



**The Kresge Foundation  
Strategic Learning and Evaluation Officer**

**Troy, MI**

**Executive Summary**

The Kresge Foundation is a national foundation dedicated to expanding opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development in Detroit. Kresge is committed to scaling innovative, collaborative, cross-sector and multidisciplinary approaches to address today's greatest social challenges facing urban underserved communities. In recent years, Kresge has worked to embed strategic learning within each program and practice area in an effort to share learnings across the foundation as well as externally throughout the social sector.

At a critical point in the foundation's build out of its learning and evaluation function, Kresge now seeks a **Strategic Learning and Evaluation Officer (SLEO)** to serve as a thought partner to internal program and practice teams and lead activities that support a culture of learning and continuous growth, connect data and insights with decision-making, and improve overall effectiveness. Reporting to and working closely with the Director of Strategic Learning and Evaluation, the SLEO will also cultivate ongoing multi-disciplinary strategic learning efforts and training that foster and embed evaluative thinking across the foundation and will bolster Kresge's efforts to disseminate the foundation's learnings across the field. Additionally, s/he will steward relationships with external consultants and will collaborate with Program Operations and Information Management staff to support accountability, learning, and decision-making, drawing on the full suite of data and analytics tools available.

The ideal candidate will bring five to seven years of experience in community development, community change, urban planning, or a related field with a strong understanding of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and practices. S/he will bring deep experience designing theories of change and logic models along with proven facilitation skills. Additionally, the SLEO will be a dynamic influencer with highly effective interpersonal and relational skills and the ability to provide nuanced support to team members on issues that may be challenges or points of opportunity. A compelling storyteller, the SLEO will demonstrate a natural inclination for learning motivated by the internal drive to shed light on complex issues. Finally, the SLEO will demonstrate commitment to Kresge's vision and values and be dedicated to advancing equity with the belief that learning and evaluation is in service to the communities the foundation seeks to support.

The Kresge Foundation has retained the assistance of Allison Kupfer Poteet and Cara Pearsall of the national search firm [Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group](#) (NPAG) in this effort. Instructions on how to submit nominations and applications can be found at the end of this document.



## **About The Kresge Foundation**

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.6 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development in Detroit. In 2006, the foundation embarked on a multiyear transition to redefine its approach toward meeting the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The result which is in full operation now, is a strategic philanthropy that views issues in their entirety, responds to needs through measured risk, while employing an array of grantmaking and social investing tools to help expand opportunities for low-income people living in cities. More than 80 percent of the U.S. population lives in and around cities and so working within cities allows the foundation the greatest potential to assist the largest groups of people experiencing hardship and poverty.

In 2016, the Board of Trustees approved 474 grants totaling \$141.5 million, and made 14 social investment commitments totaling \$50.8 million. Kresge awards operating support, project, and planning grants to advance the strategic objectives of its six programs, including:

- The [Arts & Culture Program](#) promotes the integration of arts, culture and community-engaged design into community development and urban planning.
- The [Detroit Program](#) uses a comprehensive investment strategy in the foundation's hometown to advance opportunities for people to thrive.
- The [Education Program](#) promotes postsecondary access and success for low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students living in cities in the United States and South Africa.
- The [Environment Program](#) helps cities implement comprehensive climate-resilience approaches grounded in equity.
- The [Health Program](#) works to reduce health disparities among children and adults by addressing conditions that lead to poor health outcomes.
- The [Human Services Program](#) supports the advancement of human services to accelerate social and economic mobility for people with low income in America's cities.

Additionally, Kresge created two practices that work across its six programs.:

- The [Social Investment Practice](#) complements the foundation's grantmaking with loans, deposits, equity investments and guarantees. These funds often address funding barriers, draw other investors to the project and make capital available in otherwise disinvested communities. Typical projects include investments in health care clinics, affordable housing, social service providers, and real estate to advance economic development.
- The [American Cities Practice](#) elevates what Kresge is learning in Detroit for the benefit of partners working in other cities. Through its grantmaking, the practice seeks to understand how cities are addressing challenges such as economic restructuring, fiscal collapse, infrastructure needs, racial and economic inequity, inclusive growth, natural disasters, and resource demands.

## **Strategic Learning and Evaluation at The Kresge Foundation**

When The Kresge Foundation shifted its focus in 2006 to become a strategic philanthropy, focusing on specific program areas to help improve the life circumstances for low-income people in America's cities, there was increasing demand to measure the results of the foundation's work. Each Kresge program and



practice developed a succinct theory of change, a set of values underlying the theory, and proposed objectives resulting from the strategies. Teams intentionally embed learning and evaluation throughout the strategy life cycle so that standards around strategy, learning, and evaluation are integrated within each program and practice.

In 2015, Kresge formally established its learning and evaluation function, demonstrating its commitment to growing Kresge's knowledge endowment—to draw from the full suite of philanthropic tools, including evaluation and thought leadership—to join conversations that advance the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. As a learning organization, Kresge is committed to transparency and the broad dissemination of its learning across the field, placing high value on risk taking for the sake of learning with the recognition that not every grant or investment will be a success. The development of the strategic learning and evaluation function is a critical opportunity for the foundation to advance its role as a reflective and strategic thought leader that brings an equity-minded approach to learning and evaluation.

### **Sample Collaborations between Strategic Learning and Evaluation & Program Teams**

*Fresh, Local & Equitable* (FreshLo) is an initiative of the Kresge Health and Arts & Culture programs to fund neighborhood-scale projects demonstrating creative, cross-sector visions of food-oriented development. FreshLo projects intentionally integrate healthy food, creative placemaking, community development and equity in their work. To learn from the initiative as it develops, the Kresge strategic learning and evaluation team framed the following questions:

- How do community food and creative placemaking initiatives create value and deliver multiple benefits in authentic partnership with low-income residents?
- Using qualitative comparative case analysis, what can we learn about the summative impact of efforts funded within this initiative?
- What do community residents have to say about food and creative placemaking as levers for positive community change?

The *City Energy Project* (CEP) is a national initiative to create healthier and more prosperous American cities by improving the energy efficiency of buildings. The initiative is co-funded by Kresge in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and implemented by the Institute for Market Transformation and the National Resources Defense Council in partnership with the Energy Foundation. The project's 20 participating cities support innovative, practical solutions that cut energy waste, boost local economies and reduce harmful pollution. To learn from the first phase of the project, Kresge commissioned a formative evaluation to help shape CEP's ongoing implementation. Key insights from the evaluation include:

- Specific elements of the CEP model, namely City Advisors, peer exchange networks and Hub Staff support, have proven invaluable to municipalities and are considered essential to the long-term success of CEP.
- Cities that proactively engage with stakeholder groups from the outset set the tone for stakeholders to be designers of, rather than reactors to, proposed energy policies and programs. Stakeholder outreach and education also provides an opportunity to strengthen local partnerships for energy efficiency.
- By increasing market engagement through education and outreach, strengthening links with existing networks and establishing a compelling business case, CEP will continue to build a foundation to support broader market transformation into the next phase of work.



### **Challenges and Opportunities for the Strategic Learning and Evaluation Officer**

Reporting to and working closely with the Director of Strategic Learning and Evaluation, the SLEO will be essential to the continued growth and development of the learning and evaluation function. S/he will serve as a thought partner to program and practice teams to lead and support a host of activities that support a culture of learning and continuous growth, connect data and insights with decision-making, and improve overall effectiveness. In the first 6 to 12 months and beyond, the SLEO can expect to engage the following core opportunities and challenges:

- **Guide a subset of program and practice teams in refining their theories of change, reassessing priorities, and refreshing goals and objectives for continuous learning.**
- **Steward relationships with a range of external consultants engaged in commissioned evaluation, ensuring that efforts are consistent across practices and meet or exceed standards for accountability and learning.**
- **Support accountability, learning, and decision-making by collaborating with Program Operations and Information Management staff to draw on the full suite of data and analytics tools available.**
- **Cultivate ongoing multi-disciplinary strategic learning efforts and trainings that foster and embed evaluative thinking across the foundation and connect learning with action to enliven Kresge's values and mission.**
- **Bolster Kresge's efforts to join conversations that advance the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors and disseminate the foundation's learnings across the field.**

### **Qualities of the Ideal Candidate**

While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- Five to seven years of experience in community development, community change, urban planning, or a related field; Bachelor's degree required, Master's degree preferred.
- A strong understanding of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and practices, and experience working flexibly with internal program teams to identify and deploy evaluation processes aimed at usability and learning.
- Experience developing theories of change and logic models, along with facilitation skills to frame hypotheses.
- A dynamic influencer with highly effective interpersonal and relational skills, including a demonstrated ability to work successfully across complex, matrixed teams and with roles at multiple levels.
- High emotional intelligence with the ability to provide nuanced support to team members on issues that may be challenges or points of opportunity.



- Natural inclination and intentionality for learning; A curious disposition motivated by the internal drive to uncover and shed light on complex issues.
- Deep knowledge of the field of philanthropy and strategic grantmaking; Experience working across the social sector with foundations, non-profits, and mission-driven organizations.
- Demonstrated commitment to Kresge's vision and its five values – stewardship, respect, creativity, partnership, and opportunity – with the ability to embody them in daily interactions; Dedication to expanding opportunity for low-income communities and to advancing equity with the belief that learning and evaluation is in service to the communities that Kresge is seeking to support.
- Flexibility and agility working across content areas with an appreciation for the intersections between issues; Ability to synthesize complex, cross-disciplinary material and focus quickly on the essence of an issue while maintaining clarity around the big picture; Experience using a combination of objective and subjective data to create relevant, dynamic learning opportunities.
- Effective time management skills with demonstrated ability to manage a diverse and demanding workload in a fast-paced environment.
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills; A compelling story teller who can weave a narrative that speaks to a variety of stakeholders.

### **Nominations and Applications**

All nominations and applications which include a cover letter, resume, salary history, and source of knowledge of the position should be directed to [KF-SLEO@nonprofitprofessionals.com](mailto:KF-SLEO@nonprofitprofessionals.com)

**The Kresge Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women and LGBT applicants.**

**The Kresge Foundation offers a competitive total compensation package including health, employer paid dental and vision, basic life insurance, short- and long-term disability, generous paid time off, and an attractive 401k plan with employer match and a 10% employer contribution. Kresge also provides breakfast, lunch, and snacks daily for a minimal charge, robust professional development opportunities and tuition reimbursement. Kresge promotes and supports a healthy and green work environment and encourages intellectual curiosity as we embrace and live out our values of creativity, respect, opportunity, partnership, and stewardship.**