



**GERALDINE R.
DODGE** 
FOUNDATION

**President and CEO
Position Description**

October 2024

**SALLY M. STERLING
EXECUTIVE SEARCH**

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THE OPPORTUNITY

Equity is one of the most important issues facing society today, and foundations and nonprofits across the country are working to address inequities in the communities they serve. The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (Foundation) is seeking a bold, innovative, and entrepreneurial new leader who will work with staff, board, and community partners to translate the organization's mission not just into collective action, but into impact.



The Dodge Foundation is at an exciting inflection point, as it reaches the culmination of a multi-year transformation that started with a strategic planning effort in 2017. In 2020, as mobilizations for racial justice swept the country, and the pandemic exposed and exacerbated the devastating impacts of structural racism and inequity on people's lives, the Dodge Foundation answered the call of these crises to imagine a new strategic direction and then to put action to its words.

Leaders knew that it was time to change the Foundation inside and out – to more deeply center racial equity and justice in all aspects of our work, and to transform its philanthropic approaches, using all of its resources—including grants, investments, capacity building, technical assistance, advocacy, and convening power—to build a just and equitable New Jersey where people of all races and communities have opportunities to thrive.

As part of aligning its operations with this new vision, the Foundation has relocated its headquarters to Newark to better engage with and learn from one of the communities where it already had numerous partners and where there is an active and shared commitment to dismantling systemic inequities. With the relocation also comes a strengthened focus on closing the racial wealth gap by investing in housing equity, economic security and mobility, and community infrastructure. Working in close collaboration with the board and staff, the new CEO will play a leading role in aligning our investments and operations with our new strategic framework.

The President and Chief Executive Officer leads, directs, and coordinates the activities of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation in accordance with policies, goals, and objectives established by the Board of Trustees.

Key Relationships

Reports to

Board of Trustees

Direct Reports

Chief Financial Officer	Vice President, People, Culture, and Equity
Vice President, Programs	Board Liaison and Manager, Executive Office

Other Key Relationships

Director of Operations	Community Leaders
Grantees	Philanthropic Sector Leaders
Partners	State and Local Appointed and Elected Officials
Subject Matter Experts	Media / Press

Major Responsibilities

- Provide leadership for the Foundation's activities and accountability for its work by guiding investments, programs, and strategies based on best practices, innovative approaches, evaluation, and continuous learning.
- Motivate and inspire a talented staff while expanding internal and external capacity and determining organizational structure for maximum impact.
- Exercise sound fiscal, administrative, and human resource management.
- Work with the board and investment committee to report on financial and operational matters as it relates to the Foundation's investments and its short-term and long-term financial strategies.
- Oversee the Foundation's mission investment program, advancing it from the pilot stage to the next level of full implementation.
- Further define the Foundation's role and approach to place-based work in terms of ongoing engagement/relationship-building in our priority communities of Newark, Trenton, Paterson, Atlantic City, Camden, and Morristown.
- Collaborate with an active Board of Trustees to facilitate the discussion and decisions on mission, policy, strategy, impact evaluation, and effective governance.
- Keep trustees and staff informed and engaged through honest, open, and transparent communications to maintain the confidence and support of the board and staff.
- Manage a comprehensive communications strategy that maximizes the Foundation's ability to learn and the effectiveness of the Foundation's programs and influences policy while disseminating lessons learned.
- Serve as spokesperson for the Foundation and as appropriate:
 - Inform elected officials and a larger public on the role of the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors in the life of communities.
 - Share with others examples of successful work and promising approaches in meeting enduring community challenges.
 - Engage with members of the press to garner earned media.

ABOUT THE GERALDINE R. DODGE FOUNDATION

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation is a private Foundation based in Newark, New Jersey, that supports, centers, and connects communities and changemakers who are addressing the repair of structural racism and inequity in New Jersey by closing the racial wealth gap. Through the foresight and generosity of Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge, niece of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., the Foundation bearing her name was created in 1974. Mrs. Dodge's will noted her particular interest in the arts, education, and the welfare of animals, while providing significant latitude and flexibility for the Foundation to evolve over time and address the critical issues of the day.



In addition to working to close the racial wealth gap, Dodge co-hosts with NJPAC the biennial Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, which attracts thousands of students, teachers, and poetry enthusiasts to Newark, New Jersey. Other signature initiatives Dodge helped launch include Sustainable Jersey and Creative New Jersey (now Gathering Ground), efforts aimed at connecting leaders across sectors, and promoting collaboration to help build movements for change through community-driven decision-making. The Foundation was a significant early supporter of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, Center for Cooperative Media, and Jersey Water Works, all field-specific initiatives designed to build capacity. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Dodge was central in building and distributing \$4 million raised from philanthropic partners through the New Jersey Recovery Fund. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation was a key partner in the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund and a founding funder of the New Jersey Arts and Culture Recovery Fund.



Our Vision

At the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, we imagine a just and equitable New Jersey, where people of all races and communities have equitable access to opportunities to thrive.

In 2023, following a multi-year joint strategic planning process of its board and staff, the Dodge Foundation announced “The Path Forward” for an equitable New Jersey. This critical step for the organization defined levers and systems-change work aimed at transforming the state. To forge the path ahead, the Foundation has further refined its focus on closing the racial wealth gap. New Jersey is one of the wealthiest states in America, with one of the highest racial wealth gaps in the country. A just and equitable New Jersey begins by closing the gaps that prevent historically marginalized communities of color from having opportunities to thrive. The Foundation is committed to aligning its resources to address historical, institutional, and structural impediments so that New Jerseyans of all races and communities have what is needed to realize a quality life.

The Dodge Foundation operates with a staff of 11 and annual budget of \$18 million, has made nearly \$500 million in grants to date, and currently has \$342 million in assets managed in perpetuity by a nine-member board. The 2024 grant-making budget is \$11.9 million. It has a reputation as a transparent, patient funder that provides general operating support, project support, and technical assistance, which has helped nonprofits develop, thrive, and innovate.

CRITICAL COMPETENCIES

Strategic and Visionary Leadership

The Foundation has a strong reputation in the state of New Jersey and in the field of philanthropy. A combination of innovative and thoughtful programming and the employment of financial strategies and investments has allowed the Foundation to continue to impact the state of New Jersey. The next CEO will embody the following qualities:

- An innovative and intellectual thought leader and partner.
- A willingness to take informed risks, be proactive and nimble.
- Ability to use data and evidence to inform decision-making.
- Experience with change-management and willingness to think expansively about and take action on what is needed to implement an equity-focused strategic vision and to adapt or sunset other programs, as appropriate.
- Have the practical, emotional, and social skills to lead the Foundation through a time of impact-driven transition.
- Work with staff, board, current and future partners, and other stakeholders to communicate initiatives with transparency and clarity; and
- Advocate for intelligent change, modeling flexibility, adaptation, and openness to experimentation to advance the Foundation's mission and vision.

Commitment and Authenticity

The Foundation envisions a just and equitable New Jersey where people of all races and communities have equitable access to opportunities to thrive. The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation supports, centers, and connects communities and change-makers who are addressing the root cause and repair of structural racism and inequity in New Jersey and is looking for a leader who will have:

- A passion for the vision, mission, and values of the Foundation and for New Jersey.
- An ability to foster a culture of inclusivity, transparency, encouragement, and willingness to learn from failures and successes.
- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all New Jerseyans, particularly historically marginalized communities of color.
- Compassion and be a compelling advocate with the desire to make a deep and lasting impact; and
- Integrity and honesty.

Relationship-Building and Collaboration

Partnering with and connecting people, organizations, and communities throughout the state is a key tenet of the Foundation's vision to build an equitable New Jersey. This requires relationship-building and collaboration which are qualities that the new leader will need to embody. Specifically, the next CEO will have the ability to:

- Reinforce existing partnerships and build new strategic collaborations.

- Work effectively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to leverage resources to serve New Jersey communities.
- Unite and work with an engaged and committed board and staff to further foster trust and confidence in decision-making and the direction of the Foundation.
- Influence and inspire a high-functioning team; and
- Effectively listen to and communicate with partners to inspire greater dialogue and leverage potential paths and solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

While the next CEO may come from a variety of backgrounds, successful candidates will bring several of the following experiences:

- A minimum of ten years in a senior leadership role in the nonprofit, public, or private sector
- A broad range of interest and experience in the areas impacting equity in New Jersey
- Track record of working effectively with an actively engaged board
- Proven communications skills
- Understanding of public policy and political processes
- Knowledge of or experience with philanthropy
- Knowledge of or experience with impact investing
- Current or former familiarity with New Jersey

Other Personal Characteristics:

- Ethical and moral standards
- A sense of humor
- Ability to make informed decisions
- Curious and a lifelong learner
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- A commitment to the state of New Jersey



ABOUT NEWARK, NJ

Founded in 1666, the City of Newark is America's third-oldest city, and New Jersey's largest municipality. In the past 40 years, Newark has undergone a dynamic transformation, with its economy centered on high technology, industry, and communications, based on its role as a transportation hub -- home to railroads, superhighways, the Newark Seaport, and Newark Liberty International Airport.

Cultural centers like the Newark Museum and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center offer visitors and residents world-class exhibitions and entertainment. The Prudential Center in the city's downtown is home to the New Jersey Devils NHL hockey team and hosts performers like Taylor Swift, Bruce Springsteen, and the Ringling Brothers Circus. Its restaurants and eateries reflect the city's diversity and hospitality. Notable Newark natives include basketball legend Shaquille O'Neal, writer Philip Roth, singer Paul Simon, jazz musician Sarah Vaughan, poet and playwright Amiri Baraka, Sr., actress Queen Latifah, actor Michael B. Jordan, Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, and U.S. Congressman Peter Rodino.

Today, Newark is one of America's most diverse, prosperous, exciting, and equitable cities, serving as a national model for inclusive economic growth. This transformation is the city's highest priority, with groundbreaking initiatives in public safety, economic development, housing, and community engagement, while achieving fiscal stability.

The city offers strong employment opportunities in industries like financial services, healthcare, technology, and logistics. Major employers include Panasonic, Prudential Financial, and Audible, while the growing startup scene is supported by investment groups like Newark Venture Partners. Educational institutions such as Rutgers University-Newark, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Seton Hall Law School provide excellent opportunities for students, while the city's public and charter schools are continuously improving, offering quality education for families with children.

Newark also hosts a wealth of outdoor activities, from exploring parks like Branch Brook and Weequahic, learning about history at the Harriet Tubman Monument, or discovering Newark's amazing murals. The city's arts scene thrives with festivals, live jazz performances, and galleries, while families can enjoy kid-friendly attractions like movie nights at Riverfront Park, roller skating at Branch Brook Park, and community events year-round. Newark's rich history, diverse community, and cultural vibrancy make it an appealing place to call home.

Sources: [Official Linked In Account for the City of Newark, New Jersey](#); [Newark Alliance, 14 Things to Know About Living in Newark, Is Living in Newark NJ Right for You?, Choose NJ](#)

COMPENSATION AND CONTACT

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages individuals of all backgrounds and cultures to consider this leadership position. The Foundation’s commitment to inclusivity encompasses but is not limited to diversity in race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this role is between \$325,000 – \$450,000. Total compensation includes an excellent benefits package and is commensurate with experience.

Contact

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation has retained Sally M. Sterling Executive Search to support the search for President and CEO. We welcome comments, nominations, or expressions of interest. All applicants are asked to include a letter of interest with their resume.

Please send an email with supporting materials to:

DodgeFoundation@sallysterlingexecutivesearch.com

Photo Credits

- *Cover Page: Courtesy of Rising Tide Capital, Inc.*
- *Page 2 (left to right): Newark Community Street Team, Momentum Fund Grantee; Ryan Haygood, Esq., President and CEO, New Jersey Institute of Social Justice; South Ward Environmental Alliance, Momentum Fund Grantee*
- *Page 4 (left to right): Mr. and Mrs. Dodge, Courtesy of Hartley Farms Historical Archives; ACLU Protest, Courtesy of Michelle Frankfurter*
- *Page 8 (left to right): Speakers and performers at the Dodge Poetry Festival, Courtesy of Fresco Alessandro; Momentum Fund Event, Courtesy of Michael Einreinhof*

ABOUT SALLY M. STERLING EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Based in the greater Washington, DC area, Sally M. Sterling Executive Search is a female-owned executive search services firm specializing in nonprofit and board leadership.

Sally Sterling, firm founder and principal, is a seasoned executive search consultant with more than 25 years of experience across a variety of nonprofit sectors, including foundations, media, global development, and cultural organizations. Sally's firm focuses on recruiting CEO and C-suite leaders for some of the most influential and prominent organizations, whether they are local, national, or international in scope and/or reach. She has worked for some of the most recognized search firms in the world including as a partner at Spencer Stuart until late 2017 when she decided to open her own firm.