

## American Foundation for the Blind President & Chief Executive Officer

***The leading advocate for 32 million people who are blind or visually impaired seeks a visionary management professional to shape research, employment, digital access and advocacy and public policy programs that allow AFB constituents to fully participate in the economy and civil society.***

AFB's mission is to create a world of no limits for people who are blind or visually impaired. The organization uses research to shape policies and programs that promote societal change, remove barriers and ensure inclusion. While AFB does run some direct services programs, its identity and focus is on promoting change, and so the organization is always fully prepared to develop, test and then spin off programs, or continue to administer them, depending on which approach delivers maximal impact.

AFB was founded in 1921 by M.C. Migel to serve blinded World War I veterans and quickly expanded its mission to serve all Americans with vision loss. Helen Keller, the internationally renowned advocate, author and activist, who herself was deaf-blind, joined the organization in 1924 and with AFB paved the way for significant social change in America and internationally.

Early in its history, AFB adopted Ms. Keller's "no limits" model to support people who are blind, deaf-blind, or have low vision through [Digital Inclusion](#), [Employment](#), [Research](#) and [Advocacy & Public Policy](#) programs. Building upon the groundbreaking [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) and related American and international laws and commitments to the basic civil and human rights of all people with disabilities, AFB champions fresh thinking, policies and practices that level the playing field for all who live with vision loss.

AFB is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia with approximately 50 staff positions located throughout the country. Thirty-three percent of AFB's current employees are blind, have low vision, or have other disabilities. The 16-member Board of Trustees has governance oversight of an FY 23 operating budget of \$7.5 million and investment portfolio currently valued at approximately \$25 million. This latter includes a restricted endowment of \$11 million. FY 23 projected sources of revenue are roughly: 5% from earned revenue and program fees, 55% from contributed revenue, 12% from events, and 28% from investment income and other sources.

Key objectives of the President & CEO include:

- Directly supervise the Senior Leadership Team and attract and maintain a high-performance organizational team;
- Strengthen the organization's finances and fundraising;
- Measurably shift perspectives, policies and practices across society so that those with vision loss can fully participate in our economy and civil society at all levels;
- In alignment to the strategic plan, deliver (or partner with others to deliver) data, research, education, employment and digital inclusion services that support those who are blind or have low vision.

***AFB is an organization on the move, with CEO and Management Team success measured in terms of concrete beneficial impact delivered to its constituents.***

## **BASIC FUNCTION**

Reporting to the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Board, the President & CEO will ensure that AFB's fiscal, operations, marketing and communications, human resources, technology, and program strategies are effectively implemented across all segments of the organization and will provide overall direction and day-to-day management of the organization. The President & CEO will also define vision, strategy, objectives and messages, and will function as the organization's lead fundraiser and relationship builder.

## **MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Articulate and continually refine AFB's vision and mission statement to provide the context and focus for AFB's work and serve as a platform for cultivating support; develop, implement, execute and periodically update AFB's long-range strategic plan outlining objectives, programs and success metrics;
- Supervise, motivate and evaluate staff to ensure that they are well-suited to addressing the challenges facing AFB; ensure that a performance evaluation and review system is in place, with emphasis on well-defined goals, clear responsibilities and levels of accountability for all staff; oversee the articulation of a staff development plan, and encourage staff opportunities for growth within the organization; ensure that there is clear and effective internal communication and coordination between program and administrative areas;
- Drive and oversee a cogent organizational inclusion, belonging, and equity strategy to ensure increased workplace respect, engagement, and wellness.
- Practice inclusive leadership to ensure integrated and collective energy of AFB staff, board, and partners are encouraged to embrace new perspectives that lead to innovations and resources to serve the core purpose and mission of the organization.
- Ensure that the day-to-day operations and programs of AFB are smoothly and effectively administered; provide appropriate oversight of advocacy, program staff activities, fundraising, finances, systems and procedures;
- Work closely with the Finance Team, the Budget & Finance Committee and the Board in preparing budgets; ensure that the organization responsibly operates within the budgetary and audit guidelines to maintain the organization's fiscal well being; ensure that there is alignment between programmatic objectives and available resources; develop long- and short-term financial plans and prepare financial and operating reports for the Board;
- Maintain effective relationships with a variety of external organizations including but not limited to the professional blindness field, governmental agencies, corporations, and other associations and organizations aligned with AFB's goals and objectives; take a leadership role in coalition building, identifying issues and opportunities for collaboration across the blindness/vision loss field and create forums to address these issues.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

- Serve as the spokesperson for the organization to audiences, including the general public, the media, governmental entities, the blindness field and other key organizations and

individuals;

- Review AFB's communications materials, telecommunications, website, social media, rich media, written and other materials to ensure effective articulation of AFB's mission and purpose; continually explore new and creative marketing strategies that extend AFB support to a broader base; create new opportunities for branding and enhancing the image of AFB;
- Promote and provide increased visibility for AFB and serve as an articulate and effective spokesperson for the organization, in person and in writing, to reinforce and build positive understanding of and reputation for AFB's work in the United States;
- With the Public Policy and Research Team, help influence US government policy as it relates to funding for research and support of those living with blindness or vision loss.

#### REVENUE GENERATION AND FUNDRAISING

- Understand the actual and prospective AFB funding sources, including for individual donors, foundation and government grants, business philanthropy and earned revenue sources; communicate national fundraising goals, strategy and progress while actively also engaging Board and staff in the solicitation process; keep abreast of external environmental factors that could affect fundraising;
- Maximize long-term earned and contributed revenue; view fundraising and revenue generation as an extension of cause advocacy and organizational marketing, and in consultation with the Board and the development staff, create strategies to secure ongoing significant sources of private/unrestricted funds to support AFB; ensure that all staff and Board members, all events and all AFB resources are leveraged in the effort to increase earned and contributed revenue;
- Lead and direct all fundraising efforts as Fundraiser-in-Chief and Chief Revenue Officer; develop fundraising alliances; actively solicit philanthropic donations and earned income, in the process building ongoing relationships with corporations and other business entities, foundations, high-net-worth individuals and other donors, government funders and other sources; create special and donor cultivation events for AFB; ensure that all outreach is tracked on an end-to-end basis.

#### BOARD RELATIONS:

- With the Board Chair, coordinate the efforts of various Board committees and task forces; ensure that all committees achieve objectives; encourage Board members' involvement in AFB's range of activities, including fundraising;
- Implement Board policies, program goals and objectives in accordance with Board bylaws; provide ongoing communication to the Board on critical matters related to AFB;
- Help identify and recruit new Board members, whose talents, backgrounds and commitment, and fundraising abilities are congruent with the needs and mission of AFB.

#### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

The successful candidate should ideally possess most of the following core qualifications and professional experiences:

- Lived experience of a person who understands the realities of living with blindness;
- Management experience in the private, nonprofit or public sectors with a track record of

- advocacy, fundraising/friend-raising, driving earned income, and program delivery;
- Leadership experience in developing, implementing, executing, and evaluating impactful strategic plans, with an emphasis on accountability and success metrics;
- Demonstrated track record in attracting and maintaining a diverse and effective team, while building a culture of collaboration and trust among constituents, staff, partners, and an oversight board;
- Experience working closely with industry leaders, government officials, heads of organizations and the news media, while serving simultaneously as an effective spokesperson, advocate, operating leader and fundraiser;
- Possessed of outstanding written and verbal communications skills, with strong interpersonal skills and ability to communicate the organization's mission to diverse audiences;
- A person of unquestioned integrity whose values, ideals and actions mirror those of AFB, who is committed to a culture of organizational transparency and is, above all, a passionate believer in the mission and the potential of AFB.

For more information please contact:

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