



# DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND EVALUATION



## William G. McGowan Charitable Fund

**WILLIAM G. MCGOWAN CHARITABLE FUND**

**[WILLIAMGMCGOWANFUND.ORG](http://WILLIAMGMCGOWANFUND.ORG)**

**LOCATION: CHICAGO, IL**

**REPORTS TO: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### VISION

To impact lives today, create sustainable change, and empower future generations to achieve their greatest potential.

### MISSION

The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund brings its vision to life through grant-making efforts in three program areas: Education, Human Services, and Healthcare & Medical Research. The Fund gives priority to programs that have demonstrated success, have measurable outcomes and plans for sustainability, and aim to end cycles of poverty and suffering.



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## BACKGROUND

2018 marked the 25th anniversary of the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, which is the living legacy of William G. McGowan. The McGowan Fund is a family foundation that addresses poverty with extensive grant-making programs in three areas: Education, with the goal of improving high-school graduation rates; Human Services, with an eye to moving people from homelessness to self-sufficiency; and Healthcare & Medical Research, where the focus is on the reversal of disease through the science of behavioral change and prevention of disease through lifestyle management, as well as access to healthcare. In addition, the McGowan Fellows Program steeped in ethics and leadership, aims to support, inspire and influence emerging leaders to be a channel for principled decision making. Throughout its work the McGowan Fund values evidence based practices, sustainable

results and principled leadership. Knowing that the McGowan Fund cannot solve problems through only their grant-making, grant dollars are leveraged by awarding challenge grants, participating in funder collaboratives, and helping out in the communities served by the McGowan Fund through the Board and staff's own volunteerism. Leveraging funding is a priority and the ultimate goal in this regard is affecting systems change at the local, regional, state or federal level.

The McGowan Fund makes grants in the five geographic regions where Board members reside: Denver Metropolitan and Eagle County; Chicago neighborhoods of Austin and North Lawndale; Kansas City; Rochester, and Yates County, New York; and Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties in Pennsylvania.

The Board sets specific quantitative goals for funding initiatives, and they extend that

concern for strong evidence and identifiable outcomes to grantees. The Board and staff leadership believe in organizational mapping to define strategies and benchmarks of success; they know that measurement and tracking strengthens programs and organizations. Accordingly, grant applicants are required to include a detailed outcomes matrix.

The Fund is governed by an engaged Board of Directors comprised of family members as well as content experts. Grants are made by the Board three times a year. The number of grants made has declined from nearly 200 to about 100 per year. About \$7 - \$8 million are allocated annually. Over 25 years, the Fund had allocated more than \$140 million in grants and programming. Of grants made in 2018, 38% of the funding supported education, 31% supported human services, and 8% supported healthcare.



## THE OPPORTUNITY

The McGowan Fund is a small organization with two full-time staff and two part-time employees. It is focused on measurable outcomes and ensuring that funding leads to sustainable programs and improving lives for the communities served by grantees. The underlying belief is that grants made by the McGowan Fund are an investment made with grantees who are essential partners in solving problems. Ultimately success is evidenced by systems level change.

In anticipation of the 25th anniversary, an evaluation of the Fund's grant making was commissioned. The study looked at grants awarded across 25 years, exploring the impact the Fund has had on a short- and long-term basis for grantees, their participants and the communities they serve. The results of the evaluation led to new directions including refining the guidelines

to support initiatives whose demonstrated outcomes align with, and advance the goals of, the McGowan Fund's program areas. Currently, 50% of funds allocated continue to support the regional communities where trustees reside, additionally the remaining 50% is allocated to initiatives that are, or have the ability to become, national in scope.

An example of a successful national program is Eat, Love, Move (ELM), a program incubated at Rush University's Department of Preventive Medicine. It is a lifestyle intervention program that takes aim at metabolic syndrome. The data reflects the program success and has led to additional funding to launch the program in the McGowan Fund's five regions. The ultimate goal is to be embedded in the whole American healthcare system.

In moving towards larger,

national grants the need to have a staff member that can drive meaningful utilization of research and data is essential. The overall goal for evaluation and learning is to ensure that there is a clarity around what effectiveness looks like for the Fund's investments.

The Executive Director and the Board are now ready to invest in the newly created position of Director of Learning and Evaluation. This new role is a compelling opportunity for a consultative, flexible professional who will work with the Executive Director to develop hypotheses, learning questions, and indicators and metrics for strategies and initiatives. The opportunity now exists for a relational, analytical individual who can build a robust learning and evaluation component that will ultimately elevate the impact of the grantmaking overall.



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## THE POSITION

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Director of Learning and Evaluation is responsible for building this new area and will provide thought leadership to ensure that the McGowan Fund has the necessary mechanisms in place to effectively assess current funding and use the insights gathered to optimize impact.

The successful candidate will develop and refine the vision, strategy, frameworks, and structures for learning and evaluation at the McGowan Fund. S/he will provide consistent monitoring, and shared learning to enable the McGowan Fund and its grantees to continually improve and help build effective strategies. The Director will work in close partnership with the Executive Director to identify opportunities to advance strategies, enhance grantmaking practices, and strengthen impact.

S/he will manage all grantmaking program evaluation, performance measurement and data management and analysis for the assessment of existing grantmaking programs in a manner consistent with the mission, values and guiding principles of the McGowan Fund. S/he ensures that the mechanisms and tools are in place to effectively understand outcomes and use these insights to assist in planning and refining grantmaking strategies.

### Specific Duties:

- Guide discussions resulting in agreement on the McGowan Fund's theory of change and logic model.
- Assess grantmaking through



the lens of the agreed upon theory of change

- Build a strategic learning and evaluation system.

- Provide expertise and guidance for evaluation, measurement, learning and other program-related assessment activities.

- Inform the annual planning process by gathering internal data, assessing progress to date, and analyzing current context and opportunities.

- Contribute to a culture of learning, inquiry, and experimentation.

- Conduct research to build and support use of systems for evaluation data collection and analysis.

- Ensure that learning and evaluation results are considered and integrated into ongoing efforts as well as future strategy and program planning.

- Identify and cultivate partnerships with external evaluators.

- Provide appropriate data for Board reports.

- Stay abreast of effective learning and evaluation practices.



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## CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek an entrepreneurial, creative, strategic and analytical individual who has a solid track record of evaluation in a grantmaking organization. Candidates must be well-versed in using a variety of qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques. Qualified candidates will possess understanding of the grantmaking process and work collaboratively with the McGowan Fund's Executive Director to create and implement a learning agenda.

A track record of developing and implementing processes that advance rigor and learning across an organization or team is required. The candidate we seek has technical expertise from the field of applied social science, strategy, evaluation, and learning and will act as a thought partner. S/he will have a demonstrated ability to create and implement new learning and evaluation approaches and must be skilled in a range of efforts that elevates learning, guides action and creates impact. Excellent strategic and critical thinking skills and the ability to take a broad perspective in the analysis and evaluation of information is expected. The candidate of choice must demonstrate strong communication skills (written and oral), particularly in synthesizing, interpreting, and presenting complex information to a variety of audiences.

The successful candidate has emotional intelligence, tact, and professionalism to know when and how to ask the right questions to provide technical expertise and be a true thought partner. S/he will be a hands-on, collaborative leader and

will build strong working relationships with the Executive Director, staff and Board.

S/he will be comfortable working in a small office, is adaptable to change and committed to providing exceptional service. The successful candidate will be a self-starter with a willingness to "roll up the sleeves" and is largely self-sufficient in terms of administrative support. S/he must be interested in, and ideally knowledgeable about, the McGowan Fund's programmatic pillars.

Excellent organizational skills and reasoned judgment are essential. Flexibility, creativity and the ability to contribute at both strategic and tactical levels is needed. Impeccable integrity and ethics, along with a diplomatic approach to problem solving are critical in this role.

S/he must provide evidence of an interpersonal style that builds alliances and emphasizes consensus building, collegiality and effective teamwork. Intellectual curiosity, and the ability to balance multiple, often competing priorities is required. A sense of urgency, a balance between analytical and intuitive skills and a good sense of humor is also sought.

Master's degree is required. PhD preferred. Candidates must have a minimum of five years of experience in strategy, measurement and evaluation. Promoting ongoing learning in a grantmaking organization is needed. The ideal candidate will bring experience with diverse social sector and philanthropic programs.



Please click [here](#) to send a current resume and letter of introduction to Noetic Search. For more information, please visit [www.noeticsearch.com](http://www.noeticsearch.com) or the McGowan Fund's website at [www.williamgmcgowanfund.org](http://www.williamgmcgowanfund.org).

The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund is an AA/EOE/ADA employer.

