

President
The Public Welfare Foundation
Washington, DC

The Search

The Public Welfare Foundation (PWF) – a focused and bold grantmaker based in Washington, DC – seeks a new President. Established in 1947 by Charles E. and Claudia H. Marsh, the Public Welfare Foundation is dedicated to supporting efforts to ensure fundamental rights and opportunities for people in need.

With assets of more than \$420 million, in 2009 PWF awarded \$18.5 million in 261 grants to nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. The Foundation has a long legacy of taking risks, finding unusual targets of opportunity, and going where others won't. Its ability to engage leading thinkers and activists, combined with its well-honed focus on policy outcomes and its location in Washington, DC, distinguish PWF in the national grantmaking community.

Working closely with a 14-person staff and an engaged Board of Directors, the new President will be expected to build upon the Foundation's track record of innovation and lead the organization as it sets and implements its vision and program strategies for the future. Over the near-term, the President will lead the Foundation as it defines and initiates a third major grantmaking area – in addition to its current two programs in Criminal and Juvenile Justice and in Workers' Rights. The President will also assist the Board Development Committee as it identifies and orients new Board members as Directors rotate off under newly instituted term limits.

The position calls for a creative leader with proven strategic and advocacy skills, as well as intellectual breadth, political savvy, and an enterprising spirit. Informed passion for the Foundation's mission and legacy is critical, as is sophisticated understanding of government, public policy, and the role of the nonprofit community in driving change. The President must have an affinity for, if not experience in, PWF's current program interests, and should bring a wide network of contacts among activists, policymakers, media representatives, and others. High integrity, strong communication skills, proven team leadership and management ability, and deep respect for the organizations and people PWF supports are also essential.

The Public Welfare Foundation has enlisted the support of Isaacson, Miller in its search process. Please direct nominations, inquiries, and application materials in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

Background

The Public Welfare Foundation was established in 1947 by Charles Edward Marsh, founder of the Marsh-Fentress newspaper chain, and his wife Claudia Haines Marsh. Mr. Marsh, a Midwestern reporter-turned-entrepreneur, was a staunch advocate of public service and had long been personally generous. He and his wife created the Foundation “to help people help themselves” and to achieve “the greatest good for the greatest number.” The Foundation’s first grant, made in 1948, was for 28 sewing machines for an organization of Jamaican women, so that the island’s poor children could be clothed and sent to school. The Foundation followed up with funding for scholarships and occupational training, medical equipment, clinics, and – ahead of the times – micro-loans for fishermen. As the Foundation grew, Mr. Marsh built a network of trusted “agents” who were given an annual sum of money to distribute in their communities. Once this approach became unwieldy, the Foundation hired its first staff member in 1969, setting the stage for a new era of formalized grantmaking overseen by staff program officers who not only proposed distributions but worked collaboratively with their grantees.

Although Charles Marsh worked behind the scenes guiding the Foundation until his death in 1964, and his wife continued as President for another decade, they deliberately gave its governing board discretion in decision making. In outlining the Foundation’s mission, Mr. Marsh insisted that it remain flexible so it could change over the years as new social and economic needs arose. Its early focus on providing immediate relief to individuals broadened to encompass support for a range of organizations and projects working both to address human needs directly and to support movements for change. The Foundation became known for its commitment to advocacy, empowerment, and service; for its support of organizations early in their existence, providing seed money for causes that were often controversial; and for its willingness to make general support grants. Its support of educational television, environmental activism, advocacy against weapons proliferation, and a host of other causes distinguished PWF among grantmakers. This legacy of boldness, agility, pragmatism, and a profound belief in people and their resourcefulness is very much alive in the Foundation’s approach to grantmaking today.

Over its 63-year history, PWF has distributed more than \$450 million in grants to more than 4500 organizations across a broad spectrum of endeavor. Beginning in 2007, following a strategic planning effort, the Foundation’s Board decided to concentrate and intensify its grantmaking, moving from eight primary program areas to three and ceasing almost all international grantmaking. They concluded that as a mid-size foundation, PWF should “target its finite resources at points where an infusion of energy, expertise, and funds might make a decisive impact and lead to far-ranging reforms.” The programs chosen in 2007 were Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Health Reform, and Workers’ Rights, with roughly a third of the grantmaking dollars invested in each area.

The Foundation revised its focus again in October, 2009, when the Board of Directors decided that, given the changing landscape of health reform and the fact that a long-time goal of the Foundation – national health reform – was moving forward, it would discontinue its programming in Health Reform after FY2010. Beginning in FY2011, and until a third program area is established under a new president, the Foundation will expand its grantmaking in the

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Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program, given the tremendous needs in that area, the small number of foundations providing support, and the potential to create change and have an impact.

The Public Welfare Foundation Today

Today, the Public Welfare Foundation is recognized as a focused, results-oriented grantmaker committed to social and economic justice. It defines its mission as follows:

The Public Welfare Foundation supports efforts to ensure fundamental rights and opportunities for people in need. We look for carefully defined points where our funds can make a difference in bringing about systemic changes that can improve the lives of countless people.

As a national foundation based in Washington, DC, PWF is able to have a special role in policy discussions and it works to take advantage of this unusual position of leverage to enrich public debates and drive change in its fields of interest. Drawing on a long tradition of funding effective, creative, and in-touch grassroots organizations and activists nationwide, combined with the expertise and technical assistance offered by its policy-oriented grantees, PWF strives to serve as a catalyst for highly targeted reforms.

In its Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program, the Foundation “seeks to establish more effective and fairer criminal and juvenile justice policies and institutions throughout the nation. In addition, the Foundation’s grantmaking aims to lower overall rates of incarceration and help eliminate unequal treatment of African Americans and Latinos.”

The Workers’ Rights Program “seeks to improve the lives of working people, especially those most vulnerable to exploitation, such as low-wage workers, by ensuring their basic legal rights to safe, healthy and fair conditions at work.”

The Foundation also makes a small number of grants under its Special Opportunities category in order to field-test new ideas for helping disadvantaged people, for one-time or emergency needs such as disaster relief, to support cross-program initiatives or when unusual opportunities arise to advance the Foundation’s strategic goals.

The President's Discretionary Fund offers grants of up to \$25,000 to advance the Foundation's priorities through a streamlined application process. These grants are typically given for needs that occur between Board meetings.

Organization and Finance

As of June 30, 2010, PWF’s unrestricted net assets totaled approximately \$421 million. In FY2009 (ending October 31), the Foundation awarded approximately \$18.5 million in 261 grants ranging in size from under \$10,000 up to \$500,000, with an average grant size of \$45,000. Grants were distributed across the country to organizations working in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Although most grants are one-year awards, the Foundation also considers multi-year funding.

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The Foundation's 2010 operating budget is approximately \$28 million, with roughly \$23 million allocated for grants and \$5 million for administrative and other program expenses. Fourteen staff members work from offices in the True Reformer Building in Washington DC's U Street/Shaw community, a historic landmark purchased and renovated by PWF in 1999-2001. The Foundation's senior management team includes the President, the Vice President for Programs (currently serving as Interim President), and the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer.

Governance

Following a 2007 governance review, the Foundation amended its by-laws and instituted term-limits for members of its Board of Directors. Members can serve for up to three consecutive three-year terms, and may be eligible for reelection after being off the Board for at least one year. The Foundation currently has 13 Directors as well as the President as an *ex officio*, non-voting member. The ten Directors (excluding the President) who were in office prior to July 31, 2007 – many of whom have served for decades – will cycle off the Board over a three-year period beginning in January 2012.

The Board, chaired by Peter Edelman, is composed of a diverse and lively mix of professionals from business, academia, government, and social and community service who bring a range of interests and viewpoints but share a deep commitment to the Foundation. The Board convenes three times a year and reviews and approves grant proposals presented by staff in policy area clusters at each of these meetings. Standing Board committees include Audit, Finance, and Board Development.

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At the end of June, 2010, the Foundation's President, Deborah Leff, stepped down to become Deputy Counselor for Access to Justice at the US Department of Justice. In turn, John B. Williams, Vice President of Programs, was appointed Interim President while a search for a permanent new leader is conducted. Dr. Williams is not a candidate for the position.

The President is the Foundation's chief executive officer, overseeing all of the organization's activities and serving as a key spokesperson. The President reports to the Board of Directors and serves as an *ex-officio*, non-voting member and officer of that Board.

Over the near term, PWF's new President will lead a process of selecting a third program focus. Over the longer term, both the number of Foundation programs and indeed its future program directions will be open to careful review, given the Foundation's commitment to flexibility and to targeted impact. As the terrain shifts, PWF expects to examine what it is doing on an ongoing basis to ensure it is focused on issues where its contributions will provide maximum public welfare benefits.

The broad objectives for the President are as follows:

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- Provide focused, imaginative leadership for the Public Welfare Foundation, ensuring that it continues, and wherever possible, strengthens its record of strategic, innovative philanthropy.
- Undertake a critical needs assessment and make recommendations to the Board about possible new programming and grantmaking for the Foundation to pursue in FY2011.
- Ensure that the Foundation stays nimble, bold, and responsive to changing conditions, new trends, and unexpected challenges. Lead ongoing strategic review to make sure all the Foundation's programming is well directed and achieving desired leverage and impact.
- Assist the Board Development Committee as it identifies, recruits, and orients new Board members, given the 3-4 vacancies that will occur each year in 2012, 2013, and 2014.
- Keep Board members well informed about the Foundation's ongoing activities and provide them with concise, rigorously presented information to make sound decisions.
- Serve as an articulate, credible spokesperson for the Foundation – both its program directions in particular and its approach to philanthropy in general. Engage with leading thinkers and activists in the Foundation's areas of interest. Circulate widely and build strong, effective collaborations with a range of partners.
- Forge direct links between what the Foundation helps accomplish at the community level and policy making at the state, regional, and national level.
- Provide effective and efficient management of the Foundation. Attract, retain, and lead the strongest possible staff. Hold all aspects of the Foundation's work to clearly defined, high standards of excellence and accountability.
- Work closely with the CFO, Board Finance Committee, and outside consultants to monitor the performance of PWF's investments and maximize its returns.

Qualifications and Experience

For this pivotal role, the Foundation seeks a leader who is deeply committed to PWF's mission, values, and approach. Candidates should bring demonstrated interest, if not professional experience, in the Foundation's current grantmaking programs and in issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged communities, but a generalist is preferred over someone who has narrowly specialized. All candidates must have been an agent of change in some context, and must understand how government works and how change is driven both from the grassroots and through strategic policy reform.

The qualifications of an ideal candidate include:

- Informed passion for the Public Welfare Foundation's mission and legacy. A demonstrated commitment to working for social and economic justice.

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- A track record of providing strategic leadership and effective management of an intellectually driven, complex organization, preferably one that provides diverse programs or services. The more varied and broad the leadership experience, the better, including oversight of financial and human resources as well as program. Experience reporting to a governing board strongly preferred, and grantmaking experience would be an asset.
- Advocacy experience. Demonstrated understanding of public policy, legislative and political processes, the ways outside forces impact government, the role of the media, and the role of organizing in driving social change. Strong networks and a breadth of contacts in these arenas, nationally and especially in Washington, DC.
- Excellent strategic and intellectual abilities and analytic skills and a reputation for rigor. Entrepreneurial spirit and drive. Willingness to challenge conventional thinking, take calculated risks, and venture into controversial issues.
- Very strong written and oral communication skills.
- Deep respect for the grantee community and for the importance of its strong partnership with the Foundation.
- Demonstrated commitment to the value of diversity and inclusiveness.
- An outgoing, open, and even-keeled personality. Outstanding interpersonal skills. Tenacity, pragmatism, energy, patience, and good humor.
- A graduate degree in a relevant field would be an asset but is not required.

To Apply

Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Karen A. Wilcox, Vice President
Rebecca Swartz, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller, Inc.
263 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210
617.262.6500
kwilcox@imsearch.com
rswartz@imsearch.com

Please submit a resume and 1-3 page cover letter to publicwelfare@imsearch.com. Material submitted by October 1, 2010 will be assured full consideration. All applications will be kept confidential.

*The Public Welfare Foundation is an equal opportunity employer
and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates in this search.*

August 5, 2010