



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Chief of Strategy & Impact
Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
Richmond, VA

"Fostering an equitable and healthy Richmond region."

– RMHF's core mission

Executive Summary

Long part of the philanthropic fabric of Richmond, VA and surrounding areas, [Richmond Memorial Health Foundation](#) (RMHF) has deepened its reputation in recent years as one of the South's most thoughtful grantmakers.

Shortly after the appointment of its current CEO in 2016, RMHF began what was to become a six-year learning journey to understand more fully the social determinants of health and the impact of race on health within the region. As noted in the Foundation's new Strategic Framework released in January 2022,

"The more we have learned..., the more strongly we feel that health should never be determined by a person's race, income, education level, employment status or neighborhood."¹

The success of the new Strategic Framework depends on its effective implementation, an iterative process that itself requires alignment of the Foundation's resources and a determination to learn from experience.

The new framework centers around four commitments, all key to advancing health and racial equity in relationship with the Foundation's community partners:

- Multi-year general operating support
- Investment in civic engagement
- Investment in policy and advocacy
- Investment in Black, Brown and other diverse leaders and organizations.

The learning journey continues, of course, but traditional staff roles have been repositioned

¹ "Our Commitment to Richmond," January 2022. Full text at <https://rmhfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RMHF-StrategicReport-Final.pdf>



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Is it morally acceptable for one's zip code and race to determine their health outcomes?



to ensure the Foundation's structure supports its aspirations. As part of that repositioning, a new leadership role has been created—Chief of Strategy & Impact—to help deliver the best possible alignment between the Foundation's intent, actions and impact.²

The Organization

Six years ago, RMHF Trustee Dr. Bill Nelson posed the question, “Is it morally acceptable for one's zip code and race to determine their health outcomes?” Later that year, the Board of Trustees adopted RMHF's current mission, “Fostering an equitable and healthy Richmond region,” initiating a six-year equity learning journey to understand both the social determinants of health and the impact of race on health.

With that ambitious charge and a continuing commitment to learning, the Foundation embraces a sense of urgency in its quest to effect change. Among the factors important to RMHF's recent success and central to its aspirations:

- **A diverse, engaged, and aligned Board.** The [majority BIPOC-led Board](#) includes leaders from the region's public, private and nonprofit sectors, all committed to and passionate about health and racial equity. Trustees are deeply inquisitive and open-minded. They show up, ask thoughtful questions and invite new perspectives.
- **Visionary leadership.** RMHF is headed by Dr. Mark Constantine, a CEO with a [wealth of experience](#), respect for innovative ideas and extensive relationships across the sector.

² RMHF's service area includes the City of Richmond and five surrounding counties: Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico and Powhatan.

Combining “a creative mind with a caring spirit,”³ Mark and his team inspire partners, funders and community members alike to join RMHF in ambitious pursuits.

- **Bold strategy.** RMHF has proven that a small regional foundation can have big impact. From its broad definition of health and racial equity, to its nontraditional partnering and community-informed processes, the Foundation aims to be responsive and accountable to the persistent and emergent challenges and opportunities of the region.

The [new Strategic Framework](#) outlines a commitment to multi-year general operating support for mission-aligned organizations, rooted in the belief that those most proximate to community are best equipped to determine what is needed.

- **A caring culture, with ongoing opportunities for professional development.** The RMHF team is a supportive, tight-knit group that honors the value of each individual. The Foundation is committed to the growth of its colleagues. Every team member is provided numerous opportunities to learn and grow, whether through new, more challenging roles or through participation in coaching, conferences or fellowships.
- **Collaborative partnerships.** RMHF regularly works with local and regional peer funders to deepen its community impact and ease the process burden on grantee partners. The Foundation has attracted repeat investments from such national funders as [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) and the [CDC Foundation](#). Both continue to support RMHF’s momentum with substantial grants, and both



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³ Ambassador James A. Joseph, in a copyrighted talk to RMHF, September 6, 2016.

are representative of RMHF's collaborative, multi-pronged effort to address some of the toughest, most intractable issues facing the region.

With assets of just \$120 million, RMHF is clearly accustomed to punching above its weight.

Richmond Memorial Health Foundation has a staff of nine. They are a diverse group, with varied backgrounds, academic credentials, life experiences and tenure with the Foundation. As a team, they share a strong commitment to community and to the Foundation's transformative work. Among particular points of pride are the following recent initiatives:

- [Impact investing](#) as a mission-aligned strategy
- A [cohort of Black and Brown leaders of grassroots organizations](#), launched by RMHF to support capacity building
- Funding from the [CDC Foundation](#) leveraged organizations serving the Latino community during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Support for more organizations doing [policy work](#) to advance health and racial equity
- Collaboration with various partners on
 - A [Regional Housing Framework](#)
 - [Expanding Medicaid in Virginia](#)
 - [Advancing Mental Health](#)
 - RWJF's [Invest Health](#) and [Connect Capital](#) Initiatives
- The newly-formed [Virginia Funders' Network](#), chaired by RMHF's CEO.
- The [Richmond Resilience Initiative](#), a guaranteed-income pilot.

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Visit RMHF's [website](#) for fuller explanations of the Foundation's evolution, recent programming and aspirations for impact. The site also has links to each staff member, recent financial reports and articles on various aspects of the Foundation's work.

The Mandate

Armed with visionary leadership and a public commitment to a bold new direction, RMHF seeks a Chief of Strategy & Impact to be a partner to the CEO and a guiding resource for the rest of the team. This new member of RMHF's leadership team will have outsized responsibility—and outsized opportunity for impact. Among the overlapping roles:

- 1. Thought partnership.** Serve as a true thought partner for the CEO, asking stimulating questions, contributing vision and identifying ways to operationalize big ideas.
- 2. Health and racial equity.** Be an active, visible and credible champion for the Foundation's commitment to health and racial equity.
- 3. Talent management.** Reinforce a culture of inquiry, learning and accountability that promotes individual and team development within RMHF and program effectiveness within the larger community.
- 4. Operational excellence.** Support the Board-endorsed vision with day-to-day operational excellence, providing guidance, counsel and oversight for all operational matters not reserved to the CEO.
- 5. Community engagement.** Model the Foundation's commitment to community and collaboration through personal engagement with regional leaders and institutions.



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The Relationships

The Chief of Strategy & Impact will report to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President & CEO
And work closely with RMHF's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Trustees and its committees • Senior Fellow⁴
While leading and managing RMHF's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Officer & Grants Manager • Two Program & Strategy Officers • Special Projects Officer & Accountant • Other staff as appropriate
With responsibility for overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of strategies • Talent management/assessment/integration • Project management
While contributing to other important relationships, such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program partners, collaborators and funders • Leaders throughout the service area, especially among RMHF's institutional partners • Thought leaders on issues relevant to the Foundation's focus • Outside consultants and program advisors

The Location

Richmond Memorial Health Foundation is based in Richmond, Virginia and invests primarily in Chesterfield County, Goochland County, Hanover County, Henrico County, Powhatan County and Richmond City. The Foundation is open to considering regional, statewide or national investments that align with and advance its mission.

As the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia (and the once-capital of the Confederacy during the Civil War), Richmond has a [storied history](#), much of which the community has worked to acknowledge and move past, prompting the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to name Richmond a [Culture of Health Prize](#) city.

After the murder of George Floyd, Richmond became an epicenter of civil unrest, which led, among other developments, to the [removal of Confederate monuments](#). The region's complex racial history contributes to the reality of who remains disenfranchised today and makes RMHF's

⁴ An experienced, respected philanthropist on retainer with RMHF through July 2023.

mission of “Fostering an equitable and healthy Richmond region” even much more critical. How the area’s foundations addressed the intersections of racial unrest and Covid-19 is summarized [here](#), a telling example of the new collaborations RMHF has helped to foster.

Richmond is a vibrant city with a strong sense of community. Its neighborhoods are rich in cultural, educational and recreational resources. There is much to love about the place RMHF calls home, as detailed [here](#).

The Candidate

Candidates of greatest appeal will offer a compelling mix of the following experiences and characteristics:

Expertise: The ideal candidate will offer...

- Deep experience with and demonstrated commitment to health and racial equity, ideally informed by both lived experience and professional engagement
- Direct, practical experience with grantmaking and the life cycle of grants management complemented by diverse experiences with nonprofits and community-based entities
- A history of team development and team leadership, preferably within a significant community-based context
- A creative outlook, a strategic mindset, a facility for seeing the possibilities where others may focus on hurdles, and an analytical approach to critical issues
- A proven leader comfortable with ambiguity and the dynamics of “experiment and model”—someone who can develop concepts, lead their implementation, and undergird the overall process with appropriate tracking systems to gauge effectiveness

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We are a small team
doing big work.
The pace is super
accelerated.

—RMHF staff member





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The ideal candidate will offer the social and emotional intelligence and the cultural competence to handle challenging situations with grace.

- A highly collaborative style that honors all voices but does not dodge the tough decisions; a leader who models and expects mutual accountability
- A respectful, empowering and facilitative management style
- The maturity, experience and intellectual acumen to be a full thought partner for the CEO and mentor/coach/advocate for colleagues
- A strategic mindset and an entrepreneurial spirit; the facility for fostering raw ideas, sifting and testing the best ones for further exploration
- The social and emotional intelligence and the cultural competence to handle challenging situations with grace
- A record of relevant accomplishment and impact
- The ability to communicate effectively—whether virtually, in-person or in writing—with individuals from all different types of organizations, sectors, backgrounds and perspectives.

Culture: The Foundation seeks an executive who is...

- Creative and tenacious in pursuit of an ambitious strategy
- Excited about the Foundation’s commitment to health and racial equity and undaunted but realistic about the challenges inherent in such a commitment
- A personable colleague who respects confidences and invites collaboration and accountability
- An engaging discussion partner; a sounding board for whom questions are at least as important as answers

- Ambitious for the Foundation, its strategy and its community but humble about his/her role therein
- Invested in place-based work; if from another community, someone committed to embracing the greater Richmond area in all its complexity
- A grounded, even-keeled leader unflustered by changes in pace or priorities
- A disciplined leader facile with systems and intentional with people, a colleague who supports creative learning with disciplined processes
- A colleague whose pride derives from collective success.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email appropriate materials to RMHF@BoardWalkConsulting.com or call **Sam Pettway** or **Lysondra Somerville** at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).

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“... someone who is fresh, lively, excited about life and people, someone who exudes love for this work.”

—An informed observer

