

Program Officer

Do you have a background in workforce development or rural postsecondary education? Are you passionate about creating pathways for learners in rural areas to achieve academic and career success while staying in their communities? As a Program Officer at Ascendium, you'll combine that experience and enthusiasm to manage a portfolio of grants and strategic partnerships that support rural postsecondary education and workforce training opportunities. You'll source grant ideas and partners, assess theories that emerge from the field, shepherd grant applications through the proposal process, develop reporting and payment structures, support grantees and cultivate relationships with peers and other funders.

This position is based in Madison, Wisconsin at our new, state-of-the-art headquarters. You'll have a hybrid schedule, working both in the office and remotely. You'll also have opportunities to travel to conferences, grantee events and other forums.

This position may be filled at a senior program officer level, depending on your qualifications. Senior program officers typically have at least a decade of related experience and are recognized as leaders in their field.

Job Responsibilities

Your day-to-day activities may include the following.

Partnering with the director of education grantmaking and colleagues to ensure Ascendium's rural postsecondary education and workforce training grantmaking activity is effective and aligned with overall strategy.

Discovering and applying insights that help refine Ascendium's grantmaking strategy and effectiveness as a funding partner.

Monitoring and coordinating future grantmaking prospects.

Helping develop and plan for one or more of Ascendium's investment priorities.

Sharing best practices with grantees and connecting them to other resources as necessary to help them succeed.

Coordinating with Ascendium's communications team on focus area messaging.

Collaborating with the director of education grantmaking to establish annual planning and budgeting priorities to advance focus area goals.

Developing relationships and partnerships with national and regional funders that support the successful execution of Ascendium's grantmaking strategy.

Representing Ascendium at national and regional conferences and engaging with funder networks and field working groups and committees.

Performing other related duties as assigned.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

A highly qualified candidate will possess the following.

Knowledge equivalent to a master's degree in philanthropy, social sciences, social work, community development, education, economics, business or a related field.

Five or more years of experience in postsecondary education; local, state or federal government; workforce development; economic development; philanthropy and/or nonprofits.

Familiarity with state or local workforce development strategies, training pathways that create access to well paying, high-growth jobs and federal and state government rural workforce training funding streams.

Ability to work cooperatively and inclusively with others to achieve shared goals.

Effective interpersonal skills exemplified by initiative, courtesy, diplomacy, positivity and professionalism.

Ability to develop and maintain strong working relationships with and among a diverse group of stakeholders.

Curiosity and a desire to continuously learn.

Comfort with ambiguity and the ability to adapt to a fast-paced, continually evolving work environment.

Strong project management skills with a demonstrated ability to execute and follow through to achieve intended results by honoring commitments, prioritizing work and managing time and resources well.

Excellent written and verbal communication skills.

To Apply:

<https://recruiting2.ultipro.com/GRE1001GLELS/JobBoard/8c2a9195-a744-4d37-85dd-2765d36dda1f/OpportunityDetail?opportunityId=4a4a2f42-34ac-462c-9d49-ec7fc111b9ef>

About Ascendium

Ascendium is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has helped millions of learners pursue postsecondary education since 1967, when we were formed to help fulfill the promise of the landmark Higher Education Act of 1965. Over the years, we've grown to become the nation's largest federal student loan guarantor, providing information, tools and counseling to help millions of borrowers nationwide avoid default and keep the door to reenrollment open. We also conceive and develop innovative products and services that support academic achievement, financial wellness and student loan repayment success and invest in studying and improving postsecondary education practices through our philanthropy.

We use the net proceeds from our guaranty services and other operations to fund our philanthropy. The Philanthropy team comprises program, grants management, and learning and impact staff who all have a shared commitment to advancing our philanthropic mission of elevating opportunities for learners from low-income backgrounds so they can achieve postsecondary education and career success. Our grantmaking focuses on transforming postsecondary education and workforce training systems so they can support low-income populations, especially those in historically underrepresented groups, including first-generation students, incarcerated adults, rural community members, students of color and veterans. Currently, our philanthropy focuses on removing structural barriers to success, streamlining key learner transitions, expanding postsecondary education in prison and supporting rural postsecondary education and workforce training. Across these four focus areas, our funding supports

innovative ideas, the creation of an evidence base and the expansion and replication of effective practices.

Other Information

Ascendium offers an [outstanding benefits package](#) designed to provide employees and their families with a high degree of security. These benefits include, but are not limited to:

Comprehensive medical, dental and vision insurance.

Generous time off.

Continuing education opportunities, including tuition assistance and student loan repayment assistance.

Paid volunteer time off.

Ascendium provides equal employment opportunity to all individuals regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, creed, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law. We are strongly committed to this policy and believe in the concept and spirit of the law.

If you would like assistance with the application process, please email [Ascendium Human Resources](#). We invite all applicants to complete the Voluntary Affirmative Action questions when submitting application materials. The questions are found at the end of the online application process. To learn more about our commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, please visit the [Ascendium Careers webpage](#).

Ascendium requires criminal, employment and education background investigations before hiring.