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John R. Oishei Foundation Vice President of Community Investment and Finance

Buffalo, New York

JRO
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About the John R. Oishei Foundation

The John R. Oishei Foundation is a private, place-based foundation working in the Buffalo-Niagara region of New York State. Established in 1941, the Foundation manages approximately $370 million in assets and operates with an annual budget of around $15 million. With a current team of 11 and plans to grow to 15–17 staff over the next year, the Foundation is evolving steadily and with purpose, shifting from a traditional grantmaking approach toward a **focused strategy** that addresses root causes and centers community voice to advance financial prosperity for a racially just Buffalo Niagara region. Beginning on Buffalo's East Side, this work reflects a belief that lasting change is shaped through relationships, proximity, and partnership, and that philanthropy has a role to play not just in funding solutions, but in supporting the conditions that allow them to emerge and grow.

Over the past two years, the Foundation has been actively transitioning from strategy to practice. This has included investing more than $15 million in transition funding to support longtime partners, redesigning internal structures and governance, and beginning to operationalize the strategy. This approach reflects a fundamental shift in how the Foundation shows up, moving beyond traditional grantmaking toward deeper relationships, shared influence, and investments that support the leadership, assets, and priorities already present in the community. As this next phase takes shape, the Foundation is building the internal and external conditions needed to advance its work alongside partners, with a growing focus on initiatives that connect community voice, organizational strength, and long-term financial prosperity. This includes building out internal capacity to develop and implement a strategy to shift from being a primarily grantmaking organization to an investment partner who uses our investment portfolio to catalyze equitable development and asset building for residents in Buffalo's East Side.

Mission, Vision, and Values

The Foundation's work is driven by its mission, vision, and values:

Mission: We work with communities to change systems and build financial prosperity for a racially just, vibrant Buffalo-Niagara region.

Vision: A thriving, prosperous community for all, where diversity is our strength.

Values:

- **Act against racism**: We actively counter racism and systemic barriers faced by Black and other residents of color.
- **Build on strengths**: We center communities' and colleagues' agency, assets, and opportunities.
- **Be trustworthy**: We build trust through transparency, accountability, and humility.

- **Work together**: We listen, collaborate, and build partnerships across sectors and difference.
- **Make a difference**: We invest in our capacity to learn, improve, and create positive change.

Learn more about The John R. Oishei Foundation at https://oishei.org/.

The Opportunity

For this newly created leadership position, the Foundation is seeking an entrepreneurial, strategic and highly experienced Vice President of Community Investment & Finance to build and lead an emerging community investment function while also providing strategic oversight of the Foundation's overall finances. Reporting directly to President, Christina Orsi, and serving as a member of the Leadership Team, the Vice President will have the opportunity to imagine a bold and comprehensive strategy for using the resources of the Foundation to catalyze additional community investment in the region. The aspiration over time is significant: to use investment capital alongside, and potentially at a greater scale than, traditional grantmaking to advance the Foundation's mission more quickly and more effectively.

This role represents a unique opportunity for a senior community investment leader who is passionate about the mission of the Foundation and brings a track record of building and growing programs and/or organizations. The Foundation is looking for an entrepreneur and problem solver who understands capital but is not constrained by traditional approaches to deploying it. The role calls for someone who is both a strategist and a doer, able to think at a high level while also rolling up their sleeves to move the work forward.

This leader will assess the community development finance landscape, identify where Oishei can have the greatest impact, cultivate investment opportunities, and determine how the Foundation can most effectively deploy its capital. They will bring the ability to structure complex transactions, creatively mitigate risk, bring different partners to the table, and find ways to move promising ideas forward.

This leader must be equally comfortable working with community members and organizations, CDFIs, banks, developers, investors, Foundation colleagues, and Board members. They will listen, build trust, and translate between stakeholders who may approach opportunities from very different perspectives.

Alongside this primary focus, the Vice President will also provide strategic oversight of Oishei's finance function and work with external partners and a small internal team to ensure the Foundation maintains strong financial management, reporting, budgeting, cash flow, audit, and compliance practices. They will also oversee the $370 million investment portfolio in partnership with external investment advisors and the foundation's Investment Committee.

This is a unique opportunity for an entrepreneurial investment and finance leader to shape how philanthropic capital can be used in new and innovative ways to advance racial equity, build lasting community wealth, and create meaningful impact across Buffalo's East Side and the broader region.

Key priorities for the Vice President of Community Investment and Finance will be:

- Designing a compelling strategy for the Foundation's investment activities
- Providing financial leadership to the Foundation ensuring that the organization is healthy and sustainable.
- Expanding partnerships and co-investing opportunities with other investors including financial institutions, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI's), intermediaries, and others.
- Deploying capital, including through MRIs, PRIs, and other vehicles for the benefit of East Side, Buffalo.
- Working collaboratively with the Foundation's grantmaking staff to utilize resources in tandem for maximum impact.
- Convening cross-sector partners to address complex economic and community challenges and expand resources, influence, and collective impact.
- Representing the Foundation within the national community investment eco-system, both sharing and learning and identifying and leveraging national partnerships.

Candidate Profile

We recognize that there is a spectrum of lived and professional experience that will set candidates up for success in this role. While no one candidate will have every experience outlined in the position description, ideal candidates will display the following professional and personal qualities, skills, and characteristics:

Passion for the Mission

The Vice President will demonstrate a deep commitment to Oishei's mission and its focus on advancing racial equity and building financial prosperity. They will understand the important role that access to capital, business ownership, housing, and community assets can play in creating equitable economic opportunity, building community wealth, and addressing longstanding inequities and development without displacement.

This leader will bring the cultural awareness, humility, and curiosity necessary to build authentic relationships in primarily legacy Black neighborhoods where the Foundation works. They will listen before prescribing solutions, recognize community members as partners with essential knowledge and expertise, and ensure community voice and priorities inform how investment opportunities are identified and pursued.

The Vice President will operate with an abundance mindset – seeing the strengths and assets within the Buffalo and East Side community, rather than only the challenges. They will bring a strong commitment to the Buffalo area and if lacking direct experience in the region, the candidate's ability to embrace and be embraced by the community, particularly Buffalo's East Side communities, is key.

Community Development Finance & Impact Investing

The Vice President will be an experienced community development and impact investing leader who understands how capital can be creatively deployed to advance community and economic development. They will bring experience within CDFIs, community development banking, impact investing, or a related field, along with the financial expertise to evaluate and structure investments that advance Oishei's mission.

The successful candidate will have experience navigating complex transactions and bring a strong understanding of underwriting, financial modeling, due diligence, risk assessment, and portfolio management. Experience leveraging tools such as PRIs, MRIs, tax credits, investment funds, guarantees, or credit enhancement will be necessary.

Importantly, this leader will bring the judgment to balance community impact, financial sustainability, and risk. They will look beyond individual transactions to identify opportunities for Oishei's capital to catalyze additional investment, strengthen community assets, and contribute to lasting economic opportunity.

Entrepreneurial Builder & Strategic Thinker

The Vice President will be an entrepreneurial and strategic leader who is energized by the opportunity to build and shape Oishei's community investment function. Rather than inheriting a mature program, this leader will have the opportunity to help define the Foundation's approach, identify where its capital can have the greatest impact, and build the infrastructure necessary to move from strategy to execution.

Comfortable operating in an evolving environment, the Vice President will assess the landscape, develop a clear point of view, identify and test opportunities, and translate learning into action. They will bring creativity and a solutions-oriented mindset to complex challenges while maintaining sound judgment and discipline around financial and organizational risk.

The successful candidate will combine vision with practicality. They will have the ability to imagine what Oishei's community investment strategy can become while bringing the initiative, persistence, and execution skills necessary to build it.

Relationship Builder & Community-Centered Leader

The Vice President will be a skilled relationship and coalition builder who can move comfortably between community, philanthropic, and financial environments. They will develop trusted relationships with residents and community organizations as well as CDFIs, banks, investors, developers, philanthropic partners, and Board members.

This leader will recognize that successful community investing requires more than strong financial transactions. They will serve as a bridge builder and translator, making complex financial concepts accessible, bringing together different perspectives and sources of capital, and identifying opportunities for collaboration and shared investment.

Internally, the Vice President will thrive within a small, highly collaborative organization where leaders work closely together, remain connected to the work, and contribute beyond the boundaries of their individual functions.

Strategic Financial Stewardship

The Vice President will also provide strategic financial leadership and stewardship of Oishei's broader resources. They will bring the financial expertise necessary to ensure the Foundation maintains strong financial discipline while aligning its resources with its mission and long-term priorities.

The Vice President will bring an understanding of budgeting, forecasting, liquidity and cash-flow management, financial reporting, audit, controls, and investment oversight. They do not need to be a traditional accounting executive but must have the experience and judgment to effectively oversee the finance function and leverage the expertise of staff, external advisors, and partners.

They will work with leadership and the Investment Committee to establish a portfolio policy that allocates a portion of the Foundation's endowment to investments on the East Side of Buffalo that align directly with the mission, even if they offer below-market financial returns or additional risk. Included in this work will be determining an overall capital strategy that balances financial returns with measurable social impact outcomes across the entire investment portfolio.

As a strategic partner to the President, Leadership Team, and Board, this leader will translate complex financial information into clear insights and recommendations. They will help ensure that Oishei's financial resources—from its operating budget and investment portfolio to its community investment capital—are thoughtfully stewarded and strategically deployed to advance the Foundation's mission.

Organizational Leadership:

The Vice President will be a thoughtful and values-aligned leader who contributes to the overarching strategy of the Foundation while modeling collaboration and listening. They will be a compelling ambassador for the organization and a trustworthy partner to internal and external stakeholders alike.

With a focus on impact, they will take responsibility for the successful execution of plans and help guide implementation across the Foundation. They will bring experience leading through change with both transparency and a learning approach and will be skilled at working alongside other leaders and a Board of Directors to ensure enterprise-wide success.

A Well-Qualified Candidate Will Bring:

- Significant experience in CDFIs, community development finance, community development banking, impact investing, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience developing, structuring, and executing complex investments or financing transactions.
- Experience developing new investment strategies, programs, products, or functions.

- Knowledge of PRIs, MRIs, community development investments, real estate finance, tax credits, or other innovative financing structures.
- An understanding of financial management, budgeting, forecasting, cash flow, and investment oversight.
- Experience working with Boards, investment committees, or other governance bodies.
- Strong relationship-building skills and experience working across community, philanthropic, public, and financial sectors.
- Experience leading within a small organization or workgroup where success requires both strategic thinking and hands-on execution. Demonstrates the ability to balance organizational culture, staff experience and performance while building trust, accountability, and results.
- An entrepreneurial mindset and demonstrated ability to turn ideas into action.
- Cultural acuity with experience demonstrating respect and openness towards people whose social and cultural background is different from one's own and the ability to communicate respectfully across differences.

Location

The successful candidate must be based in or willing to relocate to Buffalo, New York, and will be expected to be in the Foundation's office a minimum of 3 days per week, depending on specific responsibilities, and flexible on nights and weekends in community to best achieve role outcomes. Flex office time is offered to support this schedule.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary for the role is anticipated to range from $250,000 - $300,000 commensurate with experience.

A comprehensive benefits package includes 401(k) (7% match), and health, dental, and vision insurance (100% coverage by employer), an HSA fully funded by employer. The Foundation provides a very generous benefits package to ensure the whole wellness of the team.

Contact

DSG | Koya has been exclusively retained for this engagement, which is being led by Erin Reedy. Express interest in this role here or by emailing the search team directly at erin.reedy@dsgco.com. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

The John R. Oishei Foundation (JROF) is an Equal Opportunity Employer and considers all candidates for employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, citizenship, pregnancy, military status, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.

About DSG | Koya

DSG | Koya, a DSG Global company, is the nation's premier search firm dedicated to mission-driven leadership. Since its founding in 2004, DSG | Koya has had an exclusive focus on mission-driven clients and was founded on the belief that the right leader can transform an organization and have a deep and measurable impact on our world. DSG | Koya works with nonprofits & NGOs, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

DSG Global is consistently recognized by Forbes on its top 10 list of “America’s Best Executive Recruiting Firms” and is an industry leader in recruiting transformational leaders for a changing world. The firm is deliberately different in its approach, with best-in-class teams who have decades of experience in cultivating inclusive leaders, understanding the dimensions of diversity, and building equitable teams.

Learn more about DSG | Koya via the firm's website.