

# Associate Program Officer, Oceans Program

## Position Description

Classification: Full-time, Exempt

Position Reports to: Program Officer, Oceans

Location: Chicago, IL or San Diego, CA

Date Created: August 30, 2021

**We are looking for a talented individual who wants to join a dynamic team that is working to fundamentally change our world through philanthropy and investing.**

## About Builders Initiative/Builders Vision

The Builders Initiative (BI) is a private foundation established by a member of the Walton Family and his wife (the “Principals”). BI is the philanthropic arm of Builders Vision (BV), the Principals’ broader family office, which also includes a direct investing team (venture capital and private equity); an asset management team; and an operations team: all committed to the vision of a **humane and healthy planet**. Collectively BV is focused on four core issue areas:

- **A more humane and healthy food system**, with a focus on sustainable agriculture and food production, the welfare of farmed animals, and equitable access to healthy food in Chicago.
- **Sustainably managed and healthy ocean ecosystems**, with a focus on scalable innovations in fisheries management, restorative aquaculture to provide ecosystem benefits and healthy seafood, and resilience strategies to protect ocean habitats against climate change.
- **Renewable energy for all**, with a focus on accelerating the pace to 80% renewable penetration and planting seeds for the remaining 20%.
- **A flourishing, democratized arts sector**, with a focus on enabling artists to enhance communities through visual arts and storytelling and to lead communities to connect in Chicago and the Rural Midwest.

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BV's mission is **shifting markets and minds for good**. BI and BV do this by applying a range of tools including grant-making, policy advocacy, strategic communications, impact investing, and direct investing to play three key roles:

1. Demonstrating economic viability: Showing that sustainable goods and services can be profitable for producers and accessible for consumers;
2. Building systems: Investing in the "missing pieces" for market development; and
3. Challenging mental models: Engaging in targeted activities that create new knowledge, change cultural norms, and make the case for change.

Given this variety of tools and roles, BI's partners include non-profits, researchers, alliances, governments, peer investors and donors, companies, makers, and entrepreneurs committed to a better future. BI currently grants out about \$50M-\$70M, expected to scale significantly over the next few years. In addition, the foundation expects to deploy substantially more resources in mission-related investments over the coming years.

BV's other entities, while well-established in their investing activities, are still in the very early stages of defining and implementing impact strategies to complement their investment approaches and the impact aspirations of the overall office. However, that process is now underway.

When appropriate, BV and the Principals also collaborate with the Walton Family Foundation (WFF) and other individual members of the Walton family to further shared social and environmental goals. They also rely upon many services provided by a central family office, Walton Enterprises, Inc. (WEI), based out of Bentonville, Arkansas. This office serves the needs of the broader Walton family and includes dedicated staff for the Principals.

### **Position Summary**

At the Builders Initiative our Oceans Program strives to secure sustainably managed and healthy ocean ecosystems as a pillar of global environmental recovery, a driver of economic growth, and a foundation for food and climate security and human health.

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We are looking for an Associate Program Officer to join our Oceans build and develop our partnership with grantees, mainly focused around scaling sustainable fisheries management, catalyzing restorative aquaculture and building solutions for climate resilience in the ocean. As we build out our programs in specific places (Maine, Pacific Northwest, San Diego, Gulf Coast, Baja and Bahamas) we are looking to further partnerships with diverse organizations and initiatives that are developing ocean health initiatives that center inclusion in their programs, support local indigenous communities, and drive equitable solutions for ocean health.

The position will primarily focus on grant making and will encompass other responsibilities as well.

- Develop, execute and manage grants, program related investments, recoverable grants and other innovative instruments
  - Conduct due diligence on organizations, their leadership and capacity to carry out programs
  - Define grant terms and expectations
  - Obtain agreement on reasonable outputs and outcomes including how they will be measured and reported
  - Review budgets for appropriate expenditures
  - Conduct site visits
  - Help facilitate decision making processes
- Manage grantee and stakeholder relationships with integrity and authenticity
- Support partners beyond providing funds, including connecting with other grantees, technical assistance and helping raise additional funds
- Coordinate with peer grant officers to support development of strategic portfolios and oversee discreet grant portfolios
- Build strong partnerships as relevant to the place- and strategy-based work
- Support development of advisory committees, investment funds or other tools to support strategy
- Partners with Learning and Evaluation team support our learning culture, identify key lessons learned and apply learning to future strategy
- Partner with Communications team to share and celebrate our partners work
- To support our grantmaking you will also engage in operations related to our grantmaking and growing foundation

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- Oversee data maintenance, systems development and office-wide coordination for portfolio
  - Manage workflow and processes through effective project management, and clear, customized, and concise communication
  - As part of a growing foundation, you may also be asked to manage other projects and assignments as requested, and will have opportunities to engage cross-office.

### **Experience and Basic Qualifications**

*We realize that people's lived experiences and motivations for entering the philanthropic space vary greatly. Given this, we are open to a wide range of experience and education backgrounds.*

- 4+ years working in a professional, social-change setting including:
  - 3+ years of related project management experience
  - Experience in oceans related issues a plus
  - Demonstrated experience working with a Principal on their philanthropy is a plus
- Experience developing social impact strategies and projects:
  - Experience executing a philanthropy portfolio will be strongly prioritized, including:
    - Developing strategic and practical grant proposals and managing grants
    - Experience in participatory grantmaking
    - Experience facilitating decision making processes is a plus
  - Building and maintaining relationships with partners –including grantees, peer funders, and other movement partners
  - Tracking progress and evaluating success; learning lessons from tough and/or unexpected situations a plus
- Experience practicing dynamic leadership – sharing responsibility, accountability, and planning across team, regardless of roles; and stepping into roles of leadership that may require robust learning, delegation, and collaboration
- Location in (or willingness to relocate to) Chicago or San Diego is highly preferred.
  - Willingness to travel up to 30% time visiting locally and nationally with impact partners (grantees, nonprofits, peer foundations, and other leaders)

*Additional characteristics that would support a candidate's success:*

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- Shares the Builders Vision’s values of bravery and creativity; beginner’s mindset; integrity with humility; diversity and collaboration; and making the world better. It is vital that this candidate has a deep passion for The Builders Initiative’s vision, mission and roles in social change.
    - Value being a team player, operating with a great sense of collaboration and diplomacy, with a commitment to teamwork –treating other people with respect and dignity, while resolving issues in ways that preserve and strengthen key relationships
    - Engage comfortably in growth roles and delegation.
    - Prioritize practical solutions-based thinking
  - Prioritizes process and result mutually, focusing on relationship building, listening, and co-creation
    - Client service; ability to assess and meet the Principals’ goals and preferences, curate information, elevate appropriate decisions and represent the Principal appropriately. A passion to serve in a way that demonstrates respect and care for family and staff and exceeds expectations
    - Community orientation and servant leadership; respects partners of all types uniformly and view partners as peers. Practices integrating listening and findings into strategic planning and grant decisions.
    - Strategic networks: Builds partnerships in service to alignment and “togetherness,” sometimes with unexpected allies
  - Practice great detail-orientation and system thinking. You like to collect and streamline data for access and application. You demonstrate intellectual agility through analysis of complex data and effectively synthesize information and glean key points from research as well as interactions with the Principals and others
  - Communicate well: in person, via phone, and through written communication
  - Are technology savvy: very skilled with Word, PowerPoint and Excel, and learn other programs – such as Slack, Salesforce, Ally, Airtable – readily
  - Possess unquestionable ethics and personal integrity.

### **Other Duties**

Please note this position description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the candidate in this position. Duties, responsibilities and activities may evolve or change over time.

**To apply: Submit your resume to Jessica Sporleder at [jsporleder@weioffice.com](mailto:jsporleder@weioffice.com).**

*Builders Vision is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to building and maintaining a culturally diverse workplace. We encourage women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race,*

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*religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, status of protected veteran, among other things or status as a qualified individual with a disability.*