

## About the Foundation

At College Futures Foundation, we believe that securing the postsecondary success of learners facing the most formidable barriers will ensure that all of us can thrive—our communities, our economy, and our state. We believe that the equitable education system of the future, one that enables every student to achieve their dreams and participate in an inclusive and robust economy, will be realized if we are focused, determined, and active in our leadership and partnership.

We also know that the past few years have brought profound shifts in California's education and workforce landscapes—including college enrollment declines alongside high demand for affordable, career-connected training, national conversations on student debt and mental health, and numerous other changes prompted or accelerated by COVID-19 and a nationwide racial reckoning. These changes have underscored the realities of how inequitably our systems center and serve diverse people. We know that the coming years will present equally significant challenges and opportunities and that we must be well-prepared to meet these moments. As a foundation, we are using this moment of change and uncertainty to reflect deeply on our role and how best to animate our philanthropy for these times.

## Our new Strategic Framework:

In 2023, the foundation announced a [new mission and vision](#). At the start of this year, we launched a guiding strategic framework and are beginning the initial phases of implementation. Across the organization – trustees, executives, staff, and grantees - we are excited align our efforts around a call to action: by 2035, at least 70% of underserved California learners will complete a postsecondary degree or credential that increases opportunity for economic mobility.

Our guiding framework includes three reinforcing strategic priorities we believe are necessary for making progress toward our ambitions for attainment and economic mobility:

- **Aligning Postsecondary Education for Economic Mobility:** We will advance deeper understanding and a new narrative regarding the future of postsecondary education as a driver of economic mobility. Through research and convening, we will drive an actionable conversation about how to deliver value, improve access, and create meaningful opportunities for learners. This area will drive much of the foundation's initial research, convening and broader public engagement.
- **Advancing Learner-Centered Innovations:** We will foster creative and effective educational experiences through learner-centered policies and practices. By supporting innovative and equity-informed approaches, we aim to empower learners and dismantle barriers with a focus on cost/affordability, access, time to degree, learner supports, credit portability, and flexible learning environments.
- **Reimagining Education for the Future of Work:** We will support education aligning with our ever-evolving economy. By reimagining and redesigning policies, narratives, and financing mechanisms to support lifelong upskilling and reskilling and increasing

equitable opportunity, we can equip learners with the knowledge needed for successful careers in changing job markets.

As a philanthropic organization with an annual \$20M grantmaking budget and as a strategic thought partner with a point of view on postsecondary education, College Futures will play two key roles in the years to come as the postsecondary philanthropic sector continues to develop a shared agenda: focusing the field by elevating ideas, innovations, and changemakers inside and outside public higher education; and brokering relationships among thought leaders and innovators, decision-makers, and expert practitioners with purviews in policy, practice, and funding in postsecondary organizations, education technology and/or workforce systems.

### **Position**

The foundation is seeking a Director, Program and Strategy who is nimble, deeply curious, a synthetic and strategic thinker, who possesses the ability to mine ideas through good research, effective facilitation, and catalyzing through convening and coalition building. Over the next few years as the organization progresses in aligning to this guiding strategy framework, the configuration of necessary capacity – staff, consultants, strategic partners – will be assessed and calibrated.

The incumbent will report to the Chief Program and Strategy Officer (CPSO) and support the execution of the foundation's new strategic framework. They will be part of a core program and strategy team which includes staff representing learning/evaluation and communications. The incumbent will develop high-level knowledge of key issues across our focus areas of (1) Post Secondary Education for Economic Mobility, (2) Learner-Centered Innovations, and (3) Education for the Future of Work. The incumbent will identify and convene new partners and cultivate ideas to inform foundation initiatives and associated programmatic efforts.

### **Primary Responsibilities:**

The foundation's new framework requires our program and strategy team to utilize all the foundation's assets and tactics – grantmaking, communications, convening, and research. The primary responsibilities of the role include:

- Engaging and building new networks where necessary to catalyze and scale efforts critical to the mission of the Foundation, including education technology partners and solutions.
- Significantly contributing to the design and execution of time-bounded projects and/or initiatives within and across our three focus areas through effective landscaping and documenting of policy and practice solutions and identifying key strategic partners. This can include the development of concept memos and initiative plans that articulate outcomes, objectives, partners, budgets, and tactics (grantmaking, communications, convening and knowledge building).
- Building and managing a portfolio of strategic partnerships, relationships, and grants, including identifying and assessing investment opportunities, effectively communicating with partners and developing annual plans and budgets

- Building funding partnerships, including actively engaging other philanthropies, funder collaboratives, and individual donors, to better leverage College Futures' investments and enable collective impact on aligned issues.
- Working with external partnerships to influence and leverage policies that further the mission of the Foundation
- Speaking to external and internal audiences (including the board) about initiatives, and their progress and impact
- Preparing and presenting grants/partnership recommendations, strategy papers and related analysis to the CEO, CPSO and Board of Directors
- Remaining abreast of current research, data and innovations in higher education, economic mobility and other areas of knowledge pertinent to our mission
- Working collaboratively with College Futures' learning/evaluation and communications colleagues to
  - design, execute, communicate, and evaluate the effectiveness of projects and initiatives that practically drive impact in our three focus areas, and
  - effectively coordinate external partnerships, relationship, and communications

#### Essential Attributes, Competencies and Skills:

The following is a set of essential attributes that will characterize the top candidates. We also know that applicants will come from diverse backgrounds with different constellations of skills and competencies. We are looking for an enthusiastic team player and effective portfolio manager who can hold ideas together, and strategically use our tools of grantmaking, connecting and bridging people, in service of equitable impact. While sufficient analysis of issues related to postsecondary education and equity is important, the primary drivers of productivity for this role are field sensing, relationship-building, and ecosystem orientation.

- Understanding systems that impact working learner experiences (education – workforce – social services). Understanding the California context is a plus.
- Understanding of and experience with working in complex environments, with and through state, local, and national intermediaries, networks, and coalitions for scaled impact in postsecondary education and related systems (e.g., workforce).
- Knowledge and experience in building strong partnerships across different stakeholder groups and fields (e.g., education, workforce, private sector, social services, policy and advocacy, community-based organizations) to build or strengthen impact initiatives.
- Ability to craft specific, catalytic, and supportive roles of private philanthropy, including leveraging its financial, social, and relational capital for impact, creating momentum, and engaging others for leverage (e.g., seeding a fund, running a campaign).
- Understanding and ability to use foundation tactics and tools of research, convening, communications, and strategic innovation in service of impact on narrative change, innovative policy, and practices for post-secondary credential completion and economic mobility.
- Experience with building inclusive, diverse networks that will enable strong listening, learning, knowledge-building, and input functions to inform decision-making related to strategic partnership and grant development.

- Strong writing, editing, and oral communication skills.
- Ability to learn quickly and possess comfort in taking broad direction.
- Ability to manage projects, remain organized, and attend to the big picture.
- Ability to work collaboratively and independently, as needed.
- Enthusiasm for the foundation's [values of equity, courage, community, and curiosity](#).
- A sense of humor, flexibility, and the ability to work in a matrixed, integrated team environment, contributing to a culture of collegiality, respect, and support.
- Dedication to participating in inclusive team environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds can grow, thrive, and do their best work.
- Understanding of public policy influence, creation, and implementation at the state and local levels.
- Experience with grantmaking and an understanding of the strategic role philanthropy plays in social movements and policy change is a plus, but not necessary.
- 10 years of experience, ideally with a blend of education, public policy, non-profit and for-profit sector experiences.
- Salary will be commensurate with experience and proven track record of impact.

**Additional Position Details:**

This is a flexible and hybrid position, with some required in-person time at the office or events in the field. Our offices are in downtown Oakland (near the 19th Street BART station). However, we are open to candidates residing in Los Angeles and Southern California. The position is full-time.

College Futures Foundation is an equal opportunity employer to all regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

**Compensation:**

This permanent, full-time position offers competitive compensation and excellent benefits. Annual salary is \$160,000-220,000. The salary range is subject to change with the labor market for the position.

**To Apply:**

Please submit application materials—a cover letter and resume—via email to [jobs@collegefutures.org](mailto:jobs@collegefutures.org). Preferred subject line: “Application: Director, Program and Strategy.” No calls, please. Submissions will be accepted through July 26, 2024.

Invited candidates will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute Zoom interview with the Chief Program and Strategy Officer. Second-round candidates will be invited to participate in one or more interviews with a panel (2 to 3 individuals) of staff members. Finalists will be asked to prepare an assignment and then discuss it with the president and CEO and Chief Program and Strategy Officer. Finalists will be provided a \$300 stipend for completing an assignment.

Assignment outline. Prepare a 2-to-3-page memo outlining an approach to developing a strategic portfolio/initiative. The candidate will present this as part of their final 60-75 min interview. A fuller set of instructions will be provided to finalists.