

Position and Candidate Specification



Chief Financial Officer

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The Heising-Simons Foundation (the Foundation) is a family foundation based in Los Altos and San Francisco, California. The [Foundation](#) works with its many partners to advance sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enable groundbreaking research in science, enhance the education of our youngest learners, and support human rights for all people. The Foundation also has initiatives on journalism and local grantmaking, and recently launched a portfolio on Technology and Society through the newly-established CEO Fund.

In 2007, Mark Heising and Liz Simons established the Foundation and were later joined on the Board by their daughter, Caitlin Heising. In 2016, Liz and Mark joined the Giving Pledge, publicly committing much of their wealth to philanthropic causes. You can read the letter they wrote about why they joined [here](#).

With the establishment of sister organization [Heising-Simons Action Fund](#) (Action Fund), the family and staff see increased capacity to leverage politically what the organization seeks to achieve philanthropically. Ultimately, both organizations are dedicated to ensuring that all people, especially people who have been historically marginalized, have access to urgent human needs: childcare, knowledge, a livable earth, and whole, safe, dignified lives.

The Foundation's Board and staff feel incredibly fortunate to work with and support great leaders and organizations in vital endeavors. In 2022, the Foundation awarded more than \$170 million across nearly 616 grants; a comprehensive breakdown of the Foundation's 2022 giving is available on the [HSF grantmaking hub](#). Since its first grant in 2007, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion across over 3,800 grants.

Earlier this year, the Foundation welcomed [Sushma Raman](#) as its next president and CEO to continue the transformational journey of The Heising-Simons Foundation to unlock knowledge, opportunity, and possibilities, and create promising future pathways. With guidance from the Board and under the leadership of the CEO, the Heising-Simons Foundation will embark on a process to lead transformational change, called *Heising-Simons Forward*. The new CFO will play an integral part in helping to shape and implement this process.

Read more about the Foundation's historic [grantmaking](#), yearly [financials](#), and [staff](#) on the Foundation website.

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Operating budget: \$24.8 million
- Endowment: \$850 million
- Full-time staff: 54

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is a member of the Foundation’s senior leadership team and a strategic partner to the chief executive officer (CEO) and the board. The CFO will direct the organization’s financial strategy, plans, practices, and processes, and oversee its overall financial health, ensuring the Foundation and Action Fund have the appropriate financial, facilities and technological infrastructure and capabilities to advance their mission and meet short- and long-term organizational objectives.

As a key advisor, the CFO provides both strategic and hands-on leadership to inform the financial health and integrity of the foundation, proper reporting of its investment assets, and ensure that internal fiscal processes and systems support informed decision making and increased operational effectiveness. In addition, the CFO is responsible for ensuring that the finance team partners effectively throughout the organization, continually evaluates and refines business processes, and uses technology to create a strong culture of partnership and service. As a senior leader of the foundation, the CFO helps to shape a culture of building shared vision, purpose, and arriving at consensus to drive other things.

The Heising-Simons Foundation is currently implementing a purpose-driven hybrid work policy. With a preference for someone located or willing to relocate to the Bay Area, this position may work remotely and/or from one of the Foundation offices in the Bay area.

Compensation will be commensurate with the candidate’s experience and qualifications, with an expected compensation range between \$275,000 to \$380,000.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to President & CEO

Direct reports Director of Finance
Director of Technology
Office Operations Manager

Other key relationships Other members of the senior leadership team
Heising-Simons Foundation Board and Action Fund Board
Chair of the Audit Committee
External Auditors, Banks, and Regulators

OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Lead with a distinct service orientation, model healthy management practices, and reinforce a culture of collaboration, transparency, and mutual respect.
- Partner with the CEO to develop and lead financial strategies that will lead to the continued stability and growth of the foundation and support its evolving strategic and programmatic direction.
- Oversee the management of financial resources supporting operations, including the development of annual and long-range operating and capital budgets, and advise the CEO and other key members of senior management on financial planning, budgeting, cash flow, operational risk mitigation, and management of working capital.
- Evaluate areas of opportunity for enhancement as they relate to systems, processes, and people to achieve greater efficiencies and collaboration. Develop and provide recommendations, options, and tools to senior leaders and the board that are data-driven and rooted in fact-based analysis.
- Encourage open communication and information flow among programmatic and financial staff to help ensure that programmatic needs can be identified and met in the most effective and efficient manner.
- Develop, motivate, mentor, and lead a high-performing team with the tools and skills required to consistently deliver a seamless operating environment across relevant functions.
- Quickly develop a high level of trust with key stakeholders, both internally and externally, through the implementation of transparent and rigorous financial processes and procedures.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizational Leadership

- Partner with the president & CEO, CEO Advisory Group, and board of directors to define the organizational priorities and how they translate into investment, financial, and operational strategies and tactics.
- Contribute to the Operations Leads team, a cross-functional team whose purpose is to oversee and set guidelines to ensure best practices and continuous improvement, policies, and practices across the organization's operational functions.
- Serve as the corporate treasurer for both organizations.

Financial Planning and Cost Management

- Work with the CEO to forecast, prepare, and maintain the organizations' financial strategy and budgets, facilitate the annual budget planning process to collaboratively develop grant and administrative budgets for each department.
- Analyze and manage cash flow, cost controls, and expenses to ensure the organization's needs are met. Oversee cash management to ensure the foundation has the financial resources it needs at all times, ensuring that annual payout targets and ongoing operational needs and obligations are met.
- Design, review, and present financial reporting, including monthly and annual financial statements, quarterly budget versus actual comparative analysis, and periodic grant payout reporting.

Financial Management

- Work closely with the director of finance to determine cash flow needs, short-term investment strategies, and appropriate management of international funds. Optimize financial operations, including adoption and oversight of systems implementation and business process improvements.
- Oversee the annual external audit, including working with the Audit Committee, to engage the audit firm and auditors to define audit parameters and oversee the audit process.
- Ensure that adequate controls are installed to safeguard the organization's financial assets by protecting against mismanagement, fraud, and non-compliance. Oversee the preparation of tax returns; ensure legal and regulatory compliance regarding all financial functions.

Information Technology Management

- Work closely with the director of technology to assess and forecast organizational technology and hardware needs.
- Assist the Technology Team with change management to ensure the successful adoption and implementation of new policies and technologies.
- Ensure that all data is protected by robust security protocols to prevent cyber-attacks.

Facilities Management

- Work closely with the office operations manager to establish office policies and procedures that maintain a safe and inclusive working environment.
- Develop and implement the disaster preparedness plan and administer the foundation's risk management program.
- Effectively manage the negotiation and tracking of key vendors and contracts, including real estate lease and sublease agreements, maintenance, and facilities management.

As a senior executive with strong strategic and technical financial skills, the Foundation's next CFO will be an effective, self-motivated, and proactive leader. The CFO should have exceptional analytical skills and be capable of developing and implementing clear goals, systems, and priorities, yet have the nimbleness and agility to adjust to shifting priorities. As a strong communicator with high emotional intelligence (EQ), the CFO will be attracted to the opportunity to join an organization with a clear, compelling mission, and will embrace the opportunity to forge strong, supportive relationships.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Finance Experience

15+ years of a proven track record of success in a senior financial leadership position, ideally with prior experience in a philanthropic/family office, and/or nonprofit setting. A working understanding of investment practices is a plus.

Strategic Partnership

A strong strategic orientation, with the ability to effectively collaborate with senior leaders and board members.

Change Management

A proven change leader with experience designing and implementing a complex change agenda, in collaboration with others.

Data-Driven Analytical Acumen

Extensive knowledge of financial systems, with prior experience leading strategic financial planning, financial and investment management, financial reporting, and cash flow management.

Team Leadership

Strong people management skills, with a focus on encouraging a culture of inspiring, mentoring, coaching, empowering, planning, and problem solving while optimizing resources and driving efficiencies.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Commitment to and track record of impact in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Academic Credentials

A bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration or a related field is required, with a preference for an M.B.A. in finance and/or a C.P.A.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Strategic Business Leadership

- Articulates and executes a financial strategy that expands and optimizes the institute's assets while supporting the programmatic work and goals of the institution.
- Proactively seeks to improve processes and implement best-in-class solutions, seeking opportunities to raise quality and productivity in an intentional way.
- Spends time building a clear understanding of the opportunities to build capacity to support the whole organization. Fosters a culture of excellence and learning, holding people accountable for their commitments.

Relationship Building and Collaborating Skills

- Decisive and thoughtful leader who deftly engages stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes. A highly credible and experienced leader who partners effectively and instills confidence with the board.
- Leverages the team to facilitate increased collaboration across the organization, tapping their motives and values to energize them.
- Committed to a culture of collaboration, transparency, excellence, and accountability with the capability to build an inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace.

Leading Change

- Brings a sophisticated understanding of change management and strong analytical skills to move the organization toward greater efficiency, optimization, and excellence.
- An innovative thinker and creative problem solver focused on continuous improvement and unafraid to challenge and change the status quo.
- Has the ability to motivate, mentor, and lead teams and other stakeholders through a period of cultural and operational change, clearly communicating goals and expectations in an inspiring way.

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Values diversity and seeks it out to bring fresh and relevant perspectives to the work of the organization.
- Operates with humility and a sense of humor.
- Effective and persuasive communicator who values listening.
- Strong presentation skills, both oral and written.
- Unquestionable personal and professional integrity.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

The Heising-Simons Foundation is being assisted in this recruitment by Spencer Stuart. Interested parties should submit comments, nominations of others, or information in support of their own candidacy to the confidential email address of the Spencer Stuart team: HSFCFO@spencerstuart.com.