



Position Announcement

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR POLK BROS. FOUNDATION Chicago, Illinois

About the Foundation

Together, we envision a time when every Chicagoan can have a secure home, a job that pays a living wage, good health, and access to resources that protect their rights. A time when every child is well-educated, safe, supported by family and community, and has the opportunity to be inspired by the arts.

The mission of the Polk Bros. Foundation is to improve the quality of life for the people of Chicago and to make Chicago a place where all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. As a “foundation for Chicago families” and one of Chicago’s leading philanthropies, Polk Bros. Foundation actively partners with local nonprofit organizations, other foundations, corporations and government agencies, working to reduce the impact of poverty and to provide area residents with better access to quality education and vibrant arts organizations, preventive health care and basic human services.

With assets of approximately \$425 million and a deep commitment to the city and its residents, the Polk Bros. Foundation is a private foundation established by members of the Polk family who owned and operated the Polk Bros. chain of retail stores.

In 2014, the Foundation celebrated 25 years of partnership with the organizations that are working hard to make a difference in the lives of Chicagoans, especially those most affected by poverty. Since 1988, the Foundation has given over \$300 million to more than 1,000 nonprofit organizations in Chicago through approximately 6,700 grants. Today the Foundation makes annual grants in excess of \$25 million in six program areas: strong communities, strong families, education, arts access and learning, health care and enhanced capacity for the sector.

About the Position:

The Polk Bros. Foundation seeks a Communications Director, a newly created position, to drive the Foundation’s communications strategy and to further the Foundation’s philanthropic goals by bringing attention to the issues, policies and programs that increase the impact of our grantee partners. The Communications Director reports to the Foundation’s CEO.

The goal of the Foundation’s new communications effort is not to promote the Foundation per se, but to use the platform and voice of the Foundation to further the impact of our grantees and support the Foundation’s program area goals. The Foundation has a lean but collaborative staff of 15. The Communications Director will launch our new communications efforts, in partnership with the CEO and an internal communications team drawing from the program and administrative staff.

Responsibilities include:

- Develop and implement an effective communications strategy that advances the work of the Foundation and its grantees, including increasing public awareness about critical topics and effective strategies in Chicago
- Manage communications for the portfolio of Polk Bros. Foundation programs. Work closely with the CEO, program staff, grantees and other stakeholders to develop and carry out these strategies
- Refine the Foundation's voice and ensure cohesive messaging throughout the organization
- Create and distribute effective communications materials, including managing and creating content for the Foundation's digital assets through e-blasts, website and social media, as appropriate
- Develop and execute a media relations strategy to raise awareness of key topics and effective work in our community of grantees. Build relationships with, pitch stories to, and respond to inquiries from media
- Write press releases, web and social media content, op-eds, talking points, briefings and updates for the public, media, staff and other audiences
- Meet other responsibilities, as needed

Important Skills and Qualifications: The Communications Director will possess leadership and interpersonal skills and will embrace the Foundation's culture of accessibility, transparency and fairness and demonstrate an open, caring attitude in working with others, as well as a high level of written and oral communication skills. S/he should demonstrate a track record of collaborating with stakeholders with integrity, forthrightness and genuineness.

The successful candidate will be able to think strategically and creatively and work collaboratively with foundation colleagues to further the work of our grant-making programs. S/he will be self-directed and interested in the service orientation of the Foundation's work.

Education / Experience

- B.A. degree and a minimum of 7 -10 years of relevant communications experience. An advanced degree is a plus.
- A track record of success developing and executing comprehensive strategic communications programs in a complex, multi-layered work environment.
- A deep appreciation and passion for Chicago and its residents, and a commitment to the Foundation's mission.
- Experience working in or with the nonprofit sector and an understanding of the sector's role in social change.
- Experience developing relationships with media, responding to media inquiries and proactively securing coverage, especially in Chicago.
- An understanding of the work and role of foundations is helpful; prior experience with a foundation is not required.

Collaboration and Communication Skills

- Exceptional writing, communicating, listening and interpersonal skills, deadline management, and a sense of responsibility and accountability.
- Significant experience writing and talking about social challenges and public issues in a style that respects their depth and complexity but is accessible to a general audience.
- A strategic and creative thinker who can get things done under time pressure and despite multiple competing demands.
- An effective communicator and listener with superb organizational and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work as part of a team to develop, implement, evaluate and inform long-term projects and initiatives.
- Ability to work comfortably and develop relationships with people who hold diverse perspectives.
- Capacity to work amicably in small office with high volume of work.
- Commitment to the Foundation's tradition of continuous improvement.

Compensation/Benefits: The Foundation offers competitive compensation, commensurate with experience, and an excellent benefits package. The Polk Bros. Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and seeks to maintain the diversity of its staff.

Application Process: Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and interested parties are encouraged to apply early.

Applicants must send an email to Position@polkbrosfdn.org with only *YOUR NAME* in the subject line and including the following materials as attachments:

1. A resume;
2. A cover letter that speaks to how your experience meets the needs outlined above; and
3. A 1- to 3-page writing sample.