



**Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Senior Research Associate**

Boston, Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the largest philanthropy in New England dedicated exclusively to education, is seeking nominations and applications for a Research Associate. Nellie Mae concentrates its grantmaking strategy on improving educational outcomes and college readiness for all students, especially underserved learners, through systems change in support of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) programs and schools. Student-Centered Learning approaches value personalized and competency based learning techniques that both encourage students to take ownership in their education and to seek learning anytime, anywhere. Nellie Mae, together with its education and policy partners across New England, is leading the way in seeking education reform that brings SCL to the country's existing public school systems.

As an integral member of the research team and reporting to the Director of Research, the Research Associate will provide the support to the Foundation's internal learning process, its knowledge of and ability to contribute to needed research in the field. S/he will support the Foundation's strategy and agenda by enhancing the depth and breadth of its relevant knowledge of high quality academic and practice-based research in the Foundation's focus areas. Specifically, s/he will develop cross-cutting research projects that move forward the vision of the Foundation; help conceptualize and implement internal and external Foundation research projects; assist in development and implementation of the Foundation's long-term research agenda; and lead internal research in key areas of interest to inform the Foundation's strategy and grant making.

The Research Associate must have a deep commitment to the Foundation's mission to promote accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of education for the underserved in the six New England States. S/he will ideally have a background in education or education research and trends – especially those designed to increase student proficiency and readiness. The Research Associate will be a thoughtful, organized, and skilled communicator who looks forward to partnering with grantees and stakeholders from economic, socially, and culturally diverse communities.

This search is being conducted with assistance from Nureen Das and Erica Nicole Griffin of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Please find more information and application instructions at the end of this document.



RESEARCH AT THE NELLIE MAE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Research Office is responsible for supporting and enhancing the Foundation's overall strategy and agenda and its overall approach to research. The office leads efforts to integrate academic and practice-based research into the foundation's grantmaking and operations.

The purpose of research work at NMEF is to facilitate learning; to drive continuous improvement in grantmaking and thought leadership, and to help partners and grantees better reflect, refine, and when necessary, change course. The Foundation's goal is to learn as much from its mistakes as from its successes, and to engage in collaborative reflection to ensure that we gain as much understanding as possible from both.

For more information about Nellie Mae Education Foundation, visit www.nmefoundation.org.

THE ROLE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Reporting to the Director of Research, the Research Associate will engage in the following challenges and opportunities:

- Track research in key areas of Foundation interest, including research to practice partnerships, 21st century skills, performance-based assessments, and others; Maintain database of research in these areas and supervise database development by graduate and undergraduate students; Develop and maintain database(s) of examples of student-centered learning approaches in the U.S. and abroad;
- Build knowledge of regional consultants and research centers with capacity to carry out research projects. Visit schools and other appropriate education settings on a regular basis;
- Conceptualize new ways to share research findings for a variety of audiences; Serve as the lead point of contact for researchers and others preparing reports or other materials for the Foundation; Complete literature reviews on key areas of Foundation interest; Write summaries, case studies, analyses, and other materials that share research findings and knowledge with others;
- Help to develop Requests for Proposals and select Foundation grantees, particularly for research-focused grants. Communicate with prospective and actual grantees and monitor progress; Conduct and/or supervise all administrative tasks related to grant making, including the drafting of Memoranda of Understanding, contracts, and other documents; Develop and track work plans;
- Support the work of Program Department by consulting with staff on all research related aspects of their work;
- Play key role in all activities and projects that integrate the work of the Research Departments and;
- Support general work of NMEF in selecting areas of focus, designing theories of change and developing strategies.



QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

While no single candidate will embody all of the following, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- 5-7 years of relevant, successful experience in education, non-profit or public policy sectors including foundation and/or grant making experience with demonstrated experience with, and sustained commitment to, underserved populations;
- Deep commitment to the Foundation's mission to promote accessibility, quality and effectiveness of education for the underserved in the six New England States. Ability to understand the Foundation's goals and objectives, and to apply gained knowledge;
- Advanced degree in education policy, or education research; or B.A. degree and significant relevant experience; Experience as a teacher or other role in a school preferred
- Substantive knowledge of and experience with education reform issues in public policy and research, particularly Foundation focus areas;
- Solid research skills including knowledge of research design and methodology; Ability to collect, review, and synthesize complex policy issues and research findings from wide-ranging sources such as websites, published reports, databases, interviews, journal articles, and blogs;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in one-on-one settings and in large groups, both internal to the Foundation and with external audiences;
- Ability to multitask and meet deadlines within tight timeframes, and demonstrate resourcefulness in setting priorities and managing resources in that environment;
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail with the ability to work both independently without close oversight and as a team player who will productively engage with others;
- Communicates and interfaces with every internal function and all levels of management and non-management employees;
- Interfaces with new and existing grantees and professional contemporaries in the industry;
- An optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, and patience necessary to work within the challenges and opportunities of a Foundation in the midst of change;
- Minimal travel primarily within New England, with some meetings outside the area.

TO APPLY

Nellie Mae Education Foundation has retained Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group to assist in this search. Nureen Das and Erica Nicole Griffin are leading the engagement. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), salary history, and where you learned of the position should be submitted to: NMEF-RESE@nonprofitprofessionals.com

Nellie Mae Education Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women, candidates of color, and people of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group is a national executive search and consulting firm dedicated to serving the mission-driven community. We partner with global mission-driven clients to deliver highly-tailored, innovative, and strategic senior- and executive-level search services. www.nonprofitprofessionals.com.