

Position and Candidate Specification



President and CEO

PREPARED BY:

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The Kauffman Foundation helps unlock opportunity for all so that people can achieve financial stability, upward mobility, and economic prosperity – regardless of race, gender, or geography.

The [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#) (“Kauffman Foundation”) was established by the late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman. The Foundation is a private, nonpartisan foundation that provides access to opportunities that help people achieve financial stability, upward mobility, and economic prosperity – regardless of race, gender, or geography. The Kansas City, Missouri-based foundation uses its grantmaking, research, programs, affiliates, and initiatives to support the start and growth of new businesses, a more prepared workforce, and stronger communities. Mr. Kauffman is the source of the Foundation’s initial endowment, commitment to our core strategic program areas, and reputation—given that we bear his name.

We work in Kansas City, the surrounding states of Missouri and Kansas, and across the country. We champion organizations and communities that address root causes, test innovative solutions, and seek to change conditions. We share what we learn nationwide through programs, research, and policy. As a Board, Senior Leadership Team, and organization, we are exploring the most effective ways to pursue our work and culture through a lens of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, especially (but not exclusively) to alleviate conditions of poverty as structurally imposed on certain groups.

Our grantmaking connects students, educators, families, and entrepreneurs with practical solutions and resources to realize their ambitions. As a result, new businesses and a stronger supply of skilled individuals drive economic growth and set us on a path to stronger communities.

Our mission: We seek to prepare people for success in their jobs and careers so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve economic stability, mobility, and prosperity. Our work is grounded in the principles of [racial equity, diversity, and inclusion](#) and is consistent with the aspirations of our founder, Ewing Marion Kauffman.

For more information, please visit www.kauffman.org

Honoring both the spirit and intent of Ewing Kauffman, the next CEO will help drive a vision for the Foundation's future, capitalizing on its strengths and expanding its ability to pursue opportunities where Kauffman Foundation can have a unique impact within Kansas City and across the country.

The next leader will establish a close partnership with the Board and will engage the Foundation staff, partners, and members of the broader community, to assess and affirm the Foundation's vision for impact within education and entrepreneurship. The CEO will be responsible for the development and implementation of the Foundation's new strategic plan, supporting organizational culture assessment and evolution, building relationships and partnerships at the local and national levels, and the overall management and oversight of the grant-making, operating, and administrative functions of the organization.

As the leader of an experienced and committed staff, the CEO manages and partners closely with a Senior Leadership Team of ten direct reports and oversees a full staff of approximately 100 Foundation Associates.

A highly visible representative of the Foundation, the CEO is responsible for speaking on behalf of the organization, promoting, and advocating for the role of philanthropy and philanthropic solutions, and developing strong relationships with key philanthropic, community, political, and business leaders connected to the Kansas City area, the broader communities we serve across the country, and the Foundation's mission.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to Board of Trustees

Direct reports Chief Investment Officer
Chief Human Resources Officer
General Counsel
Vice President, Education
Vice President, Entrepreneurship
Vice President, KC Civic
Vice President, Public Affairs
Chief Financial Officer
Senior Director, Evaluation, Learning, and Impact Stories
Executive Assistant

Other key relationships Grantees and the sectors they serve
Foundations operating in similar or adjacent fields

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- Evidenced commitment to the foundation’s mission, as well as a profound understanding of and appreciation for the unique position and responsibilities of a philanthropic organization dedicated to issues in Kansas City, the broader Missouri and Kansas communities and at the national level.
- A seasoned, results-oriented leader and manager, ideally with multi-sector experience and a track record of successful organizational leadership, including change management, at scale within a complex environment.
- Strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging, with evidenced success in supporting action and progress in reducing inequities as a leader.
- A strong culture builder with a track record as a leader of aligning organizational values, strategy, structures, norms and behaviors and creating a coherent, healthy, and well understood culture that supports the organizations internal and external objectives.
- Experience leveraging metrics, data, evidence, and assessment to monitor progress and identify emerging patterns to shape future strategy and help demonstrate impact.
- Record of representing an organization to a wide range of audiences in ways that inspire confidence, engagement, and partnerships.
- Passion for, and experience within, philanthropy and the Foundation’s strategic programmatic areas of education, entrepreneurship, and Kansas City is a plus.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Strategic Leadership

- Works with the Board of Directors to balance short-term objectives with long-term vision to drive, and monitor, the organization’s strategic direction while stewarding Mr. Kauffman’s intent.
- Anticipates and maintains awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing the organization, its grantees, and the philanthropic sector broadly. Positions the Foundation to be intellectually and programmatically agile – to learn from results and use those to inform future directions and tactics.
- Models and drives excellence, impact, and innovation in service of the Foundation’s mission.
- Demonstrates intellectual dexterity and curiosity; strong capability for critical and creative thinking and problem solving.

Change Management and Trust Building

- Leads organizations thoughtfully and effectively through change by continually striving to build consensus and broad buy-in while acting with agility and decisiveness.
- Sets clear goals and creates a culture celebrating positive change and experimentation, engaging people in a reasoned way that encourages and reinforces innovation and change thinking.

- Demonstrates resourcefulness, creativity, and respectful persistence in forging authentic relationships built on demonstrated integrity, mutual respect, and trust.
- Be present in, and learn from, the communities served through the Foundation's engagement and grantmaking.
- Develop and expand upon a deep local and national network, including leaders in philanthropy and adjacent fields, so that the Foundation's strategy is informed by diverse and well-informed perspectives.
- Builds collaborative, ongoing partnerships that amplify the Foundation's scope and impact.

Leading People

- Build and lead a talented and motivated staff to develop and execute a strategic plan. Especially important will be an ability to facilitate successful change management within teams and organizations as a whole.
- Develop a positive and productive organizational culture characterized by trust, mutual respect, operational excellence, innovation, optimism, collaboration, and rigor.
- Creates an inclusive workplace environment that attracts, retains, and develops underrepresented talent for the organization; encourages open communication.
- Holds the organization accountable for its commitments, provides clarity, fairness, and constructive feedback, and motivates team members to achieve their goals.
- Builds and ensures operational systems and procedures that drive efficiency, transparency, and philanthropic best-practice, with clearly articulated expectations and measurable goals.

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Servant leader.
- High emotional intelligence; leadership style that reflects servant leadership, distinct humility, sense of humor, listening skills, and lack of ego.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal.
- The ability to think laterally and to synthesize complexity, make informed decisions in ambiguous, uncertain situations and develop strategic alternatives that accurately identify possible outcomes and risks.
- Serve as a role model of commitment to the Foundation's and Mr. Kauffman's values.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

If you wish to submit application materials or nominate someone to serve as the next President and CEO of the Kauffman Foundation, please email: KauffmanCEO@SpencerStuart.com.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Kauffman Foundation firmly supports the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law.