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Long Island Community Foundation

**Executive Director
Long Island Community Foundation,
a division of
The New York Community Trust**

Syosset, New York

THE SEARCH

The retirement of the Executive Director of the Long Island Community Foundation after twenty-one successful years offers a rare opportunity for a creative and strategic-minded individual to lead this important community organization. A division of The New York Community Trust, the Foundation is an influential voice for strengthening communities in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, distributing approximately \$7 million in grants each year.

In its 31-year history, the Foundation has given away over \$100 million in grants to not-for-profit organizations. The Foundation addresses needs in education, economic development, the environment, health care, housing, not-for-profit leadership, social justice and the arts. The Foundation is particularly known for its commitment to serving vulnerable communities. Over the years, the Foundation has incubated and supported several initiatives that have become independent and successful not-for-profit organizations in the region.

In partnership with the Foundation's Board of Advisors and the leadership of The Trust, the Executive Director will be expected to set an ambitious course that will build upon the Foundation's accomplishments to date, increasing the Foundation's visibility and impact in the region. The Executive Director will be expected to engage new donors in the Foundation's programs and mission, enlarge the scope of grant making, and foster growth. The position calls for vision, programmatic agility, sound management and interpersonal skills, and a commitment to the region.

An eight-member search committee has been appointed to conduct this search, assisted by Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm. Please direct nominations, inquiries, and application materials in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

BACKGROUND

The Long Island Community Foundation (LICF) was established in 1978 by The New York Community Trust (The Trust) to strengthen local grant making in Nassau and Suffolk Counties and provide Long Island donors with a regionally-focused philanthropic vehicle. A similar division of The Trust had been established for Westchester County, New York three years earlier. The stated mission of the Foundation is *to enhance the well-being of the people and communities of Long Island. The Foundation does this by:*

- *Offering comprehensive services to donors, supporting and enhancing their philanthropy;*
- *Strengthening, through effective grantmaking and technical assistance, the capacity of the Island's not-for-profit sector to respond to community needs;*
- *Providing leadership in identifying current and future community needs, and convening people and resources to address these needs; and*
- *Working cooperatively with others to encourage philanthropy on Long Island or otherwise to support the Foundation's mission.*

The Foundation serves a diverse population of 2.7 million who share the beauty and constraints of this unique region. The two counties that make up the Foundation's service area are about equal in population, but distinct in character. Suffolk County is three times as large in area as Nassau County and more rural. The Island as a whole is characterized by many small governmental units that tend to fragment its identity, creating both a challenge and an opportunity for the foundation as people in the region often identify with their individual communities rather than with the larger entity. Critical needs in the region include sustainable and equitable economic development, public transportation, environmental stewardship, affordable housing, educational equity, access to health care, gang prevention, immigrant services and advocacy, and the varied needs of an aging population.

The Long Island Community Foundation has 176 individual funds that total about \$26.6 million in assets (as of December 2008.) Donor-advised funds (106 in number) make up about 80% of assets and support a wide range of interests: children, youth and families; community development and the environment; education, arts and the humanities; health; and people with special needs. Scholarship funds (22) total about \$1.2 million of assets. Field of interest and field of interest advised funds, in which donors specify an area of interest and the Foundation awards grants to community organizations and programs that are making a difference in that field, total about \$2 million of assets. Another \$1.3 million of assets are in 10 unrestricted funds. The Trust provides \$100K annually for unrestricted grantmaking.

Discretionary grants from field of interest or unrestricted funds address priorities established by the Board of Advisors and staff of the Foundation. These grants are vetted by the staff and then reviewed and approved by the Foundation's Board of Advisors, subject to the review of The Trust's president. In the last five years, the Foundation has used a framework of "Critical Issues,

Critical Organizations and Critical Populations” to establish guidelines and criteria for discretionary awards.

LICF works well with its parent organization, The New York Community Trust. The Trust provides excellent financial and programmatic expertise to its regional divisions, and the regional model grounds the program work of the Trust, allowing a large institution to be more nimble and responsive to local needs. The Henry Phillip Kraft Family Memorial Fund, which is held by The Trust, highlights the benefits of this partnership: about \$200,000 is made available to LICF annually through the Kraft Fund to address environmental needs on the Island.

The Foundation also works through collaborative partnerships with other funders. In the Leadership, Effectiveness, Action and Partnership initiative, five Long Island funders – LICF, the Horace Hagedorn Foundation, the Rauch Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock – joined with two individual donors to launch a three-year, \$1 million initiative to strengthen not-for-profits seeking to become more effective change agents in distressed communities. Participating organizations received capacity building services through the Boston-based Community Training and Assistance Center.

The Long Island Community Foundation has been instrumental in creating, or assisting in the development of, several programs that have become independent organizations in the region. These include the Long Island Fund for Women & Girls, Sustainable Long Island, Long Island Immigrant Alliance, Nassau Partnership for After School Education, Early Years Institute, Work Long Island, Center for Nonprofit Leadership at Adelphi University, and ERASE Racism. Through its ongoing partnerships with these organizations, LICF has been able to extend its reach and impact on important issues and increase its visibility as a philanthropic leader.

The current full-time staff of the Foundation consists of the Executive Director, a director of foundation advancement, two program officers, a grants administrator, an office administrator, and receptionist/database manager. Staff members are employees of the New York Community Trust. Grants management, investment management, legal services, and finance and human resource functions are provided by the central office of The Trust in Manhattan. The Foundation has an annual operating budget of approximately \$920,000 for Foundation personnel and other services, approximately \$760,000 of which is currently paid by The Trust. The office is located in rented space at Nassau Hall, a Nassau County historic building in Syosset.

An engaged 16-member volunteer Board of Advisors comprised of experienced business and nonprofit leaders, philanthropists, community activists, attorneys, and educators provides guidance for the Foundation’s grant making and program direction. While called a Board of Advisors, the Board fulfills all the traditional roles of a Board of Directors. The Board meets monthly and operates with an active committee structure.

OPPORTUNITY

The Long Island Community Foundation has achieved a great deal since its founding thirty-one years ago. It has established a reputation as a foundation that is involved in the communities it serves and that actively reaches out to those who are disadvantaged. Even with limited discretionary funds, the Foundation's donors, partner organizations, staff and board working together have become a powerful resource for knowledge exchange and community growth.

A leadership transition offers an excellent opportunity to think broadly about ways LICF might better serve the community. Possibilities include leveraging its assets through new partnerships and programs; an expanded convening role; greater engagement with current and potential donors; and identifying and addressing a few selected community issues that are significant for the region. The Foundation has seen the positive effect of collaborative partnerships in its social justice work and is poised to extend that concept to other grant making areas. A recent challenge grant in the arts, for example, may open the door to new partnerships that have not previously been explored. LICF also has the opportunity to become a more truly "regional" foundation, and the Board is eager to explore ways to engage both the donors and the issues of the eastern end of Long Island more effectively.

In the several years leading to the Foundation's 20th anniversary celebration in 1998, new donors and funds increased rapidly. Growth has continued over the past decade, but at a somewhat slower pace, and the engagement of new donors will be a priority moving forward. As the Foundation assesses its goals for the future, board and staff are eager to find ways to increase the Foundation's visibility. An important asset will be the continued development of an engaged, active Board, with members willing to serve as ambassadors for the mission of the Foundation in their communities and partners in development efforts.

The key to achieving continued growth is the recruitment of a committed and creative Executive Director who will build upon the solid foundation that has been established and increase the Foundation's reach and impact.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director reports to the President of The New York Community Trust and is guided by the Long Island Community Foundation Board of Advisors. The Executive Director has four stated responsibilities: to respond to community needs through grant making; to raise money and attract donors in order to meet community needs; to build and manage an effective local advisory board; and to manage the relationship with The New York Community Trust effectively.

The role of the next Executive Director follows directly from the challenges and opportunities identified for the organization. The Executive Director will be expected to:

- Provide strategic, imaginative leadership to the Long Island Community Foundation, articulating a creative programmatic vision and engaging donors and other stakeholders in the Foundation's mission.
- Significantly build the Foundation's charitable resources through a proactive, focused development effort that attracts current and potential donors, including the next generation of donors.
- Raise the profile and visibility of the Foundation on Long Island, so its mission, services and programs are well and broadly understood by potential donors and communities and LICF is regarded as a leader and go-to organization on community issues.
- Continue to help to develop an Advisory Board that is representative of the diversity of Long Island interests and provides engaged leadership and guidance for the Foundation.
- Convene and work with networks of philanthropists, not-for-profit organizations and businesses, government, and community leaders to gather, apply and share knowledge and increase impact in the community.
- Foster the continued development of a strong professional staff capable of serving a changing, growing organization.
- Maintain a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with The Trust, supporting organizational goals and making full use of the expertise, resources and convening power of The Trust to build a thriving regional operation.
- Work with The Trust to review internal policies and procedures and streamline business operations, to improve efficiency and service to donors and grantees.

QUALIFICATIONS

The new Executive Director could come from a senior role in any of a wide range of non-profit, corporate, or governmental organizations. He or she will need to bring a sustained commitment to the Foundation's mission and values, and the drive to make a difference across the region. A keen strategic sense, the ability to work cooperatively and creatively, and outstanding communication skills are essential attributes. Prior experience in philanthropy would be valuable, as would knowledge of Long Island communities and issues.

Although no one candidate will possess all of these qualities, the ideal candidate will bring the following personal and professional characteristics to the position:

- A record of providing strategic leadership and effective management for an organization, either in an Executive Director/CEO role, or at a senior level in a complex organization, with responsibility for oversight of staff and budget.
- Public presence. Outstanding presentation and communication skills and the expertise and inclination to be a visible spokesperson for the Foundation.
- Experience raising funds, particularly from individual donors. A willingness to be actively involved in fund development and to cultivate the next generation of donors.
- Programmatic sense. The ability to envision effective ways for the Foundation to “make a difference” on critical issues through grant making.
- Familiarity with a range of not-for-profit, community-based organizations and the inclination to be responsive to the community-at-large rather than a particular slice.
- Strong collaborative and interpersonal skills. The ability to engender trust and cooperation with a range of partner organizations and the willingness to put forth and listen to good ideas.
- Prior experience working with a volunteer board.
- Appreciation for the importance of technology to donor services and Foundation operations.
- Self-confidence without self-importance. Integrity, intelligence, and good humor.

TO APPLY

Inquiries, nominations and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Sheryl Ash, Vice President and Director, or
Maggie Gilmore, Senior Associate
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Electronic submission of materials is preferred.

*Long Island Community Foundation is an equal opportunity employer
and welcomes a diverse pool of applicants in this search.*

Additional information may be found at www.licf.org and www.nycommunitytrust.org.