Imagine a world where hundreds of thousands of people are engaging in meaningful giving through robust conversations and building bridges with fellow givers & funding recipients to create change in the world. Giving together, with intention, is a powerful act, and we want everyone to have access to it.

Giving Circles are a community-driven model that enables philanthropy driven by everyday givers. Circles vary in size, location, and focus, but they share the same basic approach: a group of people pool their resources in order to collectively contribute to issues they deem important in their community. Giving circle members become more strategic philanthropists and more engaged change-makers, creating ripple effects of giving and action across their communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past two decades, the American giving circle movement has grown steadily: research points to at least 150,000 people engaging in over 1600 giving circles across the country, collectively giving away $1.29 billion over that time period. As US philanthropy continues to work at being more authentically community-informed and engaged, giving circles will continue to play a transformational role in bringing in many more — and more representative — everyday donors to the table: people of color, women, LGBTQIA+ people, those without wealth, youth, people in rural communities, religious minorities, people of different political persuasions, etc. In early 2020, an ambitious initiative will be launched that builds on this groundswell of momentum in the giving space. Through shared resources, programming, networking, and capacity-building, a new entity will be created that catalyzes and connects giving circles—ultimately in service of democratizing and diversifying philanthropy. We anticipate that in the next five years, support of this initiative will result in more than 350,000 donors participating in more than 3,000 giving circles, giving close to $1 billion collectively.

We invite nominations and applications for the founding leader of this initiative to support the giving circle movement in its expansion, evolution, and connectedness across the country.

This Executive Director (ED) will build and oversee a three-person team as they refine, adapt, and execute a defined five-year strategy to grow and strengthen the giving circle movement across the US. The ED will be the main voice and strategic visionary of the initiative; will oversee staff, budget, and operations; will create and sustain key partnerships; and will be accountable for the overall success of this ambitious effort. The ED will work closely with the board, funders, outside consultants, and the field of giving circles at large. Global Impact, a leading nonprofit offering backbone support for the philanthropic sector, is providing fiscal sponsorship and operational support to the initiative.

This is a unique opportunity for a motivated, entrepreneurial leader to build a vehicle for lasting impact at scale, and to propel forward an emerging field within the philanthropic sector. The
founding Executive Director will lead this multi-year initiative to help hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life, in all areas of the country, and at all levels of wealth, to engage in thoughtful, intentional giving.

THE OPPORTUNITY

1. Showcase: Expand accurate and broad understanding about giving circles.

Through the development of a strong brand, story-driven website, a series of powerful videos, comms toolkits, and ongoing work with a marketing agency, we will elevate the concept of collective giving in popular culture and across the philanthropic and nonprofit landscapes. Additionally, strategic partnerships with influential platforms, conferences, and orgs will support the validity and overall awareness.

2. Scale: Strategically grow the field, both network-led and unaffiliated circles.

Through strategic partnerships and programs, we will directly support hundreds of new circles to start strong. This includes a Giving Circle Incubator which will catalyze new circles across the country (with a priority on communities that have been traditionally underrepresented in philanthropy, whether because of their race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, geography, etc.). We will also engage in consulting agreements with corporations, organizations, and philanthropic entities to scale giving circles for their constituents, alumni, and communities.

3. Strengthen: Build the leadership and knowledge capacity of the field.

Through the creation and curation of beautifully designed educational resources, a series of field-wide community of practice, and an annual large-scale convening we will enable cross-circle, cross-network, and cross-community connections, learning and capacity building to strengthen the existing field of giving circles. Additionally, we will support research and reporting through partnerships with the Collective Giving Research Group and other researchers, ensuring that we are data-driven and the full movement is learning and growing from research findings.

4. Sustain: Support the ongoing vibrancy and sustainability of the field.

Through a central technology and fiduciary support tool, micro-grants for discrete and strategically aligned projects, and in-kind joint staffing/consulting support for networks and circles with common needs we will ensure that existing circles and networks in the field are able to sustain themselves and the powerful work they do in communities across the country.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

To operationalize this vision of success and these stated goals, the ED’s responsibilities will include:

LEADERSHIP & PUBLIC VOICE
• Lead on the execution of the defined vision and strategy, and iterate, refine, and develop new programs, resources, and supports as needed to reach the stated ambitious goals of this initiative
• Work with a diverse and broad set of stakeholders across an emerging field to bring multiple voices into a big-tent, inclusive, network of networks
• Serve as the face of this movement to outside partners to share the powerful message of giving circles at conferences, through articles, and beyond — both within and outside of the philanthropy ecosystem

OPERATIONS & PROGRAMMING
• Oversee all internal operations and staff, implementing the necessary systems, protocols, and workflows
• Manage budget and finances
• Hire a support staff of three, build an advisory board, and manage all internal relationships
• Work closely with staff to execute planned programming, educational materials, convenings, networking initiatives, capacity building work, etc. and develop new programs as necessary
• Coordinate with field and research teams on large scale research efforts
• Develop governance structure building on existing leadership that has shepherded project thus far through co-design phase

FUNDRAISING
• Raise and steward significant funding from foundations, individuals, corporations, and other funding sources to sustain the full budget requirements of the initiative
• Work with Partnerships & Development Director to secure and manage institutional partners (e.g. corporations, community foundations, academia, other institutions) and deliver a fee-for-service consulting offering to start and support giving circles

COMMUNICATIONS
• Manage external communication, PR/marketing, research groups, and other partners and consultants
• Be a vocal, visible, and persuasive champion of the giving circle movement at conferences, through written articles and thought leadership, and in other public settings

SKILLS/ QUALITIES/ EXPERIENCES

• 5+ years in an executive leadership role, with experience managing annual budgets of $2+ million and/or fundraising targets of $5+ million
• Inspirational leader with exceptional interpersonal skills and ability to galvanize trust and build bridges across a broad and diverse community of supporters with many different interests and perspectives
Deeply committed to Giving Circles as a concept—mission, vision, model, and guiding principles (experience in the field of giving circles and community-driven philanthropy preferred)

Conversant understanding of the history of philanthropy and how equity, diversity, inclusion and power dynamics show up in the craft of grantmaking

Skilled at written, digital, and in-person communication

Strong operational skills to manage and lead a team, board, funder and other stakeholder relationships

TO APPLY

More information about the national giving circle initiative may be found at:

The co-design team has engaged Katherine Jacobs and Vanita Bhargava from the national consulting firm NPAG to assist in this search. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume and where you learned of the position should be sent to: GivingCircle-ED@nonprofitprofessionals.com In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

People of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming people; women; and differently-abled people are encouraged to apply. We also encourage submissions from people of diverse religious, spiritual, and cultural backgrounds.