

Bush Foundation

Grantmaking Officer
South Dakota focus



COMPENSATION

Salary: \$124,013 annually

Applications will be accepted until April 18, 2025.
To apply, send your resume and cover letter to
apply@ballingerleafblad.com, attention Jen Hanlon Ash.

PRESENTED BY

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Bush Foundation

Grantmaking Officer South Dakota focus

Ballinger | Leafblad is honored to partner with the Bush Foundation to find its next grantmaking officer (South Dakota focus). This role will strengthen Bush’s connections with communities in South Dakota, ensuring that high-potential ideas and initiatives receive investment and support. The grantmaking officer will engage with community members, source and review grant proposals and guide grantees through the funding process. This leader will foster strong relationships, bridging differences in perspective and background with the goal of advancing transformative investments that serve communities across South Dakota and the Native nations that share the same geography.

This position is primarily remote, requiring the candidate to live in South Dakota and regularly travel (up to 40%) throughout the state and to Bush’s main office in St. Paul, Minnesota.



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OVERVIEW

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. This has been the case since Bush was founded in 1953. Archibald (Archie) and Edyth Bush set up the Foundation with few restrictions, ensuring that board and staff members through the years would have the flexibility needed to meet the challenges of the day. This ultimately sets the stage for some of Bush’s highest impact work.

Located in St. Paul, Minnesota, Bush operates with a staff of 36, stewards an endowment that has grown to \$1.4 billion and has a combined operating and philanthropic budget for 2025 of \$79.6 million. More information about us can be found at bushfoundation.org.



PURPOSE

The Bush Foundation works to inspire and support creative problem solving—within and across sectors— to make the region better for everyone. Everything they do is to advance this purpose. It is what ties all their work together.

To do this, they invest in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share this geography. This is both their tagline and their strategy to advance their purpose.

**“We invest in great ideas
and the people who
power them.”**

APPROACH

Bush describes their work through their open grantmaking in this way:

We fund the development and spread of great ideas.

We make grants for ideas as varied as reimagining agricultural finance, Indigenizing tourism and adapting telehealth for people experiencing homelessness. We removed funding caps on our biggest grantmaking program, Community Innovation, and made large commitments to ensure that great ideas get the support needed for success.

We invest directly in people.

We know that change only happens when people make it happen. We invest in individuals through our Bush Fellowship program, supporting amazing programs that help entrepreneurs thrive in rural areas and growing the next generation of Native leaders and leadership approaches.

We support organizations that support problem solvers.

We empower the region's top problem solvers by providing flexible funding to the organizations they value most. We know we can directly fund only a small fraction of the great efforts happening in our region. And yet, we can be even more helpful by supporting the work of organizations that others turn to for help in their own problem-solving efforts. We do this through Ecosystem grants and the Bush Prizes that are operated by our community grant partners.



OPERATING VALUES

How Bush does their work is as important as what they do, and their operating values guide everything they do. They describe their operating values in this way:

Spread Optimism.

We encourage individuals and organizations to think bigger and think differently about what is possible. We are positive and supportive in our internal and external interactions.

Work Beyond Ourselves.

We actively seek opportunities to work in true collaboration with others to have more impact. We are willing to both lead and follow. We candidly share what we learn with others.

Everybody Matters.

We are a champion for both excellence and equity inside and out of the Foundation. We have fair, open and inclusive processes. We work to raise overall quality of life while also closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

Steward Well.

We demonstrate appreciation for the Foundation's history and thoughtfully build on its legacy. We hold ourselves to high standards of integrity and accountability and conduct ourselves in a way we hope would make our founders proud.

More Good. Every Year.

We are a true learning organization and work to be smarter and more effective every year. We never lose sight of the reason we exist: to do the most possible good with the resources left to the community by Archibald G. Bush.

GRANTMAKING OFFICER

South Dakota focus

The grantmaking officer advances the goals of the Bush Foundation by ensuring that Bush is finding and considering the highest potential ideas from communities throughout the region.

SUMMARY

The team of five grantmaking officers work collaboratively across the region to support all of Bush's grant programs. This role has a specific focus on strengthening the ties between Bush and the communities and people in South Dakota and the Native nations that share the same geography, while also supporting regional work and broader Bush initiatives as assigned.

To be considered for this role, candidates must reside in South Dakota and have a broad understanding of the issues facing the people and communities across the state, credibility and trust with a range of communities and people across the state and experience bridging different perspectives and priorities. Bush's grantmaking approach is to seek the input of community members to help identify the most critical needs affecting the people in the region.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

This role is an individual contributor.

Reports to the grantmaking director (currently open)*

**Temporarily Anita Patel, VP of grantmaking*



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Proactively cultivate and maintain relationships with communities, organizations and individuals across the region—with a particular focus on South Dakota—through multiple strategies including the contact hub, office hours and program-specific outreach.
- Plan and conduct ongoing engagement strategies, to include frequently traveling throughout South Dakota to host and facilitate in-person activities, in alignment with the Bush Foundation’s community engagement strategy.
- Coordinating with the lead staff on Native nations to ensure the South Dakota strategy and the Native nations strategy are thoughtfully integrated.
- Intentionally connect with people and organizations in priority communities to advance the Foundation’s goals of sourcing new, innovative ideas. Participate in community-led activities to grow awareness of Bush’s offerings and raise its visibility in the region.

RESPONDING TO INQUIRIES

- Communicate thoughtfully and professionally with individuals and organizations seeking information about Bush’s grant programs.
- Provide clear, constructive feedback on ideas and applications, including guidance when proposals are unlikely to be competitive. Where appropriate, recommend alternative funding sources or connections better suited to their objectives.

DOCUMENTING AND SHARING ACTIVITIES

- Enter and maintain information about engagement activities in the Salesforce database to ensure transparency, track progress and facilitate knowledge sharing across the organization.

EVALUATING AND ASSESSING PROPOSALS

- Conduct comprehensive evaluations of proposals and applications.
 - Apply program criteria using independent judgment and collaborate with team members to test assumptions and refine analyses.
 - Conduct extensive due diligence, preparing detailed analysis and recommendations for advancing proposals for funding consideration.
 - Communicate decisions to applicants and provide detailed, constructive feedback to explain the rationale behind the outcome and, when appropriate, prepare them for potential next steps.

IDENTIFYING TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- Actively source and cultivate new ideas, organizations and individuals with the potential to drive transformative change in community problem-solving efforts.
- Design and implement targeted outreach efforts to identify high-potential candidates for programs such as Community Innovation, Bush Fellowship, Ecosystem or other Bush initiatives and partnerships.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of key issues affecting communities across the region.
 - Share insights and learnings with colleagues to inform strategic decisions and enhance collective knowledge.
 - Serve as a trusted resource and partner within the broader field, sharing Bush’s insights and lessons learned on collaborative problem-solving and community engagement — both internally and externally.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

SUPPORTING AND GUIDING GRANTEES

- Manage a portfolio of grantees, providing ongoing guidance, support and encouragement throughout the duration of their grants or fellowships.

CONTRIBUTING TO CROSS-FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

- Actively participate in organization-wide initiatives, including strategic projects, community engagement activities, learning opportunities, equity efforts, work groups, events and internal committees.

UPHOLDING ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

- Embrace and demonstrate Bush's operating values consistently in all work and external engagement efforts.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Broad knowledge of, and experience working with, community-serving entities in South Dakota. Significant experience building and maintaining effective partnerships in the region served by Bush.
- Experience reviewing grant applications and proposals is required, with the demonstrated ability to apply research-informed, analytical thinking to a criteria-based grant selection process.
- Demonstrated cultural competency, emotional intelligence and the ability to connect with people from all backgrounds.
- Effective written and verbal communication skills, adaptable to varying audiences and purposes. Ability to distill large amounts of information into salient, compelling narratives that illustrate the potential impact of an investment.
- Ability to transition between highly relational work and in-depth analytical tasks.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS (CONT.)

- Skills to successfully work remotely in a high-performing, relational organization. Self-motivated, accountable and consistently intentional about communicating and building connections and rapport within the organization, as well ensuring their own work and expertise is visible to other staff.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and tasks that require self-direction, attention to detail, effective time-management and problem-solving skills.
- Strong due diligence and assessment skills, including:
 - Understanding social change, identifying it in emerging ideas and coaching others to recognize and navigate it.
 - Identifying credible sources of information and expertise, gathering information and independently conducting in-depth research.
 - Synthesizing complex ideas and contextualizing them within larger frameworks.
 - Applying critical thinking, discernment, balanced judgment and equity considerations to the analysis and development of grant proposals.
- Ability to embrace a collaborative decision-making approach that prioritizes collective goals over individual interests.
- Ability to respectfully engage in challenging conversations, consider divergent viewpoints, accept and offer critical feedback and challenge assumptions and personal biases.
- Ability to deliver difficult news and constructive feedback verbally, in a direct and supportive manner, maintaining professionalism and healthy personal boundaries. Rejection of grant proposals is a regular part of the job.
- Proficiency working with Microsoft Office products. Comfortable using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc. Experience with Salesforce or other CRMs/databases is a plus. Willing to learn and utilize any new software or technology as required for the work.
- Enthusiasm for Bush's operating values and a willingness to reflect, learn and act in ways that align with them.

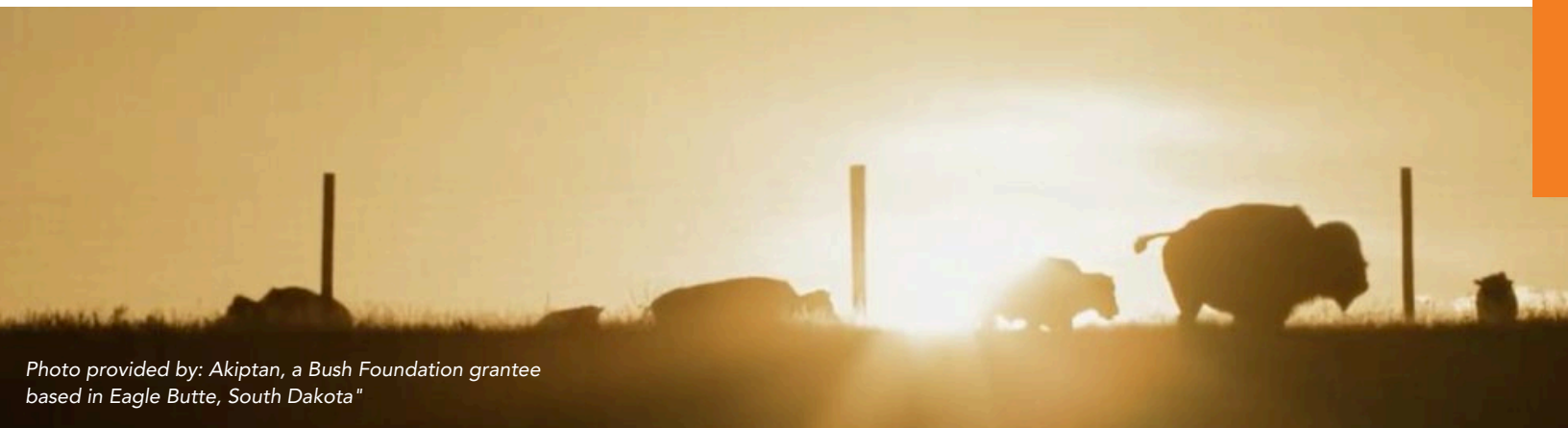


Photo provided by: Akiptan, a Bush Foundation grantee based in Eagle Butte, South Dakota"



LEARN MORE

Bush Foundation recorded an informational webinar to provide more background about the organization and this role. You can view the recording after March 24, 2025, at bushfoundation.org/job-opportunities.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary for this position is \$124,013 annually.

Bush offers excellent benefits, including health, dental, life and disability insurance; generous retirement contributions; professional development and vacation, sick and holiday leave.

WORKING CONDITIONS

This position is primarily remote and requires the candidate to live in South Dakota to effectively engage with and support local communities.

Bush's main office is in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The work environment is hybrid, combining remote work and designated times for on-site and in-person collaboration.

Twin Cities-based staff are required to work on-site each Wednesday with one additional designated in-person day each month. People based outside of the Twin Cities attend these sessions on-line, and travel to Bush's St. Paul offices at least once a quarter to attend in person. All staff are welcome to work on site more often if desired. Other adjustments to work schedules may be required to meet priority deadlines or participate in meetings and events.

Up to 40% travel is required, usually around the Bush grantmaking region.

To Apply

To apply, send your resume and cover letter* to: apply@ballingerleafblad.com.

We strive for a transparent and supportive process, starting with an initial review of applications, followed by exploratory conversations with qualified candidates, in-depth interviews, and open communication throughout. There will be an immediate and ongoing review of candidates, so we encourage and appreciate early applications. All inquiries will remain confidential.

*Cover letters are *required* for consideration. Strong writing skills are a critical part of this role.

For more details or questions, inquiries may also be directed to Jen Hanlon Ash, jen@ballingerleafblad.com.

Applications will be accepted until April 18, 2025. Review of materials begins immediately and we encourage early application.

Ballinger | Leafblad Search Team

Our collaborative search model is led by partners who bring expertise across recruitment strategy, engagement, communications, and project management, ensuring a comprehensive and relationship-focused approach to finding the right leader.



Jen Hanlon Ash

Partner



Jamie Millard

Partner

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leafblad

ABOUT BALLINGER | LEAFBLAD

Founded in 2014, Ballinger | Leafblad is a civic-focused executive search firm driven by a passion for strengthening leadership in mission-driven organizations. Rooted in partnership and a deep connection to the communities we serve, we specialize in matching organizations with exceptional leaders who align with their values and vision. Our approach is relationship-centered and designed to foster meaningful, long-term impact.

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