Senior Program Officer, Knowledge Creation & Research
Kansas City, MO

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (Kauffman Foundation) seeks a strategic, relationship-driven, and highly adaptive research professional to serve as its next Senior Program Officer, Knowledge Creation & Research. The Senior Program Officer will work collaboratively with both internal and external partners to leverage field data, emerging research, and the Foundation's own data infrastructure to identify new learning and uplift insights on the field of entrepreneurship that are aligned with Foundation's mission of inclusive prosperity for all.

Headquartered in Kansas City, MO but with national reach, the Kauffman Foundation invests almost $200M annually across three thematic areas. Known for its entrepreneurial spirit, affordability, and barbecue, Kansas City is the largest city in Missouri and is one of the most diverse cities in the Midwest, and the Kauffman Foundation has a strong commitment to supporting its home. Through its Kansas City Civic efforts, the Kauffman Foundation works alongside its community and invests in programs and initiatives that create supportive learning environments for youth and families as well as key institutions and organizations that eliminate barriers for all people to drive cultural, social, and economic impact in Kansas City. This is also reflected in its Education portfolio, which seeks to close academic performance gaps between Kansas City and the state, including kindergarten readiness, K-12 proficiency, and postsecondary completion rates. In addition, the Education program is leading a regional effort with high schools and businesses to redesign the high school experience, placing real world learning at the center of education. The Entrepreneurship program works with entrepreneurs, empowers them with tools and resources, and works to break down barriers that stand in the way of starting and growing their business via entrepreneurial ecosystems, learning, support organizations, policy change, and impactful research. The three programs work with the Public Affairs program team to extend reach beyond the Kansas City region for national impact.

Reporting to the Director of Knowledge Creation & Research in the Foundation's Entrepreneurship team, the Senior Program Officer (SPO) will work with leaders across the Entrepreneurship portfolio – especially its research team – as well with grantee partners, external data contracts/consultants, and national thought leaders to offer in-depth measures, reports, and accompanying interactive data visualizations that present entrepreneurial trends in the United States. As the field of entrepreneurship is, by its very nature, dynamic and constantly shifting, the Entrepreneurship research team takes a balanced approach to research by developing relevant and actionable insights that is grounded in sound data analysis. The SPO will help drive this research activity by leading data analysis and partnerships, serving as a critical thought partner to the Director and program staff to drive internal data infrastructure-building and research decisions.

They will also work with external partners, such as contractors/vendors and grantees to help maximize the Foundation's impact and reach across the fields of entrepreneurship, economics, and community development. This also comes at an exciting moment of reimagining how data can be used to drive change

within the Kauffman Foundation, and the SPO is anticipated to serve as a strategic and reflective thought partner around data infrastructure, system end-use capabilities, and data equity.

The SPO will lead the [Kauffman Indicators](#) project, an ongoing effort to track, analyze, synthesize, and communicate important insights and trends across the field of entrepreneurship, nationally. This project itself is a strong example of the work of the SPO: rigorous data analysis collected from multiple sources and presented in an accessible and powerful way. Critically, this and other projects should have at their cores a commitment to be action-oriented, so that leaders across the business, policy, research, and program communities may use their insights to drive decision-making and learning. The SPO is also expected to serve as an advocate for data use and citizenry, and especially with the Technology and Evaluation teams as the organization continues to build a data infrastructure advancing Kauffman's goal of inclusive prosperity through a racial equity lens.

The ideal candidate for this position is a critical, independent thinker with a strong understanding of quantitative data analysis approaches and methodologies and a deep familiarity with the data and tools that support measurement and learning such as statistical packages, datasets and platforms from a range of sources (government, philanthropic, corporate, community, etc.), survey collection platforms, and data preparation/visualization tools. At the same time, it is equally important that the candidate brings a highly adept level of communication skills to this role to be able to translate findings across projects and functions, and across different audiences and levels of familiarity with data and technology. Compelling candidates for this position must be highly motivated, capable of self-directed work, be both holistic in their thinking as well as detail-oriented and able to work collaboratively across teams and departments. Incumbents must exhibit a keen sense of responsibility and enjoy working with multiple demands, shifting priorities and constant change.

The successful candidate will be a consultative thought partner and strong relationship builder. Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills are necessary. Strong verbal and written communications skills are absolute musts. An advanced degree in the social sciences is strongly preferred (Master's level or above) with experience conducting rigorous, quantitative research but an undergraduate education with significant post-graduation research and data activity will be considered. Most importantly, a personal and professional commitment to anti-racism, equity and inclusiveness is vital to advancing the work of Kauffman, including the understanding of how one's own identity and lived experiences inform their work.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES of the Senior Program Officer, Knowledge Creation & Research

The SPO will work closely with colleagues across the Research and Program teams in Entrepreneurship, grantees, and research practitioners/thought leaders across the county to lead and support analyses that contribute to the understanding of entrepreneurship and business activity. This role is expected to leverage data in the production of intelligence that supports strategic and relevant decision-making, and the communication of insights to a broad range of internal and external stakeholders including academic and independent researchers; business community leadership; City, State, and Federal policy leaders; and the media. Most importantly, they will bring a personal commitment to advancing the Foundation's mission and applying a racial equity lens in the design and execution of analyses in order to foster informed discussion and ultimately drive program improvements.

Leading and Partnering

- Serve as the scientific, creative, and technical lead for the Kauffman Indicators, including exploration and design of new indicators, updates, and refinements to existing indicators, ensuring methodological rigor, and providing guidance around appropriate use and interpretation.
- Manage contractors and grantees who assist with the development of these indicators and other data projects. Provide technical advising and guidance as needed.
- Stay informed about new analytic approaches and entrepreneurship research. Engage with a wide range of methodological and data-driven literatures relevant to entrepreneurship and the work of Foundation grantees.
- Along with others on the KCR and entrepreneurship team, bring researchers together to facilitate communication of relevant findings to a broader audience—externally and internally.

Data Analysis and Reporting

- Identify, analyze, and interpret trends or patterns in large complex data sets;
- Create and test data collection instruments and protocols; and
- Interpret and analyze data using basic and advanced statistical methods such as analysis of variance, multivariate, patterns, time series, longitudinal, and multilevel modeling.
- Oversee efforts to validate new data, indicators, and methods related to entrepreneurship research.
- Track trends related to entrepreneurship, applying forecasting and predictive modeling as appropriate to inform and further our strategic goals, research, initiatives, and programs.

Interpretation and Communication of Insights

- Support development of reports and presentations for a range of technical and non-technical audiences to share results and impact;
- Clearly communicate results verbally and in writing; prepare briefs, memos, presentations, copy for inclusion in other materials, and training materials to support effective communication;
- Generate data visualizations and written material to communicate findings appropriate for a variety of technical and non-technical audiences

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

- At least five (5) years of experience working with large datasets from various sources (internal sources, business intelligence reports, Census Bureau information, etc.) and building statistical models including data science, analytics, and data visualization experience across complex organizations, ideally in applied social science activities
- Ability to be a leader and educator in data, helping teams understand how, why and what data is important them and both its power and limitations in driving insights and decision-making
- Excellent statistical and analytical skills, with an ability to explain complex data analysis to a diverse set of constituencies in a clear and concise manner
- Demonstrated competence in research methodologies, statistical methods, and data collection and interpretation relevant to issues and developments in the social change sector, with experience working across complex organizations (philanthropic experience is preferred, but not required).

- Strong interpersonal skills, capable of building trust and credibility quickly and effectively both internally and externally and at all levels of the work
- Possesses a passion for "doing what is right," with unquestioned integrity, positive ethics, and values reflective of the Kauffman Foundation
- Excellent written and oral communicator and presenter
- Demonstrated proficiency in programming languages such as Python (preferred), R, or Stata
- Ability to work with discretion when dealing with confidential information.

The Kauffman Foundation offers competitive compensation and exceptional benefits (medical, dental, vision) for this position, including relocation support and ongoing professional development resources (including tuition reimbursement). This role will be based in Kansas City, MO at the Kauffman Foundation's [headquarters](#).

How to Apply

Talent Citizen, a national executive search and talent consulting firm focused on the pursuit of positive social impact with equity at its center, is partnering with the Kauffman Foundation on this search. President Tracy Welsh and Senior Associate Connor Daley are leading this engagement. Additional questions and nominations should be directed to Connor (cdaley@talentcitizen.com).

Interested parties should please send an updated resume, cover letter, and how you learned of the position to EMKF-SPOKR@talentcitizen.com.