



Search for the Chief Operations Officer

KIPP Foundation

New York, NY

THE SEARCH

The KIPP Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports KIPP Public Schools' national network of public charter schools, seeks a Chief Operations Officer (COO) to define and direct the organization's operations strategy across the KIPP network. The COO will be a strategic and collaborative leader, a superb communicator, and relationship builder, have a substantial record of operational management and strategy, and will be dedicated to advancing KIPP's commitment to dismantling inequalities and fostering a culture of inclusion across the organization.

The nonprofit KIPP Foundation trains and develops outstanding educators to lead KIPP schools; provides tools, resources, and training for excellent teaching and learning; promotes innovation; and facilitates the exchange of insights and ideas both within the KIPP network and with partners including other public schools, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher learning. In doing this work, the KIPP Foundation supports the KIPP network of 280 public charter schools with 15,000 educators and 175,000 students and alumni across the United States.

The COO will be a strong partner to the CEO, the senior leadership team, the Board of Directors, KIPP Regional Leaders and to KIPP Foundation Leaders providing leadership and strategy for all short- and long-term operational plans and turning those plans into systematized processes and procedures. Across all workstreams, the COO will support ongoing DEI initiatives and build an inclusive culture wherein diversity, a commitment to equity + racial justice, and a commitment to students' access to the most excellent opportunities are of the highest priority. The COO will be a strategic change leader and systems thinker, responsible for defining what operational sustainability means for KIPP regions, standardizing that vision across the network, and developing a community of practitioners all working together to ensure resources are put to the best use in service of educational impact and what's best for students. Given KIPP's deep commitment to racial justice and equity, the COO must be a champion of these values, intentionally operationalizing policies, practices, and systems that foster equity and inclusion across KIPP's complex, federated organizational structure.

This role is fully remote with a slight preference for the candidate to be within commuting distance of KIPP's offices in New York City, Chicago, or San Francisco.

The KIPP Foundation has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

KIPP PUBLIC SCHOOLS & FOUNDATION

KIPP's diverse network of public schools, regions, and foundation are united around a shared commitment: a future without limits. By continually raising the bar for teaching and learning, they ensure success in one classroom travels across the network to hundreds more. Together, KIPP students and alumni are lighting ever-wider paths to opportunity and change for themselves, for all those who will follow them, and for us all.

KIPP believes every student walks through the doors of a school bearing gifts. Talent. Perspective. Drive. Inspiration. They support every student to see those gifts, then build the skills and confidence they need to pursue their highest aspirations.

KIPP Public Schools

KIPP Public Schools is a network of 280 public charter schools across 28 KIPP regions with 15,000 educators and 175,000 students and alumni. They are tuition-free, [public charter schools](#) open to all students. When parent demand exceeds enrollment capacity at a KIPP school, students are admitted based on a lottery. *The KIPP Difference:*

KIPP's values are centered on affirmation, ensuring students build skills and confidence needed to thrive; joyful excellence that nurtures students learning; partnering with families and communities in pursuit of equity and a just world; and collectively lighting paths to opportunity and change with optimism.

- **High Expectations:** preparing every student for college, celebrating all paths to a fulfilling future
- **Focus on Character:** fostering social and emotional skills essential for student success and well-being
- **Safe, Structured, & Nurturing Environments:** providing safe environments for students to thrive and maximize their learning
- **Highly Effective Teachers & Leaders:** empowering best-in-class teachers and leaders to see each student as an individual, matching what sparks their curiosity with what and how they teach
- **College, Career & Beyond:** KIPP Forward supports alumni to discover what a fulfilling life means to them and break through any barrier that stands in their way of achieving it

Every KIPP school is approved to operate by a charter school authorizer—typically a district school board, university, or state department of education—that ensures the school is living up to the commitments in its charter and complies with relevant federal, state, and local requirements. KIPP schools are primarily funded through public federal, state, and local dollars, along with supplemental

funding through charitable donations from foundations and individuals.

KIPP Regional Organizations

Each regional organization is a separate nonprofit that oversees its local schools and provides shared services in areas such as alumni support, teacher training, leadership development, community outreach, operations, and data analysis. All regions are governed by a local board of directors, led by an executive director or superintendent, and often partner with neighboring schools and community-based organizations.

KIPP Foundation

KIPP schools are part of a national network of schools that operate with support from the KIPP Foundation. The nonprofit KIPP Foundation trains and develops outstanding educators to lead KIPP schools; provides tools, resources, and training for excellent teaching and learning; promotes innovation; and facilitates the exchange of insights and ideas both within the KIPP network and with partners, including other public schools, non-profit organizations, and institutions of higher learning.

One KIPP

Recognizing that there has been significant variability in learning outcomes across regions and student demographics, KIPP leadership has created a strategy, One KIPP, to center its model on academic excellence and grounded in joy and identity affirmation to become the best K-12 system in the country. These outcomes will be achieved by moving towards a unified and aligned network that establishes a set standard for greatness, defining a core set of practices, encouraging across the foundation and network to move together with shared ownership, measuring outcomes that matter most, and accountability to deliver on progress. As a KIPP Foundation leader, the COO will work closely with leaders across the foundation and regions to provide support, accountability, clarity, credibility, and capacity for financial functions.

KIPP Values

Focus on Excellent Results *Winning for Children and Families*

Denying people of color and people experiencing economic hardship excellent outcomes from public organizations is longstanding and only perpetuates inter-generational racism and poverty. KIPP pursues excellence at a world-class level because children and families deserve nothing less. KIPP focuses on excellent results generated by excellent daily action because intentions alone will not enable children to lead fulfilling lives.

Courageous Action *Do Hard Things All Day, Every Day*

KIPP's work is centered on reversing the impact of generational racism and poverty on children of color from low-income families. This work is inherently challenging and will never be easy. KIPP's mission

requires that, through concerted action, we embrace, confront, and overcome adversity.

Resilient Solutions Focus *Find a Way or Make One*

KIPP doggedly pursues solutions to every problem we confront. For every problem, KIPP finds or invests in a solution. KIPP is smart, optimistic, and thoughtful in crafting solutions, but also timely, recognizing that children only have one life to live. KIPP embraces a growth mindset, believing that simply because they have not achieved their ultimate aims today does not mean they cannot tomorrow. KIPP chases the continuous improvement of themselves, their interpersonal relationships, their teams, and the organization.

Financial Position

The KIPP Foundation is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, whereas KIPP Schools & Regions are separate entities operating independently of the Foundation, and therefore their financial situations are not reflected in the Foundation's financials described below. The KIPP Foundation's Board of Directors is made up of highly engaged members who are actively committed to improving public education. Under the leadership of the Board and CEO Shavar Jeffries, the KIPP Foundation is in a position of strength and poised for continued growth in both scale and excellence as the organization aims to grow KIPP Public Schools to include 155,000 students, 345 schools in more than 50 communities, and 80,000 alumni by 2025.

The KIPP Foundation's 2021-22 annual operating budget was \$95 million, \$86 million of which went towards program services. Given the impact of their work on the educational landscape, the KIPP Foundation has been fortunate to receive the support of philanthropic and collaborative partners. In fiscal year 2022, the organization brought in over \$98 million in contributions as well as more than \$24 million in government grants.

The goal for financial sustainability is for KIPP regions to have reliable and renewable financial resources. Financially healthy KIPP regions manage within a budget, accurately forecast revenue needs, ensure they take on only the debt they can afford, have strong internal controls, and prudently save as insurance to weather the unexpected.

LEADERSHIP

Chief Executive Officer Shavar Jeffries

Shavar Jeffries has been an advocate for social justice and educational equity for more than two decades. He joined the KIPP Foundation as CEO in January 2023, a culmination of his many years as a champion for KIPP schools. Shavar was founding board chair of KIPP Newark in 2001, joined the KIPP Foundation Board in 2019; and is a proud KIPP parent, as his two children graduated from KIPP Spark Academy and KIPP Team Academy in Newark. His commitment to improving education stems directly from personal experience. As a first-generation college graduate, he understands implicitly the life-changing power of a high-quality education.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Shavar was President of Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) and its affiliate organization, Education Reform Now, where he led the organization in passing well over 100 policies at the federal and state level that expanded educational opportunities for low-income students of color. Throughout his career, Shavar has practiced law, worked as an assistant attorney general in New Jersey, and served as the elected president of the Newark school board. Among many career highlights, Shavar, as school-board president, led Newark Public Schools in implementing systemic changes that produced historic gains in student outcomes; as state assistant attorney general, executed a strategy shifting juveniles from detention centers to community-based programs that produced nation-leading reductions in recidivism; and, as a civil-rights lawyer, litigated numerous class-action cases that released hundreds of millions in education funding, rescinded racially discriminatory tracking of students of color to remedial classes, and provided special-education services to tens of thousands of children.

Shavar graduated from Duke University and Columbia Law School, where he concentrated on civil rights law and policy. He has been recognized broadly for his work—by the NAACP, the National Bar Association, and the Congressional Black Caucus, among others.

THE ROLE: CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

A vital leadership role within KIPP Foundation, the COO joins as the organization unveils a bold strategic vision to become the best K-12 system in the country, centered on KIPP's ongoing commitment to academic excellence and grounded in joy and identity affirmation. Early in its inception and dissemination across the network, the "One KIPP" vision aspires to achieve life-changing outcomes by moving toward a more unified, aligned network that sets a standard for excellence across the school experience; defines a core set of practices; encourages moving together with shared ownership; outlines the measures that matter most; and keeps one another accountable to deliver on shared progress. Critical to success in achieving these long-term objectives is a best-in-class operating model that champions "One KIPP". To that end, the COO has a unique opportunity to reimagine KIPP's business and operations model, thereby playing a critical role in realizing the organizational vision. Reporting to CEO Shavar Jeffries, the COO will achieve the below sets of responsibilities. Across all workstreams, the COO will drive DEI initiatives and build a performance-based culture centered on delivering excellent results to the children KIPP serves.

The COO will work closely with leadership to achieve the below sets of responsibilities:

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES

The COO will join the KIPP Foundation at a moment of significant strategic transformation as the organization sets a One KIPP strategy focused on shared practices and mission alignment across the KIPP networks. In this exciting moment of change and evolution, the COO will have a broad range of strategic and operational responsibilities, outlined in detail below:

Responsibilities Specific to KIPP Foundation

The COO will set up a best-in-class internal operating model for the KIPP Foundation to maximize its capacity to support the work of the regions and schools. From goal-setting, data tracking, and

monitoring to talent and IT systems, the COO will lead the Foundation in optimizing its operational capacity to drive effectiveness and impact in support of KIPP schools. The COO, in partnership with the Chief Talent Officer, will build a values-aligned culture of support and accountability rooted in concrete metrics that measure the effectiveness and impact of the work.

Responsibilities Specific to the KIPP Regions and Schools

The COO will also be responsible for evaluating all data, talent, technological and other operational practices to determine where KIPP, as a network of 27+ regions, should have unified and aligned systems and approaches that will best set us up for high business performance. This will include working with regional and foundation leaders to set an integrated vision for how KIPP Foundation, KIPP regions, and individual schools best engage operationally to maximize collective impact. This will entail considering diverse operational systems, including data infrastructure, student enrollment, talent management, and performance monitoring, and devising strategies to align where leveraging scale is advisable. The COO must have the exceptional ability to operationalize this vision in a complex national landscape during a period of organizational change while leading high-performing teams.

To achieve the above, the COO must effectively lead teams through a critical transition, creating a structure where there may not yet be structure. They must foster a culture of candid accountability, high-quality information flow, cross-team collaboration, and inclusive practices that center students' access to opportunities. The COO also must be comfortable with ambiguity and change, as KIPP seeks to build on its historic strengths by creating even more alignment throughout the KIPP network. The COO will manage a community of practice for KIPP network COOs. They will also directly manage the Chief Growth Officer, Chief Information Officer, Vice President of Events Design and Operations, and Vice President of Marcomms. The Chief People Officer and Chief Equity Officer will also have a dotted line reporting to the COO.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Preferred qualifications for the COO role include:

- **10+ years of experience as a high-performing senior leader** leading and aligning teams, systems, and operations, preferably in an organization with a federated model and of similar complexity to that of the KIPP network.
- **Change leadership experience**, managing significant change toward successful outcomes (such as, but not limited to, restructuring and strategy pivots) while maintaining a strong focus on team culture.
- **Budget management experience**, overseeing complex budgets to allow teams to achieve short and long-term success.
- **Commitment to education equity** and KIPP's mission and values, including a demonstrated commitment to DE&I.

The ideal candidate will also bring the following experience:

- **Vision Setting & Strategic Clarity** - Shape and evolve organizational vision and redesign the structure, governance, and/or operations of the organization to meet short & long-term

objectives.

- **Strong Capacities in Executive Execution-** Effectively operationalize visions and strategies with efficiency; with aptitude in anticipating needs and fashioning solutions as they arise to ensure excellence and pace.
- **Relentless Focus on Solutions and Results**—Set culturally competent and ambitious goals with teams to achieve measurable outcomes; champion improvement and professional growth while holding teams accountable to results.
- **Champion for Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion** - Acknowledge systemic racism, power, and privilege in organizations and committed to dismantling inequities; foster a culture committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Team Leadership & Change Management**— Effectively lead teams and cultures through strategic shifts and organizational changes while centering creative solutions, collaboration, alignment, equity, and outcomes; can champion the ongoing spirit of improvement and professional growth while holding teams accountable.

Work Conditions

Travel requirements: The Chief Operations Officer will be expected to travel key events, board meetings, and presentations (around 25% of the time, depending on time of year); Full time, exempt position.

Location

It is preferred, but not mandatory for this role to be based out of a KIPP Foundation office. This role also offers the option of working from a remote office full-time. KIPP Foundation office is in NYC, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

WORKING AT KIPP

Compensation and Benefits.

The salary range for this position is [\$300,000-\$375,000], commensurate with relevant experience.

Comprehensive benefits package includes:

- 26 vacation days + 18 days additional flexible PTO days (PTO increases to 23 days for years 3 & 4 and to 28 days for years 5+).
- 100% paid parental leave.
- 100% coverage of the premium for employees and 75% for employees + family's medical/dental/vision plans.
- Wellness benefits such as fitness reimbursements, discounted tickets to theme parks/attractions, backup care support for children and adults/elders, and employee assistance program.
- Benefits include a 401K retirement plan with a 4% match, employer-sponsored legal plans, life/disability insurance, and flexible spending accounts.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically to the Isaacson, Miller executive search team via the link below.

Pamela Pezzoli, Partner
Iliana Gonzalez, Senior Associate
Melissa Barravecchio, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/kipp-foundation/chief-operations-officer>

The KIPP Foundation provides equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. As an equal opportunity employer, the KIPP Foundation hires without consideration to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or disability.