with a service orientation and ability to listen and deftly influence and guide individuals and teams.
- Superior written and verbal communications skills. A compelling storyteller who can frame information in ways that are accessible to all.
- Ability to embody intentionality around learning and a talent for crafting thoughtful and strategic questions. A curious disposition motivated by the internal drive to understand and untangle complex issues.
- Exceptional prioritization and time management skills with demonstrated ability to manage a diverse and demanding workload in a fast-paced environment.
- Sense of humor and commitment to our core values of openness, collaboration, trust, equity, accountability and urgency.
- Familiarity with social or behavioral science is a plus.

Nominations and Applications

The Ford Foundation is conducting this search with assistance from Allison Kupfer Poteet and Cara Pearsall of the national search firm NPAG. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply *as soon as possible*.



To apply, please send a detailed cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position to: FORD-LO@nonprofitprofessionals.com

Equal employment opportunity and having a diverse staff are fundamental principles at The Ford Foundation, where employment and promotional opportunities are based upon individual capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation preference, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status or any other protected characteristic as established under law.

NPAG is a national executive search and consulting firm dedicated to serving the mission-driven community. We partner with global mission-driven clients to deliver highly-tailored, innovative, and strategic senior- and executive-level search services. www.nonprofitprofessionals.com