

Erb Family Foundation: Senior Program Officer - Great Lakes

Birmingham, MI
Full Time
Senior Manager/Supervisor
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The Erb Family Foundation

The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation has made more than \$165 million in grants to improve the quality of life for residents in Southeast Michigan and the Great Lakes region since launching its grantmaking in 2009. Funding has been focused on improving water quality in the Great Lakes basin; promoting environmental health and justice; advancing Alzheimer's research; strengthening sustainable business; and supporting the arts.

In May 2022, the Erb Family Foundation announced it will shift from a perpetual foundation to a spenddown model and conclude its grantmaking by 2035. The board and staff are currently engaged in strategic planning to identify grantmaking priorities for the Foundation's final decade.

That work is being guided by the Foundation's new mission and vision:

The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation envisions a flourishing, healthy, and resilient Great Lakes ecosystem and a culturally vibrant, sustainable southeast Michigan. Toward this end, we strengthen the cultural and environmental organizations that share our vision to make this a reality for generations to come.

The Foundation's grantmaking and way of working will be guided by its values, which are: *to make a lasting transformative difference; embrace possibility; work and learn in partnership; and pursue fairness and respect.* The new grantmaking strategy and program areas will be announced in October 2024.

The Opportunity

The Senior Program Officer - Great Lakes is a newly created role that will help the Foundation fulfill its longstanding commitment to improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem for future generations in honor of Fred and Barbara Erb's legacy.

The Senior Program Officer will advise and report to the Vice President of Programs. They will lead and collaborate with the Foundation's growing Great Lakes team – currently one program officer and one fellow (associate program officer) – to develop a grantmaking strategy and implement the Foundation's final ten years of grantmaking. The grantmaking strategy will include lenses for environmental justice and climate change, offer support to strengthen the organizational health of

nonprofits, and support the idea of “making people care” to pass on Fred and Barbara’s passion for the Great Lakes long after the Foundation is gone.

The Senior Program Officer will also work closely with the Foundation’s leadership team, trustees, prospective and current grant partners, funder colleagues, tribal leadership, government partners, and others. The ideal candidate will be a servant leader, strategic thinker, mentor, connector, and bridge builder and bring curiosity, humility, compassion, and a desire for continuous learning.

Core Duties and Responsibilities

- Lead the Foundation’s Great Lakes program
 - Contribute to the hiring, supervision, coaching, mentoring, and professional development of Great Lakes team members.
 - Develop and execute grantmaking strategy in coordination with Great Lakes team, Foundation leadership, and Trustees.
 - Partner with organizations to develop proposals, budgets, and presentations that convey project details; conduct thorough due diligence.
 - Assess impact of grants.
 - Coordinate learning opportunities, convenings, and networking opportunities.
 - Work in close consultation with the Foundation’s leadership team and trustees and with support from other Foundation team members responsible for grants management, communications, and evaluation.
- Actively participate in learning about Great Lakes organizations and community needs, vision, and goals and share out that information regularly—in writing, meetings, presentations, and site visits—with Great Lakes team and Foundation leadership.
- Develop and maintain ongoing relationships with prospective and current grant partners; offer thought partnership, feedback, introductions, and other resources to support the organizational strength of grant partners that extends beyond grantmaking.
- Stay up to date on current Great Lakes issues and emerging ones by attending stakeholder meetings and conducting research as needed.
- Represent the Foundation at meetings, convenings, conferences, and other events.
- Cultivate knowledge of trends in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector and share that knowledge to improve the Foundation’s work and strengthen the work of prospective and current grant partners.
- Develop and grow relationships with other funder colleagues and policy makers.
- Proactively support and contribute to external communications to create content and knowledge sharing activities that amplify grant partners’ missions, projects, and achievements.

Qualifications and Skills

- Personally passionate and knowledgeable about Great Lakes issues.
- Expansive network with people, organizations, and institutions working on Great Lakes issues.
- A deep understanding of the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors within the Great Lakes ecosystem.
- Demonstrated capacity to think strategically and execute, define, and refine grantmaking strategies.
- Demonstrated ability to lead highly collaborative teams and mentor staff.
- Demonstrated experience in building strong, positive, collaborative relationships—internally and externally—by being an active empathetic listener, maintaining openness to new ideas and perspectives, and encouraging dialogue.
- Has a growth mindset and can provide and receive feedback.
- Ability to analyze grant opportunities in the context of complex organizational and community conditions—including historical, emerging, and possible future needs and challenges.
- Strong problem solving and financial analysis skills.
- Willingness to contribute to the Foundation’s culture of communication and curiosity and to think creatively; capacity to get up to speed quickly on new subject matter.
- Ability to be resilient in the face of challenges, rebound from disappointment, and manage conflict.
- Ability to maintain the highest levels of integrity, ethics, discernment, diplomacy, and strict confidentiality.
- A collegial spirit in sharing and receiving ideas, information, and feedback.
- Exceptional writing and strong verbal communication skills; attention to detail.
- Proficient with Microsoft 365 including Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc. and ability to work in an online grants management system.

Education and Experience

The Senior Program Officer will bring an advanced degree related to the Foundation’s interests in Great Lakes. They will have ten or more years of experience with Great Lakes issues, including five or more years in a leadership role at a nonprofit, philanthropic, or governmental organization. Candidates with an alternative but comparable level of experience are encouraged to apply.

Work Arrangements, Compensation, and Benefits

The Foundation’s offices are in Birmingham, Michigan. Full-time staff work a hybrid schedule (3 days in person and 2 days remote). Attendance at grantee partners’ evening and weekend events and occasional regional travel should be anticipated.

While performing the duties of the job, the Senior Program Officer is regularly required to communicate effectively with internal and external partners. They will be frequently required to sit and to use their hands to handle or feel. They may occasionally need to stoop, kneel, or crouch, and

to lift and/or move up to 25 lbs.

In the normal course of work, employees operate a laptop, iPad, telephone, cellular telephone, web conferencing equipment, and copier/printer. This position requires the employee to make decisions in a timely manner and anticipate all of the potential ramifications of decisions made. The employee must be able to read and interpret documents, understand/follow complex written and oral instructions, be able to express themselves clearly/concisely, perform mathematical functions, and handle multiple, concurrent tasks.

The salary for this position begins at \$160,000 and may be adjusted according to qualifications and experience. The Foundation offers a comprehensive benefits package including employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance and a generous 401K plan.

Erb Family Foundation is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, citizenship status, and genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.