

POSITION DESCRIPTION

FOR THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



October 2022

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 **DIVERSIFIEDSEARCHGROUP**

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POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION	President & Chief Executive Officer
ORGANIZATION	Nellie Mae Education Foundation
REPORTS TO	Board of Directors
LOCATION	Quincy, Massachusetts
WEBSITE	https://nmefoundation.org/

OVERVIEW OF THE OPPORTUNITY

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF) seeks a visionary, strategic, and transformational leader as its next President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO will lead the largest philanthropy in New England, with assets in excess of \$500 million and a staff of 18, dedicated exclusively to education. This is a unique opportunity to leverage the Foundation's platform and assets to accelerate and augment the impact of education and grassroots partners' work and to strengthen the capacity of schools and school systems to catalyze and sustain education equity and justice efforts. In essence, this is an opportunity to change the lives of thousands of students, especially those who have been marginalized.

The CEO will serve as a major philanthropic thought leader on education equity and justice, significantly supporting a strategy to build sustainable resources for a regional education justice infrastructure that supports school and system transformation. Working with the Board of Directors and senior management, the CEO will provide strategic and organizational leadership for NMEF, ensuring operational alignment with the strategic plan. Importantly, the CEO will think systemically about NMEF's role in determining the ideal balance of achieving direct impact through grant making and influencing, networking, and convening to magnify the power and funding capacity of NMEF to support schools and system transformation.

This is an opportunity for an experienced leader deeply committed to education and the role NMEF can play to make significant improvements, especially for students of color. The CEO will be informed by knowledge and practical experience in a similar role and an understanding of the impact of community organizing, research and policy in education reform. The CEO will demonstrate a proven record of using philanthropy to forge the partnerships needed to implement systemic change strategies in schools, networks and districts.

Recognizing that addressing issues of educational equity and justice can lead to passionate discourse and differences of opinion on how to address these issues, the CEO will cultivate an environment consistent



with NMEF's mission and instill a culture committed to openness, transparency and constructive dialogue. The CEO will lead and support a dedicated and committed staff, guided by an organizational strategy, culture, and operational practices that promote racial equity in education.

ABOUT THE NELLIE MAE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF) is committed to championing efforts to prioritize community goals informed by research on practice and policy that challenge racial inequities in education and advance culturally responsive, student-centered public education for all New England youth. NMEF works to ensure that all youth have access to excellent and equitable public education that prepares them to succeed and thrive. Headquartered in Quincy, MA, our team is comprised of professionals who share a commitment to putting youth and communities at the forefront of efforts to support and advance schools and school systems that promote racial equity and excellence.

Over the past few years, we have intentionally shifted our focus to work aimed at creating the conditions necessary to achieve our mission, vision and values.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision: *All youth have access to excellent and equitable public education that prepares them to succeed and thrive in the community.*

Mission: *To champion efforts that prioritize community goals that challenge racial inequities and advance excellent, student-centered public education for all New England youth.*

Values:

Put Youth at the Forefront - We must widen the lens of education to encompass the socio-cultural contexts of youth and families. Every decision the Foundation makes rests on its potential for improving the lives of our region's youth least well-served by current systems.

Operate with a Race Equity Lens - We believe that applying a racial equity lens is essential for analyzing and solving problems that have endured for generations, impact individuals and communities of color most acutely, and ultimately affect ALL people, whether in other marginalized or privileged groups.

Build Reciprocal Relationships - Meaningful change demands a collective effort and shared problem-solving. We offer our resources and institutional knowledge with humility and attention to power dynamics. We listen and engage in authentic and equitable partnerships,



mindful of our duty as a philanthropic organization, about when to step up and when to step back, and to use our power and privilege to contribute to transformational change.

Support Community-Driven Change - We believe communities should be able to drive the change that affects their lives. We must be responsive and open to addressing others' identified priorities and use our institutional and individual privilege to share and reduce the risk for communities seeking change.

Learn, Adapt and Improve - Achieving meaningful impact requires us to think differently, see differently, and work differently. We continuously draw from research, evaluation, informal perspectives, and knowledge to learn and drive transparent purposeful decision-making.

The Foundation's multi-pronged strategy includes grantmaking that builds the capacity and sustainability of organizations and schools that work to promote racial equity in public education, together with grants that support broader network and advocacy efforts. Our grantmaking encompasses four core funds structured to reinforce one another in advancing our mission:

- Supporting Organizations Led by People of Color;
- Amplifying Youth Voice & Leadership;
- Advancing Community-School Partnerships; and
- Strengthening Partnerships and Movement Building

We have deliberately shifted how we fund to focus on providing more general operating support, multi-year funding, and centering grantees' goals to inform the Foundation's goals alongside research on policy and practice.

Governance

NMEF is led by a 15-member Board of Directors who have distinguished themselves in their board service through their commitment to education and prioritizing an equity and justice framework into how foundations and funders support leaders and communities of color while advancing excellent education outcomes for all New England youth.

ROLE SUMMARY

The CEO will serve as a major philanthropic thought partner on education equity and racial justice, and be a champion for improving educational outcomes in a way that seeks, respects, and incorporates community voice. The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the overall management, planning, and leadership of the Foundation. The CEO will work closely with the Board and senior management to advance the strategic direction of the Foundation and the development of effective policies and programs that support the Foundation's mission. The CEO ensures that the



Foundation's programs, fiscal, operations, communication, human capital, and technology strategies are effectively aligned and implemented across all areas of the organization.

The successful candidate must be mission-driven and eager to lead and guide the excellent work that has already been done, while forging a clear vision that will inform the next iteration of the Foundation's efforts. Proposing direction, making the case to the board, staff and the broader community, and executing to deliver desired outcomes will require a strong leader who can articulate how operational activities and grants are directly related to the mission and vision of NMEF. A successful candidate will be guided by a clear theory of change for how the Foundation will support capacity building and power building to bring change to schools and communities.

The new CEO will welcome diverse perspectives while aiming to reach consensus and informed decisions through collective problem solving. The CEO will be an engaged and active listener, and will value transparent communication with the staff, community, and the board. The CEO must possess the expertise and enthusiasm to serve as an inspiring advocate for both the Foundation and the communities it serves. The CEO will work with the board and staff to identify methods to tie NMEF's work to systems change and positive academic outcomes for all students, and especially students of color.

The successful candidate will demonstrate professional competence and personal characteristics required to provide leadership in these key areas:

Passion for the Mission - The CEO will engage and energize the staff and board members around a clear, shared vision for NMEF and how the Foundation can best achieve its mission. The CEO will be passionate about helping provide the resources and support to grantees to reach their full potential of impact and value in their communities.

Strategic Leadership and Vision - As NMEF approaches the last year of its 3-year strategic plan, there continues to be a commitment to the mission of pursuing racial equity in public education. There is now an opportunity to build upon the important work that has been done to date. The CEO will engage the board and staff in a deliberate process to strengthen the strategy and direction for NMEF's overarching goals and to identify short and long term priorities. Serving as a philanthropic thought leader on education equity and racial justice in education, the CEO will define new or expanded areas of work that will have an even stronger impact on education policy and practice.

Staff Management - The CEO will direct and support staff in pursuing NMEF's mission, in alignment with its values and priorities. The new CEO will be an inspirational leader who engages staff in the work, leads with compassion, and instills a culture of best practices, collaboration, and mutual respect while nurturing a positive and open environment. The CEO will promote collaboration and build cohesive teams and productive work environments at both the staff and board levels. The CEO will work to ensure staff alignment around racial equity initiatives in education and have the ability to work with and



motivate a diverse group of professionals through empowerment, creative leadership, and teambuilding.

Dedication to Education Equity and Justice - NMEF seeks a CEO to provide leadership on how the Foundation can achieve the deepest impact in educational equity and the achievement of robust educational outcomes. The CEO will build and lead a staff team with the expertise needed to execute education equity and justice philanthropic strategies. The CEO will review the current strategy and offer ways it can be strengthened/expanded to reflect the importance of education research and policy alongside community organizing and advocacy. The CEO will help crystalize NMEF's funding strategies and unify board members and staff members who have varying views on how to accomplish NMEF's mission under a common vision and approach. Recognizing the impact of locating racial equity work close to the education system, the CEO will demonstrate a clear and informed understanding of the power of community engagement and place-based philanthropy in improving educational outcomes for all New England youth.

Operational and Financial Management - The CEO will be an experienced organizational manager who brings a thorough understanding of management practices and finances unique to a private foundation and will have demonstrated experience and success in managing operational budgets and finance to approved plans. The CEO has the ultimate responsibility for the grantmaking process and all administrative and financial operations. The CEO will ensure HR policies and procedures are current and serve the needs of employees, provide for staff development, and opportunities to interact with other subject matter experts.

Board Relations and Governance - Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO understands the importance of a robust partnership with the Board and will present well-developed options/plans for consideration and approval to the Board. The CEO will work with the Board to achieve consistency in communications and messaging, establish mutually agreed upon goals and expectations, and enlist their support as needed to make timely and informed decisions. The CEO will work with the Board in ways that create consistent decision-making to move the work forward and ensure best practices and accountability to the Board. Working with the board on truly understanding and embracing NMEF's current strategy, the CEO will seek to clarify the role of the board in relationship to staff and grantees and implement practices that strengthen working relationships and collaboration toward common goals.

External Relations - The CEO will represent NMEF as a thought leader on education equity and justice and be comfortable conveying the work of the Foundation's mission and priorities to a range of constituents and stakeholders. With an understanding of how advocacy advances the work of the organization, the CEO will have experience working with federal, state, and local education agencies and cultivating and maintaining relationships with national, state, and local political leaders, and relevant coalitions and educational advocacy organizations. The CEO will have the opportunity to be a leader in the region and to identify and build relationships with local, state, and national networks that can



amplify and inform the work of NMEF. The CEO will work to establish the best mechanisms for identifying priorities and incorporating the community voice into decision-making processes.

Required Qualifications, Experience and Personal Characteristics

The successful candidate will be a passionate, energetic, and innovative leader who possesses the following:

- ▼ Substantial professional experience in a strategic leadership position with a deep understanding of education systems;
- ▼ Formal academic preparation, including a bachelor's degree or higher, along with higher level training and/or certification in fields related to education, philanthropy, and/or nonprofit management, or demonstrable lived experience commensurate with leading an organization of the size and complexity of NMEF;
- ▼ Strong background in education research, policy, and practice and an understanding of the dynamics of education organizing and advocacy;
- ▼ Experience in racial equity policies and demonstrated success in advancing change in this space;
- ▼ Ability to develop substantive partnerships and build relationships with a wide variety of leaders from diverse backgrounds including grantees, community leaders, and other philanthropic organizations;
- ▼ A record of innovative leadership and a demonstrated commitment to place-based philanthropic strategies; and
- ▼ A successful track record in leading nonprofit organizations and collaborating with non-profit boards, and skilled at identifying, recruiting, and engaging board members, senior staff, and community members.

Compensation

The annual salary for this role will be based on a range, starting at \$425,000 and commensurate with the successful candidate's skills and experience. NMEF provides health care, dental, and vision benefits, as well as a flexible paid time off policy.

We strongly encourage applications from traditionally marginalized groups — including people of color, women, members of the LGBTQ community, and other marginalized communities – as we believe that these communities must be centered in the work we do.



SEARCH TEAM

Nellie Mae Education Foundation has retained Diversified Search Group to assist in this recruitment. To express your interest in this role, please submit your materials [here](#). Nominations may be submitted by email to NMEFCEO@divsearch.com. All nominations, inquiries, and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

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