



Bush Foundation
Program Operations Director
Saint Paul, Minnesota

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About the Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. This has been the case since the Foundation was founded in 1953. Archibald (Archie) and Edyth Bush set up the Foundation with few restrictions, ensuring that board and staff members through the years would have the flexibility needed to meet the challenges of the day. This ultimately set the stage for some of the Foundation's highest impact work.

Headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, the Foundation operates with a staff of 36, stewards an endowment that has grown to \$1.4 billion, and has a combined operating and philanthropic budget for 2025 of \$79.6 million.

More information about us can be found at bushfoundation.org.

In their words...

The Bush Foundation works to inspire and support creative problem solving — within and across sectors — to make our region better for everyone. Everything we do is to advance this purpose. It is what ties all our work together. We invest in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share this geography. This is both our tagline and our strategy to advance our purpose.

Through our open grantmaking:

We fund the development and spread of great ideas. We make grants for ideas as varied as reimagining agricultural finance, Indigenizing tourism and adapting telehealth for people experiencing homelessness. We removed funding caps on our biggest grantmaking program, [Community Innovation](#), and make large commitments to ensure that great ideas get the support needed for success.

We invest directly in people. We know that change only happens when people make it happen. We invest in individuals through our [Bush Fellowship program](#) and by supporting amazing programs that help entrepreneurs thrive in rural areas and grows the next generation of Native leaders and leadership approaches.

We support organizations that support problem solvers. We offer flexible funding to organizations that we hear are the most highly valued by problem solvers in the region. We know we can directly fund only a small fraction of the great efforts happening in our region. And yet we can be even more helpful by supporting the work of organizations that others turn

to for help in their own problem-solving efforts. We do this through [Ecosystem grants](#) and the [Bush Prizes](#) that are operated by our community grant partners.

How we do our work is as important as what we do, and our [operating values](#) guide everything we do.

Bush Foundation Operating Values

Spread Optimism. *We encourage individuals and organizations to think bigger and think differently about what is possible. We are positive and supportive in our internal and external interactions.*

Work Beyond Ourselves. *We actively seek opportunities to work in true collaboration with others to have more impact. We are willing to both lead and follow. We candidly share what we learn with others.*

Everybody Matters. *We are a champion for both excellence and equity inside and out of the Foundation. We have fair, open and inclusive processes. We work to raise overall quality of life while also closing opportunity and achievement gaps.*

Steward Well. *We demonstrate appreciation for the Foundation's history and thoughtfully build on its legacy. We hold ourselves to high standards of integrity and accountability and conduct ourselves in a way we hope would make our founders proud.*

More Good. Every Year. *We are a true learning organization and work to be smarter and more effective every year. We never lose sight of the reason we exist: to do the most possible good with the resources left to the community by Archibald G. Bush.*

The Opportunity

The Bush Foundation is excited to welcome an innovative and collaborative leader to serve as its next Program Operations Director.

The eight-member Program Operations team plays a central role in the Foundation, providing leadership, expertise, and coordination in org-wide operations, technology and grantmaking processes. Their work ensures that every member of the Foundation has the resources, information, and support needed to deliver their best work. The Program Operations team ensures that the Foundation's grantmaking and operations practices are equitable, simple,

supportive, and strategic, ensuring the greatest possible impact for the communities the Bush Foundation serves.

The Program Operations Director will be at the hub of a wide array of strategic, technical, legal, financial, regulatory, and administrative priorities, advancing the Foundation’s mission by overseeing grantmaking operations and processes. Key responsibilities include oversight of grants management, program operations and technology to ensure our systems and practices are streamlined, values-aligned, and community-focused. This leader will provide visionary direction and day-to-day guidance to the Program Operations team in all these areas while ensuring our policies and practices demonstrate the Foundation’s values of equity and excellence.

As a member of the “Management Team,” the Program Operations Director will lead cross-Foundation initiatives, convene and participate in both formal and informal working groups, and foster collaboration that drives innovation and impact.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for a leader who thrives at the intersection of operations and impact, with a passion for building systems that are as inspiring as the work they support.

Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

Grants Administration

- Promote Foundation-wide understanding and adoption of effective grantmaking practices, including staying on top of and contributing to best practices and innovations in the field.
- Work with operations and grantmaking staff to review process-related data and consider adjustments and adaptations that would enhance the experience of grantees and fellows.
- Oversee grants administration at the Foundation through all stages of the grantmaking process in close collaboration with the Grants Administrator and other Program Operations team members.
- Review and approve all Foundation grants and program-related investments (PRIs), as well as all grant and PRI payments to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practices.
- Consult with and support staff across the organization in identifying and working through technical questions on grant design and implementation. The Program Operations Director plays a key role in problem-solving and working through technical issues on investments.
 - Consult with outside legal counsel as needed to accomplish this work effectively.

Program Operations

- Provide leadership and support on a wide range of program design and implementation questions, working closely with grantmaking staff and consulting with staff from other areas as needed.
 - Key consultant and collaborative decision-maker on Foundation membership and funder collaborative grants.
 - Leads implementation of Foundation's commitment to open process across programs and vendor/partner relationships.
- Support Program Operations team members in resolving a wide range of technical, strategic and process issues. Promote and provide a big picture view on specific issues, proposing or suggesting changes to process and, training and workflow to support effective org-wide partnerships, productive internal practices and great grantmaking.
- Work with Program Operations staff on tools and processes – such as dashboards, program calendars, etc. - that illustrate, anticipate and address operational and capacity tension points.
- Provide direction and guidance to high-performing team that brings deep expertise across a range of functional areas.

Technology and Data Leadership

- Support the IT Strategy and Solutions Manager in leading information technology strategy and implementation (including hardware, software, online tools) to ensure effective operations and to create culture and practice that optimizes the functionality and utility of the Foundation's tools.
- Serve as a key leader and resource on strategy and practice related to data protocols, data collection, data analysis and data extraction.
- Provide strategic leadership to the Foundation's 'data team' so that the Foundation's data collection and data reporting meet our goals for transparency, high quality analysis and equity. This includes providing guidance and direction to ensure that reports prepared for the public, staff and board illustrate and analyze key trends and issues accurately and effectively.

Team and Organization-wide Leadership

- Supervise the Program Operations team to ensure a positive and collaborative environment, including setting and modeling high expectations for customer service and cross-organization cooperation and partnership.
- Actively engage with all Foundation staff so that there is a broad understanding of best practices and core goals of the work of the Program Operations team.
- Partner with grantmaking staff and other operations teams as an adviser and thought partner to continuously review and improve process and approach.
- Oversee and manage the budgets for program operations and IT.

- Play a lead role in organization-wide work to prioritize and manage key projects and work cycles, including our program calendar and Wednesday Work Stack planning.
- Actively demonstrate cross-organizational leadership by working to identify and resolve cross-team and org-wide strategic and operational issues and participating as an active member of management team.
- Play an external leadership role, representing the Foundation in relevant convenings and professional organizations and adding to knowledge and expertise in the sector
- Actively demonstrate core organizational values in performing all duties.

Candidate Profile

While no one candidate will possess every quality outlined for this position, a successful candidate will bring many of the following professional skills and personal attributes:

Leadership and Project Management

The Program Operations Director must bring significant experience in leading and managing complex projects and processes across teams and departments in multifaceted environments. With the Program Operations team's broad and varied responsibilities, at least seven years of leadership experience is expected to succeed and thrive in this role.

- Proven success managing cross-functional or cross-organizational settings, ensuring clarity, accountability, and progress.
- Experience in at least one of the core functions of the team:
 - Grants administration, grantmaking and grants management
 - Technology tools, strategy and support
 - Program operations design and implementation
 - Management in cross-functional, cross-org setting.

Familiarity with relevant topics is a plus, including:

- Grant administration processes and tools
- Current trends in grants management, program operations, and technology systems
- Knowledge of the Foundation's region and areas of focus.
- Understanding of IRS regulations governing private foundations and grantmaking

Supporting Others and Team Development

This role requires exceptional leadership and supervisory skills. The Director will support colleagues to excel individually and collectively by providing strategic support, guidance, and coaching.

- Demonstrated ability to support and develop diverse teams, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and growth.
- Experience in guiding subject matter experts to achieve both personal success and broader organizational goals.
- Commitment to streamlining processes to enable teams to focus on high-impact work.

Relationship Building and Collaboration

The Director will work with diverse teams, communities, and partners. Building strong relationships and fostering collaboration is core to this role.

- A demonstrated ability to connect with people from different backgrounds and perspectives.
- Enthusiasm for supporting others' success through strong, respectful relationships.

Strategic and Operational Insight

The ideal candidate has a unique ability to see the big picture while understanding the details, navigating both the strategic implications of operational decisions and the operational requirements of strategy.

- Skilled at analyzing complex issues and aligning solutions with organizational priorities.
- Ability to design and implement systems and processes that are innovative, effective, and responsive.

Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

A deep commitment to equity and anti-racism is essential for success in this role. The Director will lead with inclusivity and fairness, applying these values to all operational and leadership decisions.

- Experience fostering inclusive teams and equitable processes.
- A demonstrated ability to question biases, build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, and ensure decisions reflect fairness and understanding.

Process Innovation and Technical Aptitude

As a leader of the Program Operations team, the Director will champion process improvements and technical solutions to advance the Foundation's operational goals.

- Demonstrated aptitude for designing and improving processes, ensuring they are simple, supportive, strategic, and equitable.
- Strong facilitation and problem-solving skills to lead individuals and teams through complex process design, implementation, and troubleshooting.
- Experience managing multiple projects, meeting tight deadlines with a focus on detail and quality.

- Familiarity with Salesforce or similar complex databases is a plus.

Living the Foundation's Operational Values

The Bush Foundation's values are at the heart of this position. The Director will demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to the Foundation's operating values, bringing enthusiasm, reflection, and action to uphold these principles every day.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary for this position is \$200,676. The Bush Foundation offers excellent benefits, including health, dental, life, and disability insurance; generous retirement contributions; professional development; and vacation, sick, and holiday leave.

The Bush Foundation embeds simplicity and equity in its approach to compensation. Salaries are tied to external benchmarks and regularly reviewed to make sure that employee contributions are fairly valued, and that Foundation pay is competitive in attracting talented people.

All employees in the same roles are paid at the same rate, regardless of tenure or experience to avoid embedding disparities in the pay structure.

Work Environment

The Foundation operates on a hybrid schedule with its primary office in St. Paul, MN. We are a place-based foundation with a focus on serving the people in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the 23 Native nations that share that geography. Employees are required to live in the region served by the Bush Foundation.

Staff are currently working in a hybrid environment, with a mix of virtual and in-person work to strike a good balance between connection and flexibility. Twin Cities-based staff work on-site every Wednesday (Wednesday Work Stack), with one additional 'connection and learning' on-site day each month. Staff are welcome to work on site more often if desired.

This role may require schedule flexibility and occasional travel in the region (up to 10%) to participate in events or meet priority deadlines.

Contact

Koya Partners has been exclusively retained for this engagement, which is being led by Chartise Clark. Express interest in this role by [filling out our Talent Profile](#). All inquiries and discussions are strictly confidential.

Koya Partners is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to individuals living with disabilities. If you are a qualified individual living with a disability and need assistance expressing interest online, please email NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.

The Bush Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBTQIA+ applicants.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a Diversified Search Group company, is the nation's premier search firm dedicated to mission-driven leadership. Since its founding in 2004, Koya has had an exclusive focus on mission-driven clients and was founded on the belief that the right leader can transform an organization and have a deep and measurable impact on our world. Koya works with nonprofits & NGOs, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Diversified Search Group is consistently recognized by Forbes on its top 10 list of "America's Best Executive Recruiting Firms" and is an industry leader in recruiting transformational leaders for a changing world. The firm is deliberately different in its approach, with best-in-class teams who have decades of experience in cultivating inclusive leaders, understanding the dimensions of diversity, and building equitable teams.

Learn more about Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group via the [firm's website](#).