



DIRECTOR OF FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

ByalaSearch LLC is pleased to announce that our firm has been retained by Bennington College to identify candidates for the position of Director of Foundation and Government Relations.

ABOUT BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Bennington College is a private, not-for-profit, nonsectarian college located in Bennington, Vermont, with the mission to liberate and nurture the individuality and rigorous creativity of its students, supporting them as they forge their own paths and work toward a world more beautiful, sustainable, democratic, and just.

At Bennington, learning and making are inseparable. The faculty are committed not just intellectually, but also as leading practitioners in their field. Students develop ideas in the classroom, and then test those ideas where it counts—through hands-on work in the world. The result is a learning experience free of artificial barriers where students imagine, shape, and pursue their best work. Through a genuinely distinctive education, Bennington cultivates a mindset for change, a capacity to break new ground and the conditions for progress.

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Director of Foundation and Government Relations is a key frontline leadership member of the advancement team at Bennington College and is responsible for providing strategic and proactive



oversight to grow institutional giving in order to maintain and expand existing relationships and securing new funding opportunities from government sources, family foundations and other institutional funders. This critical institutional role, proactively taking initiative to oversee, manage and enhance a growing portfolio of foundation funders and potential government agency funding, will provide leadership and expertise to advance the College's needs, interests and priorities by fostering and creating productive relationships with external funders, researching and identifying external sources of institutional support, and seeking opportunities to generate new proposals based on funders' guidelines and interests. The placement will foster a culture among faculty and staff of interest in grantsmanship. The Director will balance equally important external and internal relationships, incorporating direction given through strong partnership with the College's leadership and in collaboration with faculty, to generate the relationships, dynamic proposals and reports that lead to enhanced program outcomes.

Reporting to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and working collaboratively with the advancement team, the Director is accountable for stewarding existing relationships and developing new connections to help strengthen Bennington's network of current and prospective institutional donors. They will work closely with the President, Provost, Cabinet, and faculty members to conceptualize and develop grant proposals, working across departments to co-develop concept papers and proposals, including budget and financial data. The Director will write, refine, and edit proposals and reports, and ensure timely communications related to foundation and select government funding.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Director of Foundation and Government Relations works with members of the Institutional Advancement, Communications Office, President's Office, Business Office, Dean's Office, and additional campus offices. The Director also has external relationships with foundation contacts, Trustees (as required), alumni, parents, students, and friends of Bennington College.

Role and Responsibilities:

- Strategize with the President of the College and the Vice President for Institutional Advancement to create and execute the strategy to expand support from family and institutional foundations as well as government funders in order to reach annual fundraising goals and build a robust pipeline for future growth.
- Meet the annual Foundations and Government Relations revenue goal, including proactive identification of new institutional funders, and cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of existing funders.
- Research new sources of funding, forming relationships with program officers and/or senior leadership of foundations, government and corporate sponsors.
- Draft persuasive and clear letters of intent and proposals based on a full understanding of the interests and motivations of each potential funder.
- Collaborate with colleagues in adjacent departments to support and expand foundation fundraising and partner with the President and Cabinet members to steward funders and to develop strategy.
- Oversee post-award documentation compliance, including personalized thoughtful grant acknowledgements, and relevant mid-cycle stewardship.
- Lead the process of preparing required reports to foundation and government funders, including submission of budgets in collaboration with the financial office.
- Maintain a calendar of tasks and deadlines as it pertains to this work.
- Assist in other Institutional Advancement writing projects and presentations, as needed.

Critical Competencies:

- Track record of working with national foundations and understanding their priorities and matching those to internal research; experience preparing required reports to foundation and government funders, including submission of budgets in collaboration with the financial office.
- Experience building momentum for an institutional giving function in higher education and the arts; relationships with funders and success in connecting funders to faculty and programs.
- History of building culture of grantsmanship among staff and faculty; build trust among academic community to mobilize participation in grant-seeking.
- Track record of creating structures and serving as a resource to faculty and staff seeking foundation giving.
- Balance near-term opportunities with longer-term goals and strategies.

Metrics for Success:

- Get to know Bennington's portfolio history of grants and renewals, including the pipeline and rejections.
- Grow the institutional giving portfolio from \$2.6 million in restricted and unrestricted gifts to \$5 million in three years.
- Cultivate and grow corporate and government funding sources and relationships while working with Major Gift Officers to deepen relationships with private foundations.
- Redefine the role as a relationship lead and service-oriented proactive fundraising arm.

- Set up systems for how to deal with grants and anticipate foundation needs to make proposal writing responsive and analytical.
- Develop, cultivate and steward relationships with funders.
- Strategize major fundraising opportunities with the Vice President and President.

Ideal Skills and Experience:

- Candidates should possess a bachelor's degree with at least 8 years demonstrated experience in a professional non-profit fundraising or higher education environment.
- Extensive knowledge of Institutional fundraising and demonstrated ability to provide strategic direction and daily management for fundraising initiatives, resulting in significantly improved performance.
- Demonstrated track record of successful solicitations or proposals, including the ability to proactively identify, build, and manage a portfolio of institutional funders.
- Experience preparing required reports to foundation and government funders, including submission of budgets in collaboration with the finance department.
- History of building relationships with faculty and staff.
- The ability to compose proposals and presentations of varying length and complexity including original narratives, occasional graphics, and financial spreadsheets.
- Exemplary written and oral communication skills, with the ability to work effectively both as part of a team and independently.
- Excellent time management and organizational skills with a proven ability to anticipate and meet multiple deadlines and to gather necessary information.

- Demonstrates self-awareness, cultural competency and inclusivity, with the ability to work with colleagues and stakeholders across diverse cultures and backgrounds with a commitment to the mission and values of Bennington College.
- Proficiency with database, spreadsheet, and word processing applications, preferably with Google Suite and familiarity with Blackbaud's Raiser's Edge.
- Travel, evening and weekend responsibilities may be required.
- A hybrid remote schedule work schedule is possible with on-campus presence as required to meet work objectives.

Other Characteristics:

The Director of Foundation and Government Relations will be passionate about Bennington's mission and will embrace the opportunity to be a member of the Bennington community. The individual will be resourceful and will have a history of building bridges to faculty and staff to build trust and bring them along on new funding opportunities available to them. The placement will be able to position Bennington and make a compelling case for it to external institutional funders, including family foundations and appropriate state and federal funding agencies. The Director should possess an insatiable curiosity and be excited by the opportunity to celebrate Bennington's history and successes while building relationships with the faculty, students and staff to unlock stories that will move the passions of funders to Bennington.

The candidate will have a professional presentation style, excellent interpersonal skills, a sense of humor, and the ability to work well within a team of diverse individuals. The Director will have a keen ability to understand what motivates foundations to contribute and will excel at creating the systems to ensure a high-performing team. The Director of Foundation and Government Relations will possess an entrepreneurial attitude and strong work ethic, demonstrating a proactive, responsive, flexible and results-oriented style in a fast-paced and ever-evolving environment. The



placement will possess the ability to work independently and collaboratively as a team player across the institution while keeping the organization’s mission at heart. The candidate will give strategic direction in a changing philanthropic landscape while being forward-thinking in order to contribute to fundraising efforts to support the mission of Bennington College.

COMPENSATION

The compensation for the Director of Foundation and Government Relations is targeted at \$110,000 to \$140,000.

KINDLY SEND NOMINATIONS OR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO:

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