

# VIEWCREST ADVISORS

## Independent Board Member

Position Description

2020/2021



## THE ORGANIZATION

The Volgenau Foundation (TVF), launched in 1994, is a self-funded family foundation that awards grants to non-profit organizations supporting conservation, education, and classical music. The organization funds programs throughout the United States. TVF currently makes grants totaling between \$10MM and \$15MM dollars annually and works with over 50 grantees. TVF is committed to honesty, service to our country and humankind, and preservation of the environment.

The Volgenau Foundation believes that preservation of the environment is essential to the survival of life on our planet and that people are inspired and enriched by nature. TVF funds organizations that purchase, protect, and restore land; protect marine and fresh-water resources; and protect wildlife, especially species threatened by human activity. TVF supports conservation strategies that benefit local economies and engage and empower local communities. We also support scientific research that informs policy decisions, benefits wildlife, and educates the next generation of environmental champions.

The Foundation believes that children are the future of our society and deserve to grow in a safe environment that provides for their physical, ethical, and educational needs. TVF's education grants support innovative programs in preschool through graduate school, via STEM instruction, arts enhancement, peer and adult mentoring, and leadership empowerment. We particularly emphasize these programs for economically disadvantaged students. Approximately half of our education grants support scientifically rigorous environmental education programs, which inspire and elevate children by connecting them to nature and helping them understand their place on the planet and their relationship to its natural wonders and wildlife.

TVF also funds classical music dissemination and education. The Board believes that human lives are enriched by exposure to the arts, specifically classical music, which inspires the human soul and has stood the test of time.

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

TVF's current Board of Directors consists of five family members, including the founders. Three Board Directors serve as part-time program officers and administrative staff. The Executive Director is the sole full-time staff member; there is also a part-time Operations Director. The Foundation and Volgenau family offices are based in McLean, Virginia.

As the highest leadership body of The Volgenau Foundation, the board is responsible to:

- Determine the mission and purpose of TVF, including strategic, organizational and continuity planning;
- Make decisions that are in the best interest of TVF and lead to activities that advance its mission and social impact;
- Ensure strong governance policies, fiduciary oversight and financial management (approve TVF's annual budget and audit reports; be informed of, and meet all, legal, ethical and fiduciary responsibilities);
- Evaluate the performance of the Executive Director and help with selection during leadership changes;
- Approve and monitor TVF's programmatic decisions and resource allocation;
- Identify opportunities to enhance TVF's public image, culture of partnership with grantees; and
- Assess its own performance and support individual as well as collective development.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

As the Foundation looks to the future, the Board of Directors is seeking to expand from its current five family members to include two additional non-family members.

*This is an exciting opportunity for an Independent Director to co-create significant social impact by partnering on programmatic grantmaking in conservation, education and classical music while helping to shape TVF's future strategic direction and governance evolution.*

### **Independent Board Member expectations, responsibilities and commitments**

#### **Program (80%)**

- Learn and understand TVF's mission, programs, and needs;
- Serve as a trusted advisor to other board members and the Executive Director in developing strategy, a common vision and specific programmatic initiatives. Honor the gifts and knowledge that each Board member brings to the table and ensure all voices are recognized and heard;
- Prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings that currently number three per year, inclusive of a board retreat (with roughly six to ten hours of reading and material review required for each board meeting);
- Support the work of committees or task forces. Be willing to take on special assignments;
- May annually attend one or more conferences, forums, and grantee site visits;
- Serve as an active advocate and ambassador for TVF, as requested; and
- Leverage connections, networks, and resources in support of TVF's mission.

#### **Governance (20%)**

- Abide by policies and resolutions;
- Faithfully read and understand TVF's financial statements;
- Disclose any real or potential conflicts-of-interest; and
- Maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of TVF.

Directors are reimbursed for reasonable expenses related to their board service. Board members serve up to three four-year terms for a total of 12 years, and are up for re-election every four years.

### **Qualifications**

Broadly, candidates will bring a stellar combination of career and volunteer accomplishments, ideally with an additional and specific blend of: governance; family systems; and philanthropic giving. Knowledge of conservation and education (preferably STEM) would be a plus.

Skills and/or leadership attributes should include:

- A passion and genuine respect for the Volgenau Foundation's mission and philanthropic intent;
- Diplomacy and a natural affinity for cultivating relationships, facilitating group dialog and building consensus;
- Problem-solving that is strategic, innovative and practical (with an ability to see an opportunity from multiple angles and articulate cause-and-effect);
- Clear and thoughtful oral and written communications skills; and
- Objectivity/neutrality, integrity and judgment as well as intelligence, empathy, patience, affability, a sense of humor and flexibility.

# VIEWCREST ADVISORS

Please share nominations or submit a resume and cover letter, in non-PDF format, to Viewcrest Advisors at: [TVF@viewcrestadvisors.com](mailto:TVF@viewcrestadvisors.com)

## **About Viewcrest Advisors**

*Viewcrest Advisors is committed to social justice and access to opportunity; we actively cultivate relationships with leaders who have varied life experiences as well as the skills needed to lead strong, innovative organizations.*

*Viewcrest Advisors, Ltd. is committed to your privacy and to protecting your personal data. To view our privacy policy, please visit our website [www.viewcrestadvisors.com](http://www.viewcrestadvisors.com).*