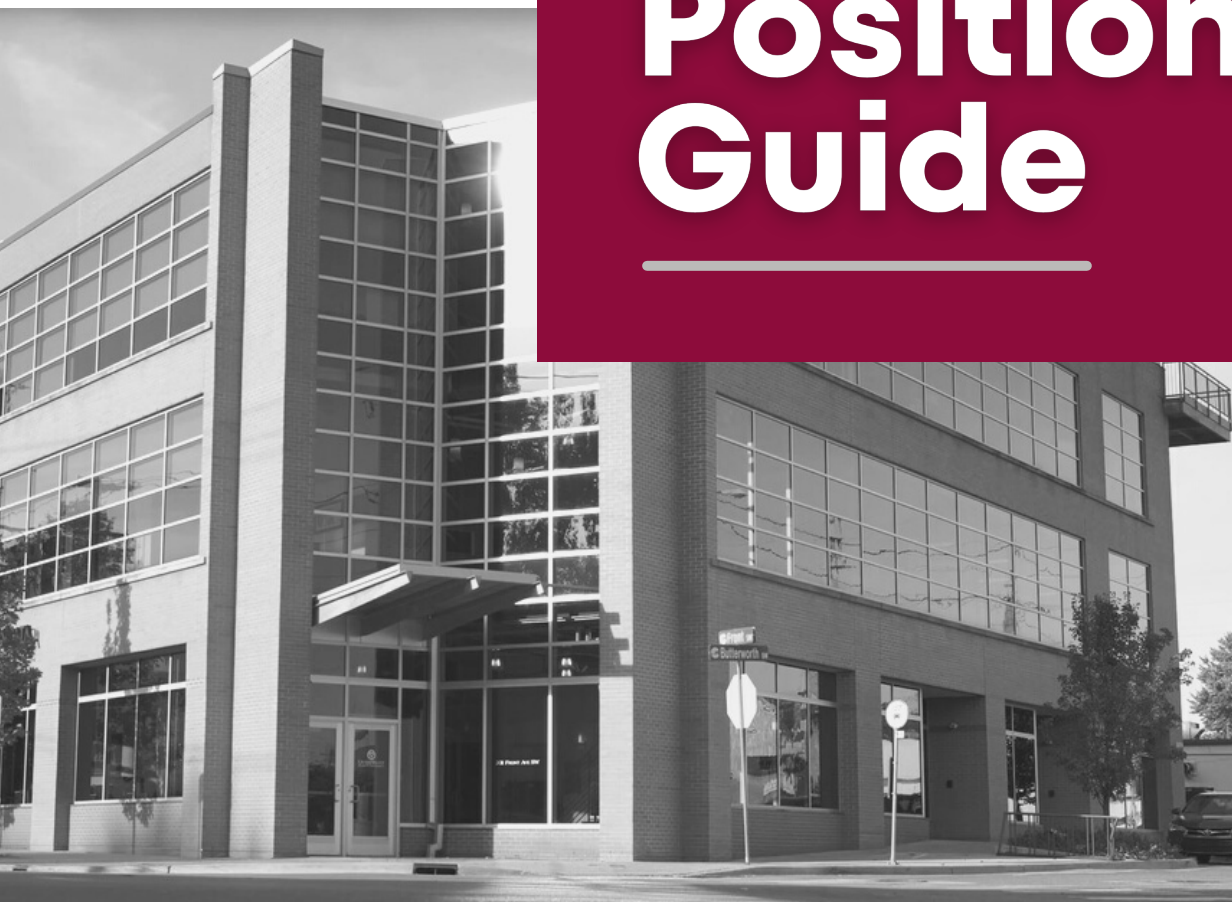




The First Source for Nonprofit Leaders SINCE 1963

Position Guide



Executive Director

**Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy
Grand Valley State University**

Opportunity 2022/2023



Dorothy A. Johnson Center

FOR PHILANTHROPY

POSITION: Executive Director

REPORTS TO: Vice Provost, Research Administration

LOCATION: Grand Rapids, Mich.

MISSION

The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy aims to be a global leader in helping individuals and organizations understand, strengthen, and advance philanthropy.

VISION

We envision a world with smart, adaptive, and effective philanthropy that helps to create strong, inclusive communities.

VALUES

Our core values are excellence, inquiry, community, innovation, sustainability, integrity, and inclusiveness. We are committed to supporting equity in philanthropy.

OUR GUIDING BELIEFS

- Philanthropy is an ecosystem of people and institutions that includes donors, funders, and nonprofits.
- Philanthropy works to strengthen communities and advance the common good through private and collective action.
- Philanthropy is a diverse and inclusive field and often engages closely with business and government.

About the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy (Johnson Center) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) was established in 1992 with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Grounded in 30 years of impact, the Johnson Center plays a marquee role in elevating the visibility and renown of GVSU well beyond Michigan and the Midwest region. Today, the team operates as an externally focused unit within the university's Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence, primarily serving an audience of nonprofit and foundation practitioners, community leaders, advisors, and other stakeholders.

Through professional education offerings; research, evaluation, and consulting services; and bold thinking to advance the field, the Johnson Center supports a philanthropic ecosystem defined by effective philanthropy, strong nonprofits, and informed community change.

As one of the few centers of its kind in the nation, the Johnson Center stands out for its engagement with every seat at the philanthropic table: nonprofits, foundations, donors, government, and grassroots organizations. The center partners with these entities as clients for their research and training, co-developers of programs and services, and thought partners.

The Johnson Center puts research to work with and for professionals across the country and the world while maintaining a strong local presence and connection to West Michigan. The three pillars of the center's work are:

- **Competency-based professional development and capacity building for individuals and organizations.**

The Johnson Center provides public and custom training for nonprofit leaders, foundation staff, board members, donors, and others. Courses are grounded in the Johnson Center's original competency models and designed for practitioners at all stages in their careers, from students to seasoned executives, and for organizations of all sizes and mission areas.

The Johnson Center's learning services team is playing a leading role at GVSU and in the sector's workforce in the development of innovative training products, such as micro-credentialing, for busy and ambitious professionals in the field.



The Johnson Center offices are housed in the historic Bicycle Factory building in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- **Applied research and evaluation to support effective, inclusive philanthropy.**

The center's Community Data and Research Lab (CDRL) and two endowed chairs in family and community philanthropy pursue an applied research agenda to advance visionary philanthropy.

CDRL is a research and evaluation hub that addresses both longstanding and emerging questions in the philanthropic field, often identifying new trends and challenges to be addressed by the sector. CDRL's team of researchers and data analysts takes on client-generated research projects and serves as evaluators on many large-scale projects and initiatives in Michigan and beyond.

The Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy and the W.K. Kellogg Community Philanthropy Chair are endowed positions dedicated to the study and advancement of key sub-sectors in the field.

The center is proud of the thought leadership provided on a national and international scale, with data and reports that inform the philanthropic sector.

- **Resources and tools to transform communities for the public good.**

Tools developed by the Johnson Center represent some of the best resources available for practitioners to deepen their knowledge in the field of philanthropy:

The Foundation Review, established at the Johnson Center in 2009, is the nation's first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff, boards, and those who work with them. With a combination of rigorous research and accessible writing, journal content can help mission-centered professionals and teams put new ideas and good practices to work for more effective philanthropy.

Community Insight, the Johnson Center's interactive data platform, is an asset to communities and networks working to visualize and address systems change. Center researchers are mining their database of 30+ years of data extracted from IRS Forms 990 and other sources to forecast challenges and areas of strength in the sector.

Johnson Center experts study and identify key trends each year and compile their findings in a highly accessible and eagerly anticipated publication, ***11 Trends in Philanthropy***.

All of the organization's tools and initiatives work together to provide a unique center for the understanding, advancement, and enhancement of the philanthropic field, both in Michigan and in the national and international philanthropic sectors.



The Johnson Center offers a variety of data visualization services and tools to support communities and organizations in advancing equity and the public good.

The Opportunity

The next executive director will serve as the visible leader that personifies and champions the Johnson Center as a unique “bridge” between theory and practice in philanthropy. The executive director will serve as the key thought leader and external spokesperson for the Johnson Center’s work, including a strong commitment to equity, collaboration, and excellence.

The Johnson Center’s strategic framework, originally adopted in 2017, has proven to be a solid anchor as the Johnson Center team and the philanthropic sector have withstood an historic era of uncertainty. The framework guides the development of annual priorities and operating plans.

The next executive director will have the opportunity to elevate and expand the center's visibility nationally and globally, relying on a current business plan, strong internal leadership, and a committed advisory council to help guide and further thought leadership and business goals.

The executive director will serve a key role in expanding sustainable funding, including bringing a landmark development campaign in celebration of the center’s 30th anniversary to successful conclusion. The executive director, moreover, will serve as a visionary and unifying leader, representing the center externally and ensuring that the strong internal team and organizational culture are nurtured.

Johnson Center team members are confident that their work will play a meaningful part in philanthropy’s efforts to build stronger, more inclusive communities where all can thrive.

To learn more about the Johnson Center, visit johnsoncenter.org.

For more information about Grand Valley State University, visit gvsu.edu.



“West Michigan’s extraordinary tradition of community philanthropy was our inspiration for establishing a center on philanthropy at GVSU. The two uplift each other, ensuring our collective reach is even greater.”

Arend D. Lubbers
Grand Valley State University
(1969–2001)



“The W.K. Kellogg Foundation helped launch the Johnson Center in 1992 to bring the resources of academic research into communities through the best practices of philanthropy. It continues to do that today.”

La June Montgomery Tabron
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Position Summary

The executive director is responsible for the alignment of strategy, planning, evaluation, policy development, communications, administration, fiscal sustainability, and personnel to ensure the achievement of Johnson Center outcomes. The executive director provides adaptive and visionary leadership for the overall administration and management of the Johnson Center. They develop and convey a unified vision of all center activities, including implementation of the strategic plan, program activities, foundation and constituent relations, and general operations. The executive director promotes a culture that is consistent with the collaborative intent of the center's work. Essential duties and responsibilities of the position include the following:

Responsibility #1: Strategic Visioning

- Convey and represent a unified vision of the center's existing areas of activity. Develop organizational goals and objectives to carry out and expand the center's mission to provide leadership training, applied research, and innovative resources to strengthen organizations that serve communities.
- Lead development of programming, research, and revenue strategies; ensure strategies and systems are effective and aligned with the center's vision, mission, donor intent, and strategic intent; ensure that strategies and systems are implemented and performed in an effective, timely, and accurate manner.
- Enhance accountability standards and systems that track the center's effectiveness and impact.

Responsibility #2: Team Leadership

- Nurture and maintain the strong culture of teamwork, deep respect, and collaboration within the team.
- Support the work of staff members; contribute to professional development; and serve as a dedicated member of the leadership team, appropriate Johnson Center and GVSU committees; and lead liaison with the Johnson Center's external Leadership Council (advisory board).

Responsibility #3: Collaboration and Communication

- Steward the center's history, culture, reputation, image, vision, mission, and strategic intent, both internally and externally.
- Serve as primary center spokesperson; represent center effectively in local, regional, and national venues, including in the media.
- Elevate the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in center-wide policies, practices, and initiatives.
- Communicate the work of the Johnson Center in a strategic way that effectively moves others to support the center philanthropically and through partnerships.
- Work effectively with foundation leaders, university personnel/partners, peer contacts, and community partners.
- Serve as a key liaison and partner to the broader Grand Valley State University community.

Responsibility #4: Financial Sustainability

- Collaborate with the Johnson Center's Leadership Council, center staff, GVSU's provost and development offices, and key foundation and donor partners to significantly increase the center's revenue from grants and gifts, as well as earned revenue.
- Direct and monitor the Johnson Center's annual and multi-year operational budgets, including evaluating revenue and expenses.

Candidate Profile

The Johnson Center seeks an accomplished, inspiring, and strategic leader who is passionate about the center's work and the opportunity to make a lasting impact. This individual will display a genuine intellectual curiosity, an exceptional degree of interpersonal effectiveness, and wisdom borne of experience. The next executive director will lead with humility and understated self-confidence. Leadership experience both in foundation and nonprofit management is strongly preferred.

The person we seek is an expert manager with a minimum of 10 years of senior leadership experience. This person will possess demonstrated management skills, including fiscal, human resource, communications, and programmatic skills. Experience in navigating the complexities of an institute of higher education would be preferred.

Candidates must be prepared to serve as a true ambassador and key external representative for the Johnson Center, and to build support for the mission through collaboration, education, and leadership. They will also maintain a learning environment and encourage active inquiry by staff and the Leadership Council in pursuit of organizational effectiveness.

Communication Skills. The well-qualified candidate will demonstrate an ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with a broad and diverse spectrum of stakeholders. We seek a practitioner who is equally at home engaging with nonprofit, foundation, and community leaders as well as with thought leaders in the philanthropic and academic spaces. This individual will exemplify the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (DEI) and will have experience integrating DEI principles in all aspects of an organization. Humility and authentic listening skills will be effective traits in harnessing the efforts of others and in furthering the legacy of the Johnson Center.

Human Resources. The candidate must demonstrate inspirational leadership, with the ability to nurture an organizational culture that is grounded in a shared vision, effective teamwork, and supported by mutual respect and accountability. They will be a leader who inspires others and recruits and retains top talent. They must be able to demonstrate effective management approaches in understanding others' opinions, building consensus, and acting with integrity and decisiveness.

Fundraising and Fiscal Oversight. A track record of achievement in developing diversified revenues is required, with a demonstrated focus and achievement in managing according to a business plan, diversifying revenues, and long-term sustainability. A proven history of successfully cultivating relationships with funders and donors is essential.

Programmatic Skills. The successful candidate will have experience in overseeing the development and refinement of research initiatives and programmatic offerings, such as new courses and micro-credentials, based on their knowledge of and interactions with the sector.

A graduate-level degree from a four-year college or university is required.

The salary range for the position is \$120k to \$180k. As GVSU employees, Johnson Center staff enjoy a generous benefits package, including a comprehensive insurance and retirement program, recreational facilities, health coaching, and more. The Johnson Center maintains a flexible and accommodating work environment.

To apply, send a current resume and letter of introduction to Kittleman & Associates, LLC at [this link](#). For best consideration, applications should be received by January 30, 2023.