

# **Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc.**

## **Executive Director Profile**

Reporting directly to the Board of Trustees through the Board President, the Executive Director directs the operations of the Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc. (“the Fund”), a nearly 20-year-old independent, charitable grantmaking foundation in New York City with approximately \$120 million in endowment assets. The Fund is an outgrowth of the Lavelle School for the Blind, a 114-year-old Bronx-based school for children with blindness and multiple impairments.

The Fund primarily supports programs that help Tri-State New York area residents who are blind or visually impaired live independent and productive lives. The Fund also supports medical eye care programs that work in either its home region or the developing world to prevent, treat, and, where possible, reverse blindness and vision loss. Programs in the Catholic tradition of providing compassionate care to the neediest are of special interest.

The Executive Director works with the Board and staff to maximize the Fund’s philanthropic impact in priority giving areas and in our Scholarship Program for financially needy college and university students who are blind. The Fund’s intentionally lean staff now include: a full-time staff Controller, a full-time Grants Manager and Special Assistant, a half-time Scholarship Program Coordinator, and a one-day-per-week Program Officer. The Executive Director also helps the Board to develop and the Fund to implement appropriate governance, operational, financial, and personnel policies and procedures.

## **Responsibilities of the Executive Director**

### **Grantmaking**

- Guide the development of annual grantmaking plans and budgets that align with Board-approved priorities; organize periodic strategic planning retreats at which the Board reviews and refines such priorities (the most recent retreat having been in April 2016).
- Identify promising grant applicants and projects within the Fund’s giving focus. Do extensive networking and research and solicit grant ideas and concept papers. Vet grant proposals, asking oral and written questions to test program feasibility, likely dollar-for-dollar impact, and the adequacy of proposed project assessment. As needed, guide applicants in making their proposals clearer and more complete. Tap expertise of the Board President, the Board and Medical Advisory Council, and the Fund’s wider network in such vetting as appropriate.

- Write summaries and analyses of each grant under consideration, together with contextual materials, for the Board’s quarterly meetings.
- Lead Board meeting discussions of proposed grants and other program-related recommendations and issues.

## **Staff Oversight**

- Oversee the program and administrative work of all staff and consultants; direct and support the staff’s work and professional development, annually assess staff members’ performance and compensation.
- With the Board Treasurer, supervise the Fund’s Controller in developing the annual administrative budget, controlling expenditures within Board-approved limits, reviewing grantee finances, and conducting the audit process and HR functions.
- Oversee the Fund’s Grants Manager and Special Assistant in the administration of Fund operations, including the drafting of grant application and reporting guidelines and individual grant contracts, the maintenance of an appropriate grants management system and Lavelle Fund website, and roles as staff liaison and principal minute-taker for most full Board and Committee meetings.
- Oversee the Fund’s Program Officer in reviewing the performance of individual grants, assessing and periodically reporting to the Board on grant progress and results.
- Oversee the Fund’s Scholarship Program Coordinator in the administration of the Fund’s Brother Kearney Scholarship Program, monitoring the program’s progress and recommending periodic renewal of the program’s contracts with participating colleges.

## **Board Support**

- Provide the Board and its Committees with the information and guidance needed to support policy, budget, and grant decisions. Ensure compliance with Board and Committee decisions.
- Provide the Board with context for understanding the Fund’s grantmaking fields and individual grantees through international and Tri-State New York area site visits and invited expert speakers.
- Provide orientation materials for new Board members.

## Community Collaboration

- Work with other private and public funders to extend our collective philanthropic impact. Liaise with Tri-State New York area state commissions for the blind and partner with other NYC funders on selected grant projects.
- Represent the Fund to external organizations and stakeholders.
- Serve as reference for grantees that are candidates for international prizes or are seeking international government aid.

## Qualifications

- Experience in positions of leadership, preferably in the Tri-State New York area, in philanthropy and/or the non-profit sector.
- Experience in the vision field and in international humanitarian work.
- Demonstrated strategic thinking and analytical skills, high ethical standards, and deep interest in the Lavelle Fund's mission.
- Superior writing and speaking skills and the proven ability to marshal evidence in support of a position.
- Strong leadership, team building, problem-solving and social-emotional skills.
- Integrity, care, and prudence as a steward of nonprofit financial assets.
- Experience in developing and managing operating budgets and in analyzing nonprofit financial statements and budgets; and, familiarity with the nonprofit audit cycle and endowment management.
- Experience with nonprofit governance and compliance issues.
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously, tolerate ambiguity, and operate effectively in demanding environments.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office. Familiarity with grants management systems and cloud-based document management systems is a plus.
- Graduate degree or advanced professional studies preferred.

May 2019