

# THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

HOWARD HEINZ ENDOWMENT • VIRA I. HEINZ ENDOWMENT

## Vice President of Programs

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### THE SEARCH

The Heinz Endowments (“the Endowments”), a private family foundation based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, seeks a strategic and collaborative leader to serve as its Vice President of Programs (“Vice President” or “VP”). With a mission of growing an exemplary sustainable Pittsburgh region where everyone prospers and belongs, the Endowments supports a range of efforts rooted in strengthening its regional community through advancing the arts, preserving the environment, generating economic opportunity for all, and deepening civic engagement. The Vice President will serve as a key member of the executive leadership team and a strategic partner to the President, responsible for guiding the foundation’s programmatic vision and ensuring strong execution across all grantmaking portfolios.

The Endowments is in a period of meaningful evolution. Building on a legacy of deep community investment, the organization is refining its strategies, infrastructure, and internal operations to be more focused, coordinated, and accountable to its goals. This includes clarifying programmatic priorities, strengthening the integration of learning and evaluation into decision-making, and effectively coordinating grant resources with brand utilization to support this more outcomes-driven approach. These shifts are designed to sharpen the Endowments’ ability to support transformative change in Pittsburgh, southwestern Pennsylvania, and, where possible, beyond to deepen understanding of its impact over time.

The Vice President will lead, develop, and inspire a team of experienced programmatic leaders, providing strategic guidance and mentorship to foster their professional growth while fostering collaboration across portfolios and ensuring that strategies are responsive to both community priorities and organizational goals. The VP will be instrumental in implementing a management culture that helps teams translate broader goals into tangible activities by ensuring program areas are working cohesively, communicating clearly with external stakeholders, and aligning their grantmaking to measurable results. The VP will cultivate high-performing teams while sustaining an inclusive organizational culture, reinforcing the foundation’s values through its work and partnerships.

The ideal candidate will bring a depth of experience in strategic philanthropy, exceptional communication and team leadership skills, deft management capacity, and a deep commitment to working in partnership with communities to address complex challenges. The VP will play a central role in shaping the next

chapter of one of the nation's leading place-based foundations as it continues to evolve its work in service of a more just, vibrant, and sustainable Pittsburgh.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, is assisting The Heinz Endowments in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## HISTORY & CONTEXT

Formed in 2007 from the merger of the Howard Heinz Endowment, established in 1941, and the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, established in 1986, The Heinz Endowments today is one of the largest independent philanthropic organizations in the United States. It is the product of a deep and enduring family commitment to community and the common good; a legacy that began with H. J. Heinz and continues to guide the Endowments' work to this day.

Widely regarded as one of the country's premier regional foundations, the Endowments is driven by a mission to help southwestern Pennsylvania thrive as a whole and just community and, through that work, to model solutions to major national and global challenges. While the vast majority of its grantmaking remains concentrated in the Pittsburgh region, the Endowments also supports work statewide and nationally.

Operating at the intersection of place, regional dynamics, and global trends, the Endowments currently pursues its mission through seven strategic priority areas: Arts & Culture; Civic Participation; Climate, Environment & Health; Community & Economic Development; Food Systems; Veterans; and Workforce. In addition, the Endowments periodically undertakes cross-disciplinary initiatives that respond to pressing community issues and that offer potential models for broader systems change.

Pittsburgh is a distinctive setting for this work. Unlike many similarly sized U.S. cities, its economy is deeply influenced by the nonprofit sector, which encompasses a rich array of academic, health, cultural, and human service organizations. Supporting this infrastructure is a large and unusually collaborative community of private, corporate, and community foundations, of which the Endowments is a central and long-standing leader.

## THE CURRENT MOMENT

In 2023, [Chris DeCardy](#) was appointed President of the Endowments, succeeding Grant Oliphant, who held the position for eight years. Prior to joining the Endowments, DeCardy served as CEO of the ClimateWorks Foundation and spent 18 years at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, where he served as Vice President and Director of Programs. Since taking the helm, he has helped the Endowments build on its longstanding values to maximize impact during a time of significant change for both the region and the nation. This evolution has focused on refining programmatic priorities, aligning grantmaking more closely with strategic goals, and reinforcing a culture of learning and accountability throughout the organization.

At the heart of this transformation is a refreshed commitment to focus, transparency, and equity. The goal is to ensure that the Endowments' work remains both visionary and responsive to community needs, with measurable outcomes.

To bring this vision to life, the Endowments has launched a comprehensive effort to modernize its internal systems and philanthropic practices in pursuit of greater impact. This includes a redefined theory of change that now guides a set of clear, disciplined program strategies directly tied to desired outcomes. These strategies are designed to leverage the full range of the Endowments' capabilities, including its financial resources, civic influence, and reputation in the community. They are also grounded in strong partnerships with leading practitioners and thought leaders across the region and beyond.

Internally, the Endowments has adopted the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) management platform to clarify roles, streamline decision-making, and strengthen management structure. Updates to grants management systems and operational processes are also being made to improve efficiency, while a robust learning and evaluation framework is being implemented to ensure that strategic goals are not only aspirational but demonstrably achievable. This framework enables program teams to track progress toward impact, surface insights across portfolios, and adjust their work in real time. It also strengthens the Endowments' ability to communicate transparently about results, supporting a culture in which data, reflection, and shared learning are central to how the organization engages with its staff, grantees, and community partners.

Together, these changes represent a bold next chapter that emphasizes strategic coherence, operational alignment, and a deepened, more measurable commitment to serving the Pittsburgh community.

## Governance, Organization, and Finance

The Endowments is governed by a 13-member [Board of Directors](#), which is currently composed of five Heinz family members and eight non-family members.

The Board is chaired by André Heinz, the second son of the late Senator John Heinz III and Teresa Heinz Kerry, who herself now serves as Chair Emeritus after chairing the foundation and its predecessor fund for more than 25 years. The Board includes civic, national, and international leaders, as well as professionals from the fields of business, academia, and community service.

Thirty-five FTE staff members report to the President, including an executive leadership team that includes the Vice President of Programs; the Vice President of Community Partnerships; the Vice President for Finance and Administration; the Vice President and Chief Investment Officer; the Director of Learning, Evaluation, and Research; the Managing Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications; and the Chief People and Culture Officer.

The Vice President of Programs oversees six program directors who lead the Endowments across its grantmaking and program strategy.

In FY 2024, the Foundation's operating budget totaled \$17M, and it dispersed \$94M in grants and program-related investments.

## Grantmaking

The Endowments' grantmaking is currently organized across four major portfolios: Creativity, Opportunity, Democracy, and Sustainability. These portfolios carry the Endowments' core impact strategies, which are: Arts & Culture, Civic Participation, Community Economic Development (CED), Climate Environment & Health (CEH), and Veterans and Workforce.

### Creativity Portfolio

The Arts & Culture strategy area builds on The Heinz Endowments' longstanding commitment to supporting artists and creative expression throughout the region. This work encourages bold artistic exploration and invests in a vibrant cultural landscape that reflects the richness and diversity of the community's creative voices.

### Democracy Portfolio

The Endowments' Civic Participation strategy is focused on strengthening collaborative local governance through a multi-year commitment to building robust civic infrastructure. This work brings together community members and government leaders to foster a more responsive, effective public sector that delivers services equitably and efficiently. It also supports access to reliable journalism and trustworthy information, helping to keep communities informed and engaged. By advancing these goals, the portfolio aims to improve the quality of life for residents who feel represented by, and actively participate in, the systems that shape their daily lives.

### Opportunity Portfolio

The Community & Economic Development, Food Systems, and Veterans and Workforce strategies are dedicated to improving the lives of under-resourced communities across Pennsylvania by supporting efforts that promote equitable development, prevent displacement, encourage housing innovation, and strengthen neighborhood resilience. Through partnerships with local stakeholders and initiatives such as the redevelopment of the [Hazelwood Green](#) neighborhood, the Endowments is investing in the revitalization of communities in ways that support the long-term sustainability of both current and future residents. This work takes a holistic approach, recognizing the importance of interconnected systems including housing, infrastructure, workforce development, and access to healthy, locally sourced food. It includes expanding career pathways for young adults and supporting veterans and their families as they reintegrate into civilian life, drawing on their experience and leadership to benefit the broader region. Together, these efforts aim to build vibrant, inclusive communities where all residents can thrive.

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## Sustainability Portfolio

The Climate, Environment & Health strategy supports initiatives that advance a climate-friendly Pittsburgh by improving air and water quality, creating healthier environments for children, and accelerating the transition away from a carbon-intensive economy.

More information on The Endowments' grantmaking strategies can be found here:

<https://www.heinz.org/strategic-areas>

## THE ROLE OF THE VP

At a time of significant organizational evolution and renewed commitment to measurable impact, the Vice President of Programs will serve as a key steward in advancing the Endowments' strategic vision. Reporting directly to the President and serving as a member of the executive leadership team, the VP will help guide the Endowments' shift toward more intentional, outcomes-driven grantmaking, ensuring that programmatic strategies are clearly defined, consistently implemented, and deeply aligned with organizational values. This individual will manage and mentor a team of senior program directors, foster a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, and support staff in building the skills and structures needed to deepen their capacity for adaptive, data-informed grantmaking. A servant leader by example, the VP will demonstrate a commitment to equity with our grantee partners in bringing voices to decisions and in assessment of strategic opportunities. As a bridge between program staff, executive leadership, and the Board of Directors, the VP will ensure that grantmaking is coherent, responsive, and community-informed. In doing so, the VP will play a central role in helping the Endowments realize its vision of a more just, vibrant, and sustainable future for Pittsburgh and the region.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

### Pursue effective implementation of an evolving grant strategy

The Heinz Endowments is building on a legacy of strategic grantmaking by advancing a more focused, outcomes-driven approach that strengthens the connection between strategy and impact. This shift requires an evolution toward deeper alignment between programs and organizational priorities, clarifying how individual grants connect to long-term goals and demonstrating measurable impact across the region. At the same time, the Endowments is seeking to identify and pursue opportunities to innovate by disrupting traditional philanthropic practices in favor of more adaptive and equity-centered models. The Vice President will play a central role in guiding this transition, working closely with program leads to ensure that strategies are effectively translated into implementation. This includes supporting staff on continued strategic alignment; supporting consistency across portfolios; reinforcing the connection between grantmaking and impact; and helping identify where new tools, approaches, or partners might advance the Endowments' mission in bolder or more effective ways.

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### **Support effective communication both internally and externally**

As program strategies become more clearly defined, maintaining strong communication across portfolios and with the broader community is essential. Program teams are often focused on distinct priorities, which can make it difficult to maintain visibility across program work and areas of potential collaboration. At the same time, grantees and external stakeholders need clear, consistent information about how strategic shifts affect their relationship with the Endowments. The Vice President of Programs will help address these challenges by fostering alignment across programmatic areas, drawing on a natural curiosity and desire to understand how different teams approach their work to surface points of connection and ensure that strategic priorities are implemented effectively and cohesively across the organization. The VP will also support program leaders in clearly communicating these changes externally, reinforcing transparency, building trust, and ensuring that the Endowments speaks with a shared voice.

### **Enhance operational alignment across the Endowments**

Through this evolution, the Endowments is also reexamining the systems and processes that support its work. Updates to grantmaking platforms, data infrastructure, and organizational workflows are underway to ensure more consistent, streamlined operations. To fully realize the benefits of these changes, it is critical that programmatic efforts stay connected to operational improvements. At the same time, the Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) function is becoming more central to how the Endowments understands and assesses impact, calling for closer coordination with program teams. The Vice President of Programs will help ensure that new tools and systems are implemented thoughtfully and that staff have the clarity and training needed to integrate them into their daily work. In close partnership with LER, the VP will reinforce the role of evaluation as a key resource for learning and decision-making, embedding these practices more deeply into the rhythm of programmatic strategy and execution.

### **Support the professional development of programmatic teams as the evolution of the Endowments continues**

With refined strategies and new systems taking shape, program leaders are being called to lead in more expansive and collaborative ways. They must translate vision into action, manage teams effectively, and serve as credible communicators of the Endowments' evolving approach to external stakeholders. At the same time, they are navigating expectations around evaluation, equity, and collaborative learning while adapting to shifts in how roles are defined and how work is structured. The Vice President will play a central role in helping program leaders manage and support their teams through this change, including clarifying responsibilities, strengthening management practices, leading cross-functional efforts, and identifying opportunities for career growth and advancement. By investing in the professional development of the program team to meet emerging needs, the VP will help ensure that the Endowments is positioned to deliver on its vision with both strategic and operational excellence.

### **Serve as a thought partner to the CEO and executive leadership team**

The Vice President of Programs will serve as a trusted thought partner to the President and executive leadership team, helping shape and refine the strategic direction of the Endowments as it continues to evolve. In this role, the VP will bring forward insight from program teams, on-the-ground grantee relationships, broader field knowledge, and a nuanced understanding of external social and political systems to inform decision-making at the highest level. With a seat at the executive table, the VP will contribute to cross-functional planning and long-term visioning while also ensuring that strategic goals are meaningfully translated into program design and implementation over time. Acting as a thoughtful advocate for program leaders, the VP will also elevate the perspectives of staff in leadership conversations with clarity and care to help surface connections between organizational priorities and programmatic activity, support shared planning across programs, and provide input on how the Endowments' goals are realized as it enters this next phase of its legacy and impact on the Pittsburgh region.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will be an experienced program management and grantmaking executive with a record of outstanding communication and team leadership. This individual will be a highly collaborative and collegial team player who listens actively, communicates thoughtfully and respectfully, and is a skilled storyteller.

#### **Required Experience and Skills:**

- 12-plus years of senior leadership experience in philanthropy, with demonstrated expertise in strategic grantmaking, program development, and team management
- Proven track record of successful board relations and the ability to communicate complex programmatic information effectively to diverse stakeholders
- Strong organizational development skills, including experience redefining team roles to align with evolving priorities, supporting career growth and planning, and implementing change management practices that enhance talent retention and team effectiveness
- Strong strategic thinking acumen with experience translating organizational vision into actionable program strategies with a deep understanding of external market, social, and political systems
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to tell compelling stories about program impact
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice principles in grantmaking and organizational culture
- Experience managing significant grantmaking budgets and program portfolios in a place-based context
- Experience building authentic, reciprocal relationships with community organizations and leaders
- Strong understanding of philanthropic best practices and emerging trends in the field
- Demonstrated experience with learning and evaluation frameworks and their integration into program strategy
- Knowledge of, or willingness to learn about, the unique challenges and opportunities in Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania

### Personal Qualities:

- Exceptional interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
- Ability to build trust and strong relationships across diverse stakeholders
- Flexible leadership style that maximizes each team member's contribution through tailored approaches to motivation, communication, and development
- Commitment to continuous learning and improvement
- Comfort with ambiguity and ability to lead through periods of change
- High ethical standards and commitment to philanthropic excellence
- Capacity to balance strategic vision with operational execution
- Humility and service orientation in their leadership approach
- Genuine passion for the Endowments' mission and values for Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania
- Authentic commitment to transformational rather than transactional relationships

### LOCATION & COMPENSATION

This position is based in Pittsburgh and is part of The Heinz Endowments' leadership team, reporting directly to the President. Leadership team members are expected to work in the office Monday through Thursday, with flexibility to work remotely on Fridays.

The anticipated compensation range for this position is \$290,000 to \$330,000, commensurate with experience.

### APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/heinz-endowments/vice-president-programs>.

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Andy Lee, Managing Partner  
Damla Williams, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

*The Heinz Endowments is an Equal Opportunity Employer that  
welcomes and encourages a diverse pool of candidates in this search.*