

Program Specialist

Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Bemidji MN

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF) is one of the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) established by the McKnight Foundation in 1986 to assist Minnesota's rural regions during the farm crisis in the 1980s. As the region's MIF and the only community foundation in the region, NMF has been serving the vast nonprofit community in northwest Minnesota for more than 30 years.

NMF provides grants and loans to organizations and small businesses and scholarships to individuals within the 12-county region and the two tribal nations. Since its founding, NMF has invested millions to help make the region a better place to live and work.

Position Description

The Program Specialist plays a dynamic, and highly collaborative support role within the Programs Division. This position contributes to meaningful regional work every day—helping communities access resources, supporting projects that strengthen northwest Minnesota, and amplifying program impact through thoughtful communication and data practices.

The Program Specialist organizes, coordinates, communicates, and supports a variety of Foundation initiatives and program activities. This position helps keep projects moving forward, maintains strong organizational systems, and ensures programs, partners, and staff remain well supported and connected.

Duties & Responsibilities

You will assist, collaborate, support, prepare, organize, update, and communicate across the following areas:

Program & Project Coordination

- Assist and support implementation of program activities, projects, and initiatives across assigned program areas.
- Assist Program Officers and Program Managers with planning, scheduling, tracking deliverables, and maintaining project timelines.
- Coordinate follow-up activities to ensure projects remain organized, documented, and progressing toward established timelines.

Job Details

Industry

Community Foundation

Employment Type

Full-Time

Employment Status

Non-Exempt

Job Functions

Public Coordination

Direct Reports

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Position Reports To

Community Health &
Wellness Senior Program
Manager

Career Pathway

A200

Meeting & Event Support

- Assist with coordination of logistics for meetings, trainings, convenings, and community engagement activities.
- Prepare meeting materials, support virtual and in-person event administration, document meeting outcomes, and assist with follow-up activities and task tracking

Community & Partner Relations

- Serve as a professional and welcoming point of contact for community members, partners, advisory groups, vendors, consultants, and other stakeholders.
- Respond to inquiries, provide information and referrals, and help connect partners with appropriate Foundation resources and opportunities.

Communications & Outreach

- Support program communications, outreach, and engagement efforts through maintenance of contact lists, preparation of communication materials, coordination of mailings, and assistance with surveys, events, and outreach campaigns.
- Assist with creation, editing, and distribution of program and partner communications

Data & Records Management

- Maintain accurate program records, files, databases, and documentation in accordance with Foundation policies and funding requirements.
- Assist with data collection, reporting, survey administration, record retention, and quality assurance activities.
- Compile and maintain routine reports, tracking tools, and program data to support program management and decision-making.

Grants, Contracts & Financial Support

- Assist with administrative processes related to grants, contracts, consultant agreements, invoices, reimbursements, and other program transactions.
- Support documentation collection, routing, approvals, and record maintenance to ensure compliance with Foundation procedures and funding requirements.

Shared Organizational Support

- Contribute to Foundation-wide operations through shared administrative responsibilities, including reception coverage, mail processing, phone support, and other organizational support activities as assigned.
- Responsibilities may vary based on assigned program area, organizational priorities, and Foundation initiatives. The Program Specialist is expected to adapt to changing needs and contribute to a wide range of programmatic, administrative, communication, and operational activities.
- Provide administrative support to the Community Health & Wellness Senior Program Manager, including scheduling assistance, calendar coordination, meeting preparation, note-taking, follow-up tracking, and other administrative support activities necessary to support program operations and priorities.
- Other duties as assigned.

What success looks like:

- You bring warmth, curiosity, and enthusiasm to your work.
- You communicate clearly, kindly, and professionally with colleagues and community members.
- You maintain exceptional accuracy in documentation, data entry, and record management.
- You help create smooth, well-coordinated workflows across projects, partners, and teams.
- You strengthen the Programs Division through positivity, reliability, and proactive follow-through.
- The Northwest Minnesota Foundation is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive workplace that reflects the communities we serve. You actively seek opportunities to grow your skills and strengthen our work across the region.

Obligations

Ownership of:

- Accurate and well-organized program records and documentation.
- Timely coordination of contracts, invoices, and required program paperwork.
- Data quality within designated program databases and information systems.
- Maintenance of program files and compliance documentation.

Will collaborate in:

- Program outreach and community-focused communication efforts.
- Cross-team project coordination and shared project communication.
- Development of program communication and data workflow
- Community Health & Wellness team support.

Qualifications

Required:

- Associate degree (A.A.) or higher or two years of relevant work experience.
- Minimum two years of experience in administrative coordination, nonprofit, business, or community development.
- Proficiency with Excel, CRM/data systems, and digital communication tools.
- Strong organizational, communication, and relationship-building skills.

Preferred:

- Bachelor's degree in business, community development, economic development, or related field.
- Knowledge of NMF programs or community development processes.
- Experience collaborating with consultants or vendors.
- Passion for NMF's mission and enthusiasm for community-focused work.

Job Information

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation follows an equal opportunity employment policy and employs personnel without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, pregnancy, veteran status, military obligations, and marital status. This policy applies to hiring, wages, internal promotions, training, opportunities for advancement, and terminations.

- This position offers a competitive salary (minimum \$50,255 to a maximum of \$72,590), commensurate with experience and qualifications.
- The primary location for this position is the Foundation's headquarters in Bemidji, Minnesota. However, a flexible/hybrid option is available where the employee is expected to be physically at the headquarters for an agreed upon number of days and has the option to work from a remote work location the other days.
- This position will require travel locally and regionally. There is the potential for state-wide, or national travel.