



FROM SMALL ACORNS GREAT OAKS GROW



**J. J. KELLER FOUNDATION, INC.  
POSITION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

AUGUST 2022





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### Foundation Background

John J. “Jack” Keller started a one-man transportation consulting business with the assistance of his wife, Ethel, in 1953. Over the years, the privately held company continued to grow and prosper, and has evolved into a leader in the marketplace. Often when asked about the success of the company, Jack used the analogy, “from small acorns, great oaks grow.”

In the early 1990s, the Keller family decided it was time to share their success with the community. As a result, in 1990 Jack established the J. J. Keller Foundation, Inc. in honor of Ethel’s big heart and her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Since that time, the J. J. Keller Foundation has funded many projects and programs, both small and large, which have positively impacted the lives of many people. Often the donations have allowed organizations to offer programs that would otherwise go unfunded.

While the world lost Ethel in December 2004 and Jack in June 2007, the Foundation’s legacy of giving will continue for many years to come as a result of the choice they and the Keller family made to leave their estate, valued at approximately \$80 million, to the J. J. Keller Foundation.

This transfer of wealth was the catalyst for the Executive Director position that was created in 2007 within the J. J. Keller Foundation.

### Foundation Focus

The J. J. Keller Foundation is a private, independent family foundation with a primary focus on making a difference in the Greater Fox Cities Region (Green Bay to Oshkosh). The J. J. Keller Foundation places strong focus on addressing basic needs, the causes and consequences of poverty, in addition to specialty areas of interest, such as mental health.

With more than \$85M in assets and reaching the \$75M milestone in giving this year - the J. J. Keller Foundation makes a real difference in the community by partnering with non-profit community organizations, projects, and programs through funding and key initiatives. In addition, the Foundation has created donor-advised funds at three local community foundations including Oshkosh, Green Bay and the Fox Valley which are focused on basic needs within those individual communities.

This is a rare opportunity to join a foundation that is a leader in innovation and collaboration in the social sector. Examples of key initiatives demonstrating the J. J. Keller Foundation leadership model include:

\*Partnership with U.S. Venture in the foundation of the Basic Needs Giving Partnership

\*Investment in local social sector leadership as demonstrated by founding and funding the Social Innovation Leadership Experience (SILE). This experience exposed leaders to social innovation concepts and funded related projects

\*Catalyst for innovation and game changing concepts such as the formation of Catalpa which took a collaborative and seemingly impossible route to address the lack of access to mental health services for kids in our region

\*Proactive convener of key partners to create efficient solutions to critical needs such as the centralized distribution of free PPE for nonprofit organizations during Covid

For more information, please visit the Foundation’s website at [www.jjkellerfoundation.org](http://www.jjkellerfoundation.org).





## THE POSITION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Scope of Position

The Executive Director serves as the primary point of contact for the Foundation and will be responsible for leading all aspects of the Foundation including board & community relations, grant making & impact, communications, strategy & planning, investment management, operations, and governance. This position is a hybrid position with an office located in Neenah, Wisconsin.

The Executive Director formally reports to the J. J. Keller Foundation Board of Directors to advance the mission of the J. J. Keller Foundation. Day-to-day the role works closely with Marne Keller-Krikava, who serves as Advisor, Trustee and Secretary of the Board of the J. J. Keller Foundation.

### Reason for Opening

This transfer of wealth upon the passing of Jack Keller was the catalyst for the creation of the Executive Director position within the J. J. Keller Foundation. After six years in the role, our second and current Executive Director is taking a gap year to pursue her passion for family adventure travel at year-end 2022.

### Compensation

Compensation will be market-based and commensurate with experience. The Foundation offers a benefits package including paid holiday, vacation/PTO time, retirement match, access to an on-site health clinic and wellness/fitness center.

### Position Attractions

- **Resources.** Resources of approximately \$85 million are currently available and momentum exists to effectively continue the work of the Foundation.
- **Brand.** The J. J. Keller Foundation is a private family foundation (not a corporate foundation). In addition to the brand recognition of the business, J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc., the J. J. Keller Foundation, and the Keller family are known and positively recognized for their community involvement and philanthropic efforts in the community.
- **Innovation.** This person will have the opportunity to work in an organization that is well-known for fostering collaboration and driving social innovation. There is an ongoing appetite to meet the challenges and needs of the community in new and innovative ways for maximum effectiveness. There is an opportunity to continue to shape the image and reputation of the J. J. Keller Foundation in the community, while still staying true to the founders' intent, but also finding new and unique ways to fulfill the mission. This individual will help the Foundation solve the current and anticipated future needs and issues of the community.
- **Autonomy.** This role has a significant amount of autonomy. The members of the Foundation Board expect this position to effectively manage the day-to-day operations of the Foundation, as they are heavily engaged in other endeavors. There is an expectation and an art, however, to engage the family strategically to add value and to further their individual philanthropic interests. The recommendations of the Executive Director are taken very seriously and are expected to be objective, well-vetted, and impactful - aligned with the Foundation mission.
- **Visibility.** This position offers tremendous responsibility and community exposure. With roughly \$85 million dollars in assets, the J. J. Keller Foundation is a key grant making organization in the region. This is a very important and visible position that will allow a person to truly make his/her mark.
- **Impact.** This is an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of people in the Fox River Area and beyond. This is a legacy career opportunity.





## Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Executive Director focus on several key areas:

- Board Relations
- Grant Making/ Impact
- Communications
- Operations
- Relationship Building
- Governance
- Investment Management
- Strategy & Planning

Percentage of Time Breakdown: 50/50 External/Internal

## Support/Staffing

In addition to the Executive Director Position, the Foundation provides staff support with two part time positions to assist with bookkeeping and general administrative duties as well as grant management support. Additionally, we have also contracted with the AkoyaGo an online grant management software solution for the Foundation. The expectation is that while the individual in this position would need to have some strategic inputs alongside the board, they would also be task-oriented and carry out the day-to-day work of the Foundation — including answering the Foundation inquiries via phone, email, etc. when in the office, as well as composing appropriate responses and other communications, etc.

## SPECIFIC DUTIES OVERALL

- **Board Relations.** Motivates, engages, organizes and supports the Board of Directors. Builds consensus through understanding and appreciates divergent views. Engages the Board in specific ways to maximize interest and talent yet respecting that their primary current focus is on other endeavors.
- **Grant Making & Impact.** Leads Foundation grant making efforts by partnering with the Board to plan, implement and drive the grant making process using best practices and an empathetic approach. With support from a part-time grants-oriented role, the ED proactively investigates, recommends, and implements specific funding opportunities for the Foundation including site visits, establishment of key indicators and thorough review of grant proposals. Prepares summaries of grant proposals and potential new initiatives and presents recommendations to the Foundation Board for action. Oversees administration of existing programs such as the Discretionary Grants and J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. Employee Matching Program. Monitors performance and progress of organizations receiving investment funding. Monitors and evaluates progress toward mission ensuring impact-based grants.
- **Communications.** Maintains a positive presence and rapport in the community and with key stakeholders including board, funding partners, grantees, and media. Defines and executes a communications plan which upholds the legacy of the family as well as the innovative, agile, and collaborative nature of the brand. Effectively amplifies the Foundation brand, mission, and accomplishments including the impact of its investments and grantee impact. Communicates effectively with various audiences through a variety of vehicles including updates, reports, and press releases. The ability to represent the family well in a range of settings, whether it is giving a speech, accepting an award, or sitting at a banquet table is critical. The role represents the Foundation within the community including “off-hours” events.
- **Operations.** Manages Foundation operations using relevant and modern technology to provide high-quality, needs-driven, outcomes/impact-based grant making. Oversees administration of key programs including the Discretionary Grants and Employee Gift Matching Program. Plans and facilitates meetings of the Foundation Board of Directors, including setting agendas, preparation of meeting materials, program presentations and preparation of accurate and timely meeting minutes.





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Prepares, implements, and monitors the budget effectively; establishes and maintains controls to safeguard the Foundation's assets. Provides guidance and support to Board committees and task groups. Performs other duties as requested by the Foundation Board.

- **Relationship Building.** Builds positive relationships enabling the Foundation to collaborate effectively with other funders and grant seekers to best serve the needs of the community. Represents the Foundation in the philanthropic community and participates in activities that contribute to the overall effectiveness of the Foundation. Provides key leadership in the promotion of the Foundation in the community including the Basic Needs Giving Partnership Committees. Manages relationships with all community foundations where the Foundation has funds established. The Foundation is known for carefully vetting organizations and yet working closely with organizations, coaching them if an appropriate fit, to get to "yes".
- **Governance.** Designs, reviews, maintains, and implements organizational policies, practices and guidelines for the Foundation — presenting to the Board for their input and approval. Assures that Foundation affairs are conducted in a manner consistent with Board policy requirements, as well as federal/state/local laws and regulations. Provides advice to the Board of Directors on these matters.
- **Investment Management.** Works with investment consultants and advisors to manage the investment portfolio and maximize return on assets. Acts as the recording secretary for the Investment Committee.
- **Strategy & Planning.** Works with the Board to establish long and short-term goals, plans and policies to reach the organization's mission. With proper planning, the Foundation is very proactive and not afraid to take risks, being the first to lead and/or drive a new way. Developing and fleshing out possibilities and programs and bringing forth new ideas and tailoring them to our local needs/landscape is highly desirable.

### Challenges

- ✓ **Rising to the Next Level** – honoring the work of a very strong Foundation yet elevating it to the next level. This would include novel, innovative initiatives as well as succession planning.
- ✓ **Sticking to the Mission** — saying no (even to Board members when necessary).
- ✓ **Managing the Process** — striking the balance between working very autonomously and engaging Board members appropriately, yet not delegating up.
- ✓ **Partnership Approach** – treating those we fund as partners in solving community issues.
- ✓ **Servant Leadership** – being the face of the Foundation yet respecting/acknowledging the family and roots of the Foundation.
- ✓ **Diplomacy & Managing Family Dynamics** – thus far, the Foundation has worked very smoothly and without conflict. Key has been the understanding of family dynamics and leveraging the interests of each active family member.

### The Person

To be successful in this role, the Executive Director must possess a blend of specific professional qualifications and personal attributes. Some of the most important components have been identified as:

- **Leadership & Passion.** Energy, enthusiasm, creativity, diplomacy and deep commitment to the Foundation's core values. Past experience of successfully rallying people around a cause or direction. Vision casting is important. One must have the ability to work with the Board to "see" the future direction of the Foundation and be able to communicate that direction in a compelling way. Maintaining contemporary skills, knowledge, and technology within the field of philanthropy and offering innovative solutions to age-old problems. 10+ years of leadership experience with a proven track record and success in setting and executing strategy and delivering upon organizational mission. Experience in the local community strongly preferred.





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- **Grant Making.** Past experience with impact-oriented grant making is paramount. Experience in a private foundation is a bonus. It is important that the new Executive Director have the right mix of interpersonal tendencies and professional skills to effectively interact at multiple levels throughout the community. A high degree of comfort with community relations is essential.
- **Business Mindset - Planning/Judgment.** The qualified individual will have experience to evaluate impact and ROI in the context of the non-profit world. Must possess the financial awareness and business skills required to effectively run an organization. Experience in budget preparation, financial management, internal controls, along with a track record of solid judgment in critical decision making, are important to the success of this role. Ability to manage and influence people/processes that don't report to you directly.
- **Organizational Effectiveness.** Must possess effective communications skills, internal and external as well as verbal and written. It is important to have the ability to manage the administrative details. A demonstrated knowledge of investments, portfolio management theory and skills working with investment consultants and advisors.
- **Communication – Interpersonal Skills.** Must possess the ability to effectively articulate the vision and mission to the community in a compelling way — both written and verbal. The qualified individual will be comfortable in public speaking situations and willing to attend “off-hours” events on behalf of the Foundation in addition to the normal daily Foundation activities.
- **Board Relations.** The ability to engage a committed and passionate Board while relieving the management burdens from busy individuals who must remain focused on other endeavors. Must be savvy and understand and appreciate divergent views yet build consensus as needed. Ability to demonstrate knowledge, respect, and a sense for how to effectively manage relationships at the Board level. Able to foster a team-building relationship and interact with the Board effectively. The Executive Director must be flexible and able to lead, empower and manage the Board and Board/family dynamics. Understanding the dynamics of a family organization is important.
- **Collaborative Style/Method.** How the Executive Director is perceived in the community and the relationship with other organizations in the community is important to the success of this role and the Foundation. Integrity, honesty, flexibility, and the ability to establish credibility and collaboration are core ingredients to this position. A deep appreciation of the mission, the value of non-profit organizations and the issues of the community are critical.

