

About the Organization

Short Summary

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, New England's largest philanthropic organization focused solely on education, believes every young person in New England should be able to access excellent, rigorous, and relevant educational experiences that support their healthy development and prepares them to thrive in school, community, and careers of the future.

Long Summary

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation has worked for almost 25 years to help our region prosper by investing in solutions and organizations that prepare ALL learners for success. We believe that success is directly related to the health of schools, youth-serving institutions, and the network of youth, educators, parents, community organizers, and organizations that ensure young people and families are seen, understood, and supported to thrive. While the current education ecosystem often operates through entrenched, top-down approaches, our grantmaking strategy works to upend that dynamic by inserting feedback loops and strengthening mechanisms at every level to interrogate for whom and how budget, policy, and practice choice points enable or hinder healthy student experience and outcomes.

The Foundation is now entering a new phase of its work. Over the past year and a half, Nellie Mae has undertaken an in-depth strategy refinement process to sharpen its impact and position the organization for the next chapter of education systems change in New England. Guided by the knowledge, feedback, and insights of more than 2,500 community members—along with message testing, media tracking, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires—the Foundation clarified both what it will prioritize going forward and how it can uniquely contribute through its grantmaking. This work reaffirmed a shared vision and mandate to **ensure every young person in New England has access to excellent, rigorous, and relevant educational experiences that support healthy development and prepare them to thrive in school, community, and the careers of the future.**

With this refined strategy, as a foundation, Nellie Mae is focused on supporting efforts that translate community insight into coordinated action. We want community insight to move upward — and for funding, policy, and practice to respond in alignment downward — so the whole ecosystem becomes more connected, aligned, and supportive of young people.

We invest at three interconnected levels:

1. **Community Engagement** so that those most proximate to the challenges have the access, resources, and infrastructure to shape and advance a shared agenda; supporting communities to use qualitative and quantitative data to define root causes of student disengagement and develop plausible solutions.

2. **State Fieldbuilding and a Knowledge and Information Ecosystem Infrastructure** that support the development of durable and responsive education data and knowledge ecosystems — and support state and local actors to apply knowledge and take action that advance healthy student experiences and outcomes.
3. **Regional Field and Capacity Building** to advance a unified vision and shared agenda, informed by community insights and data, that activates others and builds momentum for long-term systems change.

At the core of this next chapter is a commitment to continuous learning and evaluation, and to elevating the voices of the community members so that Nellie Mae's investments remain responsive, adaptive, and positioned to drive meaningful change at scale. Learn more about what we do on our [website](#).

About the Role

What You'll Do

Reporting to the Chief of Staff and Impact, the **Program Officer** is an essential member of the Programs team, responsible for managing a portfolio of grants, cultivating strong relationships with grantees and intermediaries, and contributing to strategy development through research, analysis, and field engagement. This role offers a meaningful opportunity to work at the intersection of education systems change, community-based solutions, and philanthropy by providing systems that support partners across New England who are working to improve outcomes for students.

The **Program Officer** plays a key role in advancing the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's grantmaking strategy by managing grant lifecycles, conducting due diligence on prospective new grantees, and working with the NMEF team to ensure we are effectively supporting our grantees while maintaining alignment to the Foundation's mission and strategy.

This is a great opportunity for a detail-oriented systems thinker with deep expertise in philanthropy, commitment to maximizing grantees' impact, and a passion for improving education and life outcomes for each and every young person.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Grantmaking and Portfolio Management

- Manage a portfolio of grants aligned with the Foundation's strategic priorities, including monitoring progress, budgets, outcomes, and alignment with program goals.
- Cultivate and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with grantees, intermediaries, and technical assistance providers.
- Support the development, review, and refinement of grant proposals, work plans, and reports.
- Serve as a primary point of contact for assigned grantees, ensuring clear communication, shared expectations, and effective partnership.
- Contribute to internal assessment of portfolio performance and alignment with Foundation strategy.

Program Development and Strategy Support

- Support the research, design, and implementation of new grantmaking initiatives in addition to owning the relationship with select legacy partners.
- Conduct landscape research and analysis to inform strategy development, funding decisions, and learning priorities.
- Contribute to the development of concept papers, briefing materials, and internal recommendations related to program design and evolution.
- Collaborate with Foundation leadership and colleagues to ensure grantmaking strategies reflect emerging trends, evidence, and field needs.

Learning, Evaluation, and Knowledgebuilding

- Conduct routine reviews of grantees in service of program oversight, identifying shared successes and challenges across the portfolio, and leverage those insights to support grantees in maximizing their impact in alignment with NMEF's strategy, practices, and impact.
- Proactively surface needs, insights, and trends across the education ecosystem to support assessment of grant outcomes and integration of insights into program strategy.
- Help translate research, data, and practitioner insight into accessible knowledge that informs grantmaking and organizational learning.
- Support grantee engagement in learning activities, convenings, and continuous improvement processes.

Collaboration & Organizational Contribution

- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Foundation to support integrated strategies, manage convenings, and share learnings.
- Coordinate with intermediaries and external partners to ensure grantees receive effective and aligned technical assistance.
- Contribute to the preparation of internal materials, including strategy briefs, leadership updates, and Board-facing documentation.
- Support and model the Foundation's core values, commitment to equity, and culture of learning and accountability.

Who You'll Work With

You will report to the **Chief of Staff and Impact**.

This role **does not supervise staff**, but you will support the development of colleagues, intermediaries, and technical assistance partners by offering guidance, systems and structures, thought partnership, and feedback.

You will frequently collaborate with the:

- **Programs Team** to co-design strategies, strengthen learning practices, and align implementation across initiatives.
- **Learning, Research, and Evaluation Team** to assess progress toward outcomes and integrate insights into grantmaking.
- **Operations Team** to share learning, develop Board materials, organize convenings and ensure budget and operational alignment.

Required Skills and Experience

- **5–7 years of relevant experience** in education, education policy, nonprofit program development, philanthropy, or grants management.
- Strong foundational understanding of K–12 education systems and reform efforts, particularly those focused on just and equitable systems change.
- Familiarity with education trends at the local and state level; exposure to student-centered or community-driven approaches is a plus.
- Demonstrated ability to manage projects or grants, including tracking progress, budgets, and deliverables.
- Strong research, analytical, and writing skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information and communicate it clearly.
- Proven relationship-building skills and the ability to work collaboratively with diverse partners and stakeholders.
- High degree of organization, attention to detail, and ability to effectively manage multiple priorities concurrently.
- Ability to work independently while also contributing positively to a team-oriented environment.
- Commitment to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students in underserved communities.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and comfort using digital collaboration tools and communication platforms.

Additional Details

Compensation

The salary range for this role is \$125,000 to \$175,000 and will be competitive and commensurate with experience.







Hybrid Work Environment

This hybrid role offers a unique opportunity to lead transformative initiatives while maintaining strong connections with communities and stakeholders across New England. It combines flexible work arrangements with purposeful travel, empowering a leader to advocate for a shared vision for student success, equitable student outcomes, and policies and practices that set enabling conditions for all students.

Candidates must maintain residency in the target geography, New England, and are expected to participate in in-office meetings on Mondays at the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and during the monthly Home Week (calendar published annually). Candidates should expect to travel up to 65%. This is a field-based/building position and when not in office (on required days) we are looking for a team member who is eager and excited to be out in community with local, regional,

national, grantees, partners, and stakeholders. By design the staff member will attend relevant conferences, summits, local meetings, etc., all in service of supporting NMEF State Program Officers and Portfolio Leads.

Benefits

 **Health coverage plans** (medical, vision, and dental)	 Competitive **vision & dental** benefits	 Generous **paid time off** including 12 holidays and office closure between Christmas and New Years
 **401K retirement plan** including an employer match contribution and discretionary contribution	 Long and short term **disability and life insurance**	 16 weeks of **paid family leave** and 12 weeks of **medical leave**

Equity at the Nellie Mae Education Foundation

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will be considered for employment without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or current employment status, in alignment with federal, state, or local law.

Qualified Individuals, please apply: <https://www.on-ramps.com/jobs/3605>