

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

TheJoyceFoundation

Program Officer
The Joyce Foundation
Chicago, IL

“The mission of the Joyce Foundation is to support policies that improve quality of life, promote safe and healthy communities, and build a just society for the people of the Great Lakes region..”

– The Joyce Foundation mission statement

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Racial equity and criminal justice system reform are currently at the forefront of our nation’s consciousness, with communities, policy makers and stakeholders coming together to call for transformational change. This has been the substance of the work of the [Joyce Foundation](#) for years. Building safe and just communities in the Great Lakes region is the mission of the Joyce Foundation. The Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform Program, and its leadership and work are as essential now as ever.



The Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform Program pursues a mission of building safe and just communities, focused on preventing gun violence before it occurs with a holistic approach that includes stronger gun policies, fair policing, and a justice system that minimizes incarceration.

The Joyce Foundation is poised for vital innovation, leadership and impact. The Foundation seeks an individual knowledgeable, skilled and committed to justice reform as Program Officer for [Gun Violence Prevention & Justice](#)

[Reform.](#) The Program Officer will lead the justice reform initiatives and grant-making strategy. This strategy includes supporting 21st Century policing to build greater police-community trust and legitimacy and reducing the incarceration of young people.

Working at the center of some of nation's most challenging issues, the Program Officer will advance transformational research, policy, and practice change. Recent projects by the Foundation include documenting police use of force, promoting democratic policing in Wisconsin, and police-community engagement efforts on the ground in Chicago and Minneapolis.

In 2018 the Foundation expanded its then gun violence prevention program to include justice reform. The Foundation assessed that in urban areas, gun violence and the justice system's response are two sides of the same coin. While police officers are on the front-line responding to illegal guns and high rates of gun-violence, too often their aggressive tactics disproportionately harm communities of color and undermine community trust and police legitimacy.



While the Program Officer will lead justice reform work, she/he will also collaborate as part of a three-person team to manage and oversee existing grants and investigate and develop new projects and initiatives. An example of a recent initiative was bringing together leaders from the fields of gun violence prevention, law enforcement, violence intervention and criminal justice reform to take part in a weeklong retreat with the goal of developing an agenda for research, policy and practice that advances a holistic approach to reducing gun violence. A report from the convening, [Toward A Fair and Just Response To Gun Violence is available here.](#) The Program Officer will continue this thought leadership through strategic grant making, convenings, and communications.

THE ORGANIZATION

The Joyce Foundation knows how change happens, incrementally with a combination of work on the ground, thought leadership and large, evidence-informed goals. Established in 1948, the Foundation has worked to support policies that improve quality of life, promote safe and healthy communities, and build a just society for the people of the Great Lakes region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin).

Widely respected for its thought leadership and impact, the Foundation supports policy research, development, and advocacy in five areas: Education & Economic Mobility, Environment, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform, Democracy, and Culture. It also partners with funders to explore promising policy solutions in other states or at the federal level.



Given room by its 1948 charter to grow and develop with time, the Foundation has continued to evaluate and adjust its grant making to reflect critical issues in the Great Lakes region. Its recent expansion to add justice reform to its work on gun violence prevention is but one example. It has also been vocal in its support for racial equity and the need for transformational change.

The Foundation distributes approximately \$50M in grants annually to organizations that combine creative, evidence-informed ideas for broad, systemic change with a strong strategic sense of how to make change happen. It holds approximately \$1.1 B in assets and has a staff of 29 and is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Program Officer will build upon the foundational work on justice reform and identify how the Foundation can have the greatest impact on policy and systems change. She/he will implement the strategic plan in the area of justice reform through the following activities:

1. Strategy development:
 - Monitor the field: reading, attending meetings, developing relationships so as to understand emerging issues, research, political, and technological developments that affect the program;
 - Evaluate potential policy opportunity and policy context, barriers to success, and capacities of prospective grantees;
 - Collaborate with current and prospective grantees, including law enforcement agencies, researchers, and community stakeholders;
 - Proactively identify activities and projects that would advance the program strategy.

2. Grant making and oversight:

- Solicit proposals that are consistent with the program's strategy and goals through a process of reviewing letters of inquiry, site visits, and other meetings;
- Evaluate proposals and present at proposal review meetings recommendations for action on funding requests, based on the evaluative criteria as well as the impact of the grants on current and future program budgets;
- Prepare written recommendations for and make oral presentations to the Board of Directors;
- Work to support grantee projects, including where appropriate and feasible, participating in meetings, reviewing drafts of reports, and connecting grantees to other funders, policymakers, and the media;
- Monitor grants for fulfillment of contract requirements, legal compliance, and to extract lessons for future work.

3. External relations:

- Work with grantees to facilitate communications and information-sharing among them; encourage collaboration; deepen knowledge of the field; and provide guidance and technical assistance on matters related to strategy; communications, messaging and issue framing; public and policymaker education; news media outreach; and capacity-building;
- Work closely with the communications team to develop and deliver significant messages about the program;
- Play a leadership role in relevant philanthropic and non-profit networks;
- Build productive one-on-one relationships with local, state, and national policymakers, law enforcement leaders and other stakeholders that can help deliver on the Foundation's priorities;
- Use the Foundation's convening ability to bring together groups of grantees, funding colleagues, policymakers, practitioners, and others at pivotal moments.

THE CANDIDATE

The successful candidate will have a passion for the mission of justice reform and be a smart, strategic, high-energy person, a quick learner equally capable of working as a team member and taking the initiative. She or he will:

- Have depth, sophistication, and a nuanced understanding of issues of equity and justice reform
- Have an unshakeable belief in and commitment to the people we serve
- Be highly organized with the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously
- Work comfortably in an environment where differing viewpoints are encouraged.
- See themselves as change agents and natural leaders and are as disciplined as they are creative.
- A sense of humor and a constructive outlook are highly valued.



THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Knowledge of the history of and emerging issues in 21st Century Policing and criminal justice reform;
- An understanding of the ways in which public policies are created, shaped, and changed at the local, state, and federal levels;
- Strong strategic, analytic, and communications skills and track record, including the ability to write clearly and succinctly under time pressure;
- The ability to work creatively with grant applicants and recipients and with colleagues within the foundation and in the field to foster innovative program ideas and grant requests; demonstrated effectiveness in developing networks and productive working relationships with diverse constituencies;
- An openness to new ideas and the ability to innovate and take risks in pursuit of high-impact solutions;
- A willingness to travel as COVID restrictions ease;
- The ability to think broadly, imaginatively, and strategically about the foundation's social and policy goals while remaining focused on the detail-oriented work and follow-through required by the position;
- B.A. degree and a minimum of 10 years' experience in the criminal justice fields; an advanced degree in law, public policy and/or business is strongly preferred.

THE LOCATION

The Joyce Foundation is located in downtown Chicago, Illinois, blocks away from the Chicago River and in close proximity to public transportation.



To suggest a prospect or for potential consideration, kindly email a cover letter and resume, to: TJF@BoardWalkConsulting.com, or call

Crystal Stephens or Diane Westmore at
404-262-7392
