

Houston Endowment®

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION SPECIFICATION

HOUSTONENDOWMENT.ORG

THE OPPORTUNITY

Houston Endowment, one of the city's largest private foundations, is entering its 88th year as a widely respected and influential institution with a proud legacy, deep roots in the community, and a reputation as a convener, collaborator, and innovator.

The next CEO will take the helm of an organization that fosters strong relationships, prioritizes learning and adaptability, and values empathy and listening. With its dedicated team of experts and community-centered approach, the Foundation is well-positioned to increase its impact by continuing to adapt its work and respond to the urgent challenges facing both philanthropy and the region.

Leading with humility and vision, the next CEO will be called to bring their own unique talents and experiences to bear as they act with clarity and conviction while ensuring the Foundation leverages its assets toward transformative, lasting outcomes that expand opportunity for Greater Houston's residents and contribute to the wider philanthropic sector.





ABOUT HOUSTON ENDOWMENT

Houston Endowment is a nonpartisan, private foundation established in 1937 by business and civic leader Jesse H. Jones and his wife, Mary Gibbs Jones, to improve the quality of life for everyone in Greater Houston. The Joneses loved Houston and believed they owed their success to this city. They established Houston Endowment to ensure future generations benefit from a strong, vibrant region where the opportunity to thrive is available to all.

THE WORK

The Foundation draws inspiration from the Joneses' legacy to address the pressing needs of the community today. With more than $2.5 billion in assets, Houston Endowment invests about $100 million a year in strengthening public education, increasing civic engagement, enhancing the arts and cultural sector, and growing Houston's greenspaces. It also stands ready to address emerging opportunities and challenges where it believes it can have an impact. The Foundation's giving is guided by a commitment to learning and evaluation, which deepens understanding of these areas and identifies what works.

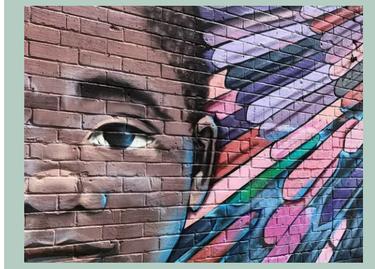
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PUBLIC EDUCATION



We want more children to graduate with choices for their future.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



We want to grow civic engagement in our region.

ARTS & CULTURE



We want the most vibrant arts and culture sector in the U.S.

GREENSPACES



We want to increase access to greenspaces for all who live here.

LEARNING & EVALUATION



We aim to strengthen our impact with learning, data, and capacity-building.

IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES



We invest in emerging areas where we can make a difference.









THE APPROACH

Houston Endowment believes in the power of bringing people together to solve problems at their very root. It focuses on areas where systemic barriers to opportunity exist, the time is right for change, and the potential for the Foundation to add value exists. It listens to and learns from its grantee partners and the distinct communities they serve and partners with diverse stakeholders—nonprofits, other funders, civic institutions, government, and business leaders—to align around shared goals and coordinated action. The Foundation's role goes beyond traditional grantmaking to include nonmonetary support—such as expertise, thought partnership, and convening—emphasizing the importance of community voices and strong grantee-funder relationships based on trust.



HEADQUARTERS

Houston Endowment is located in the heart of Houston. Its central location and open, welcoming design reflect an on-the-ground commitment to collaboration, connection, and civic dialogue. The space is a vital tool for convening—bringing together partners, grantees, and community members to learn from one another and co-create solutions. Designed as a model of sustainable architecture, the building incorporates eco-friendly materials and systems that support a healthy work environment. It reflects the Foundation's commitment to long-term stewardship and helps attract and retain top talent. The space also celebrates Houston's cultural vibrancy: A permanent art collection and rotating exhibitions showcase local artists, elevate emerging talent, and reflect the diverse stories and perspectives of Greater Houston's communities.



THE ROLE

The next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Houston Endowment will be a strategic and inspiring thought leader who is able to balance the need for significant focus on external and local representation with a clear commitment to the operating health and well-being of the Foundation. The CEO will represent Houston Endowment to its wide range of stakeholders, including local nonprofits, civil society organizations, and the public. The CEO will also have overall responsibility for managing day-to-day activities of the Foundation, including the programmatic, fiscal, and grant-making operations.

The Foundation maintains a long-term relationship with Investure, a full-service investment office for select college endowments and private foundations. The CEO will work with the Board's Investment Committee to monitor performance, including as relative to peer benchmarking, and ensure alignment with the Foundation's investment policy.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO will work collaboratively with the Board to build on Houston Endowment's past successes and to continue to evolve the organization's strategy. In leading the Foundation's team to execute this strategy, the CEO will be a tireless champion of Houston Endowment's mission.



SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CEO INCLUDE:

01

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Provide strategic thought leadership to the Foundation, its staff, Board, and key stakeholders. Serve as a catalyst for creative and innovative problem-solving in accordance with Houston Endowment's mission. Ensure that all activities and programs meet the highest standards of ethics and transparency and are aligned with the Foundation's values.

02

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Serve as the chief spokesperson and advocate for Houston Endowment's mission and goals. Inspire and motivate the community and nonprofit leadership. Continue to serve as a meaningful and effective convener of philanthropies, government entities, and other critical stakeholders throughout the Houston region. Use strategic communications to best highlight the impact of the Foundation and its grantees, inform partners and stakeholders, and share learnings with the field.

03

OPERATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Provide guidance and leadership on all financial, operational, and staff development matters. Ensure the internal infrastructure and business processes are robust. Prioritize culture as a strategic asset, modeling humility and integrity while fostering transparency, collaboration, and accountability, and living the organization's values in ways that inspire others to do the same.

04

PROGRAMMATIC INNOVATION

Work closely with staff to build upon and further develop Houston Endowment's deep roots and commitment to the Houston community. Assess the efficacy and impact of the Foundation's programs and challenge the organization to continually improve the ways it realizes its mission. Encourage an entrepreneurial and creative approach to philanthropy that meets the needs of grantees and community.

05

BOARD PARTNERSHIP

Collaborate with the Board of Directors in the articulation and implementation of an organizational strategic vision and long-term sustainability.

THE LEADER WE SEEK

In terms of the personal competencies required for the position, we highlight the following skills of the ideal candidate (while recognizing that no one candidate is likely to have all of these strengths).

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND COMPETENCIES

RELATIONSHIPS AND INFLUENCE

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, passion in their beliefs, and active drive.
- Comfort in public speaking and presenting on behalf of an institution.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- An inspiring and trusted presence who combines humility with authenticity. Excels in both the internal and external aspects of the role and is a dynamic public speaker who engages diverse audiences with clarity and motivates action.
- A leader who is viewed by others as having a high degree of integrity and forethought in their approach to making decisions; the ability to act in a transparent and consistent manner while always taking into account what is best for the organization and the overall mission.

EXECUTING FOR RESULTS

- The ability to set clear and challenging goals, while committing the organization to improved performance; tenacious and accountable in driving results.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainly; the ability to adapt nimbly and lead others through complex situations.
- A risk-taker who seeks data and input from others to foresee possible threats or unintended circumstances from decisions; someone who takes smart risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

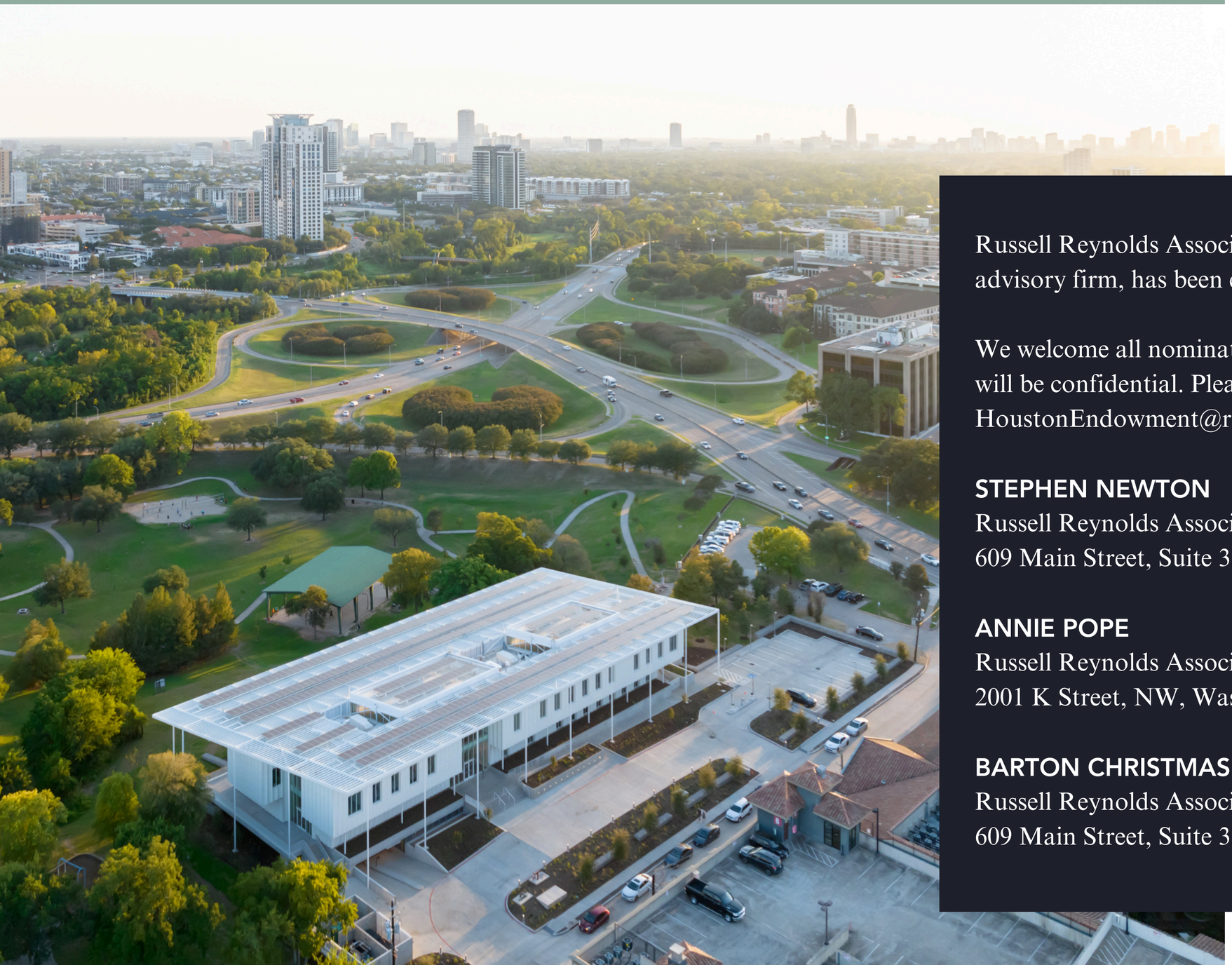
- The ability to effectively represent the Foundation in the Greater Houston communities it serves, and the capacity to represent the community on the national and global stage.
- The ability to successfully navigate complex civic, cultural, and institutional systems and to balance the varied needs of the Foundation’s multiple constituents.
- The experience and/or capacity to build deep and lasting relationships across Houston.
- An authentic interest in and the ability to enthusiastically engage in and celebrate the unique character of the city.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- The ability to work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to create and articulate an inspiring vision for the organization and to strive toward it with a focused strategy.
- The inclination to seek and analyze data from a variety of sources to support decisions and to align others with the organization's overall strategy.
- An entrepreneurial and creative approach to developing new, innovative ideas that will maximize the Foundation’s impact.
- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organization is capable of handling, to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful.

TEAM ALIGNMENT

- The ability to attract and develop exceptional talent, delegate effectively to empower others, and create an environment where people thrive and grow – retaining a strong, engaged team that delivers lasting impact.
- The demonstrated ability to provide a clear sense of direction to the team as a strong internal communicator.
- The ability to persevere in the face of challenges and exhibit a steadfast resolve and relentless commitment to higher standards, which commands respect from followers.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of their own limitations; leads by example and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.
- The ability to foster a strong sense of camaraderie and empower people to innovate and to improve.



CONTACT

Russell Reynolds Associates, the global search and leadership advisory firm, has been exclusively engaged to lead this search.

We welcome all nominations and expressions of interest, which will be confidential. Please submit these to HoustonEndowment@russellreynolds.com

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