POSITION PROFILE

President
The John R. Oishei Foundation
Buffalo, New York
The John R. Oishei Foundation ("the Foundation" or "JROF") is the most comprehensive private foundation in Western New York focusing on a broad range of interrelated issues and offering philanthropic support that goes far beyond funding. The Foundation’s mission is to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life for the Buffalo Niagara region through grantmaking, leadership, and network building.

The Foundation’s namesake, Buffalo native John R. Oishei, was a highly respected businessman whose company changed an industry, and a visionary philanthropist whose generosity continues to impact countless lives.

With assets of more than $325 million, JROF is one of the largest foundations within the eight counties of Western New York and is considered a leader in the community with an unwavering commitment to the vision of the Buffalo Niagara region as a safe, healthy, thriving, culturally rich, and diverse community with equitable opportunities for all.

**JROF Focus Areas**

The Foundation touches nearly every facet of Western New York through the following five interrelated focus areas:

- Enhance Options for **Self-Sufficiency**
- Strengthen the P-20 **Education** Continuum
- Build Livable, Stable **Neighborhoods**
- Promote **Health** and Improve Systems of Care
- Expand the Role of **Arts, Culture, and Heritage** in Regional Development

**Funding By Focus Area, 2020**

- **Arts & Culture** 12%: $1,410,674
- **Education** 20%: $1,507,768
- **Healthcare** 18%: $2,207,300
- **Stable Neighborhoods** 24%: $2,867,500
- **Self-Sufficiency** 10%: $1,992,500

**Grand Total:** $11,958,042
The Foundation has been a leader in supporting some of the most notable and consequential projects in the Buffalo Niagara region such as developments on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus that include the University at Buffalo’s Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and The John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital, for which the Foundation made a $10 million commitment. JROF, in partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and an unprecedented coalition of business, civic and public sector leaders, also served as a key partner in an effort to bring Say Yes to Education to Buffalo, in support of the education continuum beyond grade 12, which has been a recognized gamechanger in Buffalo.

Other notable support has gone to Buffalo’s waterfront, the expansion of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, to be known as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, the creation of the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, as well as significant support in education, healthcare, social services, and cultural institutions.

Approximately 60% of people in Buffalo Niagara are directly affected by the work of the Foundation and the work of their grantees.
ABOUT THE JOHN R. OISHEI FOUNDATION (continued)

Beyond Grantmaking

JROF believes changing lives takes much more than funding. It takes open minds, original approaches, a focus on building relationships, and a commitment to supporting the holistic needs of the nonprofit community.

Through internal staff and community-wide networks, the Foundation offers support that empowers change-makers to go further, move faster, and achieve even greater impact.

Philanthropic Support: The Foundation offers philanthropic support designed to help nonprofits strengthen their organizations, become successful in achieving their missions, and further enhance their ability to improve lives throughout Western New York.

Developing Leaders: JROF believes that investing in leadership pays significant dividends for the nonprofit community. The Foundation provides programs and works directly with executive directors, development officers, and trustees to help nonprofits build leadership talent and organizational structure to improve effectiveness.

Collaborative Initiatives: JROF takes pride in its role as a community convener, bringing together nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and other foundations to achieve far more than any one organization could accomplish on its own.

Mobile Safety-Net Team: The Mobile Safety-Net Team (MSNT), an initiative of the Oishei Foundation, works within communities throughout Erie and Niagara Counties to strengthen the safety net of human and social services, build coalitions among organizations, and promote data-informed decision-making.

Research & Learning: “What are the most critical issues in Western New York? How exactly do our grantees and partners improve lives in the community? Are we truly maximizing our impact as a foundation?” These are some of the questions the Foundation asks as it strives to be transparent, agile, and effective through collaborative research and learning.
Through their Annual Operating Plan, the Foundation annually reassesses goals, considers the current and evolving issues within their community, and develops specific action plans that address critical needs. This agility enabled the Foundation to support the community in the ways it needed most, in response to the challenges of 2020.

COVID-19: While the COVID-19 crisis hit with little warning, the Foundation worked hard to provide support, to remain flexible, and to find ways to help grantee partners continue to serve those who need them most. Serving as a critical enabler and leader of the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund, a collaborative effort to raise and distribute funds to struggling nonprofits, is an example. The Fund has contributed $13.1 million to more than 400 Western New York nonprofit organizations in response to the health and economic crisis.

Racial Equity: 2020 was also a year in which the Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to racial equity in the face of local and national protests for racial justice. With an intentional focus on racial equity, begun in 2017, the Foundation has developed programs such as the Oishei Fellowship for Leaders of Color and Community Conversations that are now providing connections, support, and professional development for the next generation of diverse leaders.
Looking Forward

As the existing Five-Year Strategic Plan (2017-2021) ends and the organization enters its next chapter, the Oishei Foundation will continue to offer solutions to challenges and support that empowers change and creates impact in Western New York.

While there are hopeful signs of a recovery, JROF recognizes that the scars of 2020 will linger for some time. The Foundation is proud to be a partner in rebuilding the Western New York community for as long as it takes.

The Foundation is well-positioned to continue and further elevate its impact in Western New York in its next chapter.

LEARN MORE:
oishei.org
Located on the apex of Lake Erie and the tip of Canada with proximity to Niagara Falls, Buffalo is the hidden gem of New York state.

Often touted as a “big, small city,” Buffalo is a city rich in history and culture and one that is experiencing a renaissance, with significant growth and development. Despite its Northeast location, Buffalo is described as a Midwestern city with family-friendly values and a close-knit community feel.

Also known as “the City of Good Neighbors,” Buffalo has a history of welcoming immigrant and migrant communities since the 1800s. This is reflected in the vibrancy of the cultural richness and diversity of the community.

With only 1.1 million people residing in the Buffalo-Niagara region, the city provides all the attractions of a much larger metropolitan area. Given its location on Lake Erie, proximity to Western New York’s outdoor scene, and a reinvigorated waterfront, there are countless opportunities to explore the great outdoors and stay active. The city itself boasts vibrant art centers, restored architectural treasures, a noteworthy food scene, countless historical and cultural attractions, entertainment, live music, flourishing and distinct neighborhoods, family-friendly attractions, outdoor recreation, sports teams, and more.

To discover more about the Buffalo Niagara Region, visit visitbuffaloniagara.com.
THE OPPORTUNITY

JROF is seeking a talented, dynamic executive to lead the highly respected institution’s next chapter of work and impact.

Only the third President in its history, this is an opportunity to serve as a key community leader and to significantly affect the Foundation’s impact in the years to come.

The Board will look to its next President to think creatively and strategically about the current opportunities and challenges facing Western New York, and propose ways the Foundation can continue to be a highly effective, collaborative, and catalytic force in the community.

With the current strategic plan coming to a close in 2021, the President will partner closely with the Board to develop JROF’s next strategic plan. Building on recent shifts in the philanthropic landscape and beyond, along with a number of planned long-time staff retirements, the Foundation is poised for innovation and a level of transformation in its next chapter.

The President will lead and direct the advancement and fulfillment of the mission of JROF. The leader is responsible for the execution of the Foundation’s strategic and operational goals, including fiscal management, grants, programming, board relations, staff oversight, community relations, and administrative matters. The President will serve as a trusted and respected voice on a wide range of issues in the Western New York region and beyond.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal qualities, skills, and characteristics:

An Exceptional Relationship Builder, Collaborator, & Convener

The President is a culturally sensitive leader with high emotional intelligence and the ability to build and maintain strong relationships with and among a diverse range of constituents. An excellent listener and persuasive communicator with gravitas, poise, and charisma, the President can build trust quickly, while fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and productive partnership. This executive has a demonstrated track record of successfully engaging across sectors, including with members of the community, partners, private and public organizations, and other foundations. A confident yet humble leader, the President has a natural ability to develop trust-based relationships and to serve as a ‘bridge’ within the community. The President is politically astute and attuned with a mission-driven presence. A respected thought leader, the President is naturally inclined to have a meaningful ‘seat at the table,’ with a desire and willingness to co-create solutions to the region’s biggest challenges.

A Visionary & Strategic Leader

The President is a visionary and results-oriented leader. Inherently curious and courageous, the President brings a relentless desire for innovation, with the goal of driving maximum impact for Western New York. The successful candidate will offer creative ideas to adapt and diversify the Foundation’s approaches to address the changing needs of the community, with a commitment to ‘move the needle’ on systemic issues. An effective ‘big picture’ strategist and change-maker, the President has a keen ability to envision and articulate a clear path forward. This leader will instinctively ‘get ahead of the curve’ by anticipating needs and opportunities of the Buffalo Niagara region and will craft strategies to address them. The President is a sophisticated leader with the ability to partner with a Board and advance and evolve best practices related to governance and other related matters. The President is an authentic, empowering, inspirational, and thoughtful leader with a sense of humor and an ability to foster a culture of teamwork and fun. This leader is an individual of unquestioned integrity, ethics, and values — someone who can be trusted without reservation.
CANDIDATE PROFILE (continued)

A Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The President is an inclusive leader committed to leading with equity and embedding it into the structures, culture, programs, and processes that guide JROF internally, as well as the constituents the Foundation serves. The President instinctively looks at all things through the lens of equity and prioritizes diversity as a strategic imperative for the foundation. This leader will continue to uphold the racial equity work the foundation has led to date, and work to continue to identify areas the Foundation can further expand and advance those efforts.

A Passion for the Mission and the Greater Buffalo Niagara Region

Fully embracing with dedication and pride the values and goals of JROF, the President is passionate about and fueled by fulfilling the Foundation’s mission and brings a personal commitment to those whom the Foundation serves. Highly strategic, the President will analyze the landscape and thoughtfully evaluate the projects JROF funds/takes on to produce the greatest impact for the region. This executive is a bold thinker and is energized by identifying and taking on meaningful issues in Western New York and driving toward solutions in collaboration with partners. This executive is focused on leading and advancing an organization that reflects its values and produces wide-sweeping results for constituents in the region it serves. The ideal candidate will be strongly attracted to this position. The President will inspire others because they are inspired by the work itself.
Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Cheryl Stevens, Tiara Muse and Michele Ybarra are leading this search.

To make recommendations or to express your interest in this role please email oisheifoundation@koyapartners.com.

All nominations, inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a member of Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Koya is an equal opportunity employer fully committed to creating an environment and team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, styles, and experiences. We encourage all to express interest because we believe a diversity of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone.

For more information about Koya Partners, visit www.koyapartners.com.