

Do you have experience leading strategies to change systems and improve outcomes for learners? We're seeking a Deputy Director of Education Grantmaking to play a key role in the implementation of our national funding strategy. Our grantmaking is anchored in creating opportunities for upward mobility for learners from low-income backgrounds. Within that broad population, we prioritize removing barriers for learners from communities and identities that have been historically excluded from or not well served by postsecondary education systems. These include students of color, incarcerated adults, rural learners, veterans, and those who are the first generation in their families to enroll in postsecondary education.

We continually work to refine our understanding of barriers to upward mobility, including those that derive from socioeconomic disparities and from policies and practices of racial exclusion and discrimination. Our goal is for our grantmaking to pursue equity holistically and effectively and, as Deputy Director, you'd help us work toward that goal.

Your primary responsibilities will be to support and supervise a team of program officers and oversee a cohesive pipeline of grants. You should have leadership experience, be knowledgeable about postsecondary education and workforce training systems, and be committed to advancing equity.

Ascendium is headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin. While residence in or relocation to Madison is preferred, remote hires will be considered. Remote employees would be expected to travel to Madison approximately six times per year for team home weeks and other in-person meetings. Some other travel, such as to conferences grantee events, and other forums, would also be expected.

Job Responsibilities

Focus Area Strategy and Grant Pipeline Management

- Support program officers' management of grantmaking with integrity and rigor. This includes providing coaching and thought partnership, supporting decisions about letter of inquiry invitations, facilitating letter of inquiry reviews, synthesizing feedback on grant applications, and supporting the preparation of new funding proposals for executive leadership and board review.
- Review and approve grantee interim and final reports and amendments, providing analysis and feedback to program officers as needed.
- Conduct year-end review of focus area strategy progress and facilitate grantmaking planning for the subsequent year.
- Participate in local, regional, and national networks to continually develop and update knowledge relevant to assigned focus area(s) and Ascendium's philanthropic priorities generally.
- Develop close, collaborative partnerships with national and regional postsecondary education and workforce training funders to exchange information, share lessons, and leverage each other's efforts.

Management and Supervision

- Support the ongoing professional growth and development of team members through coaching, external opportunities, and regular feedback on performance and individual objectives.

- Review and approve paid time off requests, travel requests, expense reports, and other personnel/process items.
- Discuss and approve expenditures for field events (for example, conferences, receptions, and dinners).
- Lead hiring for open roles on assigned focus area team(s) in partnership with the vice president of education philanthropy.

Cross-Unit Collaboration

- Collaborate with the Learning and Impact team to draw connections, identify priority learning needs, support program officer team collaboration, and elevate learning across focus areas.
- Collaborate with the program officer for strategic engagement and the Strategic Communications team to articulate and implement strategic field engagement activities designed to share learning and amplify grant partners' work.
- Collaborate with the Grants Management team to ensure efficient workflows, address concerns that emerge from financial due diligence reviews, and make certain grant administration issues are resolved in a timely manner.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

A highly qualified candidate will possess the following.

- Knowledge equivalent to a bachelor's degree in counseling, education, business, or a related field of study.
- Minimum of 7-10 years of progressive experience in managing teams and processes and contributing to strategies that advance upward mobility.
- Deep understanding of the systems through which postsecondary education and/or workforce training are provided in the U.S. and of the barriers those systems pose for learners of color, learners from low-income backgrounds, and others for whom upward mobility is most critical to lead lives of dignity and well-being.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise thoughtful and sophisticated professional judgment, particularly regarding grantmaking sensitivities and funder-grantee relationships.
- Ability to lead a diverse team of grantmaking staff.
- A commitment to advancing racial and socioeconomic equity in upward mobility through postsecondary learning.
- Ability to work under pressure to meet critical deadlines yet remain flexible and gracious in responding to changing requirements.
- Excellent organizational, problem-solving, and coordination skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.

- Effective interpersonal skills exemplified by initiative, courtesy, diplomacy, a positive attitude, and a high bar of professional ethics and integrity.

About Ascendium

[Ascendium](#) is the nation's largest student loan guarantor, a leading postsecondary education and workforce training philanthropy, and a provider of student and employee success solutions to colleges and businesses. Ascendium's operations are grounded in the belief that all individuals deserve a life with dignity and economic well-being and have the potential to contribute meaningfully to their community and society. We believe that learning beyond high school — whether in postsecondary institutions, through high-quality workforce training, or both — offers the most promising path to opportunity, and we work to make that learning available to all.

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, including up to eight weeks of paid parental leave.
- 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.

H-1B sponsorship (initiation or transfer) is not available for this position.

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.