



Vice President, External Affairs

Position Guide

Rasmuson Foundation

Rasmuson Foundation supports both nonprofit organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the quality of life for people throughout Alaska. By assisting those who address basic needs, arts and culture, and projects that address special circumstances, Rasmuson Foundation contributes to healthy, enriched, and productive lives for Alaskans of all ages.

The Foundation was **established** in 1955 by Jenny Rasmuson with an initial investment of \$3,000 to seed an endowment. Her son, Elmer Rasmuson, then President of the National Bank of Alaska, believed strongly in the ability of Alaskans to solve their state's problems and sought to create a Foundation that could become a steadfast partner to people and organizations who seek to make Alaska better. From these beginnings, Rasmuson Foundation has grown to become the largest private funder in the state of Alaska. The Foundation **Board** comprises Rasmuson family members and other talented leaders across Alaska who, together with staff, utilize best practices of both independent and family foundations.

Rasmuson Foundation funds nonprofit organizations and institutions that promote arts and culture, health, social services, and housing; it also supports initiatives to promote individual philanthropic giving. In each of these targeted areas, the Foundation stresses inclusion of Alaska's Native communities. The Foundation is recognized for its innovative leadership in **helping individual artists** develop their craft and pursue it as a profession, and providing **sabbaticals** for nonprofit CEO/Executive Directors and tribal administrators to offer respite to these leaders with the hope that they will be renewed and continue to serve in the nonprofit sector. Every summer, the Foundation conducts the **Alaska Grantmakers Tour**, a weeklong introductory tour of the state for select foundation leaders from across the country to understand where

MISSION: TO PROMOTE A BETTER LIFE FOR ALASKANS.

PRIMARY PROGRAM AREAS OF INTEREST: ARTS & CULTURE, HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING, PROMOTION OF PHILANTHROPY

ASSETS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015: \$652 MILLION

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED IN 2015: \$25,000,000

TOTAL CHARITABLE AWARDS SINCE 1955: \$300,000,000

STAFF: 20

OPERATING BUDGET: \$5 MILLION

VISIT RASMUSON FOUNDATION



opportunities for partnerships may exist. The Foundation believes the Tour elevates the national profile of Alaska as a philanthropic destination, estimating that from 2003 to 2013, nearly \$80 million was granted to Alaskan nonprofits from foundations who participated in the tour.

In 2015 the Foundation convened leaders from state government, native communities, and nonprofit organizations to better understand Alaska's current \$3.5 billion state budget shortfall. [Plan4Alaska](#) was a comprehensive campaign to educate all Alaskans about solutions to the budget shortfall, and the need to communicate and work together on this urgent and critical issue.

The Position

Reporting to the President, the Vice President of External Affairs (VP EA) provides leadership for, and oversees all Rasmuson Foundation communications, events, and public policy and external relationship initiatives, especially those of strategic importance to the President. S/he ensures that all events of the Foundation are well planned and executed and acts as a liaison between event staff and the President. The Vice President will create the Foundation's strategic plan for media relations, public affairs, and communications, and effectively manage a short- and long-term calendar of related events. S/he also manages external relationships in the philanthropic sector and maintains a system of communication between the Foundation and its industry partners. This



individual participates as a member of the Leadership Team to strategize for successful organizational outcomes across functional areas. S/he has two peers on the Leadership Team, the Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and the Vice President, Programs. The VP EA manages a team of three professionals, including the Communications Manager, Events Manager, and the Operations Administrative Assistant.

The Vice President, External Affairs, is expected to travel about 50 percent of the time, with most travel being in Alaska to visit grantees, local government and tribal leaders, as well as state government leaders in Juneau. Travel will also include Washington D.C. to build relationships with Alaskan delegates and their staff in Congress. As opportunities arise, s/he will travel to other parts of the country to foster partnerships with foundations of strategic importance.

Major Objectives

Within the first 12 months, the Vice President will achieve the following major objectives at Rasmuson Foundation:

- Establish trust and a rapport with Foundation staff and Board members, select grantees, government leaders at the local, state, and national level, and members of the media.
- Be readily conversant about the Foundation’s mission, its granting model, and how the Foundation is working to improve the lives of all Alaskans.
- Create the Foundation’s strategic plan for media relations, public affairs, and communications. The plan will include tactics for the Foundation to better leverage social media channels.
- Embrace and embody the Foundation culture of accountability and innovation.

Responsibilities

Communications

- Lead effort to increase understanding among stakeholders of purpose and role of the Foundation – its mission, programs, issues, and results.
- Develop the Foundation’s overall communications strategy, guidelines, policies and practices, and maintain knowledge of current practices, trends, and ideas in the communications field, and introduce applicable ideas; lead and implement strategic thinking for the Foundation’s internal and external communication/public relations/media protocols.
- Proactively identify potential crises issues and assist in developing strategies to manage those issues with external and internal constituencies.



Events

- Oversee and monitor the general tempo of Foundation’s events calendar and supervise event staff. Manage a system to ensure that internal and external invitations are forwarded to appropriate parties, including the Board, in a timely fashion.
- Maintain effective communication with the President regarding events, including working with Special Assistant to ensure proper preparedness for speaking engagements and presentations.

Industry & Partner Relationships

- Monitor assigned projects and initiatives of special importance to the President, and review regular reports to the President regarding their status.
- Oversee planning, implementation, and evaluation of the annual Alaska Grantmakers Tour and develop organizational mechanisms to maintain ongoing external relationships with them.

- Lead the planning and execution of the off-site staff retreats. This includes development of the agenda with program staff, identifying speakers, coordinating the preparation of materials, and working with event and administrative staff to oversee all logistical elements.
- Oversee development and execution of an annual learning calendar for Board members, including skill building opportunities as well as site visits and learning trips.

Public Policy

- Monitor legislative activities to stay abreast of issues of importance to the Foundation on state and federal levels.
- Manage Government Affairs contractors.
- Participate in public policy discussions as necessary within Foundation limitations as directed by CEO or the Board.
- Communicate with the CEO and stakeholders on new developments and progress of issues of importance to the Foundation.



Board & Administrative

- Partner with the CEO to develop agendas and supporting materials for meetings with individual Board members prior to each Board meeting.
- Work with managers to prepare departmental budgets to present to VP Chief Administrative Officer. Work with managers to monitor budgets throughout the year.
- As required, staff ad hoc committees of the Board as assigned.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will possess most of the following qualifications:

- A minimum of 10 years leadership experience in media relations, communications, and public affairs. Experience will include working in a philanthropic foundation, nonprofit organization or institution, government, or corporate social responsibility within a large company.
- Proven success leading, managing, and retaining a high-performing team.
- Proven success in the development and production of effective media and public relations campaigns that lead to legislative change. Experience will include print, video, audio, and social media.
- Experience in the management of budget for publications and public affairs programs.
- Adept in the engagement of external partners and stakeholders for the advancement of the mission of the organization.

- Skilled listener and builder of consensus without the fear to propose new ideas.
- Strong character and ability to rally disparate parties to a common cause.
- Open commitment to the cause and mission – ability to make public both plans and intentions in a way that encourages measurement of progress.
- Communication style that is transparent – shares knowledge, transmits a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others.
- Resourceful, high energy, demonstrable time management and organization skills with exceptional attention to detail.
- Results-orientated, quality-driven and team oriented.
- Ability to identify key stake-holders and get the right people at the table to make decisions and create strategic plans.
- Strong negotiation skills with a diplomatic approach to partnership with external partners including leaders in government, media, business, and the nonprofit sector.
- Bachelor’s degree required; an advanced degree in communications, media, or public relations is an advantage.

Application

Rasmuson Foundation has retained Campbell & Company to conduct this search. The team for this project includes Andrew Smerczak-Zorza, Consultant, and Joey Scheiber, Associate Consultant. To be considered for this opportunity, please send a letter of interest and resume to:

Joey R. Scheiber
Associate Consultant, Executive Search
joey.scheiber@campbellcompany.com

(312) 896-8897

Campbell & Company
www.campbellcompany.com

Rasmuson Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity and its role in building a more inclusive culture and, ultimately, a more capable organization.