



Program Officer – Early Childhood Education, New Mexico Albuquerque, NM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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, Early Childhood Education and Education Systems, based in New Mexico**. 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 that advances the vision of a future in which every child thrives.

Reporting to the Director of New Mexico Programs, Chamiza Pacheco de Alas, the new program officer will be a senior leader with extensive management and budget experience, a strategic and systems-thinker, and a partnership- and network-builder, who has achieved notable success in the field. S/he/they will play a management role on the New Mexico team, providing supervision and mentorship to program officers working at the intersection of WKKF's strategic priorities. Overseeing efforts aimed at advancing high quality education experiences for New Mexico's children and families, the new Program Officer will be particularly focused on leveraging the foundation's role in supporting the educational success of New Mexico's youngest residents. Ensuring that culturally appropriate and culturally relevant support systems are in place for families to be their child's strongest advocate. In addition, s/he/they will be a leader in shaping and guiding the foundation's response to COVID-19 in the state, both the short-term response and long-term recovery. S/he/they will have a deep understanding of the systemic and racial barriers that families and communities face in the current economy, the structural and historic challenges of accessing high-quality, culturally responsive educational experiences, and promising opportunities to reshape the education experience and benefits for children, families, and communities.

The ideal candidate will have deep knowledge of and experience with New Mexico's diverse communities, particularly tribal communities, the education context in the region, and how to support innovation and foster collaboration that improves the educational opportunities and outcomes of New Mexico's most vulnerable children and families. S/he/they will bring mastery of the broad social, economic, and political forces affecting education equity, as well as demonstrate a solid grasp of state and local school financing and policies, including public and private sector systems and funding supports.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is being assisted in this search by [Paola Peacock-Villada](#) and [Andres Marcuse-Gonzalez](#) of the national talent strategy firm, [NPAG](#). Please see application instructions at the end of this document.

HISTORY AND MISSION

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 50th anniversary, the foundation was among the world’s largest private philanthropic organizations. Its mission reflects the foundation’s core priorities of thriving children, working families, and equitable communities, and the dynamic connection between the three.

“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 advance this mission, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation created a framework supported by an innovative matrixed organizational design to prioritize investment decisions and maximize effectiveness toward achieving the desired ends and improvements for children and their families. This new framework supports disciplined choices toward targeted outcomes and stronger alignment across programs. It is a focused and networked approach to strategic programming that relies on close cross-foundation collaboration and agile teams to leverage human capital and knowledge resources to positively impact vulnerable children, families, and communities. Across bodies of work, the foundation implements an array of change-making tools – grantmaking, impact investing, contracting, networking, and convenings – to ensure progress. A commitment to racial equity, community engagement, and leadership development are woven into each endeavor as essential to the creation of a social context in which all children can thrive, particularly the most vulnerable.

NEW MEXICO PROGRAMS & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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 progress toward a future where all of 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 Indigenous communities across the state, because it is estimated that more than half of vulnerable children in New Mexico live in those places.

New Mexico is one of six critical place-based communities where WKKF has dedicated equity-centered, relational, and strategic investments together with local stakeholders in order to impact children, families and communities across the state. The New Mexico team reaches communities across urban, rural, and Indigenous communities with offices in Albuquerque. New Mexico program teams are integral in advancing grantmaking that focuses specifically on secure and sustainable high quality early childhood and education systems development in vulnerable communities in New Mexico that impact not only the state itself but also contribute to prosperity in the region and national landscape. The foundation believes its work must focus on community and civic engagement as well as the development of equitable early childhood and education systems to create meaningful, systemic, and lasting change for New Mexico’s children and their families.

The new program officer will join a closely connected, cross-disciplinary team executing place-based work that spans across Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Orleans, Haiti, and Mexico. These place-based teams work in partnership with national initiatives and strive to improve conditions across these diverse places by sharing best practices and aligning resources, approaches, and assessment of grantmaking to drive solutions for systemic social change.

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD FOR THE PROGRAM OFFICER

The new program officer will join the foundation during this unprecedented period of uncertainty to address timely educational challenges in partnership with communities already experiencing the highest levels of education inequity. The program officer will join an extraordinary team of individuals who are passionate about eradicating education and social disparities and improving well-being for all children and can expect to engage in the following opportunities:

Early Childhood Education and Education Systems. The program officer will bring a strong analysis of the systemic barriers that have prevented marginalized communities, families, and educators from gaining access to a range of local and state support systems and be actively engaged in breaking down those barriers to advance education equity and successful educational outcomes. S/he/they will develop a robust network connecting long-standing and emerging leaders, tribal governments, institutions, industries, and grantees in the region that support the foundation's mission and inform and advance its work in New Mexico. The program officer will expand and deepen the foundation's work in education equity shaping the work and supporting communities to enhance the well-being of children and families throughout New Mexico.

Leadership and People Development. The program officer will lead a high-performing multi-disciplinary team to set and achieve goals aligned with place-based and content area priorities. S/he/they will support team members to develop core and technical competencies necessary to successfully execute New Mexico and Early Childhood and Education Systems programmatic and policy initiatives that advance WKKF's vision.

Systemic Change and Technical Assistance. The program officer will identify and recommend grantmaking opportunities that leverage WKKF investments for maximum impact in creating systemic change, and will maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees, ensuring mutual understanding of WKKF program direction, goals, and expectations. S/he/they will provide high-level technical assistance to grantees including conducting site visits and consulting on model development, partnership negotiations, leadership capacity building, and coaching.

Strategic Learning and Evaluation. The program officer will work closely with WKKF's Learning and Impact team to incorporate assessment components into program efforts to measure progress and impact on early childhood and education systems development. S/he/they will document and circulate lessons learned from grant investments, networking meetings, and other foundation-related activities. The program officer will work collaboratively to identify and prioritize knowledge and learning from the foundation's work to shape and inform future investments and partnerships.

Communication and Dissemination of Knowledge. The program officer will build public goodwill and policy awareness of issues affecting vulnerable children and families and their impact on early childhood and education systems development. S/he/they will contribute ideas on how the foundation's 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 strategic direction and funding interests to various audiences, internal and external to the foundation.

Impact and Racial Equity. The program officer will join a networked team focused on grantmaking locally and nationally that advances key initiatives in Early Childhood and Education Systems development and addresses root causes of, including but not limited to, access to programing, teacher and staff training and development, equitable pay, culturally and linguistically relevant programing, community engagement and race equity and racial healing. In partnership with place-based and national initiatives, this New Mexico based program officer will be an active contributor to a matrixed organization that prioritizes a learning and equity-focused approach to investment decisions and toward achieving the desired impact and improvements for children and their families.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be first and foremost committed to the foundation's mission and will have a current understanding of broad systemic forces affecting education equity and wellbeing of children, their families, and their communities. S/he/they will be distinguished as a leader in the field of early childhood education and education systems, with a strong team orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguity, and the ability to adapt quickly to change.

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

Core Experience

- Eight to ten years of significant relevant local and national systems experience in early childhood education and education systems; Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree in a field relevant to the portfolio is preferred.
- Track record of successfully leading and developing others and comfort within highly collaborative organizations and cross-functional teams.
- Familiarity and experience with philanthropy as a tool to promote and advance high-quality, culturally and linguistically grounded early childhood and K-12 education and educational equity.
- Strong networks in New Mexico and nationally and the ability to shape local, tribal and national initiatives based on community input, and to connect communities to state and national public and private sector resources.

Early Childhood Education Expertise

- Sophisticated understanding of educational disparities and solutions in New Mexico and related systems and policy landscapes at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.
- Ability to successfully navigate the different sovereign, social, and political forces at play in local governance systems in New Mexico.

Policy and Partnerships

- Skilled understanding of philanthropy's role in supporting community organizing and policy advocacy to leverage current trends, movements, and opportunities in early childhood and education systems development.

- Experience leading efforts to build coalitions between government, nonprofits, and employers who are committed to high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood education and educational equity programs and initiatives.

Systems Thinker

- Demonstrated flexible, multidisciplinary thinking required to address early childhood education and educational equity and the drive to shape and inform the work based on immediate issues and emerging opportunities found in communities; understanding of the broad social and economic forces that affect communities and families and shape educational programming efforts.
- Capacity to develop and implement impactful programs and effectively communicate strategic frameworks to grant-seekers, stakeholders, and collaborators; deep and comprehensive understanding of community engagement, program design, policy and systems change.

Relationship Builder

- Strong relationship building and communication skills; demonstrated success in forging and stewarding partnerships with the private sector, tribal governments, federal, state, and local government agencies, foundations, policymakers, and stakeholders in early childhood education and educational equity support of children and families.
- Critical consciousness to effectively work with and support vulnerable communities including appreciation for historical context, discernment of relationship nuances and power dynamics, and understanding of cultural, racial, and ethnic realities.
- Holistic and multi-dimensional approach to leadership development, organizational change, and community transformation; 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.

Emotional Intelligence

- Demonstrated 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 skills in collaborative, diplomatic ways.
- Successful experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team and working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, including tribal members; willingness to set aside a personal agenda in favor of organizational and community goals and objectives.
- An optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, and patience necessary to work within a transformative environment.

Execution

- Excellent writing, editing, analytical, and oral communication skills including the ability to collect, synthesize, and present information and findings.
- Ability to multitask and meet deadlines within designated timeframes, as well as demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities for oneself and team; strong organizational skills and exceptional attention to detail with the ability to work both independently and collaboratively, to take initiative and contribute ideas.

- Ability to travel in-state approximately 50 percent is required (depending on the foundation's post-COVID emergence plan); regular attendance on-site at the Battle Creek headquarters to facilitate interaction and alignment with other grantmaking teams and programs is required.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

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

This search is being led by [Paola Peacock-Villada](#) and [Andres Marcuse-Gonzalez](#) of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [candidate portal](#).

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