

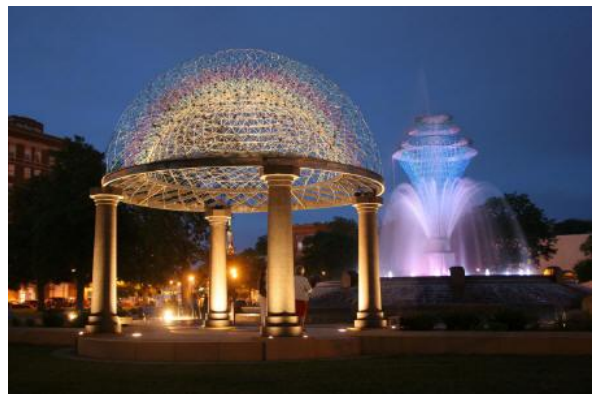
LEADERSHIP PROFILE



President & CEO **Iowa West Foundation** Council Bluffs, IA

THE CLIENT

From modest beginnings in 1994, the Iowa West Foundation has evolved into the largest grantmaking foundation in Iowa and one of the largest in the Midwest. The Foundation receives its funding from investment income and from the Iowa West Racing Association, a separate nonprofit entity, which in turn collects fees from operators of three casinos based in the Foundation's service area.



The Iowa West Racing Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was created in 1984, a result of Iowa laws requiring that gaming licenses be held or sponsored by nonprofit organizations. (IWRA is the license holder for Horseshoe Casino and the license sponsor for two riverboat casinos, Ameristar and Harrah's.) Thus are derived two sources of income for the Foundation:

1. The riverboat operators pay license fees to IWRA, which in turn distributes those fees to the Iowa West Foundation for charitable purposes.
2. Two transactions in 1999 and 2004 involving Bluffs Run (Horseshoe Casino's predecessor) resulted in significant increases in the Foundation's corpus and resultant investment income available for charitable purposes.

The CEO of the Iowa West Foundation also serves as Executive Director of the Iowa West Racing Association. The two organizations have separate boards of

directors, although they often meet jointly. Only one board member is a member of both boards.

The Iowa West Foundation has become an important source for charitable and community projects throughout its service area. Through 2010, the Foundation had made cumulative grants of over \$270 million in support of scores of communities, nonprofits and initiatives in 18 counties contiguous to the Foundation's headquarters community in Council Bluffs, Iowa. As of December 31, 2010, the Foundation had a corpus of \$316 million; the figure at this writing is closer to \$350 million.

In 2007, the Foundation completed two assessment exercises, a communitywide needs assessment and an organizational assessment. The Foundation's mission statement flows from that work:

The mission of the Iowa West Foundation is to improve lives and strengthen communities for today and future generations. We do this by providing leadership, creating partnerships, leveraging resources and serving as a catalyst in identifying and supporting community needs.

In support of its mission, the Foundation is pursuing an ambitious vision:

Our vision is community where families choose to live, and businesses choose to locate, because of its quality of life and standard of living.

Iowa West focuses its grantmaking around four special interest areas, broadly construed:

- Community development and beautification¹
- Economic development
- Education
- Human and social needs

Within Pottawattamie County, the Foundation's home county, Iowa West has embraced two overarching goals:

¹ Several of the pictures in this Leadership Profile are of artworks acquired or commissioned by Iowa West Public Art, an initiative of the Iowa West Foundation. A more complete display is available at www.IowaWestPublicArt.org.

1. Assisting local schools in reducing the high school drop-out rate, including to help increase educational attainment opportunities for Pottawattamie County citizens
2. Improving lives and transforming neighborhoods in Council Bluffs and in local communities throughout Pottawattamie County.

In addition, the Foundation respects its special place in the fabric of the community and remains open to meeting special nonrecurring needs of an urgent nature. One example is the recent grant of \$515,000 in flood recovery assistance provided to the local American Red Cross, a response to recent floods in southwestern Iowa and eastern Nebraska, as announced [here](#).²

Full detail on the Foundation's recent grants can be found in *Powering Transformations*, the 2010 annual report, available [here](#).³ Annual reports from the last seven years are available [here](#).⁴ Complete information on the

Foundation can be found on its website [here](#).⁵

Over the past two years, the Foundation's leadership has made great progress against six more specific goals:

- Develop a high-impact, outcomes-oriented, customer-focused grantmaking program that provides value to our community and opportunities for continuous learning
- Strengthen the capacity of Board and staff to take Foundation

improvements to the next level

- Increase the Foundation's efforts to promote greater collaboration and learning among grantees
- Complete preliminary planning and begin to implement innovative philanthropic investment practices and vehicles to leverage increased public and private resources that advance the Foundation's mission
- Continue to partner with casino operators and effectively oversee investments resulting in the preservation of grantmaking and administrative funding

²http://www.redcrossomaha.org/detalle_noticias.asp?id=9987&SN=200&OP=7550&IDCapitulo=V4N8M8Z9T9

³<http://www.iowawestfoundation.org/downloads/IWF%202010%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁴<http://www.iowawestfoundation.org/igsbase/igstemplate.cfm/SRC=DB/SRCN=/GnavID=16/SnavID=11/TnavID=17>

⁵<http://www.iowawestfoundation.org/index.cfm>



- Continue to be a catalyst for the Foundation's overarching goals of educational attainment and neighborhood/community transformation; additionally, support major projects that improve the image and quality of life in Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County.

The Foundation is governed by a strong board of directors of leading citizens drawn from the surrounding

communities, all of whom serve without pay. Because of the impact of term limits, the Foundation anticipates electing a significant number of new board members in the coming years.

For the past eight years, Iowa West has been ably led by CEO Todd Graham, who apprised the board this summer of his decision to return to his home town of Richmond, Virginia, to take on a new philanthropic leadership role there.⁶ The board expects to conclude the search for his successor in the first quarter of 2012.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Iowa West Foundation is at a wonderful juncture in its evolution as a major force in its community. With per capita assets exceeding those of far larger foundations, Iowa West is already a transformative influence in its region, and yet community needs and outlets for engagement and support always exceed the available resources.

The role of CEO at Iowa West Foundation is a highly nuanced one. The Foundation is clearly the largest philanthropic player in Council Bluffs and all but one of the communities it serves (the exception being Omaha, a base of significant wealth).

Accordingly, the Foundation takes seriously its role as a catalyst for change, nurturing the advancement of charitable and community interests in its area while promoting capacity-building, sustainability and self-sufficiency wherever appropriate.



⁶ The Foundation's announcement of Mr. Graham's departure can be accessed [here](#).

As the most visible champion of the Foundation's strategy and activities, the CEO must be fully engaged in the broader community, balancing the roles of leader, supporter and steward of assets with sensitivity and subtlety.



Leading a team of highly capable grant officers and program managers, and working in close partnership with a committed board of directors, the CEO will inherit several challenges and opportunities:

- ✓ **Continuesupport** of the Foundation's stated philanthropic objectives, solidifying the Foundation's reputation for responsiveness to community needs while retaining the willingness to sponsor ideas and innovations initiated by the Foundation
- ✓ **Fashion appropriate assessment protocols** to ensure that the Foundation and the larger community are leveraging the lessons learned and maximizing the overall impact of community investments
- ✓ **Foster collaboration and cooperation** with local partners to maximize the value and impact of the Foundation's giving
- ✓ **Strengthen** a true working partnership with the board of directors—making strategic use of board members' time, promoting an environment of mutual trust and respect, and helping ready the board and the community for the next generation of trustees
- ✓ **Expand** the management team's connections with community while preserving the objectivity required for effective grantmaking
- ✓ **Support** the trend towards bold, strategic and innovative grants without neglecting more routine needs that fall within the Foundation's purview

THE LOCATION

The Iowa West Foundation is headquartered in downtown Council Bluffs, Iowa, in the southwestern corner of the state, directly across the Missouri River from Omaha, Nebraska.

As noted elsewhere, the Foundation serves fourteen contiguous counties in southwest Iowa and four counties in eastern Nebraska. All the foundation's staff and trustees reside within the service area.



THE RELATIONSHIPS

The CEO will report to the board of directors of the Iowa West Foundation and will be supported by a small staff currently in place. Judicious additions to the staff may become necessary over time, but both the board and the larger community would view a substantial staff at the Foundation with skepticism.

Because the Foundation is by orders of magnitude the largest philanthropic entity in the region, effective working relationships with stakeholders are essential. Given the Foundation’s impact and visibility in the area, the range of constituencies and stakeholders is even larger that might normally be the case in a community-based foundation.

Reports to	Board of Directors, Iowa West Foundation ⁷
Manages	Team of eight full-time executives and staff plus one Foundation Fellow, who collectively are responsible for Grants & Initiatives, Finance & Administration, Special Projects and administrative support
Other key relationships	Wide array of leaders from the broader community’s key sectors: corporate employers, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, civic associations, governmental units and faith-based entities.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer of the Iowa West Foundation fall into five mutually reinforcing categories:

1. **Executive leadership.** The CEO must ensure that the Foundation’s people, assets, protocols and reputation are structured and managed in a manner consistent with board-approved strategy, sound philanthropic practices and maximum community impact. As the most visible public champion for the Foundation and its activities, the CEO sets the tone for the rest of the organization.
2. **Community leadership.** As head of Iowa’s largest grantmaking organization, the Foundation’s CEO has the special challenge of

⁷ The Foundation CEO can expect to spend 15-20% of his/her time on the Executive Director role at the Iowa West Racing Association, principally during license contract renewal cycles.

⁸ As noted above, the Foundation receives income from fees collected by the Iowa West Racing Association as well

participating in many major discussions and initiatives without dominating any of them. The CEO must be a forceful advocate for the Foundation's strategy, perspective and philanthropic intent, and yet the role of philanthropic leader requires a nuanced understanding of

Iowa West Foundation Grant Funding	
GRANTS	[2010 data]
Community Development and Beautification*	\$6,528,603
Economic Development	\$2,154,175
Education	\$4,009,166
Human and Social Needs	\$3,257,809
Total*	\$15,949,753

relationships, whether with the board, the staff or community at large.

3. **Programmatic leadership:**

Iowa West has undertaken some bold and innovative ideas over the years, and the board would like to see that pattern continue. Because the Foundation has so many opportunities to get involved, the CEO must avoid confusing busyness with impact by ensuring that both

the board and staff make time to engage in the very toughest issues of the day, not just the most pressing ones.

4. **Staff leadership.** The Foundation's staff is abundantly capable and extraordinarily dedicated to addressing the region's most challenging issues. The prior CEO made much progress in building a highly functioning team, with appropriate skills and experience in grantmaking, planning and community outreach. Additionally, he is widely credited with instilling transparency, disciplines and accountability in the Foundation's operations. As the Foundation matures and its programs evolve, the next CEO must ensure that the staff also evolves, learning from its own experiences and profiting from exposure to best practices elsewhere.

5. **Administrative leadership.** The Foundation has a corpus of about \$330,000,000, a grants budget of about \$20,000,000 and an operating budget of \$2.5 million.⁸ The CEO is responsible for the effective stewardship and oversight of the Foundation's financial and operating assets, consistent with Board-approved policies and strategies, by



⁸ As noted above, the Foundation receives income from fees collected by the Iowa West Racing Association as well as income from the Foundation's investments, and thus the spend rate is typically higher than the minimum 5% of asset value required by the IRS.

ensuring that internal and external resources are managed to optimal effect. Iowa West's investments are managed by outside professionals, but the CEO will be directly accountable for the soundness of the Foundation's operating finances, including its budgets, control and audit functions.

THE CANDIDATE

Iowa West Foundation is an equal opportunity employer, and a diverse set of candidates is being sought for formal consideration.



In broad terms, we seek a seasoned nonprofit leader with extensive experience in community-based grantmaking, preferably within contexts consistent with the dynamics and demographics of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the surrounding area.

The search committee is prepared to be creative in its recommendations to the full board. While the ideal candidate will likely be a proven leader in philanthropic management, we are open to considering other backgrounds that encompass exceptional leadership skills, a commitment to philanthropy, a passion for the Foundation's work and a superior fit with the Foundation's community of interests.

The ideal candidate will offer

- A strong background in philanthropy, preferably including grantmaking, policy development, community engagement, and assessment
- Leadership experience within organizations known for their commitment to excellence, transparency and integrity
- Innate respect for the role of the board in place-based philanthropy and a willingness to invest in the board/CEO relationship
- Deep competence within at least one of the Foundation's interest areas. We are not looking for subject matter experts, and we want to avoid anyone with a personal agenda, but portable credibility in an arena important to our work would be an asset
- The financial and managerial skills to develop and lead a robust organization with a light hand
- Excellent people skills, whether dealing with board, staff, political leaders, community activists or critics



- A bold view of what's possible and the tenacity—and patience—to work through the inevitable hurdles to achieve the desired impact
- The presence and confidence to represent the Foundation well in various settings, from intimate one-on-one meetings with local leaders to large forums with many stakeholders
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills exhibited in diverse settings with diverse audiences and formats



Culture: We seek a CEO who exhibits...

- Deep respect for the nonprofit sector, combined with a philanthropic value set
- A reputation for responsiveness, follow-through and timely completion of projects and initiatives
- The cultural sensitivity to thrive in the community. While we do not require that the next CEO come from the Midwest, candidates should be comfortable with midwestern values, work styles and lifestyles, especially those attendant to smaller communities
- Active listening skills, whether dealing with a neighboring mayor, a respected donor or the recipient of a grantee's services
- A healthy sense of humor; someone who takes the work seriously but not him/herself

Character: We expect to hire...

- A highly motivated, energetic and talented professional; a person of integrity, with a values-driven commitment to excellence, a strong work ethic and an innate sense of fairness
- A CEO who models openness, transparency and respect in all dealings while protecting confidences
- An executive comfortable letting a strong team run with initiatives, subject to appropriate checks and balances
- A manager willing to take smart risks, whether on people or projects
- A leader with a demeanor that is confident but not confrontational; someone with low personal ego needs for whom sharing the credit is second nature
- A careful steward of the Foundation's assets, whether people, financial assets, or reputation for thoughtful giving



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- An authentic leader, without artifice or ego, someone for whom such a role could be a calling, not just a profession or a job

The ideal candidate will truly embrace the Foundation's mission and the communities in which it operates. Because of the nature of the region and the Foundation's role in it, the opportunity for the CEO to have lasting impact is very real.

Iowa West Foundation has developed significant momentum, especially in recent years, and its place as a meaningful contributor to the fabric of southwestern Iowa and eastern Nebraska is secure. Just how a particular candidate might add the most value to the Foundation's future will be of special interest to the search committee.

**For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect,
please send an email to**

IWF@BoardWalkConsulting.com

**or call Sam Pettway or Joan Schlachter at
404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).**

