

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YOUTH CITY LEARNING NETWORK (NYCLN)

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC), a not-for-profit organization devoted to the advancement of social science research and scholarship, invites applications for the position of Director of the New Youth City Learning Network.

BACKGROUND

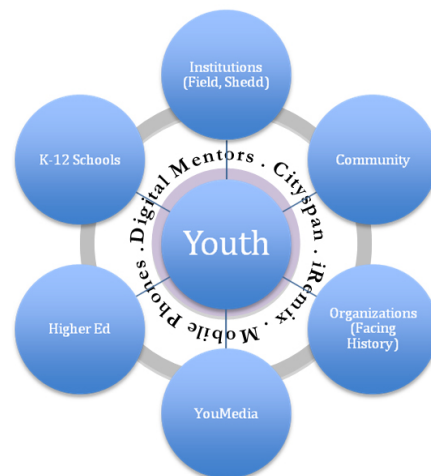
In 2005, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation established a new grantmaking area in Digital Media and Learning. Representing an investment of more than \$80 million to date, the effort is focused on understanding how digital media are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize and participate in civic life, as well as how institutions are adapting to these changes.

As part of this initiative, the Foundation has invested in the creation of a Learning Network, with starter chapters in New York City and Chicago. The rationale behind a Learning Network is two-fold:

First, the belief is that, today, the school is not the sole provider in a community's educational system. Every day, young people move among different learning opportunities. These opportunities—which can be found in formal or informal, physical or virtual environments—are increasingly defined by learners' personal interests and social networks and less by geographic proximity.

Second, is the capacity of new technologies and media to provide the necessary integration and coordination between formal and informal, virtual and physical learning environments. When designed to link together, these multiple environments can create a learning network in which youth can more easily find and engage “anytime, anywhere” learning opportunities.

A Learning Network is defined as a group of youth-serving institutions—libraries, museums, community-based organizations, school and afterschool programs, media companies, etc—working together to create and connect learning opportunities for local middle and high school aged youth. The goal is to do this by innovating with new technologies for learning (including, but not limited to social media, learning games, and mobile devices) as well as new cooperative ways of organizing (such as openly shared assets or collectively managed resources).



Beginning in January 2009, a group of diverse organizations throughout New York City have come together to plan and pilot the New Youth City Learning Network (NYCLN). In 2011, the NYCLN looks forward to expanding its organizational membership and youth participation under the leadership of a full-time Director. Building and running the Learning Network requires close collaboration among the cities so that efforts are not duplicated unnecessarily and so that standards and guidelines for all functions of the Network remain consistent.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The position of NYCLN Director is a full-time position with full benefits. The position will be housed at the Social Science Research Council. It will begin in the first quarter of 2011.

The Director will work closely with two internal groups: The NYC Community Trust and the Steering Committee. The NYC Community Trust is equivalent to a fund manager and is responsible for administering the NYCLN Program Fund. The NYCLN Steering Committee is equivalent to a Board of Directors and is responsible for overseeing programmatic, policy and organizational decisions.

The Director will also work directly with the members of the NYCLN, the staff of the Chicago Learning Network and the Learning Network Leadership Team.

Responsibilities

The NYCLN Director's primary roles and responsibilities include:

Strategy Development. The NYCLN will be overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from NYCLN institutions. The Director must work closely with this group and other subcommittees on a regular basis to strategize goals, discuss progress, and drive these teams to decisions in order to maintain project schedule and meet milestones. The NYCLN requires a Director who can clearly envision and articulate the practical execution of the strategy.

Partnership Management. The purpose of the NYCLN is to create and maintain "blended" learning opportunities for youth that cut across multiple locations and organizations. The Director will be responsible for overseeing the development and management of a diverse portfolio of opportunities that can serve the youth of NYC. This will require recruiting organizational members that vary in missions and goals but building and maintaining common purposes and strong relationships among them.

Project Management. As the NYCLN continues to develop and mature, the Director will need to prioritize, refine and implement work plans regularly. Multiple tracks of activities must occur simultaneously, while others must occur chronologically. The Director will also have direct responsibility for implementing certain aspects of the NYCLN on behalf of the member institutions while at the same time building the internal capacity of NYCLN members. The Director should be strong in process development and management.

Impact Measurement. The Director will be responsible for working with stakeholders, including academic researchers, to create appropriate evaluation methods and metrics, both formative and summative. Funds will be available to hire contractors to execute this plan, but the Director will be responsible for its implementation.

Fundraising. While funding currently exists to support the NYCLN for the next three years, a financial plan must be created early in the Director's tenure to ensure the Network's sustainability. In addition to planning, the Director will also be responsible for assisting the NYC Community Trust with fundraising activities made on behalf of the NYCLN.

Qualifications

Previous Experience

- Minimum of 7-10 years of professional experience in educational leadership, nonprofit management or in a digital media field
- 5-7 years of project management experience, including significant stakeholder management roles and responsibilities

- 5-7 years of program and budget management
- 2-3 years experience in managing collaborative programs relying on a shared technology platform or digital infrastructure
- A proven decision maker with a track record for successfully designing, implementing and evaluating large-scale initiatives, involving diverse institutions or organizations
- Entrepreneurial experience in start up organizations, business or program initiatives preferred

Skills and Knowledge

- Adept at attracting, developing and maintaining partnerships ranging from businesses to government entities and from foundations to youth
- Interest in and experience with informal learning institutions (e.g., museums, afterschool programs)
- Experience and fluency with new technologies and social media
- Understanding of youth practices with new technologies and social media for learning “anywhere, anytime”
- Advocacy for the learner point-of-view and ability to maximize programmatic opportunities for youth-centered, interest-driven learning
- Must enjoy working in a collaborative environment and have experience facilitating diverse individual and institutional constituents
- Clear communication and strong public speaking skills
- Ability to operationalize a complex vision and to move seamlessly between high level and low level details in managing and executing that vision
- Build, motivate and promote a high quality staff, and an ability to manage personnel remotely
- Flexibility and willingness to listen to stakeholders and iterate plans accordingly, while still ensuring that progress toward milestones is made
- Comfortable hiring and managing technology consultants and negotiating MOUs and contracts for provision of large-scale data platforms and content management systems
- Familiarity with New York City education systems, nonprofit sectors and/or informal learning institutions is a must

Education

- Bachelor's degree required; graduate degree preferred in learning sciences, education, management, or equivalent experience

Salary and Benefits

Annual salary will be commensurate with experience. This is a full-time position with benefits, including health, dental, vision, disability and life insurance; gym reimbursement; outstanding pension plan and tax savings programs; generous vacation and sick leave; and more.

Applications

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, but should be received by February 26th, 2011. Ideally, the position will be filled by April 1, 2011.

To apply, candidates must send a detailed letter of application, resume and/or curriculum vitae and three references.

E-mail: Applications@ssrc.org (please indicate “NYCLN Director” in the subject)

Mail: New Youth City Learning Network, Director Search
Human Resources Department
One Pierrepont Plaza, 15th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

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