



Job Title: Program Officer

Location: Jackson, MS

Reports to: Chief Strategy Officer

Classification: Full-Time (Exempt)

Supervisory Function: No

Geographic Focus: Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, with a particular emphasis on the Mississippi Delta

Job Summary:

The Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) seeks a dynamic, relationship-driven Program Officer to support the Foundation's programmatic and strategic work across Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Reporting to the Chief Strategy Officer, the Program Officer will help implement, manage, and evaluate programs, grantmaking activities, partnerships, and community-based initiatives that advance FMS's mission and strategic priorities.

The ideal candidate will have strong knowledge of and experience working in the Mississippi Delta, including an understanding of its communities, organizations, opportunities, and challenges. The Program Officer will build and maintain relationships with nonprofit organizations, community leaders, philanthropic partners, public-sector partners, and other stakeholders while ensuring that community perspectives help inform the Foundation's strategies and investments.

The successful candidate will be a strong relationship builder who can translate strategy into action, independently manage multiple initiatives and grant portfolios, and identify emerging needs and opportunities.

Key Responsibilities:

Program Strategy and Implementation

- Work closely with the Chief Strategy Officer to implement the Foundation's strategic and programmatic priorities across Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Own assigned programs, initiatives, grants, and special projects from strategy through execution, including planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and closeout, ensuring that milestones, deliverables, budgets, partner commitments, and expected outcomes are completed accurately and on time.
- Translate strategic priorities into annual, quarterly, and project-level work plans with clear goals, timelines, deliverables, responsibilities, performance measures, and reporting requirements.
- Proactively identify delays, risks, performance issues, and barriers to implementation and recommend corrective action before milestones or commitments are missed.
- Provide timely updates and actionable recommendations to the Chief Strategy Officer regarding program performance, risks, challenges, opportunities, community trends, and decisions requiring leadership attention.
- Identify emerging issues, community needs, gaps, promising practices, potential partners, and opportunities for philanthropic investment through research, landscape scans, and community engagement.

Grantmaking and Portfolio Management

- Manage assigned grant portfolios throughout the full grant lifecycle, including due diligence, recommendations, award administration, monitoring, reporting, grantee support, and closeout.

- Review grant proposals, organizational information, project budgets, and other materials to assess alignment, feasibility, organizational capacity, and potential impact.
- Monitor grant agreements, budgets, reporting requirements, deliverables, and performance, proactively identifying concerns and elevating significant issues to Foundation leadership.
- Conduct regular grantee check-ins and site visits, as appropriate, to understand progress, challenges, capacity needs, and emerging opportunities.
- Maintain complete, accurate, and current grant and program records, including agreements, reports, budgets, meeting documentation, deliverables, and closeout materials.
- Provide technical guidance and support to grantees while maintaining clear expectations, accountability, and appropriate professional boundaries.

Community and Regional Engagement

- Develop and maintain a strong presence in communities throughout the Mississippi Delta while supporting FMS's broader regional presence across Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Identify emerging leaders, organizations, partnerships, and community-driven initiatives that align with the Foundation's mission.
- Synthesize community intelligence, research, partner feedback, and program data into actionable recommendations that inform Foundation strategy, grantmaking, partnerships, and resource allocation.
- Clearly document significant decisions, commitments, responsibilities, and next steps resulting from community and partner engagement and ensure appropriate internal follow-through.
- Develop and maintain productive relationships with nonprofit organizations, philanthropic partners, government agencies, community leaders, and other stakeholders throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Listen to and elevate community perspectives to help inform Foundation strategies, programs, and investments.
- Exercise sound judgment regarding organizational commitments, partner expectations, funding discussions, and external communications, and obtain appropriate leadership approval before making commitments on behalf of the Foundation.
- Assist in planning and facilitating community meetings, listening sessions, focus groups, convenings, and other engagement activities.
- Build relationships that support FMS's long-term presence and credibility across Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, including communities and networks where the Foundation is seeking to deepen its engagement.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- Track and analyze program activities, outcomes, milestones, and performance indicators to assess effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Use program data, community feedback, research, and evaluation findings to develop actionable recommendations for improving program strategy, grantmaking, partnerships, and future investments.
- Prepare program reports, presentations, summaries, dashboards, and other materials for Foundation leadership, funders, committees, and the Board of Directors.
- Work with grantees and partners to strengthen reporting and evaluation practices.
- Ensure program information, performance data, reports, and supporting documentation are accurate, current, organized, and readily available for leadership, funder, Board, and audit needs.

Internal Collaboration

- Work with Finance staff to monitor program and grant budgets and ensure appropriate stewardship of Foundation resources.
- Coordinate proactively with Finance, Development, Communications, and other internal teams to ensure program commitments, budgets, reporting requirements, external messaging, and funding activities remain aligned.
- Perform other duties and special projects as assigned by the Chief Strategy Officer.
- Maintain effective internal communication regarding program decisions, partner commitments, emerging risks, deadlines, and matters requiring cross-functional coordination or leadership action.

Resource Development and Strategic Partnerships:

- Partner with Development and Foundation leadership to identify funding opportunities and provide program expertise, data, outcomes, narratives, budgets, and other information needed for proposals, funder engagement, stewardship, and reporting.
- Identify opportunities to leverage FMS investments and attract additional philanthropic, public, corporate, and community resources to the region.
- Cultivate strategic relationships that can expand resources, partnerships, knowledge, and opportunities available to FMS and the communities it serves.

Competencies Required:**Strategic Thinking**

- Connects community needs, research, program data, performance, emerging opportunities, and organizational priorities to assess opportunities and risks, develop practical recommendations, and inform Foundation strategy and investments.

Execution and Accountability

- Takes ownership of assigned work, follows through on commitments, meets deadlines, identifies what needs to happen next, and proactively addresses obstacles while moving work forward without requiring extensive direction.

Relationship Management

- Builds authentic, credible, and productive relationships with grantees, community leaders, funders, public-sector partners, and other stakeholders while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and accountability.

Project and Portfolio Management

- Effectively manages multiple programs, grants, partners, budgets, timelines, deliverables, and competing priorities while maintaining attention to detail and overall strategic objectives.

Communication and Facilitation

- Communicates clearly and professionally in writing, presentations, meetings, and external settings and effectively facilitates conversations among diverse stakeholders.

Financial Stewardship

- Understands program budgets, resource allocation, financial reporting, and responsible stewardship of philanthropic resources, and works effectively with Finance to monitor expenditures and address concerns.

Professional Judgment

Demonstrates discretion, sound judgment, accountability, and an understanding of when decisions or commitments require consultation or leadership approval.

Salary Range: \$55,000 - \$65,000

Benefits: Competitive salary and benefits, including 401(k) retirement savings and planning, medical, dental, vision, life, AD&D, vacation, and paid holidays. Other benefits include cell phone and gym reimbursement, education assistance, and professional development.

Qualifications:**Education and Experience**

- Minimum of five years of relevant professional experience preferred, including significant responsibility in philanthropy, grantmaking, program management, community or economic development, education, nonprofit partnerships, or related work.

- Demonstrated record of independently managing complex programs, projects, grants, or initiatives involving multiple partners, deadlines, budgets, deliverables, and reporting requirements.
- Experience conducting due diligence, reviewing proposals or budgets, monitoring grants, evaluating program performance, or managing a grant portfolio is strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated experience working with community-based organizations and diverse stakeholders.
- Deep knowledge of or demonstrated experience working in the Mississippi Delta is strongly preferred. Candidates should also demonstrate the ability to develop relationships and programmatic presence across rural and underserved communities throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Strong knowledge of the social, economic, educational, health, and community-development landscape of the Mid South.
- Knowledge of the Mississippi Delta, including its communities, nonprofit organizations, institutions, leaders, assets, and challenges.

What Success Looks Like

Success in this role means that assigned initiatives move effectively from strategy to execution; grantees and partners understand expectations and meet commitments; program information and documentation are accurate and current; leadership receives timely insight about progress, risks, and opportunities; and FMS continues to deepen its relationships, visibility, resources, and impact throughout the Mid South.

Qualified applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to careers@fndmidsouth.org. All materials should be addressed to the attention of Meshelle Rawls, VP of People & Culture. Candidates invited to move forward in the hiring process should be prepared to submit a writing sample and references.

Physical Requirements and Working Conditions. This position is based in Jackson, Mississippi, and requires regular regional travel throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, including travel to rural communities and periodic overnight travel. The position requires regular in-person engagement with grantees, partners, communities, and Foundation stakeholders.

This job description may not include all assigned duties, responsibilities, or aspects of the job described. It may be amended at any time at the employer's sole discretion. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential job functions.

This position requires a valid state driver's license, safe driving record, reliable transportation, and insurability through our vehicle insurance carrier.

The Foundation for the Mid South is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to diversity. We believe that no one should be discriminated against because of their differences, such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, religion, or sexual orientation. All employment decisions shall be made without regard to age, race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, citizenship status, or any other basis as protected by federal, state, or local law.

About the Foundation:

Founded in 1990, the Foundation for the Mid South is a regional foundation that works to improve communities and expand opportunity across Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Through grantmaking, strategic partnerships, leadership development, and community-centered initiatives, the Foundation advances economic opportunities, educational success, health equity, and community vitality. The Foundation partners with residents, nonprofits, businesses, and public sector leaders to create lasting solutions that help people and communities thrive.