Director of Grants Management

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that builds public-private partnerships to multiply the US’s public research investment and accelerate actionable solutions to urgent food and agriculture challenges. Leveraging public and private resources, FFAR increases the scientific and technological results, innovation and partnerships through the issuance of competitive and direct fund research grants, prizes and contracts.

FFAR is seeking a Director of Grants Management to lead the Foundation’s grants management team, including overseeing the administration of more than $50M in grants each year and every stage of the grants making process, improving all aspects of the process and providing support for new initiatives in data analytics and impact assessments. The ideal candidate is passionate about systems improvement, customer service, analytics and learning and process documentation. The new director thrives with change, works collaboratively across teams, understands the intricacies of research grants administration and has experience with working with grants management electronic systems.

Position Description
This position requires a hands-on analytical, detail-oriented, self-motivated grants manager who can manage the Foundation’s research grant administration operations. The director of grants management oversees the process for accepting grant applications, issuing grant awards, reporting, grant payments and other administrative functions, while also developing policies and strategies to optimize the grant administration process— particularly considering increased grant volume and complexity of a growing organization.

This position performs all administrative aspects of the FFAR grants process including assuring appropriate grants policies in newly launched grant programs, processing incoming applications, developing appropriate terms and conditions for awards and grants agreements, working closely with accounting to ensure payments are processed and tracked accurately, developing relationships with grantee institutions to resolve issues and designing and pulling reports from the grants database. The incumbent works closely with the scientific program directors, development director and the chief operating officer to develop, implement and oversee grants management processes that advance FFAR’s mission.

Job type: Full-time
Location: Washington, D.C.

Key Duties and Responsibilities (not exhaustive):

Grants Management
- Establish and maintain long-term grants management strategies and policies for FFAR.
- Lead FFAR’s Grants Management Team to ensure a well-coordinated, efficient and effective implementation of grantmaking policies and procedures. This includes all stages of grantmaking: review of requests for applications, application receipt and review, grant award, grant monitoring and grant closeout (pre-award, post-award and closeout).
- Ensure grant compliance on legal, financial and other due diligence requirements.
• Direct continuous improvement activities to strengthen work processes and align with grants management best practices, including identifying areas for improvement, developing solutions and overseeing implementation of those solutions.

• Supervise Grants Management associate(s) and/or officer(s), as well as any applicable Grants Management interns, including setting expectations for the quality of work, establishing individual goals and providing feedback and support.

• Maintain and update the grants policies and procedures manual.

• Develop, issue and negotiate grants agreements, including writing grants terms and conditions for awards and negotiating terms that meet programmatic goals, administrative requirements and legal requirements.

• Oversee and implement any federal, state and international laws and regulations along with other grants administration requirements that apply to FFAR awards.

• Creates memorandums of understanding with partner organizations.

• Develops standard operating procedures and policies for FFAR grants administration.

• Provides an efficient and up-to-date process for tracking grant payments.

• Supervise and manage process for reporting statistics on the grant administration process to internal and external constituents.

• Ensure that all grants-related processes and systems are poised for growth and for integration with other FFAR systems.

Grants Management System Oversight

• Maintain and optimize an online grants management system (e.g., SM Apply) and other tracking tools (e.g., Smartsheets).

• Set priorities and oversee system improvements and updates.

• Configure and modify system forms, tasks and workflows to support new program initiatives or process changes.

• Produce reports on grants and related information for FFAR communications outreach, accounting reconciliation, annual report and assist staff with due diligence and grants analyses.

• Ensure grants data integrity.

• Oversee and conduct staff training in new procedures and systems.

• Document template instructions for administrator and staff users.

• Works with FFAR accounting and operations to manage the processing and tracking of grants and grant payments including audit compliance.

• Develop up front risk identification capabilities and desk auditing procedures to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of FFAR research projects.

Program Department Operations

• Coordinate work between the Scientific and Grants Management Teams for program design and implementation.

• Oversee grants content for board meetings and annual reports.

• Participate in strategic operations planning for the organization.

• Supervise the creation and monitoring of the Grants Department timelines.

Cross Departmental coordination
• Coordinate with the Scientific Programs, Finance, Development, Communications and Operations Teams to ensure appropriate design and smooth implementation of grants management systems.
• Coordinate with Finance Team on matters related to grants, grants payment, other financial transactions and the annual audit to ensure accurate reporting and timely payments.
• Coordinate with Communications Team about on grant information on the website to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of external messaging on grants.
• Resolves any administrative issues with FFAR awards.
• Develops, creates and seeks out new and better ways to meet and exceed high performance of grant administration functions.
• Strives to make the grant administration processes as efficient and effective as possible.
• Assures the accuracy and integrity of the grants data and reporting.
• Communicate timeframes, milestones and payment schedules to appropriate FFAR staff.

Required Competencies and Skills:
• **Grants Management:** Demonstrates proficiency with research and grants administration.
• **Operations:** Proven knowledge of business operations and management processes.
• **Management:** Established management capabilities via experience leading projects directly, influencing teams as a member and pushing projects towards completion as a direct report.
• **Strategy:** Contributes to the achievement of strategic long-term objectives by assisting with the development and execution of operations and activities.
• **Leadership:** Demonstrates the ability to lead, mentor and serve as an example for others within organization.

Education and Experience:
• Bachelor’s degree required; graduate degree a plus.
• Minimum of five years’ experience with grantmaking administration in the philanthropic/non-profit or in research administration (including federal agencies) or other settings, or transferrable work experience.
• Supervision experience and ability to lead a team.
• Experience with agriculture research grants management, scientific grants or federal research grants management.
• Familiarity with contracts and effective project management techniques.
• Excellent attention to detail, strong project management skills and ability to meet deadlines.
• Track record of coordinating multiple streams of work to successfully design and implement efficient workflow processes.
• Ability to manage competing demands, establish priorities and meet deadlines.
• Proven problem-solving skills, flexibility in approach and willingness to adapt when necessary.
• Proactive and action-oriented personality; strong sense of pace and urgency.
• Ability and experience working productively and proactively both independently and as part of a team.
• Excellent technical skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office, database management and other information technologies.
• Excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills with all levels of internal staff and the public.

Physical Requirements:
• Prolonged periods sitting at a desk and working on a computer.
• Must be able to lift up to 15 pounds at times.

To Apply: Please submit your application using our online system. Attach your resume and a thoughtful cover letter describing your specific qualifications and interest in the position that also indicates your salary expectation range as directed in the application form. Include your initials and “Director of Grants Management” in the file names.

The position is open for immediate hire. Submissions without cover letters will not be considered. Applicants who best match the position needs will be contacted.

FFAR is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants are considered for positions without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, and place of residence or business, or any other category protected by applicable federal, state or local laws. Applications are encouraged from individuals who may fall into any such groups, as well as from veterans and uniformed service members.