



**Community Foundation of Mendocino County  
President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Position Description**

***Painter Executive Search is supporting the Community Foundation of Mendocino County in their search for a seasoned leader to continue the important work of growing philanthropy throughout the county in order to enrich the lives of all county residents.***

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County (Foundation) was established in 1993 and has steadily grown its capacity to support giving in the region, facilitating more than \$10 million dollars in grants to date. Capably led for the last 17 years by a well-loved, founding CEO who is retiring, the Foundation seeks a new leader to continue her thoughtful approach to building regional philanthropy and increasing the Foundation's capacity to leverage its unique position as a community resource and convener.

Mendocino County (California) is known for exquisite beauty, its stunning coastal cliffs and beaches, Redwood forests, and its inland valleys which are perfect for agriculture. Historically, Mendocino County's economy included robust timber and fishing industries. As those have waned, the county has been retooling its economy and now relies significantly upon tourism, government and healthcare spending as well as increasingly diverse agricultural products including wine and to an unknown degree, cannabis. A largely rural county, Mendocino communities have a strong sense of pride and have unique qualities and social concerns. Understanding the diverse needs and interests of the various cities, towns, hamlets and regional communities, maintaining and building strong local relationships, and safeguarding the Foundation's reputation as a solid, trusted resource will all be critical to the Foundation's continued success.

Since inception, the Foundation has placed significant attention on building its portfolio of funds. Their steady growth has resulted in a \$25 million dollar endowment with over 100 funds under management. Their focus on the donor, particularly in facilitating each donor's philanthropic intention, is at the heart of their success. By cultivating a robust set of giving options, the Foundation is building philanthropy at all levels of giving and ensures that anyone who is interested in supporting their communities can. Although they are at a point where they could leverage their relationships for greater community initiatives, that work would not displace the highly important and very personal work of engaging with donors which is central to their continued development.

The new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be in a position to build on past successes and explore new opportunities to make even greater contributions to the county, both through its grant-making and through its community leadership initiatives. Currently the Foundation stewards a range of Designated and Donor-Advised funds, and one Charitable Trust, in addition to managing numerous scholarship and competitive grant programs funded through Undesignated and Field-of-Interest funds. One of these competitive grant programs, "Community Enrichment Grants," has provided funding for community-

based programs for over a decade. Upon their reputation for competence and trustworthiness, the Foundation is poised to grow stronger, more resilient to economic downturns, and to broaden their leadership role in attaining the vision of a thriving Mendocino County.

The Foundation is organizationally and fiscally strong and has achieved accreditation by the national Council On Foundations. With growing assets, the Foundation has been able to distribute approximately \$700,000 each year in scholarships and grants. Of that amount, approximately \$200,000 annually is granted through competitive grant applications. The Foundation has an adequate operating reserve (Administrative Reserve Fund) and manages its operations conservatively, attempting to sustain operations from current management fees, prudent withdrawals from its Administrative Reserve (based on earnings), and minimal operational fundraising. Its 15-member Board of Directors attracts leaders from throughout the county's diverse regions. There is a competent and motivated staff team (2.5 FTEs and several contractors in addition to the CEO). Board and staff are guided by a Strategic Plan which was implemented in fiscal year 2015-16. The Foundation owns a beautifully restored historic church which is used as the central office in Ukiah, and also operates a satellite office on the Mendocino Coast. The CEO will have a choice in the location of their home base, but will be expected to reside within the county once hired.

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board and is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the Foundation, as well as shaping the future of the organization through vision, values, leadership and strategy. The CEO is expected to build upon a vision for a thriving county and increase the capacity of the Foundation to make a positive difference across the county. The CEO will need to be both very visible, as the face of the organization on the ground throughout the county, and to provide the technical knowledge of community foundation best practices and regulatory constraints.

Of utmost importance is the responsibility to maintain the financial integrity of the organization and safeguard the portfolio. The CEO serves as an agent of the Board, and with the Board provides fiduciary oversight of the assets and reputation of the Foundation. The CEO consults with the Investment Advisory Committee to make strategic financial decisions for the organization.

The CEO is the Foundation's chief asset developer and is charged with fully engaging the Board of Directors and staff to achieve the Foundation's asset building goals. The CEO must be able to cultivate, build, and maintain strong and authentic donor and stakeholder relationships. Engendering trust and empathy and relating to donors and the community at large in a highly professional, honest and caring manner will be essential to the role. Deep understanding of philanthropy, experience in donor and planned gift development, and the ability to inspire support from current and new partners, will all be needed for success. The CEO must be a highly credible and respected representative of the Foundation able to engage with policy makers, non-profit organizations, and the media about the wide range of issues related to the Foundation's mission. Significantly honed communication skills including public speaking, written communications, and knowledge of public relations, social and traditional media skills will be beneficial in building visibility of the Foundation.

Additionally, the CEO will lead, inspire and motivate Board, staff and volunteers so that each feels heard and valued, and understands their part in the evolving role of the Foundation. Success requires understanding the history of the Foundation, and adapting to its consensus-driven leadership model which allows those who are the ears and eyes of the diverse community to be heard and their opinions openly considered.

### **Additional Background**

Mendocino County is a geographically large county, with its 88,000 residents widely dispersed. Travel between these regions is time-consuming and often requires driving narrow two-lane highways. In order to ensure the Foundation has appropriate representation in its grantmaking process, it has developed a group of Regional Advisors, community members who reside in seven distinct regional areas. These experienced volunteers support the review of local grants and represent the Foundation in their communities.

The Foundation is an important technical assistance resource for the county both formally and informally. They have convened and fostered community conversations regarding greater issues in the county, such as Broadband Access and workforce development. As a trusted resource for the nonprofit community, they host cohorts of Executive Directors to support informal learning, provide Board development training and are currently developing Fundraising learning clusters. Informally they are called upon regularly for advice, direction and support. The Board is interested in exploring how the Foundation might expand its role in serving the county in these ways, as well as exploring other avenues for creating greater impact for the county.

Currently, the CEO is the primary writer and developer of all of the Foundation's communications materials including a regularly published column in the local press. Increased visibility and continued education of the public regarding the work of the Foundation is broadly desired by the Board. The development of a robust and effective communications plan will need to be considered by the new CEO as part of this transition.

## **CEO ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Leadership**

- Provide vision and leadership to the Board and staff, ensuring that the organizational values of collaboration, cooperation and consensus are upheld personally and fostered within the organizational culture;
- Work together with the Board and staff to implement the 2016 strategic plan; provide regular evaluations of progress toward those goals;
- Work closely with the Chair of the Board to ensure that communication is dynamic and valuable and that the staff and Board work in sync to achieve organizational priorities;
- Work closely with the Board to ensure the development of strong Board governance; establish clear lines of communication and organizational transparency; provide well-defined opportunities for committee and staff engagement; assist the Board in the recruitment, selection and evaluation of Board members; and actively inform and engage the Board in issues of importance to the operations and strategy of the organization;

- Represent the Foundation by effectively communicating the organization's mission, vision and program priorities to staff, Board members, donors, fund holders, nonprofit partners and the public at large;
- Create and maintain strong relationships with non-profit organizations and community leaders throughout the region in order to understand and articulate evolving needs in the region;
- Be a respected leader representing the Foundation in local, regional and national philanthropic circles, and bringing to the region the best ideas and practices for building effective responses to community needs;
- Elevate the level of leadership, influence and recognition of the Foundation in the county; build a reputation for being an indispensable part of the community's leadership;
- Engage the Board in discussions of the tactical, operating, and financial plans that reinforce the Foundation's business development and strategic ambitions; identify any issues and provide guidance and recommendations to the Board of Directors to set and accomplish strategic goals.

### **Asset Development and Fundraising**

- Be the primary external face of the Foundation; effectively represent the organization and the value of community philanthropy to the public at large and specifically with the Professional Advisor community (e.g., attorneys, CPAs, financial planners) and donors;
- Encourage and facilitate philanthropy among a broad base of participants; strive for inclusiveness and collaborative efforts to solve larger community needs;
- Ensure that the Board is supported in its community engagement efforts; facilitate and train the Board in advocacy for community philanthropy and in operational fundraising;
- Actively work to raise the visibility of the Foundation throughout the county, the broader region and anywhere people who care about the county reside;
- Grow the Foundation's assets and operational endowment to support the organization's long-term sustainability, as well as the needs of the Foundation's beneficiaries;
- Personally work with advisors and donors to support their philanthropic wishes and guide them to maximize the impact of their philanthropic goals;
- Develop additional operating income for the Foundation, primarily through growing the endowed funds, but also through direct support of the Foundation and its initiatives;
- Assist in the preparation of grant and contract proposal budgets and reports, as appropriate.

### **Operational, Staff and Program Management**

- Recruit, nurture and challenge a highly-qualified and motivated professional staff; delegate specific responsibilities with appropriate authority and establish accountability; foster open communications;
- Report to the Board of Directors regularly on key information including the financial health of the organization, specific updates on fundraising progress, financial results relative to budget, liquidity, and cash flow. Provide additional reporting as required to keep the Board appropriately informed of any significant change in financial or operational status;
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Foundation including overseeing grant administration and operations and ensure compliance with all policies, as well as legal and contractual obligations;
- Provide clear and regular reports on the Foundation's financial standing to the Board, fund holders, donors, partners and oversight institutions;

- Maintain a high level of knowledge on issues applicable to charitable giving (accounting, legal, investment, etc.);
- Expand the Foundation's capacity to develop programs to strengthen and support the non-profit and public sectors responsible for the needs of the region;
- Assure outstanding service, stewardship and responsiveness to donors; ensure donors receive meaningful and timely reports on the investment and grantmaking activities related to their funds;
- Work with staff to evaluate the day-to-day operating requirements of the Foundation, align staff and volunteer responsibilities to increase efficiency;
- Oversee budgeting, investments, the annual financial audit, tax filings, and maintenance of correct and complete records required for the healthy operation of the Foundation and the statutory requirements;
- In collaboration with the Controller, supervise the Foundation's day-to-day accounting, cash flow, budgets, and internal controls;
- Work with the Board, Investment Advisory Committee and investment advisors to ensure that the Foundation's investments and financial management are effective and appropriately aligned with the Foundation's vision and mission.

## **EXPERIENCE**

### ***A successful CEO candidate will likely have:***

- Significant experience with a Community Foundation, Financial Services organization, nonprofit or similar organization requiring skills in Board development, governance, management and public engagement;
- Strong financial and organizational management experience; knowledge of financial instruments, rules, regulations and standards for Community Foundations;
- Experience with a grantmaking organization or similar experience with nonprofit organizational assessment and development and/or knowledge of Community Foundation best practices;
- Evidence of developing and implementing strategy- a strategic thinker, planner and executor with an operating style that encourages cooperation;
- Demonstrated leadership and management skills; experienced in team building with the ability and appetite to train and mentor staff and the ability to develop and manage budgets;
- Past success in building deeply productive relationships with donors and partners;
- A history of strong collaboration; someone who actively seeks strategic partnerships;
- Wisdom and prudence in the management of financial resources; experienced in financial management and business decision-making;
- Experience as the face of an organization; well-developed interpersonal skills; superb oral and written communication skills; able to listen and present ideas clearly and persuasively;
- Success in fundraising for nonprofit operations; able to ensure the organization has the resources required to fulfill its operational needs;
- Well-schooled in nonprofit governance and fundraising; able to be a resource for the nonprofit community;
- Bachelor's degree at a minimum, advanced degree preferred.

## **ATTRIBUTES**

- Someone who understands and values rural community life and loves Mendocino County;

- Exhibits the qualities of a “servant leader”—listens first, seeks to understand and works with the best interest of the community, the organization and the mission in mind;
- Understands that building a reputation of high ethical standards and financial stewardship requires that these values are lived every day--acting always in the best interest of donors and the community;
- Emotionally mature with a good sense of humor, someone who is at ease in many places and with all people; able to interact with diverse communities with grace and confidence;
- Is open and accessible (approachable); authentic in their interest;
- Extremely proactive approach to work; solutions-oriented with attention to detail;
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many sources and able to bring others together, building consensus and creating cohesive and well-supported plans;
- Inspires trust, creativity and unity;
- Strong work ethic coupled with an enthusiastic approach to one’s work;
- Resourceful—able to set priorities, build efficiencies and create opportunity;
- Highly collaborative and transparent;
- Exercises high ethical standards; understands and keeps appropriate confidences, exercises good judgment;
- Enjoys driving, has a reliable vehicle and a safe driving record.

For additional details or to submit your experience for review, please contact;

Nancy Painter

[Nancy@painterexecutivesearch.com](mailto:Nancy@painterexecutivesearch.com)

(415) 202- 6240