

**POSITION DESCRIPTION  
SCIENCE PROGRAM OFFICER  
HEISING-SIMONS FOUNDATION**

***Los Altos and San Francisco, CA – February 2021***

**About the Foundation**

The [Heising-Simons Foundation](#) and the [Heising-Simons Action Fund](#), its affiliated 501(c)(4) organization, is a family foundation based in Los Altos and San Francisco, California. The Foundation works with its many partners to advance sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enable groundbreaking research in science, enhance the education of our youngest learners, and support human rights for all people. In 2020, the Foundation awarded more than \$127 million in grants, including over \$26 million in science, funded in over 70 grants.

The Foundation's grantmaking is guided by the values of humility, courage, justice, opportunity, sustainability, innovation, relationships, and integrity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all Heising-Simons Foundation staff are working remotely. The Foundation will re-evaluate workplace flexibility when offices reopen later in 2021.

**The Opportunity**

The Foundation is seeking a Science Program Officer who will help manage the Foundation's science grantmaking. This is an opportunity to learn about many fields and sub-fields within the sciences and grantmaking. Candidates are not expected to have experience in all areas listed in the job posting. The Program Officer will identify and work with prospective and existing grantees, monitor grantee progress, and explore new grantmaking areas. This full-time (37.5 hours per week), exempt position reports to the program director of the Science team.

The primary areas of support with the [Science](#) program are astronomy and cosmology, climate change science, fundamental physics, women in physics and astronomy, and, beginning in 2021, work to increase the number of black, indigenous, and people of color in physics and astronomy in the U.S. The successful program officer candidate might work on grants in any of these areas. The Science team is currently staffed by one program associate, two program officers, and the program director.

The ideal candidate will have: 1) a PhD or Master's degree and equivalent experience, preferably in the physical sciences, environmental, climate change, or geosciences, or in areas

related to STEM-diversity; 2) at least one to three years of relevant post-degree work; 3) experience with a research group or scientific research initiative in an academic, business, non-profit or government setting; 4) a strong interest in a breadth of scientific disciplines across the physical sciences domain and the ability to synthesize information and ideas across a diverse landscape of scientific areas; 5) a strong interest or track record working on diversity, equity, and inclusion within scientific disciplines; and 6) excellent research, project management, communications, and interpersonal skills. The candidate will possess the ability to work both independently and as part of a small (five-person) team.

## Key Responsibilities

### Knowledge

- Understands the Foundation's history, values, and current funding initiatives.
- Possesses or develops in-depth knowledge of physical sciences or geosciences, including current research, policy, and practice issues, and key resource people and organizations.
- Possesses or develops in-depth knowledge of STEM diversity, particularly within the physical sciences and climate change or geosciences, including current research, policy, and practice issues, and key resource people and organizations.
- Develops a clear understanding of how research, policy, practice, resource people and organizations fit into the Foundation's interests in the science portfolio.
- Has or develops expertise to review research proposals and projects.

### Program Management

- Takes the initiative (via email, phone, and in-person meetings) to contact appropriate organizations to encourage them to submit proposals for possible funding.
- Develops coherent, accurate, and complete summaries of funding and prepares to answer substantive questions about the proposals. If necessary, develops a complete and coherent rejection rationale for proposals that will not be funded.
- Screens proposals, applying breadth of expertise and a clear understanding of the Foundation's interests.
- Conducts site visits to current and potential grantees, and undertakes the consequent travel as an integral part of the position.
- Monitors progress on approved grants, including scheduling and setting standards for interim and final reports. Reviews interim and final progress reports.
- Periodically reviews and reports to executive management and the Board regarding the overall effectiveness of funding in the physical sciences program area.

- Stays informed about, and follows up as necessary on, grant-related issues throughout the duration of a grant.
- Provides non-financial support to grantees, including advice concerning capacity building, fund development, project activities, and evaluation.

### Reporting

- Occasionally (annually, usually) attends Board Meetings to discuss and support grant recommendations.
- Provides program information to, and interacts with, the Board throughout the year.
- Keeps the Director of Science and Foundation management informed on developments within the science program area.

### Professional Development

The Foundation encourages professional development and provides resources for activities such as (but not limited to) those below.

- Attends workshops and conferences to learn more about relevant science topics and/or program strategies.
- Takes online or in-person courses in relevant job-related activities (subjects such as software tools, fundamentals of grantmaking, etc.).
- Informally reads and synthesizes published literature and web-based resources to increase knowledge of scientific areas and/or grantmaking techniques.
- Joins and/or networks with relevant affinity groups or individuals to increase skill set.

### **Qualifications**

- Have a PhD or Master's degree and equivalent experience in physical science (such as astronomy, cosmology, or physics), climate change or geosciences (such as paleoclimatology, geochemistry, environmental science or related fields), or an area related to STEM diversity.
- At least one to three years post-degree work.
- Experience with a research group or scientific research initiative in an academic, business, non-profit or government setting.
- A strong interest in a breadth of scientific disciplines and the ability to synthesize information and ideas across a diverse landscape of scientific issues.
- A strong interest or track record working on diversity, equity, and inclusion within scientific disciplines.
- An understanding of the research enterprise in major research universities and institutions in the U.S.

- Demonstrated initiative and the ability to plan and think strategically about program design and implementation, manage large projects and budgets, set realistic goals and objectives, and effectively balance multiple priorities.
- Excellent project management, time management, research, writing and communication skills, including an ability to synthesize material and to identify major opportunities in a specific area.
- Demonstrated strong interpersonal skills, with an ability to develop productive relationships with colleagues, grantees, stakeholders and others in an ongoing and multifaceted partnership.
- Ability to work independently and to be self-motivated.
- An understanding of (or willingness to learn) how foundations function and of the grantmaking process.
- The personal presence to represent the Foundation in diverse forums and establish and maintain organizational relationships.
- The personal motivation to embody the Foundation's values and support the Foundation's mission, vision, and goals.
- Ability and willingness to quickly learn and use new systems of technology, such as Microsoft Office applications, Salesforce, Zoom, and Box.
- Ability to travel locally and nationally (up to 15 – 20%) to achieve the goals of the Science Program and the Foundation.
- A sense of humor and a commitment to teamwork.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

The target starting salary for this position is \$119,000-170,000, depending on skills and experience.

We offer a comprehensive employee benefits package that includes employer-paid medical, dental, and vision insurance for employees and dependents, long term disability, business travel and life insurance, flexible spending accounts for medical and child care expenses, a 401(k) plan (with a matching contribution of up to 16%), commuting assistance, an employee assistance program (EAP), tuition reimbursement and a generous professional development budget, matching gifts, fitness reimbursements, fertility assistance, mental health counseling, and identity theft protection. In addition, we allow some schedule flexibility.

Paid time off includes:

- Vacation: 3 weeks/year, with increases based on tenure

- Sick: 12 days/year
- Personal Days: 2 days/year
- Family Medical Leave
- Parental Leave
- Holidays:
  - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
  - President's Day
  - Memorial Day
  - Juneteenth
  - Independence Day
  - Labor Day
  - Veterans Day
  - Thanksgiving Day (and the day after)
  - Year-End Break (Christmas Eve through New Year's Day)

The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes a diverse pool of applicants. Foundation policy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, military service, legally protected medical condition, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified applicants with disabilities may participate in the application process. Please advise in writing of special needs at the time of application.

### **Application Process**

Our success is dependent on our ability to build teams that include people with different experiences and expertise who can challenge each other's assumptions with new viewpoints and bring different perspectives on scientific excellence to the team. We encourage people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+, people from under-resourced communities, people with disabilities, and others with diverse perspectives and experiences to apply.

[Martha Montag Brown & Associates, LLC](#) has been retained for this search. Interested and qualified candidates should apply by sending a cover letter, resume and salary requirements by email to [Martha@marthamontagbrown.com](mailto:Martha@marthamontagbrown.com).