# President & CEO

## Robert Sterling Clark Foundation

**New York, NY**

Salary: $300,000 to $325,000

# Background

## The Organization

Robert Sterling Clark Foundation (RSCF) supports the people and organizations working to build a more just, equitable, and vibrant New York City. A private foundation with a strong commitment to leadership development, it invests in the people who lead change and the relationships that help them do their work well.

The foundation practices trust-based philanthropy through sustained relationships with grantee partners, flexible support, and a willingness to listen and learn. Its approach recognizes that nonprofit leaders understand their organizations and communities, and that a funder can be most useful when it responds to their priorities. Alongside grants, the foundation offers opportunities for peer learning, convening, and connection.

Robert Sterling Clark Foundation has helped advance trust-based philanthropy nationally while maintaining a strong focus on New York City. Its small team works closely with nonprofit leaders and philanthropic peers to share learning and strengthen the sector. The foundation is also exploring how its investment portfolio can more fully support its mission with an expansion to impact investing.

## The Position

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President & CEO will lead the foundation through its next chapter. During the past decade, under the leadership of Phil Li, RSCF has deepened its commitment to supporting leadership, promoting equity, and defining and expanding trust-based philanthropy. Through practices including sustained collaboration with grantee partners and providing support "beyond the check", RSCF has emerged as a more relational, adaptive, and values-led institution. The next leader will build on this work and bring a curiosity about what is possible and the ability to develop a shared direction with trustees and staff. This is an opportunity to build on trusted relationships and a distinctive approach to philanthropy while examining how the foundation can have the greatest impact in the years ahead.

The President & CEO will oversee strategy, grantmaking, staff leadership, financial stewardship, and external engagement. Success will require comfort moving among these responsibilities: speaking on the national stage about trust-based philanthropy or non-profit leadership development, listening to a grantee, coaching a colleague, reviewing a budget, and helping the board make consequential decisions. The foundation seeks a leader who combines emotional intelligence with sound judgment, clear expectations, and consistent follow-through.

# Role Overview

## Strategic Leadership and Board Partnership

- Work with the board and staff to articulate the foundation's next phase of strategy, drawing on its leadership development work, grantee relationships, and learning from the field.
- Translate that strategy into clear priorities, realistic plans, and shared goals. Help trustees assess progress, understand tradeoffs, and make timely decisions.
- Build a candid, productive relationship with the board chair and individual trustees. Prepare clear materials, communicate emerging issues early, and follow through on decisions.
- Bring together differing perspectives, address disagreement directly and respectfully, and clarify the respective responsibilities of governance and management.

# Role Overview (cont.)

## Grantmaking and Grantee Partnership

- Guide grantmaking with staff and the board, ensuring that funding decisions reflect the foundation's mission, available resources, and understanding of community needs.
- Sustain trust-based practices through accessible communication, meaningful relationships, and support that respects grantees' expertise and time.
- Maintain direct relationships with grantee partners and participate in learning conversations, convenings, and other opportunities to understand their work.
- Assess how to balance continuity for existing partners with openness to new organizations, ideas, and relationships across New York City.
- Strengthen the foundation's approach to learning and assessing progress, using grantee perspectives and appropriate evidence to inform decisions without imposing unnecessary reporting burdens.

## Team Leadership and Organizational Management

- Lead and develop a small, experienced current team of five people, preserving a culture of care and collaboration while providing clear supervision, decision-making authority, and accountability.
- Set priorities with staff, clarify roles and workloads, and establish consistent practices for feedback, professional development, and performance conversations.
- Remain accessible and engaged in day-to-day work. Identify where additional expertise, systems, or outside support would help the team deliver effectively.

## Financial Stewardship and Operations

- Oversee the foundation's budget, grant commitments, financial reporting, and long-term sustainability in partnership with staff, trustees, and external advisers.
- Work with the board and investment advisers to oversee the endowment, understand portfolio performance and risk, and advance the foundation's investment philosophy.
- Ensure dependable operational systems, appropriate internal controls, and timely coordination of audits, required filings, human resources policies and protocols, and legal and regulatory compliance.

## External Relationships and Field Leadership

- Represent the foundation with credibility and care among nonprofit leaders, philanthropic peers, and other partners in New York City and nationally.
- Communicate the foundation's purpose and learning clearly through conversation, writing, convenings, and public engagement.
- Develop relationships beyond existing networks, creating opportunities for collaboration and introducing grantee partners to resources and people who can support their work.
- Contribute to the continued development of trust-based philanthropy and leadership development, bringing curiosity and openness to perspectives that differ from the foundation's own.

# The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will understand the realities of nonprofit leadership and bring the confidence to lead a foundation whose influence depends on the quality of its relationships. They will demonstrate the following competencies:

### Builds Trust and Relationships

Listens carefully, follows through, and treats people with respect regardless of their role or access to resources. Recognizes the power dynamics in philanthropy and creates room for honest feedback.

### Thinks Strategically and Incorporates Learning

Connects the foundation's mission to practical choices about resources and priorities. Tests assumptions, learns from experience, and adapts without losing sight of long-term goals.

### Acts Entrepreneurially

Sees opportunities and pursues them with creativity and resourcefulness. Tries new approaches, forms creative partnerships, and looks for ways to expand the foundation's reach.

### Leads People and Delivers

Develops others, sets clear expectations, and addresses difficult issues directly. Balances shared leadership with the responsibility to make decisions and ensure that work gets done.

### Communicates and Builds Alignment

Explains complex ideas in plain language, listens across differences, and helps people work toward a shared direction. Can engage a board in substantive discussion and communicate decisions clearly to staff and partners.

### Exercises Sound Judgment

Makes thoughtful financial and organizational decisions, asks good questions of advisers, and weighs opportunity alongside risk. Remains steady when circumstances are uncertain and is willing to acknowledge and correct mistakes.

## Additional Qualifications

- Significant senior leadership experience in a nonprofit, foundation, or related organization, with responsibility for staff, strategy, and financial management.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and to the principles of trust-based philanthropy, reflected in how they lead, allocate resources, and engage partners.
- Experience working effectively with a governing board and translating organizational priorities into goals and accountable execution.
- Strong financial literacy, including the ability to oversee budgets and work productively with investment, accounting, and legal advisers. Experience with endowments or mission-aligned investing is valuable.
- Understanding of New York City's nonprofit and civic landscape, or a demonstrated ability and commitment to develop that understanding and build relationships across the city.
- Experience supporting leadership development, peer learning, or organizational change. Prior foundation employment is welcome but is not the only path to this role.

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## Who We Are

### Work Environment

The foundation values relationships, flexibility, and learning. Team members collaborate across functions and bring their experience to a broad range of work. The President & CEO should enjoy leading in a small organization and be prepared to contribute directly alongside colleagues.
The role is hybrid, with offices in New York City.

## Compensation and Benefits

### Salary

$300,000 - $325,000

The President & CEO benefits package currently includes:

- Medical, dental, and vision insurance: Coverage begins on the first day of employment. The Foundation pays the full monthly premium, with no employee contribution.
- Individual life insurance: The Foundation pays the premium during employment. Upon separation, the employee may keep the policy and pay the premiums directly.
- Group disability insurance: Includes short- and long-term disability coverage.
- 403(b) retirement plan: After three months of employment, the Foundation contributes an amount equal to 15% of the President & CEO's salary. This is an employer contribution, not a match based on the employee's contributions.
- Paid time off: 20 days, available after the first three months of employment.
- Holidays: 10 paid holidays.
- Summer Fridays: Six, scheduled between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
- Sabbatical: After seven years of service, the President & CEO is eligible for a three-month sabbatical, as outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- Hybrid work schedule.
- Professional development: $5,000 annually.

## Timeline and Next Steps

If you are interested in this position, please click here. All applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of their application.

We encourage candidates of all backgrounds to apply even if you do not meet all of the qualifications outlined above. If you are selected to move forward for an initial screening call, we expect you to hear from us by November 2026.

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