



**NoVo
Foundation**

Position Description: Interim Chief Operating Officer

Starting: Mid-June 2019 to early July 2019

Term: full-time position for at least six and up to nine months

Location: NoVo Foundation office, Brooklyn, NY

BACKGROUND: The [NoVo Foundation](#) acts from the original meaning of philanthropy: the love of humanity. Created in 2006 by Jennifer and Peter Buffett, NoVo is a social justice foundation dedicated to the transformation from a world based on domination and exploitation to one that operates on the principles of mutual respect, collaboration, partnership, justice, and equity. NoVo pursues this vision through investments and initiatives that advance adolescent girls' rights, end violence against girls and women, increase social and emotional learning, promote thriving local communities, and support Indigenous communities. Examples of current projects/initiatives for which NoVo is the home or sponsor include:

- the [Radical Hope Fund](#), a four-year \$32 million commitment that responds to the current moment by supporting bold, imaginative efforts to build the movements we need for the future we imagine;
- the [Women's Building](#), a 100,000+ square foot building in Chelsea, NYC - a former women's prison that will serve as a hub for and provide nurturing and transformative space for those working for justice and equality for girls and women; and
- the [Move to End Violence](#) a 10-year capacity building initiative to support those who are strengthening the movement to end violence against girls and women.

NoVo's initiatives, though varied, share a commitment to building authentic relationships with grantee partners and other funders, investing in and centering feminist leadership, and taking calculated risks. A single set of strongly-held [values](#) -- love, interdependence, respect for lived experience, integrity, social justice, patient partnership, embracing risk, and radical hope -- guide everything that NoVo supports and builds, and how the foundation operates. Seeing the world as it is -- **and** as it could be -- inspires all our activities. We believe that a new code of behavior is possible, where we are all linked and not ranked. Both through what we do and how we do it, we work to create the conditions for that new code to arise and to support others to participate.

With significant growth in recent years, NoVo currently has a core operating budget of approximately \$20 million, and will make grants to organizations, special projects and initiatives totaling over \$210 million this year. This work is led by a staff of 35, based in our offices in Brooklyn and Kingston, and remote staff in Montana, Washington D.C., and Seattle, who work closely with a wide range of initiative partners and consultants.

POSITION OVERVIEW: NoVo seeks an experienced Chief Operating Officer (COO) to lead and oversee the Foundation's operations for an interim period during the parental leave of our current COO, Kelly Merryman. Kelly has played a central role in shaping the growth of the foundation over the past decade. She directs NoVo's financial strategy and fiscal functions, oversees its information technology, facilities, and administrative operations, as well as being NoVo's point person for key special projects, which currently includes leading NoVo's coordination of the [Women's Building](#) initiative, and managing the final stages of the transition to being fully at home in our new offices in Brooklyn, and welcoming our partners and community into our space.

This role offers a challenging and exciting opportunity to maintain and elevate an already outstanding operational infrastructure; support and coordinate the work of staff and consultant teams; keep forward momentum on significant projects; coordinate and communicate key information related to complex initiatives; and work collaboratively with the executive director and senior leadership of the foundation as a key partner on managing continued growth and change, guided by NoVo's values and principles.

While Kelly leaves big shoes to fill, NoVo has a committed and skilled staff team managing the Foundation's operations, and a "kitchen cabinet" of long-time financial and legal counsel and consultants whose expertise and knowledge of the Foundation will be available to the Interim COO. This interim period is not seen as a time for major shifts in how the Foundation operates, but a significant handover time is built in once Kelly returns, during which the Interim COO will be looked to for their insights and recommendations on any changes in practice and systems based on their experience.

CANDIDATE PROFILE: The successful candidate for this position will be a highly collaborative, senior-level nonprofit or foundation professional with deep expertise in management and operations, personnel management and development; financial forecasting and contracts management; growth and risk management; complex project management; and systems and IT integration and oversight.

They will likely have gained their skills through significant experience as a seasoned foundation or social sector COO or Operations Director -- or as a CEO/Executive Director with deep operations knowledge -- in an organization whose budget, size, and complexity of operations are comparable to those of NoVo Foundation. Ideally, they will have stepped into an interim role before, and certainly they will bring accessibility, patience, and kindness, combined with an appetite for problem-solving, and the judgement, emotional intelligence and instincts needed to step into decision-making in a fast-moving environment.

Whatever track they have taken to this point, they will also bring alignment with NoVo's values; an aversion to business as usual; a proven passion for social justice, and racial and gender equity; and a commitment to collaboration and inclusion. And they will relish this challenge, and the opportunity to contribute their skills to an organization whose mission and culture are unabashedly rooted in love.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS: Priorities may shift over the six to nine months, but the key focus areas for the Interim COO are anticipated to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **Providing support and supervision** to key administrative, financial, operations, IT, facilities, and grants management staff – including four direct reports -- and their teams, consultants and service providers. This includes all management and oversight of these areas, including:
 - being accessible to, and providing supervision, guidance, professional development and problem-solving support to staff, including at least two members who are newly-hired or in new positions;
 - holding and/or establishing direction for projects, assignments and their prioritization; and
 - supporting strong internal coordination and communication across departments and functions.
- **Maintaining strong internal controls and risk-management** for all financial, legal, grants management, and contractual matters related to NoVo's operations and its Initiatives, including:
 - ensuring all governing documents including by-laws, tax filings, D&O insurance, board books and annual reports are maintained and available;

- with input and support from NoVo’s legal advisor: reviewing and approving all contracts, leases, insurance, and other legal documents and agreements to ensure their compliance with the law and with NoVo’s goals and values;
 - with input and support from NoVo’s financial consultant: overseeing financial planning, cash flow management, financial reporting, internal controls, accounting, investment and banking activities,
 - ensuring timely, accurate, and useful reporting to keep the Executive Director fully informed of important financial, facilities, and contractual matters.
- **Overseeing facilities, and IT infrastructure** to ensure that effective and efficient systems and infrastructure are in place to meet the needs of NoVo’s programs and initiatives, including:
- overseeing the management of IT infrastructure that meets the needs of initiatives, finance, grants administration, communications, and other projects;
 - Coordinating with the Director of Grants Administration to maintain and strengthen NoVo’s grants-management system and database;
 - ensuring that NoVo’s facilities are maintained to the highest standard, and ensuring a smooth and consistently functioning office, and business continuity in all situations.
- **Overseeing key special projects and initiatives**, maintaining their forward momentum and representing NoVo’s values and interests in their implementation. Two key current projects are:
- Taking leadership on the Women’s Building Initiative by supporting a newly hired Capital Projects Director, representing NoVo in key meetings, making and communicating decisions on the project, and keeping NoVo’s Executive Director informed of the Initiative’s status and key issues.
 - Providing guidance to the facilities and information technology staff to ensure the completion of remaining issues related to the new office construction and ensuring that protocols are set up, implemented and communicated related to staff, partner, and community use of offices and meeting spaces.
- **Participating as a member of the Senior Management Team** to both inform and communicate to staff about key strategic, budgetary and other issues as they arise, for example by:
- Preparing for and participating in senior team meetings and bringing status updates, and best thinking and strategic advice on organization-level projects as needed;
 - Partnering with and supporting the Director of Organizational Development and Leadership on issues of personnel management, recruitment, performance management, and organizational culture;
 - Providing thought partnership and strategic guidance to the executive director on budgetary and organizational matters, and helping to troubleshoot issues as they arise; and
 - Bringing fresh eyes, insights and recommendations to support the COO in her return and inform the ongoing COO role, and possible staffing, systems, and process improvements.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE: We seek candidates with as much of the following experience as possible:

- Alignment with NoVo’s mission, vision and values demonstrated through work, activism, and/or personal lived experience.

- Demonstrated experience providing strategic and operational leadership in a social sector organization, ideally including foundation and grantmaking experience, and definitely including a senior role in a setting whose size and complexity is comparable to that of NoVo.
- At least seven years' senior level experience as COO/CFO, Director of Operations, Executive, Deputy, HR Director w/ operations functions or comparable role, including managing legal compliance and contracting, and direct hands-on experience overseeing and/or directing nonprofit finance, budgeting, and operations; previous interim CEO or COO experience highly preferred.
- Experience, aptitude and enthusiasm for the use of technology, including cloud-based computing, project management, and communications tools; previous grants management and salesforce experience highly preferred.
- Exceptional personnel and project management skills with high ability in defining and communicating action steps and objectives, and leading teams in meeting them.
- Experience in successfully managing and leading diverse, complex projects with multiple stakeholders; facilities, real estate and capital project experience would be a plus but not required.

While professional qualifications in a relevant field (e.g. MBA, CPA) are very helpful, they are not required when a candidate can demonstrate significant evidence of equivalent experience and training.

IDEAL ATTRIBUTES: We seek candidates with as many of the following attributes as possible:

- A combination of attention to detail, and the ability to hold and communicate the big picture;
- Optimistic and resourceful, with strong self-awareness, cultural competence, emotional intelligence, and humility;
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills, including the ability to identify potential risks, and to know when they can be handled internally and when to bring in external resources and expertise;
- Excellent interpersonal and written and verbal communication skills;
- An earned reputation for being trustworthy, with excellent judgment and discretion;
- Ability to adapt as needed, self-manage, prioritize between, and manage multiple demands;
- Demonstrated ability to inspire and lead the development of collaborative, cross-functional teams;
- Patience, kindness and strengths-based leadership: someone who sees value in every person and communicates respect and encouragement to people at all levels.

COMPENSATION: This is a full-time, temporary position based at our office in Brooklyn, New York. NoVo will work with the selected individual to design an independent contract or temporary employment agreement. The salary will be determined upon hiring but will be generous and commensurate with the expectations of a senior position for a seasoned leader, and in-line with similar transition management positions in the philanthropic sector.

APPLICATIONS: Qualified applicants should submit a resume and substantive cover letter that makes the case for relevant experience and values alignment. Please submit applications in pdf format with subject line "Interim COO" to jobs@novofoundation.org, **as soon as possible and no later than end of May 2019.**

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received – so early submissions are strongly encouraged. The position will remain open until filled, with the goal of having the Interim COO on board as early as mid-June and no later than late July 2019. This search is being supported by Paula Morris and Cory Pohley of Bandwidth Consulting, and questions can be directed to pauladpm25@gmail.com.