



## **POSITION PROFILE**

On behalf of our client, ECMC Foundation,  
CohenTaylor Executive Search Services  
is conducting a retained executive search for its

# **VP of Grants**

## About the Organization

ECMC Foundation is a nationally focused postsecondary funder with offices in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C. ECMC Foundation uses a variety of funding structures, including strategic grantmaking and program-related investments, to support both nonprofit and for-profit ventures, which aim to close equity gaps in college completion for students enrolled in U.S. postsecondary education. In pursuit of system change in postsecondary education, ECMC Foundation’s grantmaking and investing are concentrated on three [strategic priorities](#): removing barriers to postsecondary completion; building the capacity of organizations, institutions and systems; and transforming the postsecondary ecosystem.

ECMC Foundation is part of ECMC Group, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. Through a unique combination of philanthropic work, financial services, and education solutions, ECMC Group and its affiliates deliver outcomes that make a difference for individuals, organizations, and communities. ECMC Group and its family of companies provide financial tools and services, and funding for innovative programs to help students succeed and achieve their academic and professional goals.

### NORTH STAR GOAL

ECMC Foundation is dedicated to systemic change to improve outcomes for underserved populations in postsecondary education. In 2024, ECMC Foundation defined a new commitment to advance its work:

***By 2040 equity gaps in postsecondary completion are eliminated, so that underserved learners have greater opportunity for social and economic mobility.***

ECMC Foundation’s focus represents an unyielding commitment to equity and student-centered strategies to eliminate gaps in postsecondary completion.



### MISSION

To improve higher education for career success among underserved populations through evidence-based innovation.

### VISION

All learners unlock their fullest potential.

### VALUES

#### Long-Term Investments

Aim to make long-term investments – either alone or by leveraging the work of other nonprofit, public, private and philanthropic partners – that improve academic achievement among underserved students as they prepare themselves for postsecondary education and fulfilling careers.

#### Entrepreneurial

Take risks with grantmaking dollars, understanding that failure is a natural part of generating discoveries. Support innovation and a willingness to experiment with a bias toward ideas that can be scaled to benefit large numbers of students.

#### Research and Reforms

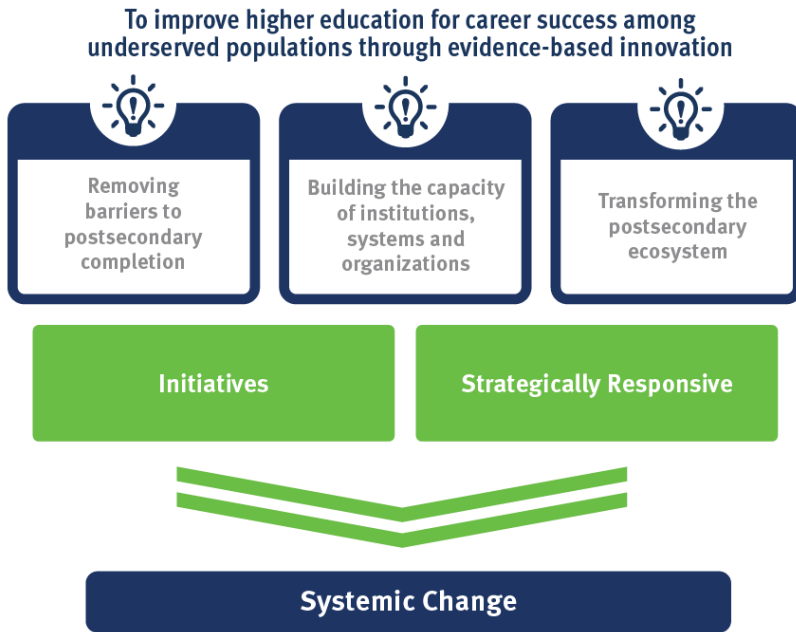
Support important research and reforms that help people prepare for postsecondary success and careers.

#### Measurement and Evaluation

Require measurement and evaluation in all that they do and recognize their obligation to share the results of their work to help educate and improve the field, free of charge and available to all.

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

ECMC Foundation’s Strategic Framework is structured to improve equitable student postsecondary outcomes using a spectrum of funding tools, including strategic grantmaking and program-related investments.



### At a Glance

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation established in 2000
- \$335M in grants & investments since inception
- \$56.8M in grants and investments in 2023
- National presence with grants in nearly every state
- 72% of students served since 2018 are people of color
- Positioned to become one of the nation’s largest educational foundations

For more information about ECMC Foundation’s work, impact, and values, visit [ecmcfoundation.org](http://ecmcfoundation.org).

## INITIATIVES

ECMC Foundation’s initiatives represent its commitment to working toward systemic change in postsecondary education. A number of existing and emerging bodies of work are being deepened and expanded as initiatives, and new opportunities will be identified as ECMC Foundation evolves in its learning.

Established initiatives include:

- [Basic Needs Initiative](#)
- [CTE Leadership Collaborative Initiative](#)
- [Men of Color Initiative](#)
- [Rural Impact Initiative](#)
- [Single Mother Student Success Initiative](#)
- [Transfer and Credit Mobility Initiative](#)

## STRATEGICALLY RESPONSIVE GRANTMAKING

In addition to its Initiatives, ECMC Foundation deploys “[strategically responsive](#)” grants. These grants address emerging issues in higher education, often tackling cross-cutting challenges that may affect multiple student constituencies enrolled in one or more sectors of higher education. By supporting a diverse range of strategies – in ways that are especially timely – ECMC Foundation’s grantees and partners are better prepared to improve persistence and degree completion for students pursuing postsecondary credentials of value.

## APPROACH AND IMPACT

### Strategic Grantmaking

ECMC Foundation awards more than \$65 million in project-based grants each year that support organizational capacity building, new program or model development, existing program refinement or expansion, capital, research and evaluation.

ECMC Foundation uses an open letter of inquiry process to encourage a variety of nonprofit entities and organizations to seek funding for projects aligned to the mission of the organization. In addition, ECMC Foundation reserves funding for projects that may not fit within one of their established initiatives but are connected to one or more of their strategic priorities.

### Education Innovation Ventures

ECMC Foundation's program-related investment portfolio makes investments into nonprofit and for-profit ventures that seek to generate social impact. Complementing ECMC Foundation's strategic grantmaking, the Education Innovation Ventures (EIV) program provides catalytic risk capital to early-stage ventures working to increase postsecondary educational outcomes and economic mobility among learners and jobseekers from systemically disadvantaged backgrounds. Through program-related investments, EIV's capital generates impact alongside financial returns, which are recycled to fund further impact initiatives and drive changes in economic mobility for learners and jobseekers.

## The Role

The VP of Grants serves as a member of ECMC Foundation's executive leadership team, responsible for overseeing the strategic direction, management, and execution of ECMC Foundation's grantmaking programs.

In partnership with ECMC Foundation's leadership team, the VP of Grants leads the evolution of ECMC Foundation's grantmaking strategy, overseeing approximately \$65 million in grants/year with potential to grow grantmaking significantly over the next 5 years.

The individual in this role is a visionary leader with a strong commitment to ECMC Foundation's mission, exceptional strategic thinking, team leadership, demonstrated people-development and relationship-building skills.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The VP of Grants will report to the President, ECMC Foundation, and will be responsible initially for 2 Senior Program Directors who report directly, and a total team of 13.

## Key Roles and Accountabilities

### Strategic Grantmaking Leadership

- Serve as a strategic advisor and thought partner to the ECMC Foundation President; identify emerging trends and recommend new grant making initiatives.
- Implement and iterate ECMC Foundation's grantmaking strategy in alignment with the organization's North Star, mission, and impact measurement framework.
- Establish clear goals and drive the achievement of measurable outcomes and impact through effective grantmaking practices and policies.
- Provide leadership to the development, review, and approval of grant proposals, ensuring alignment with ECMC Foundation's strategic priorities.

### External Leadership in the fields of Philanthropy and Higher Education

- Provide leadership to the fields of philanthropy and higher education by serving as a thought partner, representing ECMC Foundation at external events, conferences, and meetings.
- Serve as an emissary for promoting ECMC Foundation's North Star and mission.
- Identify emerging trends, challenges, and innovations in the postsecondary and philanthropic sectors to inform strategic decision-making and opportunities for advancing postsecondary reforms.



### Grantmaking Team Development and Growth

- Lead, mentor, and develop a high-performing grantmaking team, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, curiosity, and continuous improvement.
- Provide guidance and support to team members in the development and execution of grantmaking strategies and initiatives.
- Promote professional growth and development opportunities for team members to enhance their skills and expertise.

### Skilled Collaborator

- Cultivate and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including the organization's leadership team, Board of Directors, grantees, and community leaders.
- Enhance ECMC Foundation's existing collaborative efforts with the parent company, ECMC Group.
- Collaborate with ECMC Foundation's executive team to set priorities, allocate resources, and ensure the effective execution of grantmaking initiatives.
- Engage with diverse communities to ensure ECMC Foundation's grantmaking efforts are inclusive and equitable.
- In collaboration with ECMC Foundation's executive leadership, implement processes for effective evaluation and reporting of grantmaking initiatives, using data and feedback to inform continuous improvement.
- Report on ECMC Foundation's grantmaking activities and outcomes to the executive team, Board of Directors, and other stakeholders.

### The Ideal Candidate

While no one candidate will have all the criteria highlighted below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities and attributes:

- A leader with deep expertise in both the **strategic and operational dimensions of philanthropic grantmaking**.
- Proven experience managing a **significant grant making budget** on a national scale.
- An authentic leader who has **built and managed high-performing teams**, with a track record of delivering measurable results through a nurturing and empathetic leadership style.
- A **visionary, growth-driven leader** with a demonstrated ability to steer the organization through transformative change.
- An **exceptional communicator**, adept in representing the organization's NorthStar externally and serving as a key ambassador for ECMC Foundation.
- A **relational leader** who excels in collaborating with multiple stakeholders in a complex landscape.
- A leader with **insights and knowledge into the post-secondary education ecosystem** is strongly preferred.

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Commitment to ECMC Foundation's mission and values, with a passion for making a positive impact in the community.
- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
- 15+ years of experience in philanthropy or higher education (combined experiences are preferred).
- 8+ years of experience in a leadership role with formal direct reporting relationships.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to make data-driven decisions.
- Commitment to ECMC Foundation's hybrid work model.

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Advanced degree.
- Lived experiences or insights as a first-generation college student.

## Position Location & Travel

- ECMC Foundation is a national foundation with offices in Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Washington, DC.
- **This position is based in either Los Angeles or Minneapolis. Relocation is required.**
- This role requires an ability to travel domestically (approximately 25% of the time).

## Compensation

Salary range for this position is \$275,000-\$350,000. Actual base salary may vary based upon, but not limited to, relevant experience, time in role, peer and market data, prior performance, business sector and geographic location.

ECMC Foundation has exclusively retained CohenTaylor Executive Search Services to help conduct this search.

For more information or to send your credentials, please email:  
[ECMCFoundation@cohentaylor.com](mailto:ECMCFoundation@cohentaylor.com).

All inquiries will remain confidential.

*ECMC Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants Will be considered for employment without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, prior record of arrest or conviction, or current employment status.*

*ECMC Group is committed to ensuring our diverse, inclusive and equitable culture is built on a strong sense of belonging, where everyone feels seen, heard and encouraged to show up as their authentic self.*