

Position Description

Thrive Foundation for Youth Senior Program Officer

The Organization

Thrive Foundation for Youth (www.thrivefoundation.org) is passionate about helping young people thrive. Our goals are to look at the nature of thriving: what's worth strengthening in youth, help create tools to track and support conditions of thriving, and who's out there for young people. Our ultimate goal is to change the trajectory of a significant number of youth so they can live up to their potential and move on track toward a hopeful future. We are mindful that any change process is a point of leverage, and that inherent in the change process is a spirit of optimism. We are attracted to audacious people and ideas that catalyze change, and we value a systemic view of the world and human beings. In our rigorous striving for excellence, we partner with social scientists and nonprofit leaders who are committed to creating ever-evolving links between research and practice that measurably enhance positive life trajectories of youth.

Thrive captures research with high potential to influence adult practice and packages that research into a theory of change that promotes thriving in youth via our web-based tool called *StepItUp2Thrive*. Our plan is to embed the *Step-It-Up-2Thrive* theory of change in practice across America as we seek to measurably influence millions of young people to thrive, positively affecting the future of our society.

Thrive practices venture philanthropy by developing collaborative partnerships that blend creative thinking and knowledge to help us deliver social impact at scale. We are a bridge connecting academic thought to practitioner savvy. We play the role of convener and gear our multi-year investments toward promoting high-impact social change for youth ages 10-17. We engage deeply with our grantee partners offering a blend of financial support, tools, and a network of shared expertise. We also expect a high degree of accountability for results achieved.

The Thrive team is highly collaborative, flexible and committed to seeing all youth thrive. There is a spirit of cooperation, respect and teamwork that permeates the organization. Foundation team members freely collaborate in cross functional ways so that all facets of the organization benefit from the combined skills and experiences of all employees.

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The Position

The Senior Program Officer (SPO) is a new position and will report directly to Executive Director, Carol Gray. S/he will have primary responsibility for leading the organization in development of the following:

- Evaluation: Lead the effort to track and measure outcomes and impact
- Grantee Recruitment and Oversight: Develop processes around selection of grantees, relationship management and grantee tracking of results
- Relationships with schools: Lead the portion of the Thrive portfolio that invests in embedding the Thrive theory of change in educational settings
- Materials for the younger adolescent (10-12 years): Round out team expertise with rich experience and a lens focused on the younger disadvantaged adolescent and his/her adult guides.

Other responsibilities include:

Synthesis of best practices

Integral to the role of SPO is that of *learner*. This position has the opportunity and responsibility to capture the knowledge and innovative ideas that come from seasoned professionals within Thrive's portfolio of grantees and external partners working with youth, each and every day. Thrive expects to continuously learn and integrate the concepts, lessons and challenges of the academic and practicing fields to improve Thrive tools, training and directions.

External partnerships

The SPO will identify opportunities and mechanisms to transfer knowledge outside the Foundation regarding our experiences and best practices in philanthropy. S/he will maintain relationships with colleagues in the philanthropic community and keep current on innovative initiatives and trends in the market. The role will occasionally include representing the Foundation as a spokesperson with external audiences.

Training

The SPO will be involved in tailoring Thrive's training tools to fit the staff development needs and patterns of a host of youth-serving programs from schools to mentoring organizations, and from small niche providers with limited resources to large national organizations with firm frameworks. The SPO will play a role in exploring ways to impact parents as well.

Grant Making

In tandem with all Thrive Foundation program staff, the Senior Program Officer will structure and review investments with grantees, engaging in a deep and consultative way throughout the terms of the investment. The SPO will manage a portfolio of grantees that include those engaged in academic applied research and youth-serving organizations that are embedding Thrive's theory of change in their staff development.

Management

The Senior Program Officer will be one of a three-member senior cabinet responsible for all facets of the strategic plan. He or she will be a thought leader on how to best deepen the Foundation's social impact as well as that of grantees'. An administrative pool of two staff members and a program officer pool of two staff support the senior executives. The Thrive organization is highly cross-functional and fosters innovation and teamwork regardless of position title.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have the ability to combine the core strength of solid leadership and management skills with a strong creative capacity in the interpersonal sphere. Philanthropy and training expertise go hand in hand with administrative acumen, dynamic energy, and passion for the youth population served by Thrive.

- An advanced degree in a relevant area and a minimum of 15 years of senior level work within the positive youth development field and/or classroom teaching; seasoned manager who has grown and developed team members.
- Relevant work experience in organizations serving disadvantaged youth in the target group, ages 10-15 with specific expertise on middle-school aged youth.
- Exceptional quantitative, qualitative and conceptual skills with a rigorous approach to knowledge capture and impact assessment tools and methodologies.
- Entrepreneurship - has the experience and skill to discern great ideas from the constant stream of opportunities.
- Demonstrated outstanding written and oral communication skills in positions requiring communication with a broad and diverse audience on a range of complex issues.
- Excellent training skills - can project passion and enthusiasm; can transfer new knowledge to seasoned professionals with grace and expertise.
- Demonstrated capacity and initiative to solve problems with energy and positive attitude.
- Proven ability to plan and think strategically, articulate realistic goals and objectives, and balance multiple priorities.

- Team building - proven collaborator and facilitative leader who can forge strong, diverse teams and has the ability to blend a variety of talents, perspectives, work styles and approaches.
- Experience in evidence - based strategic priority setting desired.
- Commitment to Thrive's core values and mission, and to the cause of helping all children thrive.
- Ability to prioritize work and meet deadlines within a fast-paced environment with multiple and competing demands.
- Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills.
- Sound judgment - makes decisions that balance a variety of factors and engages others in a transparent and principled manner in order to make informed decisions

Thrive Foundation for Youth is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply for this position. The Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit organization, serves diverse organizations and is committed to building high-performing teams that mirror the communities we serve. The Search Committee requests that all inquiries, nominations and applications be directed to the Bridgespan Group at spothrive@bridgespan.org. If interested please email your resume in WORD and indicate in your cover letter where you learned of the opportunity.