OPPORTUNITY PROFILE
Executive Director

Laughing Gull Foundation
Durham, NC
About Laughing Gull Foundation

Committed to Justice. Rooted in the South.

Laughing Gull Foundation (LGF) is a progressive family foundation based in Durham, North Carolina. LGF was founded in 2012 and plans to spend out all assets by 2036 in the service of three strategic goals: the advancement in the South of LGBTQ equality, higher education in prison, and climate and environmental justice; the growth of progressive philanthropy in the South; and the sustaining of a vibrant internal learning community. LGF currently grants $4.5 million annually in primarily multi-year, general operating grants, with the aim to reach $6 million a year by 2022 and maintain that pay out level until we complete our work and pass the torch.

**LGF Vision:** We envision a world of sustainable communities, liberated from the intergenerational harm of structural racism and economic inequality, living in balance with the earth. We envision both human rights and human rites of passage including everyone equally and fully, especially those who have been pushed to the margins of our human family.

**LGF Mission:** Laughing Gull Foundation is a progressive family foundation rooted in the South and committed to justice. We redistribute our resources to repair,rehumanize, and transform relationships, institutions, and systems.

**LGF Strategy:** We achieve our mission through grantmaking in support of three program areas: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Equality, Higher Education in Prison, and Climate & Environment. We typically fund grassroots organizations engaged in direct service, organizing, advocacy, and/or culture change work. We prioritize organizations that are led by, are accountable to, and build the collective power of BIPOC communities and others harmed and marginalized by unjust systems. We also help shift philanthropy in the South to be more progressive through relationship building, funder organizing, and mission-aligned investing aimed at systems change in philanthropy and finance. We recognize that structural racism is at the root of our society and all the systems in which we work. Thus, we use an explicit racial equity lens in all our decisions and actions, and we are on a continuous learning journey to do this better.

**LGF Values (excerpts):**

- *Authentic Relationships*
  We actively work to build authentic relationships with our grantee-partners by showing up, listening, and respecting their expertise and leadership.
• **Impact and Sustainability**
  We support our grantee-partners to survive and thrive, achieving big impact while also being sustainable.

• **Power Analysis with Humility**
  As a family foundation, we strive to reflect and model the world we want to see by letting go of resources and passing on a spirit of openness and engagement with money to our family, peers, and future generations.

• **Sharing Stories**
  We welcome and embrace everyone’s multi-dimensionality and nuanced stories.

**Spend Out Commitment from the LGF Board**
Our decision to spend out Laughing Gull Foundation’s assets is both personal and political. Through the foundation, we are intentionally redistributing wealth out of our family and into the community, acknowledging the unjust economic system and racist history that made this wealth accumulation possible. In 2016, we established a twenty-year timeline for the spend out plan because of the urgency of the injustices LGF addresses, the moral imperative to move assets out of the family’s control, and the founders’ desire to witness many of the impacts of the foundation’s work.

To learn more about Laughing Gull Foundation, visit [https://www.laughinggull.org](https://www.laughinggull.org).

**About the Opportunity**

The Board of Directors seeks an Executive Director who is an energetic and empathetic leader to guide and manage the next chapter of LGF’s impact. In our first decade, LGF has laid the groundwork for our contributions to social and environmental justice in the South. We have established a strategic plan, grantmaking strategies, internal policies, values-aligned investing, and a fantastic Staff. We have made over $19 million in grants, developed strong relationships and networks, and created an internal culture that is highly relational and intentional. We are poised to take our work to the next level both internally and externally and are looking for the right person to take us there. LGF’s next ED will work out of our newly built-out offices in downtown Durham, North Carolina. They will be a strong internal manager and external organizer. The successful candidate will utilize their high-level leadership, emotional intelligence, and management skills to lead LGF in advancing justice in the South.
Essential Responsibilities and Functions

The Executive Director (ED) is responsible to the Board of Directors for fulfilling Laughing Gull Foundation’s mission by providing leadership, direction, and oversight to all areas of the organization. The ED leads the Board and Staff in achieving the strategic goals of LGF as outlined in the twenty-year plan. The ED represents LGF publicly and drives LGF’s external impact, while managing the Staff and supporting the Board.

MISSION, VISION, AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

- Ensure that LGF’s ongoing operations are in support of its mission, vision, and values.
- Lead reviews and revisions as needed to LGF’s programs, operations, capacity, policies, and practices to maintain alignment with the mission, vision, and values.
- Bring an empathetic and mission-driven approach that unites Staff, Board, grantees, and peer organizations together around LGF’s mission and strategic goals.

GOVERNANCE AND BOARD RELATIONS

- Meet regularly with the Board President to coordinate the work of the Board and Staff. Organize and facilitate Board meetings, currently set as three 1.5-day meetings a year. Provide the Board sufficient and high-quality information for making sound policy and programmatic decisions. This is a writing intensive position.
- Facilitate the Board's timely response to urgent issues and opportunities between Board meetings.
- Keep Board up to date between meetings by coordinating Board newsletters.
- Identify and facilitate opportunities for Board members to participate in the activities of the foundation, including site visits and conferences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Nurture a healthy Staff culture that is mission-focused, relational, and high achieving.
• Manage the work of all Staff, consultants, and interns.
• Oversee the program Staff’s achievement of annual grantmaking goals.
• Lead LGF Board and Staff in on-going learning journeys around racial equity and other critical issues.
• Establish annual budgets for Board approval. Monitor budget vs. actuals and maintain oversight of all financial systems.
• Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.
• Oversee the implementation of and compliance with all LGF policies and practices, and management of LGF’s physical assets and office space.

EXTERNAL IMPACT

• Establish annual goals for LGF’s philanthropic organizing and impact.
• Identify and seek out key opportunities to provide leadership in the philanthropic sector, focusing primarily on the South.
• Support program Staff and Board members to represent LGF externally. Build out LGF’s communications plans and capacity.

Essential Qualifications

The successful candidate will be an energetic champion of LGF’s vision and goals, and a high functioning capable leader of Staff and Board. They will possess the following essential qualifications:

STRATEGIC EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP

• Executive-level leadership experience within the nonprofit sector, with a preference towards experience within philanthropy.
• Extensive knowledge of and/or direct experience granting money. Acute analysis of the philanthropic sector, specifically in the South.
• Deep knowledge of racial equity and social justice principles and practices, with experience in organizational implementation.
INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Demonstrated ability to provide thought leadership, and to inspire and motivate Staff and Board members.
- Proven management, planning, administrative, and supervisory skills, particularly with a small team of under 10 Staff members.
- Experience working with a Board of Directors, and an understanding of the unique qualities of a family foundation.

FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP

- Experience developing and monitoring an annual budget of $5+M in operations and grants.
- Experience overseeing the financial systems of a nonprofit organization.

PROGRAMMATIC LEADERSHIP

- Successful experience implementing and reviewing programmatic, ideally grantmaking, strategies.
- High-level skills in, and enjoyment of, building working relationships with a broad range of leaders and organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to build and engage in collaborative partnerships.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Lived experience of the issues LGF addresses, and of the South.
- Ability to lead with empathy and compassion.
- Positive attitude and sense of humor.
- Patience and commitment to see work through that is long-term by nature.
- Relationship-focused with the courage to lead and push boundaries on issues critical to LGF.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. An active listener.
- Highly motivated, organized, creative, self-directed, and flexible.
Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for the Executive Director position is $170,000 - $190,000, along with a robust and competitive benefits package.

How to Apply

Laughing Gull Foundation has retained Morten Group, LLC to conduct this search.

Applicants should email a cover letter and resume in PDF format to executivesearch@mortengroup.com with the subject line “Laughing Gull Foundation – Executive Director Search.” Cover letters will be evaluated as a writing sample and should include the applicant’s salary requirements. Application materials must be directed to the email address above. No phone calls, please. For best consideration, applications should be received by Monday, September 20, 2021. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The Laughing Gull Foundation is committed to equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees. Laughing Gull Foundation does not discriminate against any individual based upon their race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity or expression, national origin, marital status, disability, involvement with the justice system, or immigration status in recruitment, employment, promotion, demotion, termination, job assignments, training, rate of pay or other compensation, or other terms and conditions of employment. Applicants from historically underrepresented communities, including but not limited to people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and women, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Laughing Gull Foundation will provide medically necessary reasonable accommodations for qualified prospective or current employees with disabilities to facilitate the employee selection process and to enable them to perform essential functions of their positions, unless such accommodation would impose an undue hardship upon the organization.

This executive search is being conducted by Morten Group, LLC. More information available at www.mortengroup.com/executive-searches.