June 26, 2023

Chief Executive Officer
Taos, New Mexico
Opportunity Announcement, Position Description and Candidate Profile

About the Taos Community Foundation

The Taos Community Foundation (TCF) is one of eight community foundations in New Mexico. We are focused on supporting effective philanthropy to meet community needs in the greater Taos community and western Colfax County, and more broadly north central New Mexico. Celebrating 30 years of community philanthropy, the Taos Community Foundation manages more than $20 million in charitable assets and disburses some $2.5 million annually. It is governed by a board of 15 directors and is staffed by a team of six full-time professionals.

To Apply

We invite qualified candidates to submit a letter of interest and an up-to-date summary of your qualifications to the attention of Alix Henry, Chairperson of the foundation’s Board of Directors, and Dave Lambert, Chair of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Search Committee. Materials should be submitted via applicants@TaosCF.org. Any questions should be directed to the Interim Executive Director Catherine Horsey via email to chorsey@TaosCF.org. All inquiries and expressions of interest are held in strict confidence.

We seek to have identified our new CEO by August 2023. We will be reviewing applications on an ongoing basis and may fill the position earlier. The foundation reserves the right to amend or withdraw this opening at any time.

Compensation

We are actively searching for candidates who have the capacity to lead the foundation into its next era, and we will offer a competitive, comprehensive compensation and benefits package to secure this leadership.

Our Commitment to Equal Opportunity and Equity

Beyond being an equal opportunity employer that welcomes employees of all backgrounds and carefully protects against all forms of discrimination, the TCF recognizes the strong body of research which establishes that organizations with diverse staff are more successful and is committed to ensuring that the foundation is a model of and leader in ensuring that workplaces are characterized by inclusion and belonging. In particular, we are aware that the philanthropic sector faces challenges in terms of being diverse, inclusive and representative at all levels, and as such we invite candidates from all backgrounds to apply, especially those from backgrounds traditionally under-represented in philanthropy. This is particularly important for us as a place-based foundation serving a community that is predominantly Hispanic as well as is home to the people of Taos Pueblo and Picuris Pueblo. We also recognize that as part of the larger field of philanthropy that struggles with offering equal opportunity to persons from all backgrounds, we have a responsibility to use our unique position in a multicultural, majority minority community to contribute thoughtfully to expanding inclusion and belonging in the philanthropic sector as a whole.
The Opportunity

Recognizing that our foundation’s considerable growth of assets under management in the past decade puts us in an enviable position to evolve from being a nascent community foundation, the Board of Directors of the Taos Community Foundation has set its sights on the foundation’s becoming a model of and leader in place-based philanthropy by embracing the best practices emerging from throughout the world. The goal of this work is for the foundation to make the greatest contribution possible to improving the lives of the members of the greater Taos community, particularly the community’s children and those populations who have historically been excluded or marginalized in the community’s development. To realize this vision, the TCF Board of Directors is seeking an individual of exceptional qualification to serve as the foundation’s first CEO to work with us to build its capacity to realize this vision and lead it into this next era.

For this role we are seeking an individual who will bring operational leadership of the highest caliber to the foundation, capable of building on the systems that we have in place that have worked to bring us from our founding a quarter century ago to a stable yet still small grant-making organization. Now, with over $20 million in assets under management to sustain our annual operations and allow us to distribute some $2.5 million dollars annually, we are looking to shift our attention to the effectiveness and the impact of our work in the community. This shift in the foundation’s attention will require an executive leader who is exceptionally versed in and committed to social change and results-based leadership. This person will be capable of working with the Board to articulate meaningful, bold ambitions for its work in terms of contributions to the improvement of the community and the lives of community members. The new CEO will institute organization-wide practices to support the Board and professional staff of the foundation to ensure that we are making the greatest progress possible toward these audacious goals. This will of course require the chief executive to be able to think of how the foundation can act independently to advance these goals and also to consider how the foundation can be a catalytic force in mobilizing other actors and leveraging other resources to realize these aspirations, including through strategic communications, advocacy and building the capacity of the community’s social purpose organizations and initiatives.

Perhaps most important and challenging to fulfill, the new chief executive will be exceptionally capable of leading the foundation’s outreach to the community and providing leadership within the community in advocating for meaningful social betterment, particularly establishing authentic relationships with the various peoples whose lives the foundation’s work is expected to improve most and bringing them in to the work of the foundation. We are aware that community foundations are increasingly among the leaders in global efforts to make philanthropy itself more equitable by shifting the focus and “shifting the power” of philanthropy from donors to communities. We are committed to ensuring that the TCF is among the leaders in this global evolution of place-based philanthropy to advance equity in both outcomes and in process.

These aspirations for the foundation also represent a considerable evolution in the foundation’s operations from primarily disbursing small grants supported chiefly through donor-advised funds, characteristic of early-generation community foundations, to a clear focus on catalyzing meaningful community improvement through the advancement of strategic place-based philanthropy in the greater Taos community. Accordingly, the new chief executive will need the capacity to build and lead a team of highly capable professional staff, qualified in philanthropy, community development, social change, organizational management, capacity building and delivery of technical assistance. The new CEO will lead the team to continue modernizing the foundation’s operations through new technologies and strategic partnerships and alliances.

Concurrent with the shift toward these goals, the new CEO will continue the focus on and expand fundraising opportunities, both locally and further afield. This is essential to achieve the foundation’s goal of greater impact in the community.

We seek a chief executive who will advance the TCF as a leading voice for improving people’s lives in the greater Taos Community, in northern New Mexico and throughout the state, and as a model of best practice in place-based philanthropy regionally, nationally and globally.
Position Responsibilities

Specifically, the chief executive’s responsibilities will include:

• Expanding on our successful upward trend in fundraising and fostering trust-based relationships with current and future donors.

• Being a visible member of the community, capable of leading the foundation’s outreach to the community and providing approachable, inclusive leadership throughout the community in advocating for meaningful social betterment, establishing authentic relationships with the various peoples whose lives the foundation’s work is expected to improve and bringing them in to the work of the foundation

• Engaging readily with the wide variety of the foundation’s stakeholders – from community members to community leaders, the foundation’s staff and members of the Board of Directors, from leaders and staff of social purpose organizations and businesses in the community, to individual supporters and volunteers and other philanthropic organizations and actors, including regionally and nationally

• Cultivating deep interest in and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the greater Taos community and northern New Mexico, with an enthusiasm for and ideas about tackling these challenges and a passion for advocating on behalf of the residents of all of our diverse communities

• Providing day-to-day leadership of the foundation’s operations to make the greatest progress in realizing the foundation’s vision through its effective execution of its mission

• Translating the vision, mission and long-term aspirations of the foundation into clear plans and milestones that all foundation staff are versed in and recognize their role in contributing to the foundation’s success in making these aspirations reality

• Advancing a culture of community philanthropy throughout the greater Taos community, northern New Mexico and the State of New Mexico, in which communities themselves are empowered to set priorities that guide philanthropic efforts

• Serving as a visible leader advancing the foundation’s overall purpose and specific priorities, including both representing the foundation personally in outreach and engagement with residents, social purpose organizations, government agencies and officials, businesses, other philanthropic institutions and actors, and other stakeholders of the communities of the greater Taos community, northern New Mexico and the state, and supporting members of the Board of Directors and staff to effectively represent the foundation as well

• Serving as a visible leader of the foundation’s commitment to equity, inclusion, diversity and belonging and to advancing equity throughout the greater Taos community

• Appropriately safeguarding the foundation’s resources through effective and timely budgeting, financial management practices and internal controls, including developing and presenting the annual budget per the schedule established by the board

• Supporting the foundation’s Board of Directors to provide the highest level of fiduciary, strategic and generative governance

• Building key partnerships, alliances and coalitions with other social purpose actors, governments, businesses and other stakeholders to advance the purpose, priorities and agenda of the foundation

• Creating a strong, results-based culture throughout the organization via a robust process of effective planning, assessment and reporting practices

• Ensuring that the foundation is a model of a leadership organization that hires, develops and deploys staff to be able to best contribute at all levels to the foundation’s most effective realization of its mission

• Consistently assessing the foundation’s capacities to identify opportunities for improvement and encouraging and empowering all foundation staff to do the same
• Ensuring that the foundation can operate most effectively by securing, with the Board, the resources necessary for building or strengthening these capacities

• Reviewing the foundation’s operations with the Board of Directors and staff to identify opportunities for evolving or introducing new programming or services to make the most rapid progress toward its aspirations for improving the lives of community members, in its grant making, and also in areas such as impact investing, foundation-led initiatives, advocacy and public awareness campaigns, capacity building and technical assistance

• Inspiring supporters – particularly those that can contribute significant additional resources, including those from outside the community – to increase the resources of the foundation’s unrestricted endowments and other funds, by demonstrating the success of the foundation in improving the lives of community members, particularly those from prioritized populations

• Improving the foundation’s capacities for more effective operations, better governance and greater impact through the introduction of new technologies, including the routinization of basic business functions to external service partners, and development of strategic partnerships and alliances.

Profile of a Successful Candidate

The Taos Community Foundation seeks a CEO who is:

• A recognized leader in the philanthropic, social purpose, business, government or academic sector, and preferably across multiple sectors, with the potential to expand the foundation’s outreach for support beyond local stakeholders to regional and national philanthropic institutions and resources

• A demonstrated leader in fundraising

• Exceptionally versed in and committed to social change and results-based leadership

• Capable of operational leadership of the highest caliber

• An effective leader, familiar with the theory and practice of leadership, able to deploy different approaches to leadership, and with a capacity for sharing leadership and passion for developing leadership in others

• A model of personal integrity and accountability with a commitment to the highest level of professional ethics

• Of exemplary emotional intelligence and executive function, capable of effective self-reflection and passionate about self-improvement, willing to receive feedback and eager to seek it and meaningfully integrate it into actionable plans for further professional development to be more effective in advancing the foundation

• Deeply familiar with the need for diversity, inclusion and belonging to be explicit priorities to realize equitable social progress

• Able to develop, understand and manage a budget that serves the needs of the foundation.

We believe that the successful candidate will likely have an advanced university degree in a relevant field, such as philanthropic studies, public administration, public policy, community development, economics or management. We also recognize that educational qualification requirements can problematically disadvantage individuals from historically marginalized backgrounds. As such, we will consider candidates with a bachelor’s degree in combination with strong qualifying experience. Fluency in Spanish and/or Northern Tiwa would be a plus for a CEO serving our diverse community.

Our Commitment to the Success of Our CEO

The successful candidate will have an appreciation that being an effective leader in community philanthropy requires a unique combination of soft and hard skills and particularly a capacity for understanding social systems and social change and the ability to translate this understanding into effective community improvement.
We recognize that no individual can represent the pinnacle of all of the qualities that we are seeking. However, our chief executive will excel in enough of these areas and be familiar with the other qualities required to fulfill the role. The new CEO will be enthusiastic about and capable of collaborating with colleagues who are more talented in these other areas.

We will support the highly qualified individual who becomes our new chief executive in developing their knowledge of subjects necessary to most effectively lead the foundation, including philanthropy, foundation operations, good corporate governance, strategy, fundraising, planning and financial management, as a complement to their commitment to the equitable social, economic and cultural development of the greater Taos community and northern New Mexico.

About the Taos Community Foundation

The Taos Community Foundation is one eight community foundations in New Mexico. We are focused on supporting effective philanthropy to meet community needs in the greater Taos community, communities of western Colfax County, and more broadly north central New Mexico. Celebrating 30 years of community philanthropy, the TCF manages more than $20 million in charitable assets and disburses some $2.5 million annually. It is governed by a board of 15 directors and is staffed by a team of six full-time professionals.

The foundation has operated primarily in the traditional community foundation model with a focus on raising money from individuals for donor-advised funds for which it disburses grants, while also collaborating with social purpose organizations to develop endowment funds. The foundation has also played a leadership role in raising and disbursing funds for time-sensitive, emergency issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfires that have severely affected large swaths of the community.

The TCF seeks to build on the vision of its founders to be a driving force in advancing equitable improvement of the lives of residents of the greater Taos community through such efforts envisioned for the foundation’s future as:

• continuing to play a more intentional, strategic and effective role in fostering mutual engagement among social purpose organizations, community members and other stakeholders to strengthen the social purpose sector through learning from each other and mobilizing greater resources for social betterment efforts;

• building unrestricted funds for the foundation to invest strategically to catalyze solutions to the community’s most significant concerns;

• strategically investing the foundation’s assets in vehicles that promise equitable expansion of economic opportunity in the community and improvement in community conditions while generating a financial return; and

• programming to more effectively engage and educate financial supporters of the social purpose sector in strategic philanthropy.

Our History and Our Community

The Taos Community Foundation was founded in 1994 amidst rapidly changing social, economic and cultural realities of the region when a handful of visionary community members saw increased community-based philanthropic efforts as a way to strengthen the community and relations among community members in addition to providing important support for meaningful community betterment.

Most of rural north-central New Mexico had been characterized until the 1970s and 1980s by a largely localized society, influenced by its long history of Native American Pueblos, early Spanish settlement and becoming part of the United States in the early 1800s. In the decades preceding the foundation's establishment, immigration from the rest of the US accelerated dramatically and began to reshape the demographics and social, economic, cultural and political dynamics of the community significantly.
Taos is a prominent part of Northern NM and is surrounded by stunning natural beauty, including the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Rio Grande Gorge, and the Taos Ski Valley. The town is a popular destination for hiking, biking, skiing, and fishing as well as the arts.

However, Taos, as well as the rest of the region, faces considerable modern challenges to shared socioeconomic development, particularly widening economic inequality and declining affordability, on top of historical challenges regarding social, political, economic and cultural inclusion that have fallen disproportionately on families with children and older residents for whom the community has been home for generations.

Today, Taos County has slightly more than 35,000 residents, of which populations 5% identify as Native American and 57% identify as Hispanic, with less than 1% identifying as Asian, Black or Pacific Islander. With the median household income of roughly $49,000 and per-capita income $32,000, more than one of every six persons and nearly one in five children in Taos County live below the poverty level.