

Wikimedia Foundation Board Member

The Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit charitable organization based in San Francisco, California dedicated to encouraging the growth, development and distribution of free, multilingual content, and to providing the full content of these wiki-based projects to the public free of charge. The Foundation operates some of the largest collaboratively edited reference projects in the world, including *Wikipedia*, a top-ten internet property. *Wikipedia* contains more than 22 million volunteer-authored articles in over 280 languages and visited by more than 450 million people monthly.

The Wikimedia Foundation provides the technical, operating and managerial infrastructure to sustain and grow Wikimedia's free knowledge projects. The Foundation supports a global volunteer community of contributors, chapters and readers that contribute ideas, benefit from the support provided by the Foundation, and continually upgrade and evolve Wikimedia's free knowledge projects. The Wikimedia Foundation's five strategic priorities are to stabilize infrastructure, increase participation, improve quality, increase reach, and encourage innovation. The Foundation's goals include reaching one billion readers globally and 200,000 contributors by 2015.

To concentrate on these priorities and objectives, the Foundation is keenly focused on:

- Sustaining a robust, resilient, safe and scalable infrastructure for hosting Wikimedia projects like *Wikipedia*;
- Increasing the reach, health and effectiveness of the Wikimedia Community through great software that enables anyone to easily read and contribute to Wikimedia projects through diverse mobile, desk and laptop platforms, whatever the circumstance;
- Advancing the proposition that knowledge, and the open source tools used to access knowledge, should be free and freely available to everyone globally;
- Grantmaking that is open, participatory and advances Wikimedia's free knowledge agenda.

Wikimedia's Board of Trustees and staff have each evolved since the Foundation was formally incorporated in 2003. In 2003 the operating budget of the Foundation was \$79,000 and there were just 2 staff. By 2008 the budget was \$3.2 million with 20 staff, and in 2013 the budget will reach \$29.2 million with 150 staff roughly organized into three areas: engineering, grantmaking & programs, and support (which includes fundraising, finance, human resource and legal).

In 2003 the Board of Trustees functioned as an operating entity, while today the Board functions as a governance body that adjudicates the complex policy-setting process of the Wikimedia Community, supervises the disposition and solicitation of donations, and hires the organization's Executive Director who leads all Foundation staff. The Board does not involve itself in day-to-day management of Foundation operations.

The Board currently consists of 10 Trustees, 3 elected by the Wikimedia Community, 2 by Wikimedia Chapters, 1 Board-appointed "Community Founder" seat, and 4 Board-Appointed

“specific expertise” seats for subject matter experts. The Foundation seeks to fill one of the “specific expertise” seats.

As arguably the most influential and respected organization in the free knowledge movement, the Wikimedia Foundation and its Board have a great responsibility for setting policy deliberately and with due consideration for the diverse interests of a truly global community.

BASIC FUNCTION

This search effort will be one of mutual exploration on the part of prospective candidates and current Trustees. The Board’s objective is to use this search to strengthen its knowledge of: board governance, grantmaking, strategy, and issues of importance to prospective new Wikimedia growth markets. However, there are no predefined criteria for selection.

2-year renewable terms are served, and the time commitment is significant. The Board of Trustees meets four times a year, twice in San Francisco and twice in changing locations around the globe. Meetings take two days and travel can add another two days to each meeting. In addition, the Board communicates frequently by email and Internet Relay Chat (IRC) as it navigates policy issues. This can absorb 4-10 hours weekly. Board members also regularly engage with the Community through wiki pages.

Other Trustees feel that they would benefit from a member who has experience with organizations that have grown and evolved explosively, and who understands how boards can evolve to provide appropriate governance support. Experience with international, community-driven, consensus organizations is also important as the Foundation would not exist without the community. Wikimedia functions in a radically transparent fashion, soliciting feedback and open dialog when a change in strategy, fundraising or governance is being considered. The culture of the community, Foundation and Board is collaborative, open and unguarded.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- Nonprofit leadership experience, either in an operating or Board role; strong understanding of good governance and organizational effectiveness in a large, growing nonprofit;
- Experience in and knowledge of international, progressive grantmaking; however, without a rigid ideology;
- Reasonably tech-facile; willingness to engage with other Board, community and staff electronically;
- International work and life experience; comfort in working with organizations and entities with people from diverse cultures;
- A reflexive tendency to communicate in an open, public and transparent fashion; ability to engage and have dialog (verbally and in text) with individuals in a public setting and in a non-polarizing way;
- Willingness to accommodate scheduling requirements of frequent interactions across time zones, with chapters and entities across the world;
- Proficiency in a second language would be a distinct advantage.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should embody the following personal characteristics:

- Mission-driven: a passion for, belief in and commitment to the societal benefits of freely-available knowledge as articulated in Wikimedia's vision and mission; core belief in freedom of expression and anti-censorship;
- Process-oriented, understanding of implementation;
- Independent and open-minded: sincerely values and appreciates diversity, input and collaboration from various constituencies; has the ability to make unpopular decisions when necessary and explain them transparently in the face of criticism; intellectually curious;
- Self-reflexive listener and communicator: comfortable receiving input and criticism from many sources, and able to act on information to develop strong, stable and well-functioning systematic solutions; a willingness to be vulnerable;
- Community oriented: Awareness, understanding and respect for the volunteerism of Wikimedia community members and chapters, who spend their free time contributing towards the continual upgrade and evolution of Wikimedia's projects; willingness to learn from and engage with the community to deeply understand their interests and concerns; interest in movements, consensus building, radical transparency;
- Emotionally mature and self-reliant: ability to tolerate a high degree of ambiguity, and to negotiate with people having sharply defined opinions while maintaining positive, respectful relationships;
- Patience with consensus processes and a sense of humor.

For more information please contact:

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