



Southwest Initiative Foundation President/CEO August 2022

The Foundation

Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) connects people, invests in ideas and builds communities in southwest Minnesota. An independent community foundation supported by individuals, families, businesses, and organizations who want to strengthen southwest Minnesota, the foundation is a trusted partner and regional leader. SWIF was born out of crisis more than 30 years ago. The 1980s were a bleak time for southwest Minnesota's rural communities. Minnesota's prime agricultural region was facing its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Farmers were losing land their families had owned for generations, businesses along Main Streets and industrial parks were closing, homes were being foreclosed, and families were moving away.

Leaders at the Minneapolis-based McKnight Foundation saw what was happening in greater Minnesota and wanted to help. SWIF was created as one of six Minnesota Initiative Foundations funded by McKnight Foundation. It is a philanthropic model unique to Minnesota which provides opportunities for partnership and collaboration, shared learning, and a strong rural voice. McKnight remains a strong partner to SWIF and remains one of its largest individual funders.

SWIF works across a region that includes 18 counties and two Native nations. With rolling prairies, the historic Minnesota River Valley and some of the richest farmland in the world, southwest Minnesota is unique. The region borders South Dakota and Iowa and encompasses Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift and Yellow Medicine counties, as well as Native nations Caŋša'yapi Oyate (Lower Sioux Indian Community) and Pezuhutazizi K'api Oyate (Upper Sioux Community).

The region is home to 275,000 incredible people representing dozens of Indigenous and ethnic backgrounds. Southwestern Minnesotans are known for a strong work ethic, spirit of innovation, generosity and sense of community. Communities range in size from 50 to 21,000 and immigrants and refugees are increasingly contributing to the region's vibrancy and growth.

SWIF's vision is a southwest Minnesota where all people thrive and that communities are strongest when all people can fully participate in the region's opportunities. SWIF puts its mission – **connecting people, investing in ideas and building communities** – into practice every day to make this vision a reality.

SWIF's Values:

- **Equity:** We believe that dignity and belonging are core human values and that all people deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- **Integrity:** We value honesty and high ethical standards.
- **Curiosity:** We value learning and innovation.
- **Collaboration:** We believe better results come from working together.
- **Optimism:** We believe the future of southwest Minnesota is bright!

SWIF works in several areas to strengthen southwestern Minnesota:

- Business Development – leverage private investments that create and retain quality jobs, foster entrepreneurship and help the region’s communities – large and small – compete in a global marketplace.
- Community Foundations – provide tools for communities to establish a local foundation without the burden of IRS filings, federal and state regulatory compliance, and investment management.
- Employer Resource Network® - in partnership with 5 regional employers, the ERN assists companies in supporting working families while driving business growth. The model combines job retention services, work supports, education and training.
- Grant Making – SWIF awards grants to nonprofit organizations, schools, government agencies and projects through its more than 120 fund partners.
- Grow Our Own – these efforts are focused on closing the opportunity gap for our region’s kids and their families.
- Rural Child Care – investing in growing the availability of childcare spots, providing professional development for providers close to home and ensuring leaders and the general public have access to information and understand current childcare issues.
- Initiators Fellowship – SWIF is a funder of this fellowship which supports the next generation of regional leaders to use their entrepreneurial spirit to address society’s needs while building the business and leadership capacity of Greater Minnesota.

Through all of these efforts, SWIF will incorporate a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens that will lead to action and changes that support equity and opportunity for all of the populations served in the southwest Minnesota region.

Position Summary

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the President and CEO is responsible for leading the organization in a manner consistent with its mission, vision, and values, and doing so in a fiscally responsible and ethically sound manner.

The President/CEO will lead the overall strategic direction, external visibility and relationship development and stewardship, public relations and Board management for the organization.

Reports to:	Board of Directors
Direct Reports:	Scott Marquardt, Senior Vice President Nancy Fasching, Vice President of Community Impact Liz Cheney, Vice President of Philanthropy Margie Nelsen, Chief Financial Officer Karen Grasmon, Communications Director Nancy Kaping, Senior Executive Administrator
Other Key Relationships:	Regional and state-level government, businesses and foundations
Position Location:	Hutchinson, Minnesota Travel throughout the region is a requirement of the role.

Key Responsibilities

Organization Leadership and Strategic Direction

- Align the Board of Directors and Leadership Team on SWIF's vision and strategic direction. Lead the continuous renewal of the mission and vision and ensure alignment of work to the strategic plan.
- Represent Southwest Initiative Foundation in the region and in the communities/with partners the Foundation serves.
- Develop and implement evaluation measures to illustrate the impact that SWIF is having with partners.
- Communicate results to community, partners, and board members.
- Work with Leadership Team to establish and maintain an organizational culture that fosters inclusion, diversity of thought, impact through action, accountability, and offer professional and team growth opportunities.
- Work with the CFO to maintain effective internal financial operations and controls including the fiduciary role of financial management, budgeting, accounting and audit functions, and investment management. Create defined methods to provide access to financial information to the Board of Directors and corresponding committees.
- An understanding of nonprofit financial management, including budgeting, planning, GAAP, and investments. Work collaboratively with CFO on annual audit and 990 preparation and filings.

Board Governance

- Work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to affirm the mission of the foundation, develop the vision and strategic plan in response to the region's needs, and execute on the strategic plan to achieve it.
- Provide educational opportunities for Board members on best practices in philanthropy, governance, and program issues of interest to the Board.
- Provide transparent reporting to Board of Directors at established Board and committee meetings, and as requested.
- In collaboration with the Governance Committee Chair, conduct an annual evaluation of the Board's work.

Fund Development and Stewardship

- Working with Vice President of Philanthropy to create development plans to meet organizational objectives, including potential capital and special project campaigns, as well as annual operating needs.
- Stewarding a dynamic portfolio of donors including major donors, individuals, local and national corporate and philanthropic funders and governmental organizations.
- Cultivating new relationships with funders and expanding SWIF's donor base.

Community Relations, Partnership and Advocacy

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Caŋsa'yapi Oyate (Lower Sioux Indian Community) and Pezuhutazizi K'api Oyate (Upper Sioux Community) Native nations and communities served in the 18-county region by being visible to a wide range of community stakeholders and groups.
- Build and nurture relationships with partners and prospective partners. Proactively identify prospective partners.
- Actively engage with area nonprofits, especially nonprofits who receive grant support from the Foundation.
- Increase awareness of and advocacy for SWIF's work through public appearances, speaking engagements and media interviews.

- Act as the public speaker and public relations representative of SWIF in ways that strengthen its profile, brand and reputation in the communities it serves, as well on a national scale.

Leadership Competencies

As a leader at SWIF, this person is expected to demonstrate the following leadership competencies:

Visionary Leadership: Develops a clear, focused and inspiring vision for the future. Models excellence and galvanizes other to embrace the vision and the strategy.

Managing Complexity: Quickly integrates complex information to identify strategies and solutions. Learning new concepts quickly, demonstrating keen insights into situations, assimilating large amounts of information and narrowing it down to core ideas. Willing to challenge one's own mental model by being open to different ways of looking at issues. Always including multiple perspectives.

Builds Talent: Develops and maintains high-performing teams and coaches other leaders to develop their own leadership capabilities. Ensures all leaders and team members challenge and support each other while respecting others' unique roles and contributions.

Champions Innovation: Constructively challenges the prevailing wisdom or accepted ways of doing things. Pushes the organization to identify new approaches and uncover unconventional ideas that drive value using data. Supports well-reasoned risks and new ideas.

Cultural Competence: Demonstrates highly developed subject matter knowledge and thought leadership in this domain. Stays abreast of trends in the field, and appropriately disseminates knowledge throughout the organization.

Dynamic, Inspirational Communication Skills: Advocates effectively and concisely in written and verbal communication, tailoring messages to various audiences, providing the right amount of detail, explaining ideas and data as needed. Builds support for ideas and initiatives across key stakeholders. Is effective in a variety of formal and informal presentation settings: one-on-one, small and large groups, and external constituencies. Inspires and motivates entire units around a shared vision and creates milestones and symbols to rally support. Decisive, clear and transparent.

Fosters Collaboration and Teamwork: Creates an environment that supports collaboration by facilitating dialogue, communication and coordination across all parts of the organization. Builds an intentional, empathetic and cohesive culture that aligns agendas and unites the team and creates strong morale and spirit. Shares wins and successes and empowers people to take responsibility for their work. Creates a feeling of belonging, models positivity, collegiality and the highest level of integrity.

Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Awareness: Possesses a high level of insight and keen awareness of self and others. Demonstrates the ability to connect with and influence individuals at all levels. Builds positive, authentic relationships. Ability to apply creativity to the process of developing mutually beneficial relationships and trust. Cultivates an active network of relationships inside and outside the organization. Is an excellent listener and values learning from others. Is a deep and empathetic listener to the ideas, experiences, viewpoints, and perspectives of others.

Models Credibility and Authenticity: Consistently lives the organization's core values and principles. Follows through on commitments and holds others accountable for same. Builds trust and models a high level of integrity. Promotes and maintains an open and respectful environment.

Strategic Acumen: Understands the market, identifies trends and drives the organization to create comprehensive, competitive and breakthrough strategies. Prioritizes strategically, leading the organization to pursue and capitalize on the best opportunities.

Ideal Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate possesses skills and experiences that include the following:

- I. BA degree, advanced degree preferred.

2. 10+ years of progressively responsible management experience, including a demonstrated ability to fundraise. Additional experience in at least one of these focus areas: human services, education, nonprofit operations, economic development, or financial management is preferred.
3. Strong work ethic with a high degree of energy and passion around the Foundation's purpose and mission.
4. Passion for the mission of the Southwest Initiative Foundation and making a difference in the lives of the individuals in the communities it serves. An appreciation for and understanding of southwest Minnesota.
5. Demonstrated success in establishing relationships with individuals and organization of influence including community partners, funders, partner agencies and volunteers.
6. Comfort and experience working with employees and leaders at all levels and galvanizing others into action around SWIF's mission.
7. Strong written and oral communication skills, with an emphasis on listening to understand.
8. Impactful and influential public speaker, comfortable serving as an organizational spokesperson. Gifted facilitator with the ability to create safe and courageous spaces for dialogue.
9. High impact and low ego orientation with strong commitment to team and mission. Roll up sleeves attitude and willing and able to engage and take on relevant work at all levels of the organization.
10. Proven leadership and relevant relationship management experience.
11. Excellence in organizational management with ability to coach, manage, and develop/change an organization's culture.
12. Ability to effectively engage a wide range of stakeholders.
13. Passion, integrity, positive attitude, mission-driven, and self-directed.
14. Clear demonstration of honesty and integrity, and the highest ethical standards are assumed.

Libby Utter
lutter@lymanexecutivesearch.com
612-670-9212

David Lyman
dlyman@lymanexecutivesearch.com
612-812-3263

