

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Foundation Summary

Established in 2014, the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation began as an arts-centered philanthropy making grants related to the collections of our founders. In 2020, we broadened our strategic priorities to include a new focus on rural education. Our mission within this field is to increase opportunities and access to quality education and high wage careers while improving life outcomes for rural young people in the Texas Panhandle. In 2024, we launched the Thoma Scholars Program which offers scholarships to students at our first two partner universities of Oklahoma State University and Texas Tech University.

Position Description

In this new, broad-reaching position for the Foundation, the Research Association will work across departments and topics, providing the research, insights and presentations necessary to continue the Foundation's reach across the arts, education and our granting programs.

Your 50,000-foot view of research will be essential to the more granular, daily work of our curators, communications and scholarship team. You will be conducting pivotal research that will inform ongoing decisions, the creation of new programs, and charged with thinking through systems design, evaluation tactics, and broad strategic vision. You will work cross-functionally with the Foundation to provide planning, execution, and monitoring of programmatic initiatives and focus areas, serving as a key point of contact and thought partner to all departments and teams.

This position is located in Dallas, TX.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Conduct short- and long-term research in connection with current and new program initiatives and prepare clear and concise summaries of this research.
- Keep Foundation leadership up to date on legislative and policy issues in education across our Southwestern target region that will impact decision making.
- As assigned, prepare briefing materials and reports for the Founder and Director or other program leadership, as assigned.
- Research a robust network of stakeholders and decision-makers in education and the arts, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Actively assist with additional projects/research as needed; demonstrating capacity to respond to shifting priorities and resourcing needs.
- Work with each department to draft strategy memos or research-driven policy recommendations informing current and future grant initiatives.
- Transition smoothly between big-picture thinking and analyzing fine-grain details as you evaluate how Foundation mission and policy are reflected in specific programs.

Skills and Qualifications

To be successful, you should bring together advanced research and communications skills with demonstrated field-specific expertise. This role requires balancing strong analytical skills with the soft skills required to create strong relationships with decision makers and prospective grantees.

- MA/Ph.D./Ed.D. required
- 5 years of progressive work experience, ideally within education and/or a philanthropic organization
- Dynamic systems thinker
- Passion for arts and education and a drive to stay informed on the latest in the field through literature reviews, reading studies, and interviewing other experts
- Analytical and reporting skills with a sharp eye for accuracy and detail

- Exceptional organizational and project management skills, with the ability to independently coordinate and lead multiple projects simultaneously with a focus on quality and project follow-through
- Ability to frame and communicate research to Foundation leadership and staff, as well as to external audiences
- Confidence to ask pertinent questions and to grasp concepts quickly and think beyond specific tasks
- Interpersonal skills to empathetically navigate the power dynamics that exist within philanthropy
- Adaptable workstyle suited to team projects, individual research, and pursuing directives from the Founder

Location and Hours

The property is located in Dallas, TX at our headquarter office/gallery.
Monday through Friday 8:30am to 5pm.

To Apply

To apply, please send your cover letter, resume or C.V. and a writing sample of no more than 10 pages to TFjobs@thomafoundation.org.

Further information about the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation and the Thoma Scholar Program can be found at <https://thomafoundation.org>.