POSITION PROFILE

Program Officer, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform

The Joyce Foundation

Chicago, IL
The Joyce Foundation is a private, nonpartisan philanthropy that invests in public policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility for the next generation in the Great Lakes region.

We support policy research, development, and advocacy in six program areas: Culture, Democracy, Education & Economic Mobility, Environment, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform, and Journalism. We focus our grant making primarily in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, while also exploring promising, evidence-informed policy solutions nationally and at the federal level.

The Foundation, located in Chicago, IL, was founded in 1948 by Beatrice Joyce Kean, the sole heir of the Joyce family, which built its wealth in lumber and related industries. The foundation charter has allowed Joyce to grow with the times, developing strategies that evolve to reflect critical issues in the Great Lakes region.

The Joyce Foundation has budgeted 2021 charitable distributions of $50 million on assets of $1.1 billion. The Foundation’s commitment to racial equity and economic mobility is reflected in our strategic grant-making priorities, which aim to improve outcomes for all young people, with a focus on young people of color who disproportionately face structural barriers to social and economic progress. It also is reflected in our business operations, as we work to measure the impact of our grant making, staffing, and contracting with the goal of creating greater, more equitable opportunities for people of color.

Our work on this front is ongoing. We are committed to aligning our policies, practices, and resources to foster equitable opportunity for all.

Learn More:
www.joycefdn.org
THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND JUSTICE REFORM PROGRAM

The Gun Violence Prevention and Justice Reform Program’s mission is to build safe and just communities in the Great Lakes region.

For more than 25 years, The Joyce Foundation has been a national leader in supporting effective public policies to reduce gun violence. Along the way, the Foundation has worked closely with researchers, policy makers, advocates, law enforcement, impacted communities and other stakeholders to reduce the use and accessibility of firearms, especially for those at high risk of violence.

With a deep focus on driving meaningful change, the Gun Violence Prevention and Justice Reform Program prides itself on working at the forefront of the field. The program expanded in 2018 to include justice system reform and in 2021 to include community violence intervention. These expansions reflect Joyce’s commitment to finding holistic, integrated solutions that advance equity and ensure the health and safety of all people and communities in our region.
THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND JUSTICE REFORM PROGRAM

Today, the Gun Violence Prevention and Justice Reform program has three main goals as outlined in the Foundation’s 2021-2025 grant making strategy:

Goal: Reduce gun deaths and injuries in the Great Lakes region.

- Advance and implement federal, state, and local policies and practices that reduce easy accessibility of guns to those at risk of violence
- Support policies to reduce easy accessibility of guns to those at risk of violence
- Reduce the next generation’s exposure to gun violence through education on the risks of gun ownership
- Litigate to defend evidence-based gun policies and challenge extreme gun rights policies and practices

Goal: Reduce the harms and racial disparities in the criminal justice system’s response to gun violence.

- Reform policing to build police-community trust and legitimacy, reduce the use of force by police officers, and increase police accountability
- Develop alternatives to arrest and incarceration for young people who commit non-violent gun offenses
- Reimagine the future of public safety

Goal: Advance the policy and practice of violence intervention.

- Build the research base supporting violence intervention, including identification of best practices for design, delivery, and funding of programs
- Elevate the practice of violence intervention through the professional development of a new community of practitioners, and support expert technical assistance in our region
- Support policies to secure public sector support for violence intervention
THE OPPORTUNITY

The Joyce Foundation is seeking an enterprising, strategic, and innovative Program Officer to oversee its state gun violence prevention and community violence intervention initiatives and grant-making strategies.

The Joyce Foundation is a driving force in the growing effort to reduce gun violence across the nation. With a specific focus on the Great Lakes Region, the Foundation is seeking a Program Officer who can effectively leverage the opportunities available to shape gun violence prevention policy at the state level. They will be expected to work collaboratively to identify best practices, share knowledge, and drive greater impact and investment. In some states, the Program Officer will be a key partner to existing programs and policy advocates and help determine future Foundation strategy and grantmaking in those jurisdictions. In other states, they will be expected to identify new opportunities to support the creation or expansion of promising programs and strategies that will have the ability to advance gun violence reduction policies.

The Program Officer also will have chief responsibility for identifying and supporting grantees in the rapidly expanding and evolving field of Community Violence Intervention (CVI), which includes community-based and community-led programs providing targeted services and outreach to the population at highest risk of gun violence. They will join the Foundation at an important and pivotal moment for the CVI field. The crisis in public safety and the recent rise in gun violence at the community level have brought new attention to Group Violence Intervention (GVI), Violence Interruption (VI) and Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs), among others. An unprecedented influx of funds from federal and state governments is adding further capacity to the field.

Growing evidence suggests that violence intervention strategies can be a highly effective tool to reduce gun violence, minimize the role of the justice system, and serve as an alternative to arrest and incarceration, especially of young people in communities where gun violence is highly concentrated. However, more research is still needed to identify best practices, and more policy support is needed to drive deeper investment at all levels of government, and integration at the state and local level. Given The Joyce Foundation’s role as a leader in this space, the new Program Officer will have a unique opportunity to advance the policy and practice of CVI in the Great Lakes region and the nation.
THE OPPORTUNITY

The Program Officer will report to the Program Director, Gun Violence Prevention and Justice Reform and will collaborate as part of a 4-person team (including the Program Director, a Program Officer focused on the team’s justice reform portfolio, this open Program Officer position, and a Program Assistant focused on supporting the team’s grant making) to advance the program’s goals and priorities.

The Program Officer is responsible for implementing the strategic plan in the areas of Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) and Community Violence Intervention (CVI) through the following activities:

**Strategy Execution**

- Implement the program’s goals for policy and/or systems change for both Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) and Community Violence Intervention (CVI), including intermediate objectives, priority activities, and benchmarks for measuring progress as it relates those goals and to the Foundation’s overall mission;
- Monitor the field by reading, attending meetings, developing relationships to understand emerging issues, research, political, and technological developments that affect the program;
- Evaluate potential policy opportunities and policy context, barriers to success, and capacities of prospective grantees;
- Align policy strategy with research, including tracking new research and identifying research gaps, particularly within the CVI focus area;
- Collaborate with current and prospective grantees, including advocates, law enforcement agencies, researchers, and community stakeholders; and
- Proactively identify activities and projects that would advance the program strategy.

**Grant Making and Oversight**

- Solicit proposals that are consistent with the program’s strategy and goals through a process of reviewing letters of inquiry, site visits, and other meetings;
- Use program criteria to evaluate proposals and present recommendations at proposal review meetings;
- Prepare written recommendations for and make oral
THE OPPORTUNITY

presentations to the Board of Directors;

• Work to support grantee projects, including where appropriate and feasible, participating in meetings, reviewing drafts of reports, and connecting grantees to other funders, policymakers, and the media; and

• Monitor grants for fulfillment of contract requirements, legal compliance, and to extract lessons for future work.

External Relations

• Work with grantees and other stakeholders to facilitate communications and information-sharing; encourage collaboration; deepen knowledge of the field; and provide guidance and technical assistance on matters related to strategy; communications, messaging, and issue framing; public and policymaker education; news media outreach; and capacity-building;

• Collaborate closely with the communications team to develop and deliver significant messages about the program and grantee initiatives;

• Participate in relevant philanthropic and non-profit networks;

• Build productive one-on-one relationships with local, state, and national policymakers, advocates and other stakeholders that can help deliver on the Foundation’s priorities; and

• Use the Foundation’s convening ability to bring together groups of grantees, funding colleagues, policymakers, practitioners, and others at pivotal moments.
The ideal candidate will be:

**A Strategic, Entrepreneurial Thinker & Innovator**

The Program Officer will have an entrepreneurial spirit, looking for new innovations, policies, and practices when it comes to effective gun violence reduction and community violence intervention strategies. They will be animated by a deep sense of purpose and a steadfast belief in the possibility of “what could be”. They will excel at creatively exploring problems, issues, and opportunities to make meaningful change that will lead to a safer, more just and more inclusive society. They will be a lateral thinker who is able to translate ideas from different spaces, make connections between seemingly disparate ideas, and see how they fit within a broader whole for a common goal.

**A Continuous Learner & Subject Matter Expert**

A learner by nature, the Program Officer will have a deep understanding of the fields of Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) and/or Community Violence Intervention (CVI). They will have direct experience working to advance one or both fields and will have a demonstrated passion for continuously staying up to speed on the latest efforts. They will be actively aware of emerging issues, new research, and policy developments that affect the field. They will proactively seek out new information and relationships that can help advance The Joyce Foundation’s strategies and impact. They will have a keen understanding of how policy is made and will know how best to influence regulatory and other policy making processes. They will embrace the opportunity to be a thought-leader in the field, someone who is highly respected, trusted and often sought out for their expertise.

**A Relationship Builder & Convener**

The Program Officer will move seamlessly between the worlds of government, philanthropy, law enforcement, research, and community stakeholders, leveraging the perspectives and expertise of each for maximum impact. They will be able to convene a diverse array of constituents under a common goal, including local community members as well as leaders across the private, public, and non-profit sectors. They will have a thoughtful, empathetic, and engaging approach that fosters an atmosphere of collaboration and partnership. They will be active listeners, seeking input from a wide array of perspectives to help inform
the Foundation’s grant making priorities, and to deepen their understanding of gun violence prevention and community violence intervention practices. Internally, they will be a natural team player, contributing actively to the culture and success of the Foundation. They will embrace the opportunity to support, collaborate with, and learn from their fellow Foundation colleagues.

An Effective Communicator and Analytical Decision Maker

The Program Officer will apply analytical rigor and an unbiased lens to researching, evaluating, and making decisions. They will have a thorough understanding of how to harness the power of data to assess impact and effectiveness. The Program Officer will look to quantitative and qualitative research to advance the Foundation’s priorities and will bring a clear-eyed approach to assessing the most effective programs, policies, and strategies. Finally, they will be an extremely effective communicator, consistently demonstrating the ability to distill and synthesize complex information clearly and concisely in both written and verbal formats for diverse audiences, internally and externally.
Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Steve Edwards and Michele Ybarra are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express interest in this role please email joyceprogramofficer@koyapartners.com.

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

The Joyce Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages expressions of interest from people of color, persons with disabilities, women and LGBTQ+ applicants.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a part of the 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 apply 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.