



MARY REYNOLDS BABCOCK  
FOUNDATION

*helping to move people and places out of poverty*

***Search for Program Director***

**Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

**The Search**

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation seeks a highly collaborative, discerning, mission-driven and experienced grantmaker committed to taking on entrenched challenges and structural inequalities for its next Program Director. With its mission of helping people and places move out of poverty and achieve greater social and economic justice, the Foundation is often described as a pioneer and leader in Southern philanthropy, thanks in part to a sophisticated array of strategies and approaches, as well as its long-term support of community asset building, civic engagement efforts, and supportive policies and institutions. The Foundation strives to foster respectful, supportive relationships with its grantee partners while diligently developing a deeper understanding of their specific contexts than is common in philanthropy. The Foundation's grantee partners, with support from the Foundation and others, have made meaningful progress on key issues across the region through boldness, patience and a carefully curated set of multi-strategy approaches. While some raise skepticism about the prospect of social change in the region, the Foundation and its partners believe there are multiple opportunities to make a substantive difference for low-wealth communities and people of color.

The next Program Director will be coming at an exciting time for the Foundation. While the Foundation does not currently envision major strategic revisions to its mission and approach, in recent years there have been a number of personnel and organizational changes that make this perhaps the most fluid moment in its history. New board and staff members are bringing fresh ideas and perspectives to the work. While the team is young in some ways, it is nonetheless a deeply committed, collegial and enthusiastic group that has the potential to carry on and even explore new approaches to achieving its mission. Organizationally, there has been a greater push to instill a clearer commitment to racial equity, and as a result more shared and collaborative decision-making processes.

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation is a family foundation with total assets of \$200 million and an annual grantmaking outlay of approximately \$9 million. The Program Director will be expected to work consultatively and collaboratively with other staff to determine grantmaking guidelines and strategies. Mentoring and developing the Program Team and continuing to enhance and deepen the Foundation's efforts on racial equity will be critical duties.

The Foundation has engaged the search firm Isaacson, Miller to help with this important recruitment. Interested candidates should apply to the firm as outlined at the end of this document.

## **The Foundation**

The Foundation's mission is to help people and places move out of poverty and achieve greater social and economic justice. Because poverty is complicated and multi-faceted, there is a need for significant changes in systems and structures—laws, behaviors, attitudes, policies, and institutions—to make a lasting difference. The Foundation's vision for the South is anchored in a belief in people, organizations, and the power of partnerships. A core value is that people must directly influence the institutions and leaders that shape their economic and civic lives, and they need support and resources to do so. A defining feature of the Foundation has been centering the needs and views of grantees and communities; that those closest to the problems know best how to solve them. The Foundation's footprint spans 11 Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Today there are serious challenges to an equitable, inclusive and more democratic South: structural racism and other forms of discrimination are major barriers. Political control remains too concentrated. Disinvestment in public goods like education and the safety net has eroded the foundation people need to get ahead. The economy too often rewards short-term market behavior that hurts low-wealth people, communities, and natural systems. To overcome these challenges, the Foundation employs patient, long-term investments; facilitates collaboration among unusual partners; and helps develop supportive networks for greater impact.

In pursuit of its mission, the Foundation employs the following approaches:

- *Place-Based*: An understanding and clear focus on place is central to the Foundation's ethos. The Foundation underwrites not so much a grantee and its mission but its context (e.g. social, political) and how that touches its work.
- *Multiple and Layered Strategies*: The Foundation understands there is no single approach to poverty alleviation; rather, investments in multiple organizations and networks over time using complementary strategies informed by an understanding of place are most effective.
- *Network Approach*: Greater impact is achieved by supporting networks of people and organizations that bring a diverse collection of strategies, capacities, and perspectives. The Foundation supports efforts to develop leaders and connects them to other potential partners and funders.
- *Engage with Multiple Tools*: The Foundation deploys 100 percent of its financial assets (grants, program-related investments, and market-rate investments); uses its intellectual and reputational capital to leverage investments from other foundations; engages in strategic communications and looks for opportunities to convene grantees and other partners for peer learning.
- *Learn Deeply*: Reflecting on and capturing lessons from the Foundation's grantee partners and sharing those broadly is an important facet of the Foundation's work and guides the direction of strategy and program.
- *Build Capacity*: Through long-term general support and attention to organizational development, the Foundation aims to enhance every facet of healthy organizations.

Progress along all three pathways of change—*economic opportunity, democracy and civic engagement, and supportive policies and institutions* are the Foundation's priorities for investing its money, time,

relationships, and learning. Historically, the Foundation has seen networks and places that advance along more than one pathway as most successful.

- *Economic Opportunity*: The Foundation looks to provide individuals with ladders of economic opportunity that include work supports, job training, and connections to employers seeking skilled, fair-wage labor. Others include access to non-predatory financial services, local control of community assets and tools to encourage entrepreneurship and new business models.
- *Democracy and Civic Engagement*: The Foundation recognizes the importance of people developing knowledge, skills, networks, and motivation to build democratic systems that can challenge entrenched structures. Key strategies toward these outcomes include community organizing, leadership development, inclusive community planning, voter education, and get-out-the-vote efforts.
- *Supportive Policies and Institutions*: For communities to thrive, for-profit and nonprofit institutions and all levels of government must foster cultures and adopt policies that open doors to economic opportunity and democratic participation for low-wealth people. Supportive institutions can bring new resources to the table, effectively implement policy, and leverage political will. Strategies toward these outcomes include research, strategic communications, advocacy, and community organizing.

### Racial Equity

Addressing the pervasive harm racism has inflicted demands foundations do more than refine their grantmaking; it requires them to examine everything with an explicit focus on racial equity. Today the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation is learning to center equity in all its work. Foundation staff and board members are delving into the history omitted from schoolbooks and reflecting on ways it has helped or hindered them; asking its partners different questions; and collecting new data about their organizations and the communities they serve. There is also an examination of internal policies, from hiring to investing, the way the work is discussed, the vendors used, and even the hotels and restaurants it patronizes to more thoroughly embed racial equity throughout the organization.

More information about the Foundation can be found at [www.mrbf.org](http://www.mrbf.org).

### The Role and Leadership Opportunities and Challenges

The Program Director reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for collaboratively managing the Foundation's program work as well as specific grant portfolios. The Program Director manages all grantmaking, leads program-related material development for the board packet, and collaboratively manages program strategy decision-making. Ensuring a strategic and appropriate set of grants for the board is a central element of the role. This includes conveying and providing a clear set of grant recommendations and presentations that support the Foundation's overarching strategies. The Program Director supervises the Senior Network Officer, Network Officers, and Grants Manager. In addition, s/he recommends and oversees capacity building resources, shares helpful information with grantee partners, and represents the Foundation in networks, conferences, and professional activities. The Program Director contributes to public communications and overall communications strategy in collaboration with the Communications Officer. This is in service to the Foundation's commitment to transparency, its vocal support for policies beneficial to our partners and Southern communities, and its overarching goal of leveraging sustained, thoughtful investment in the region. The Program Director is a member of the

Management Team and brings critical issues to attention to ensure processes and systems support the Foundation's mission.

The Program Director will be expected to address the following leadership challenges and opportunities:

***Provide a highly collaborative leadership style and mentor staff***

The next Program Director must work collaboratively and in consultation with other staff around important decisions facing the Foundation. In particular, the Program Director will consult closely with the Program Team and Management Team on grantmaking guidelines and strategy. The Program Team often discusses topics relevant to the Foundation's work and uses that learning to inform program and strategy directions. Coming into this role, the Program Director will engage in an iterative process with the Foundation's staff around respective roles and responsibilities and how each will complement the others.

Moreover, with many of the Network Officers and Program Associates being newer to the Foundation, and relatively new to philanthropy, the Program Director will be expected to provide effective mentorship to this cohort of highly talented and mission-oriented individuals. The Program Director will work in collaboration with the Senior Network Officer on the onboarding and training of Network Officers and continue to refine their roles and responsibilities where appropriate.

***Lead the Foundation's grantmaking***

While the Program Director will be expected to consult closely with the Executive Director, Senior Network Officer, and Program Team on grantmaking guidelines and strategies, s/he is, in the end, the lead on these matters. The Program Director plays an important leadership role in decisions about potential shifts to grantmaking based on what happens to grantees and the external environment; applying sophisticated discernment on where to push and/or hold back; helping to leverage outside resources for the Foundation's work and more. A skilled, experienced social change generalist with deep curiosity will provide important insights to guide program decisions and support a range of strategies.

***Continue to advance racial equity work***

The Program Director will be an important voice and leader in advancing racial equity in all the work that the Foundation does. From hiring and training to mentoring and grantmaking, the Program Director must apply a racial equity lens to all matters. The work of racial equity is an ongoing process at the Foundation and the Program Director will help facilitate meaningful conversations and provide space for learning and reflection.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The successful candidate will have the following skills, experience, and qualifications:

- Undergraduate degree; master's degree preferred;
- 8+ years of grantmaking experience related to the Foundation's priorities; significant nonprofit management experience preferred;

- Commitment to the mission and values of the Foundation and a commitment to equity, particularly racial equity, with a willingness to proactively learn about it and integrate it into all aspects of the work;
- Extensive experience in and commitment to the Southeastern United States;
- Excellent written and oral communications skills, and experience and/or interest in strategic communications;
- Experience with and commitment to collaborative management and team-building;
- Significant experience managing, coaching, and supervising staff;
- Experience managing budgets and program-related investments;
- Experience building relationships and fostering alliances among diverse people to accomplish goals;
- Respect for the dignity and abilities of a wide variety of people;
- Keen analytical skills, ability to learn and synthesize new information quickly;
- Ability to use instinct and intuition effectively in building relationships and making decisions;
- Ability to handle multiple assignments and meet deadlines; ability to pay attention to accuracy and detail while thinking broadly;
- Ability to travel.

**To Apply, Inquire and Nominate**

Interested applicants are invited to submit their resumes and cover letters to:

Kahn Lee, Managing Associate  
Martens Roc, Senior Associate

1300 19<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The position is based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Electronic submissions are strongly preferred, and can be made at [www.imsearch.com/7103](http://www.imsearch.com/7103). Inquiries and nominations for this position should be made via the same web address.

***The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, working to promote racial equity and challenge oppression. The foundation is dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse and pluralistic staff committed to working in a multicultural environment***