



**PROGRAM OFFICER - NEW MEXICO**  
**(Early Childhood Education)**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), a leading philanthropic institution helping communities create the conditions children need to thrive, is seeking nominations and applications for the position of Program Officer, New Mexico, with a focus on early childhood education grantmaking. In recent years, the foundation has sharpened its focus on improving conditions for vulnerable children, concentrating on three key factors of success and their intersections: education and learning; food, health and well-being; and family economic security. The foundation has made a generational commitment to grantmaking in the region that advances the vision of a future in which every child thrives. The New Mexico team partners closely with community stakeholders and policy makers to create a network of organizations working together to advance New Mexico's economic stability, racial equity, and community and civic engagement, while increasing access to quality education, healthy food, and medical care for children and families in need.

Reporting to Director of New Mexico Programs, Frank René López, the new Program Officer will provide leadership and oversight of the portfolio's programmatic and policy initiatives that strive for educated, healthy kids and secure families throughout the State of New Mexico with a special emphasis in early childhood education. S/he/they will build relationships and coalitions throughout the state that enhance and support the portfolio's work; screen and recommend grants for funding; and manage and monitor a portfolio of grant programs that have a public policy and community engagement approach aligned with the strategic framework of the foundation. S/he/they will collaborate with other foundation program staff to foster a rigorous, inclusive, and interdisciplinary approach to grantmaking. The Program Officer will nurture and maintain strong, authentic relationships to achieve the foundation's goal of working with communities to improve the lives of their children, partnering closely with community leaders and policymakers across New Mexico to co-create a network of organizations working together to increase access to quality Early Childhood Education opportunities. The incoming Program Officer will play a key role in supporting this work in pursuit of the foundation's ambitious goals.

The ideal candidate will have deep knowledge of and experience with New Mexico's diverse communities, the educational context in the region, and how to foster collaboration toward positive change among and with New Mexico's most vulnerable children and families. S/he/they will bring comprehensive knowledge of the learning experiences of young children, from birth through eight years, who live and learn in underserved communities. S/he/they will possess a thorough knowledge of systems change and will be a holistic and interdisciplinary thinker with significant mastery of the broad social, economic, and place-based forces affecting educational opportunities and outcomes among communities in New Mexico. S/he/they will have a demonstrated ability to oversee the development and implementation of programs and policies that target disparities, and possess the skills to facilitate authentic, productive dialogue within diverse communities and settings. These policies and programs include, but are not limited to: teacher preparation and professional development, equitable funding, child advocacy, culturally-relevant coursework, and flexible, results-driven assessments. The successful candidate will also be a holistic thinker who understands how to leverage relationships to drive the foundation's mission forward. S/he/they will understand how to motivate social change not only as a partner with community organizations but also as a connector whose portfolio engages all areas of educational advocacy. S/he/they will possess a strong team orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to adapt quickly to change, and a record of success in working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds. The ideal candidate will have an advanced degree and substantial work and leadership experience in education, early childhood, or a relevant field.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation - New Mexico is being assisted by Carolyn Ho and Hallie Dietsch of the Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Please see application instructions at the end of this document.



## HISTORY AND MISSION

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In 1930, breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg donated \$66 million in Kellogg Company stock and other investments “to help people help themselves” launching the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The foundation began its work in Michigan, but by the 1940s had expanded its work internationally and was breaking ground in areas such as rural children’s health, “mainstreaming” children with disabilities, and the development of the healthcare profession. By its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the foundation was among the world’s largest private philanthropic organizations and, now in its 83<sup>rd</sup> year, the foundation celebrates over \$7 billion spent toward helping people to help themselves.

In 2007, the foundation reviewed, revised, and refocused program goals toward helping vulnerable children and realigning with W.K. Kellogg’s original intent. The new mission statement reads:

*“The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.”*

To bring the vision of this refreshed mission into action, the foundation unveiled a new strategic framework for its programming. Previously, both the organization and its grantmaking were structured around individual programming areas. The new framework, built on 80 years of grantmaking experience, recognizes that success for vulnerable children depends on an intricate tapestry of elements. The three program areas (Education and Learning; Food, Health, and Well-Being; and Family Economic Security) all play interconnected roles in creating an environment in which vulnerable children are protected, nurtured, equipped and stimulated to succeed. Moreover, the attention to racial equity, the eradication of structural racism, and the rigorous encouragement of civic and philanthropic engagement across each of these program areas is essential to the creation of a social context in which all children can thrive, particularly the most vulnerable.

## NEW MEXICO PROGRAMS

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WKKF began its work in [New Mexico](#) in 1945 and remains focused on working with the state’s diverse communities to create a future that is equitable across boundaries of language, ethnicity, and national origin. The foundation partners with a diverse portfolio of grantees to help ensure that New Mexico’s children are healthy, well-educated, and economically secure while embracing the wisdom of the state’s unique cultural, social, and governance traditions. Working with grantees and partners in the state to tackle the root causes of inequities and to support enduring, community-led solutions, WKKF concentrates its investments in Bernalillo (specifically South Valley), Doña Ana, McKinley, and San Juan counties and in Native communities across the state, because it is estimated that more than half of vulnerable children in New Mexico live in those places.

The foundation’s commitment to the state is also reflected in the regional office that was opened in Albuquerque in 2012. WKKF’s education related grantmaking emphasizes several interrelated program areas specific to the needs of New Mexico’s children, including programs that improve early childhood education opportunities, strengthen K-12 schools, provide culturally-based learning that promotes Native languages and culture, and support access to healthier foods in schools. The foundation also supports programming that extends mother-to-mother support for women who breastfeed their babies, increases access to home visitation and parenting support, and helps communities strengthen their local food systems. WKKF supports family economic security in partnership with industry and technical education programs to ensure there are clear pathways to employment for diverse populations. Furthermore, WKKF is committed to helping develop diverse local leaders with influence and who can help leverage other local and national philanthropic dollars.

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

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Research shows that the first eight years are the most crucial developmental period of a child’s life. The cognitive, social, and emotional growth from birth to age 8 are the basis for self-awareness, communication, and emotional skills – all foundational to a child’s future learning and healthy development. The foundation focuses its work on the earliest years, helping parents to be a child’s first and most important teachers and advocates. The foundation’s early childhood



education efforts support children where they learn and grow, building strong connections between early childhood programs and the early elementary years to keep all children on a path to success.

Many communities in the United States – both rural and urban – do not have the infrastructure, funding, or tools to improve the quality of early childhood education that occurs in licensed and informal child care settings, preschool and pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten through third grade. Children are particularly at risk in the presence of great adversity. This is too often the case for children of color, many of whom live in families with low income. The Education and Learning team is committed to ensuring that racial equity is part of public policies and practices that impact quality early childhood education, and that families are able to be engaged in schools with a shared responsibility for their children's education.

The Education and Learning team prioritizes the following strategies to improve early childhood education nationwide:

- Removing barriers to ensure families have equitable early learning opportunities and resources that directly affect whole child development (social, emotional, cultural, mental, physical, health, and cognitive);
- Supporting private and public entities to align systems, policies, and practices focused on whole child development and culturally appropriate programs and practices rooted in racial equity and community engagement; and
- Ensuring equitable design and implementation of federal, state, tribal, and local policies to support a healthy start, school readiness, and third grade success.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE PROGRAM OFFICER

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The new Program Officer for Early Childhood Education in New Mexico will join a team of individuals who are passionate about transforming the schooling experience for all young children, including and especially those who live and learn in underserved communities. The new Program Officer will have demonstrated expertise merging the priorities of school advocacy, improvement, and racial equity and can expect to engage in the following challenges and opportunities:

***Provide leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of program efforts that is aligned and integrated with the unified mission and vision of the foundation.*** The new Program Officer will develop a strong network of key stakeholders, policymakers, community leaders, and grantees that support the foundation's mission and inform and advance its work in New Mexico. S/he/they will expand and deepen the foundation's work on early childhood education, shaping the work and supporting communities to enhance the well-being of children and families in the state.

***Collaborate with and support prospective and existing grantees in developing funding strategies, requests, and plans with a focus on changemaking relevant to policy and advocacy.*** The Program Officer will provide high-level technical assistance to grantees including conducting site visits and consulting on model development, partnership negotiations, leadership capacity building, and coaching. S/he/they will identify and recommend grantmaking opportunities that leverage WKKF investments for maximum impact in creating systemic change, and s/he/they will maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees, ensuring mutual understanding of WKKF program direction, goals, and expectations.

***Create learning communities and collaborative networks amongst grantees and partners, develop and manage learning and evaluation components for grants, and cultivate a wide breadth and depth of knowledge about trends, practices, and issues relevant to early childhood education.*** The Program Officer will work closely with WKKF's Learning and Impact team to incorporate assessment components into program efforts that measure progress and impact. S/he/they will document and circulate lessons learned from grant investments, networking meetings, and other foundation-related activities. S/he/they will work collaboratively to identify and prioritize the highest value knowledge and learning from the foundation's grant investments and networking meetings.



***Build public and policy goodwill and awareness of issues affecting vulnerable children and families.*** The Program Officer will contribute ideas for how the foundation's highest value knowledge and learning could be packaged and disseminated to benefit nonprofit executives, business leaders, government officials, community leaders, parents, and other external stakeholders of the foundation. S/he/they will serve as a credible, articulate representative and spokesperson for the foundation and will communicate the program's strategic direction and particular funding interests to various audiences, internal and external to the foundation.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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While no one person will embody all of the qualities enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- Significant work experience (eight plus years) in a field related to early childhood education, and a deep and comprehensive understanding of the nexus of education and racial equity; strong networks and contacts throughout New Mexico; an advanced degree in a relevant field is preferred;
- Demonstrated flexible, multidisciplinary thinking required to address barriers to quality early childhood educational opportunities, and the drive to shape and inform the work based on the immediate issues and opportunities found in communities; understanding of the broad social and economic forces that affect communities and families and shape programming efforts; holistic and multi-dimensional approach to leadership development, organizational change, and community transformation;
- Sophisticated understanding of educational disparities in New Mexico and the related policy landscapes; ability to successfully navigate the different legal, social, and political forces at play through the federal, state, local, and sovereign governance systems in New Mexico;
- Expertise in leveraging philanthropy's role in policy development to sustain program success and the current trends, movements, and best practices in developing policy to advance and magnify philanthropic investment and capitalize on emerging opportunities;
- Capacity to develop and implement impactful programs and effectively communicate conceptual program frameworks to grant-seekers and trustees; deep and comprehensive understanding of program design and development, systems, networking, and community change;
- Demonstrated success in forging and stewarding partnerships with the private sector, government agencies, foundations, policymakers and stakeholders in health, racial justice and equity, economic development, education, and community organizations in support of children and families;
- The knowledge and sensitivity to effectively work with and support vulnerable communities including appreciation for historical context, discernment of relationship nuances and power dynamics, and understanding of social, racial, and ethnic realities;
- Demonstrated ability to develop and implement programs that have impact; ability to think globally while working locally, representing WKKF to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way and with a selfless manner, focusing on values and the greater good;
- Successful experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team and working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds; willingness to set aside a personal agenda in favor of organizational and/or community goals and objectives;
- Strong relationship building and communication skills; the ability to have authentic dialogue around sensitive issues including funding priorities, WKKF expectations, and community concerns; highly developed emotional intelligence and active listening skills, and the ability to use interpersonal and political skills in collaborative, diplomatic ways;



- Excellent writing, editing, analytical, and oral communication skills including the ability to collect, review, synthesize, and present information and findings;
- Ability to multitask and meet deadlines within designated timeframes, as well as demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities; strong organizational skills and exceptional attention to detail with the ability to work independently, take initiative, and contribute ideas for enhancing performance;
- An optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, and patience necessary to work within a transformative environment; and
- Ability to travel approximately 50 percent time is required; regular attendance on-site at the Battle Creek headquarters to facilitate interaction and synthesis of the grantmaking programs is required.

## APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

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More information about the W.K. Kellogg Foundation may be found at <http://www.wkkf.org>.

The search is being led by Carolyn Ho and Hallie Dietsch of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to: [WKKF-POECENM@nonprofitprofessionals.com](mailto:WKKF-POECENM@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.

***The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.***