

DSG | Koya

*Surdna Foundation*  
*Program Officer, Learning & Impact*

New York, NY



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### **About Surdna Foundation**

The Surdna Foundation was founded by John E. Andrus in 1917, and its mission is to advance social and racial justice in U.S. communities. The foundation has assets of more than \$1 billion, an annual grantmaking budget of over \$53 million, and a staff of 24. It is governed by a Board of Directors that includes fifth-generation members of the Andrus family, as well as community members. Surdna pursues its mission by providing grants in the areas of arts and culture, environmental justice, economic inclusion, and youth justice, as well as through its communications, internal operations, and investment practices. In addition, Surdna seeks to achieve three [foundation-wide racial equity outcomes](#): wealth creation, democratic participation, and accountability of institutions.

The foundation strives to exemplify its core [values](#)—justice, equity, inclusion, respect, and humility—in every aspect of its work. Surdna’s staff contribute to an organizational culture of collaboration, curiosity, and bold thinking.

Surdna is a hybrid workplace where 2-3 days per week are spent together collaboratively with other foundation staff and partners.

Learn more about the Surdna Foundation at <https://surdna.org/>.

### **The Opportunity**

The Learning & Impact Officer is a strategic leader who will help guide learning initiatives and strengthen Surdna’s organizational capacity to learn from our grantmaking, apply lessons to improve effectiveness, and share our experiences to inform the field. This role sits within our Communications & Engagement team—a deliberate placement that reflects our commitment to cross-functional collaboration, synthesis, sense-making, storytelling, and dissemination. Learning is only valuable when it is shared.

The Learning & Impact Officer reports to the VP, Communications & Engagement and works closely with program, grants operations, impact investing, finance and administration teams, grantee partners, and external consultants to ensure that learning informs our decision-making internally and contributes knowledge to grantees and the broader field.

### **Core Responsibilities**

The Learning & Impact Officer will be a thought partner, synthesizer, and storyteller. We are looking for someone who can hold the complexity of a multi-program foundation while helping staff and board find the questions, patterns, and insights that sharpen strategy, strengthen relationships with grantees, align learning with the foundation’s priorities, and advance Surdna’s mission.

This role supports the foundation’s ongoing learning through analysis, evaluation, storytelling, and the delivery of actionable opportunities to strengthen Surdna’s culture of learning. The ideal

candidate will be familiar with the [equitable evaluation](#) and [emergent learning](#) frameworks to drive learning, enhance strategic clarity, and track effectiveness over time.

### Learning, Synthesis, and Storytelling (70%)

- Strengthen organizational capacity for learning, grounded in Surdna's commitments to racial justice, [trust-based philanthropy](#), accountability, and rigorous learning from successes and failures
- Identify and synthesize key trends, stories, and insights across programs, grants operations, and impact investing, and make that synthesis actionable
- Illustrate Surdna's impact with compelling data and stories, using qualitative and quantitative information to capture the foundation's learning and impact
- Partner with grants management, grantmaking, and impact investing teams to collect, maintain, and analyze data, metrics, and indicators that are low-burden and high-value for grantees, partners, staff, and board
- Support strategy reviews for continuous learning and adaptation, including programmatic strategy reviews and annual i4 (intent, implementation, influence, and impact) assessments, with data analysis and synthesis
- Connect internal learning to external contexts, including field-wide trends, emerging research, and the political and economic environment
- Create high-quality data visualizations, summative reports, and other presentation materials for internal and external learning
- Stay abreast of trends and practices in the philanthropic sector and racial justice field.

### Project Management & Dissemination (30%)

- Collaborate with the communications and grantmaking teams to ensure learning is shared — with staff, board, grantees, and the field — through a range of formats and channels
- Lead projects and consultants on assigned projects related to learning
- Develop, support, and maintain internal structures and systems for cross-program sharing; and develop specific tools that anchor a culture of learning, both institution-wide and within each program.

### Candidate Profile

We are looking for a collaborative, flexible, and continuous learner who is committed to advancing the Surdna Foundation's social justice and racial equity mission. The ideal candidate understands learning as a partnership rather than oversight and brings:

- **Superb qualitative and quantitative analytical skills, with the ability to surface the human stories** behind the data and translate both into insights that inform strategy and strengthen accountability.
- **Curiosity and humility**, with a knack for spotting patterns, working with unstructured or incomplete data, and holding complexity in a social and racial justice context where "impact" is often achieved over a long horizon.
- **Relational intelligence** to build trust across the foundation and with grantees to co-create learning strategies.

- **Synthesizing and facilitation instincts** that create the conditions to develop a culture of learning, sense-making, and continuous improvement.
- **Sector literacy** grounded in knowledge of the best practices and tensions around learning and evaluation, grantee burden, and trust-based practices.

**In addition, strong candidates will offer:**

- At least 8-10 years of experience in strategic learning, evaluation, data journalism, or knowledge management in a philanthropic, nonprofit, or social sector context.
- Demonstrated experience co-designing learning strategies that align with systems change and social justice across diverse teams and functions.
- Strong ability to collect, analyze, and synthesize data, surfacing patterns and insights across a complex portfolio and communicating them clearly to diverse audiences.
- Excellent communication and storytelling skills, with the ability to inform and inspire audiences through compelling data visualizations, stories, patterns, and lessons learned.
- Capacity to effectively use research—and support evaluations led by consultants—for learning and strategy development.
- A collaborative, self-directed, and resourceful working style, equally comfortable leading a strategy conversation and building a spreadsheet.
- Experience with Fluxx, Tableau, and data visualization a strong plus.
- Comfort navigating ambiguity, balancing rigor with adaptability, and modeling curiosity.
- A commitment to ethical standards, transparency, and accountability.
- Ability to take the work seriously, but not themselves.

## What Success Looks Like

In this role, you will know your work is succeeding when grantees experience Surdna's reporting and metrics as useful for their own work, when program teams can adapt strategies based on what they're learning from the field, and when staff and board engage in substantive learning conversations that explore challenges and emergent opportunities to advance our mission. You will help make learning a part of Surdna's culture that advances racial justice and strengthens the foundation's and partners' effectiveness and accountability.

## Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for the Program Officer, Learning & Impact is \$125,000 - \$137,500, commensurate with experience.

This position is a full-time position, and Surdna offers a leading and holistic total compensation package that includes salary and benefits. All full-time staff are eligible for Surdna's generous benefits package including:

- 100% employer-funded medical, dental, and vision coverage, life insurance, and long- and short-term disability from the first day of employment for individuals and dependents
- Through Maven Clinic, Surdna provides up to \$100,000 lifetime coverage for family-building and reproductive health, including fertility treatments, adoption, and surrogacy
- Retirement plan with an overall employer contribution of 12% per annum of gross salary, regardless of employee contribution

- Flexible time off policy that empowers staff to take time as needed for rest, self-care, and personal responsibilities
- 8 wellness days per year
- 12 paid holidays, including select extended holiday breaks with foundation-wide closure to encourage restorative time-off
- All employees receive a foundation-issued cell phone
- Home office equipment allowance
- Employer-funded transit contribution of \$140/month
- Access to professional development opportunities (capacity and financial support) and tuition reimbursement
- Fully paid parent leave (maternal and paternal) during the new child's first year (born into the family or adopted)
- Financial relocation support
- To encourage community giving, Surdna matches employee charitable contributions at a 5:1 ratio, with a minimum \$100 donation eligible for matching

## Contact

DSG | Koya has been exclusively retained for this engagement, which is being led by Sarah Avendaño. Submit a compelling cover letter and resume by [filling out our Talent Profile](#). All inquiries are strictly confidential.

DSG | Koya is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to individuals living with disabilities. If you are a qualified individual living with a disability and need assistance expressing interest online, please email [NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com](mailto:NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com). If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.

The Surdna Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and considers all applications without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, disability, socio-economic status, marital or veteran status, pregnancy status, or sexual orientation.

## About DSG | Koya

DSG | Koya, a DSG Global company, is the nation's premier search firm dedicated to mission-driven leadership. Since its founding in 2004, DSG | Koya has had an exclusive focus on mission-driven clients and was founded on the belief that the right leader can transform an organization and have a deep and measurable impact on our world. DSG | Koya works with nonprofits & NGOs, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

DSG Global is consistently recognized by Forbes on its top 10 list of "America's Best Executive Recruiting Firms" and is an industry leader in recruiting transformational leaders for a changing world. The firm is deliberately different in its approach, with best-in-class teams who have decades of experience in cultivating inclusive leaders, understanding the dimensions of diversity, and building equitable teams.

Learn more about DSG | Koya via the [firm's website](#).