

THE BARRA FOUNDATION

Program Officer

Invitation to Apply | Issued: August 1, 2022

The Opportunity - Position Overview

[The Barra Foundation](#) is hiring a Program Officer. This person will play a key role in a small dynamic team as the Foundation improves and refines its strategy. They should have a broad understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with both creating the conditions for innovation and supporting early stage ideas/experiments that aim to have outsized impact in the Greater Philadelphia region. They should be flexible and open to change; have a familiarity with the Greater Philadelphia region/social sector; be able to equitably identify ambitious novel approaches to emerging or entrenched problems; lift up the latest conversations and trends in the field; and be able to co-create with communities, grantees, partner organizations, as well as funding peers. While our team works collaboratively on sourcing and supporting innovation across its four interest areas, this Program Officer will have primary responsibility for the Arts & Culture and Education portfolios. The Program Officer (PO) will report to the President.

The Organization

[The Barra Foundation](#) is an independent private foundation that invests in innovation to inspire change that strengthens communities in the Greater Philadelphia region. Barra's investments are designed to address the needs of under-resourced populations in the region and promote a continued vibrant cultural community. The Foundation provides more than \$4 million in annual grants to 501(c)(3) organizations that are focused on supporting innovation in and across the fields of Arts & Culture, Education, Health and Human Services. Using both general operating support and risk-capital, Barra supports the efforts of creative thinkers and bold organizations that are tackling problems and seizing opportunities in new and different ways.

Our Evolving Strategy

With our [roots](#) in the scientific method, we believe that the practice of innovation is a process that requires certain elements. It involves creating opportunities for idea generation, selecting ideas that have the potential to influence others, supporting risk-taking and sharing learning. Building on [learning](#) from these past few years and feedback gathered since our Strategic Plan launched in 2014, we have determined it is time to re-fresh our strategy. We plan to maintain our [mission](#) and our overall [approach](#) to philanthropy while making the following modifications: build out our mission-aligned Investing, which we have been experimenting with [since 2016](#); sharpen our equity lens to more intentionally integrate equity, in particular racial equity, across our grant making and mission-aligned investing; refine the Catalyst Fund to better support early-stage, novel, potentially transformative ideas; phase out the Barra Awards but integrate important components from it, such as flexible funding and opportunities for cross-sector idea generation. The team will be working on the details associated with these adjustments over the next several months, including the development of a new website.

THE BARRA FOUNDATION

Program Officer - Primary Responsibilities

- Primary Interest Areas – While our team works collaboratively on sourcing and supporting innovation across its four interest areas, this Program Officer will have primary responsibility for the Arts & Culture and Education portfolios.
- Strategy Implementation – Work with team to implement improvements to strategy and tactics for advancing objectives.
- Pipeline Development – Source and identify ways to support early stage idea development as well as opportunities to test ideas and ventures, including mission-aligned investing opportunities.
- Build Relationships – Manage relationships with partner organizations; earn trust and build relationships amongst grantees and community partners; serve as a resource and a connector, be responsive to their needs; convene grantees for peer learning and sharing; manage consultants working on related projects.
- Outcomes/Results – Work with partners collaboratively to define goals for each grant and investment, as well as in aggregate at the portfolio level.
- Research and Learning – Stay current on key issues and related research; lift up learning from partner organizations and learn from partner organizations.
- Dissemination and Communication – Assist in designing and maintaining transparent, standardized and easily accessible systems to capture lessons learned and share information from past grants. Recommend and develop grant stories for publication on Barra’s website, email and social media.
- Grants Management – Manage administrative tasks throughout a grant’s lifecycle.
- Organizational Team – Participate in regular staff meetings, retreats and events. Participate in conferences and site visits as necessary. Collaborate with team to ensure consistent implementation of strategy and values. Practice participatory philanthropy, engaging grantees, staff and colleagues in the design and improvement of programs.

Qualifications

We are open to a range of professional experiences that candidates provide. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, humble, adaptive, energetic, confident and personable. They enjoy working in a small, fast-paced, multi-task environment that has a learning culture. They will have the ability to work both independently and as a team member in a collegial workplace where dialogue and discourse are expected and encouraged. A sense of humor and a constructive outlook are a plus. The individual should be able to demonstrate the following:

- A solid understanding of the opportunities and challenges of early stage ideas that have the potential to seed and create transformative change.
- The ability to think creatively and strategically about Barra’s broad goals while remaining focused on the details and follow through required.
- Flexibility: Ability to quickly pivot and thrive in a fluid environment.
- Understands the importance of equity in the social sector and in philanthropy—both in strategy and in practice.
- Commitment to supporting a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.
- A solid understanding of how nonprofit organizations operate. Strong and diverse experience in and/or commitment to Arts & Culture and Education.

THE BARRA FOUNDATION

- Familiarity with the Greater Philadelphia region/social sector; have an existing diverse network in the region or a demonstrated ability to build one.
- Knowledge about innovation practice in the social sector and philanthropy.
- Experience in/or willingness to learn about mission-aligned investing.
- Strong analytic and communication skills; ability to write clearly and succinctly; and, to make well-organized verbal presentations.
- The skills to work collaboratively with grantees throughout proposal development and implementation. The ability (through analysis, evaluation, informal research and site visits) to determine the feasibility of submitted proposals.
- Excellent project management skills.
- Solid interpersonal skills; ability to work effectively as a member of a small team.
- Good judgment and integrity. Ability to handle confidential information with maturity and discretion.
- Savvy about applying the use of technology to capture, manage and disseminate information; proficient computer skills with knowledge of MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Seven or more years of relevant experience in a social impact organization, nonprofit management, public policy, government, social enterprise, philanthropy, economic development, mission-aligned investing or a related field.
- Bachelor's degree preferred but not required.

Office in COVID-19

Staff is currently working on a hybrid schedule. The office is located in Center City at The Bond Collective 1617 JFK Boulevard Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Compensation

Competitive compensation package, including base salary and benefits package will correspond to the experience level and credentials of the candidate. Salary is approximately: \$95,000 - \$100,000 based on experience and skills.

Non-Discrimination

The Barra Foundation supports the principle, philosophy and practice of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, ability, veteran status or any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. We welcome and encourage all qualified candidates to apply.

How to Apply

If you wish to apply for this position, please submit your resume and cover letter to careers@barrafoundation.org with the Subject Line: 2022 Barra Program Officer. ***You must send your materials to this email address to be considered.*** Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.