



## **One8 Foundation** *(formerly the Jacobson Family Foundation)*

### **Director of Education Research and Communications** **Boston, Massachusetts**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The One8 Foundation’s mission is to increase the success of nonprofit organizations with the highest potential to achieve breakthrough results on the most pressing problems facing the United States and/or the Jewish people. With assets in excess of \$500M and deploying a unique model that combines grant-making and pro-bono consulting with key strategic grantees, One8 is pursuing a venture philanthropy approach – identifying a highly selective set of grantees to support with meaningful funding and deep strategic engagement. Hallmarks of grantees include excellent leadership, game-changing ideas, measurable results, and approaches that are both scalable and sustainable. A cornerstone of this commitment is to fund high-impact nonprofits working to create equitable access to an excellent education for all students in this country. Undergirding the development of this portfolio is the strongly held belief that all students can achieve at high levels and that the excellence gap is an unacceptable reality for our nation because it poses both long and short-term challenges to both equity and our economic wellbeing. As the Education portfolio grows and refines this focus, One8 seeks a **Director of Education Research and Communications** to (1) build the evidence base for educational excellence for all students with a focus on low and middle income students, and (2) translate and actively communicate this new knowledge into ideas and practices that shift the way our country thinks about the quality of our education system. This work will catalyze support for excellence across Massachusetts, moving to additional states as it gains momentum.

The ideal candidate will have both research and strategic communications experience with a proven record of mining secondary research and devising and managing primary research projects to inform decision making and communications strategy. S/he will be a flexible and generative thinker who relishes the chance to work both independently and as part of a close team in partnership with grantees and champions. The Director will bring strong knowledge of and savvy around translating research into policy and practice. Exceptional persuasive oral and written communications skills are essential and experience in communications or advocacy is a strong plus. A deeply held belief in education as the primary means to dramatically improve life outcomes for children and the capacity of all children to achieve at high levels, regardless of life circumstance, is also a must.

Formerly known as the Jacobson Family Foundation, the Foundation changed its name in 2017 to reflect its guiding principles and values. The mission of the foundation is to effect meaningful and lasting social change focused on measurable outcomes and to that end, the trustees wanted create a name that captures the foundation’s intent. **One8** signifies the number eighteen, or *chai*, which includes two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. *Chet*, the 8<sup>th</sup> letter in the Hebrew alphabet, signifies “life” and *yud*, the tenth and smallest letter in the alphabet, signifies humility. Together, **Chai** conveys the holiness of life and the principle tenant of Judaism that all lives are sacred, with every human being created in the image of God, each life of infinite value symbolizing the whole of humanity. The principles of the foundation’s charitable giving are based on the purest forms of giving; helping those in need support themselves to become self-sufficient and giving anonymously so the recipient does not know from whom he or she is receiving the benefit, thereby creating a relationship of equals between the giver and the recipient.



This search is being conducted with support from Allison Kupfer Poteet, Callie Carroll, and Erica Nicole Griffin of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Application instructions can be found at the end of this document.

## THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO: OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The United States has fallen woefully behind its international counterparts; since the first PISA test cycle in 2000, the US has fallen in rankings. On the 2012 PISA test of 15 year olds across the globe, US students scored 20<sup>th</sup> in science and 27<sup>th</sup> in Math among the 34 OECD countries. As distressing, student success in America is broken into the tale of haves and have nots, with minority and low income students receiving a dramatically less rigorous education. In an era where mathematics and science proficiency all but ensure job security, 3 million jobs are unfilled and countless college graduates unemployed or underemployed because our students have weak performance in math and science overall and much weaker performance relative to students in other countries. The data is incontrovertible. We are failing our students and failing our nation. It is our moral imperative to change this.

The Education portfolio's objective is to dramatically alter student outcomes so that all students achieve their highest potential. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation is currently:

- Piloting and growing a diverse set of exemplar schools and programs to demonstrate what is possible;
- Supporting a research agenda to identify, test out, confirm and share definitions of what an excellent education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century looks like and the effective educational approaches that clarify what is necessary for students to succeed in this fast changing economy;
- Scaling the most successful approaches;
- Developing and launching a communications campaign to catalyze demand for 21<sup>st</sup> century rigor and excellence with equity in education; and
- Along with likeminded partners, identifying, devising and promoting policies that will accelerate adoption of effective practices that impact student outcomes.

The principles that guide and undergird this work are:

Research, Listen and Learn: One8 recognizes that being informed about the problems and most relevant research is critical to success, and that the Foundation cannot be the leading expert on the programmatic solutions. As a result, the foundation puts a premium on developing relationships with experts and gathering their perspectives.

Clearly assess nonprofits' potential for impact: One8 believes that a clear mission and programmatic approach that articulate a game-changing opportunity are the foundation for major impact. However, nonprofits must also have the following additional characteristics to succeed:

- **Excellent leaders:** Even the best idea is impotent without strong, capable, and decisive leadership.
- **Measurable results:** While gathering definitive proof is not always possible, One8 invests based on results and believes that the most effective nonprofit leaders manage their organizations with data on impact.
- **Sustainable approaches:** One8 believes that change requires many years of investment and generally cannot be funded by One8 alone. One8 looks at a nonprofit's long-term financial and organizational sustainability up front.



Build organizations: One8 identifies organizations with missions, strategies and capacity that are well matched to their goals and then provides organization-wide (not program-specific) support.

Go deep: One8 believes that focused attention and funding for a small number of organizations allow for the greatest possible results. The Foundation employs the highest standards in selection and looks for a clear investment hypothesis and ambitious goal setting to drive meaningful financial investment. Funding provides for focused consulting and implementation support, and results in strong, trusting relationships established over time.

Provide dogged support, strategic assistance and on-going coaching: When appropriate, One8 provides support to grantee organizations to:

- Clarify their theories of change and strengthen their business plans;
- Communicate their work powerfully to others;
- Provide “block and tackle” problem-solving, on-going advice, and a safe haven for rigorous problem-solving; and
- Advocate for them with other funders, decision-makers, and political leaders.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Reporting to the President, Joanna Jacobson, and working in close partnership with the Senior Portfolio Manager and the Education team, the Director will develop and manage a “think and do tank” initiative that builds the evidence base for 21<sup>st</sup> century educational strategies that enable all students to achieve at high levels, with a focus on low income and middle income students. The work will help build strategy for the One8 team and develop research that will support a communications campaign to engage and compel critical stakeholders, including other funders, policy makers and private and public education leaders. Driven by a commitment to One8’s mission and vision, s/he will work alongside a tight-knit team at the forefront of an organization that is poised to catalyze support for excellence across Massachusetts, and moving to additional states as it achieves momentum.

Specifically, the Director will:

**Develop and commission research that builds a research-based definition of what 21<sup>st</sup> century student success is within k-12 education that produces outsized student achievement outcomes. Research will showcase these exemplars as both learning opportunities and proof points.** The Foundation’s work is embedded in the conviction that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students must attain more advanced skills, particularly in mathematics, technology and the sciences, with a strong applied foundation in critical thinking and problem solving capabilities. Research will:

- 1) Develop evaluation rubrics that more clearly identify what constitutes educational excellence;
- 2) Explore and propose a new category moniker to replace generic “21<sup>st</sup> century excellence” nomenclature;
- 3) Identify (a) approaches and programs that deliver results; (b) obstacles and opportunities to learning through the lens of students, parents, and educators; (c) inequities of policies, actions, and outcomes that promulgate an educational system that does not act under the premise that all children can achieve at high levels.

**Develop and commission research that identifies how to effectively engage and inform students, parents, and teachers on the education needed to succeed in a globally competitive environment. A**



critical obstacle to change is a lack of understanding of what is required for graduates to be successful in the new economy and how few students in the US have the skills employers require. Activating demand among key stakeholders for a high quality, engaging education that includes applied learning, STEM competencies, critical thinking and problem solving for all children regardless of race or income is of paramount importance. The Director will work with the President and communications experts, commissioning research that identifies effective messaging to pique interest and build will for change.

**Share research with stakeholders, partners, and the public and convene key stakeholders to help advance the vision for excellence.** The Director will convene an advisory council of key stakeholders and experts to provide critical thought partnership on the initiatives, evaluation criteria, and policies required to foment excellence for students across our state and nation. The Director will also engage with other key policy groups to align agendas to stimulate demand for excellence. The Director will work with the Portfolio Management Team and President to explore and develop policy options that accelerate the adoption of higher standards and proven practices.

**Support the Foundation's grant making and grantees by developing a knowledge management function that facilitates cross pollination of learnings across grantee organizations.** The Director will seek and capitalize on opportunities to generate and disseminate learning that clarifies and nurtures continued dialogue and interest in excellence. S/he will develop a learning community across One8 grantees that both builds their capacity and strengthens their ability to respond to portfolio-wide feedback and learning in real time.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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

- A strongly held belief that education is a primary means to dramatically improve the life outcomes of children and that all children can achieve at high levels independent of their circumstances;
- Deep experience in strategic research, mining secondary research, and devising and managing primary research projects to advance strategic objectives; experience with both quantitative and qualitative research;
- Experience working with a variety of audiences and building towards a common goal;
- Demonstrated ability to analyze, interpret, and assess programmatic, management, and research data to unearth relevant implications and opportunities;
- Experience using research to devise effective communications campaigns;
- Generative thinker who excels working both independently and as part of a diverse team, demonstrating high emotional intelligence and the ability to keep work moving along multiple tracks and dimensions. A proactive, problem-solving orientation.
- Exceptional persuasive communications skills, both verbal and written, and the ability to conceptualize and translate research-based perspectives. Experience in advocacy is a strong plus;
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail. Ability to multitask and meet deadlines, and demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities;
- Knowledge and sensitivity to effectively work with and support vulnerable communities, including demonstrated cultural competence in research design, methodology, and execution;
- Experience in the education field with an established network of influential contacts is a plus;
- Strong facility with technology and key tools including Microsoft Office and statistical packages;



- An optimistic outlook and the humor, vision, and patience necessary to work in a transformative environment; and
- Graduate degree in a relevant field is strongly preferred.

## APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

More information about the One8 Foundation may be found at <http://www.One8.org>.

The search is being led with support from Allison Kupfer Poteet, Callie Carroll and Erica Nicole Griffin of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), salary history and where you learned of the position should be sent to: [One8-DRC@nonprofitprofessionals.com](mailto:One8-DRC@nonprofitprofessionals.com). In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

The One8 Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity.  
Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.