POSITION PROFILE

On behalf of our client, the McKnight Foundation, Ash Talent Solutions, LLC is conducting a retained executive search for its

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

 McKNIGHT FOUNDATION
MISSION
The McKnight Foundation, a family foundation based in Minnesota, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive.

VISION
We envision a world that recognizes the dignity of every human being, a world where we celebrate the creativity of the arts and sciences, and come together to protect our one and only Earth.

VALUES
Stewardship—Our deepest responsibility is to use all of our resources for mission impact. We deploy the Foundation’s resources in a transparent manner and seek to maximize our relevance, credibility, and effectiveness.

Respect—Authentic and mutually accountable relationships matter deeply to us. We equip ourselves with the intercultural competency mindset and skills to help us bridge differences of all kinds.

Equity—We embed an equity approach across the Foundation because we see it as mission critical. We align our policies, practices, and resources so that people have genuine opportunities to thrive locally and globally.

Curiosity—We value ongoing learning, and we look outward and reflect internally to discover opportunities for greater impact. It is only when we act with humility, ask big questions, and practice deep listening that we can open ourselves to new ideas and relationships.

For more information about the McKnight Foundation’s work, impact, and values, please visit www.mcknight.org.

The McKnight Foundation, an internationally recognized family foundation based in Minnesota, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953 by William and Maude McKnight, this fourth-generation family foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience, and international crop research.

As an early leader of 3M, Mr. McKnight earned a reputation for spurring innovation and recognizing the creative potential in others—practices that live on at the Foundation. His daughter, Virginia McKnight Binger, then set the standard for the Foundation’s work with her singular compassion and spirit of generosity. The current governing board includes actively engaged fourth-generation members of the McKnight family, with soon-to-be fifth-generation involvement, as well as community members who bring diverse perspectives.

Today, the McKnight Foundation works across many disciplines, sectors, and geographical boundaries. McKnight’s work supports communities in its home state of Minnesota and beyond, spanning several continents. Its diverse programs are united in a quest to improve our shared fate. The Foundation envisions a world that recognizes the dignity of every human being, a world where we celebrate the creativity of the arts and sciences, and where we come together to protect our one and only Earth.

In 2019 the Board of Directors approved a new mission statement, a new Strategic Framework, and several shifts in programmatic investments. These changes led to the sunset of some programs, the expansion of the Midwest Climate & Energy program, and the creation of the Vibrant & Equitable Communities program focused on building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota.

McKnight is a valued philanthropist and community leader in Minnesota, the broader Midwest, nationally, and internationally. Leveraging the organization’s track record, its ability to work in partnerships, and its willingness to experiment and explore, the Foundation sees many new impact and leadership opportunities ahead. Recognized for its pragmatism, McKnight aspires to make progress on several complex, ambitious challenges facing us today, in the coming decade, and beyond.
THE ROLE
The McKnight Foundation seeks an experienced strategic and tactical technology leader to head its Information Technology (IT) department. Reporting to the Vice President of Finance and Operations, the Director of IT serves as an internal business partner to peers and leaders across the enterprise and as a member of the Operations Leadership team. This key role will develop and execute an enterprise IT strategy to support the Foundation’s core business processes, facilitate collaborative working groups, enhance the effectiveness of a distributed workforce, and enable the seamless and secure exchange of data with its numerous stakeholders. The Director of IT will optimize existing systems and identify new ones that connect internal teams and enable a secure interface with the Foundation’s complex and growing network of regional, national, and international partners. This critical infrastructure leader manages a team of two staff members who—in addition to selected outsourced solutions—deliver high-quality technology services and support across all functional departments of the Foundation.

The Director of IT will join McKnight at a transformative moment, as the Foundation advances its recently adopted Strategic Framework. Alongside fellow members of a highly collaborative leadership team, the Director of IT will play an essential role in guiding employees at every level through periods of ambiguity, iterative learning, and growth. Importantly, this person will ensure the optimization of and responsive support for smart, user-friendly technology investments that facilitate McKnight’s operations while protecting the Foundation’s data, people, and partnerships. As important, the Director of IT will be charged with helping to grow the level of technical competence among employees, enabling more agile operations.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS
The Director of IT will report to the Vice President of Operations & Finance and have direct oversight of 2 staff members:

- IT Administrator
- Programmer Analyst

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
The Director of Information Technology is responsible for the following:

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
- Establishes and maintains a deep understanding of the Foundation’s unique needs, challenges, trends, and opportunities related to technology, systems, data, and security. Taps into the collective experience of the Foundation’s leaders and staff members, and solicits input from external partners and stakeholders as needed to ensure an inclusive, comprehensive view.
- Develops and drives a holistic IT strategy that supports and adapts to the changing demands of the modern workplace, aligns with the Foundation’s strategic goals, reflects its values, and addresses the needs of all stakeholders.
- Displays continual awareness of the Foundation’s technical strengths and gaps relative to other foundations and across the broader philanthropic sector; identifies and recommends new technology investment opportunities to ensure McKnight’s continued success.
- Monitors the technology universe to identify opportunities and threats, building awareness with Foundation leaders and collaborating on preparedness planning as needed.
- Strategically sources, secures, and manages relationships with outside vendors as needed.
TACTICAL EXECUTION

- Operationalizes the IT strategy, serving as the point person for all aspects of execution, IT administration, systems implementation, testing, and end-user training.
- Manages all activities that relate to the operations, performance, support, maintenance, and security of network devices, servers, and applications. Collaborates as needed with multiple hardware and software platform vendors.
- Leads the implementation of new tools and systems, providing initial and ongoing education, training, and support to internal and external users and ensuring a high level of adoption.
- Develops, documents, and maintains Foundation procedures that guide the installation, configuration, and maintenance of all platforms, systems, and services.
- Troubleshoots and resolves end-user, system, and service technology issues as needed.
- Develops recommendations, obtains approval, and proactively manages IT budget to support the technology needs of the organization. Reviews and approves requests for technology purchases.
- Develops, implements, and tests IT disaster recovery processes.
- Identifies, evaluates, and proactively mitigates cyber-security vulnerabilities and threats.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Effectively collaborates with leaders across the Foundation to integrate processes, facilitate change, ensure alignment, and achieve organizational goals.
- Continually assesses the effectiveness of Foundation IT resources through internal and external evaluations and monitoring.
- Develops and communicates policies, procedures, and standards to ensure that technology use aligns with the Foundation’s values and operating principles.
- Transparently communicates across the Foundation—both verbally and in writing—about evolving IT strategy, plans, and policies, providing context for technology decisions as appropriate. Ability to translate technical terminology and concepts into clear language, suitable for non-technical audiences.
- Leads efforts to build and support an IT environment that adapts to the diverse technology needs of its users, with an overall goal to collectively increase the Foundation’s technical knowledge, aptitude, and skillsets. Designs and/or manages technology-related training and educational opportunities for staff members, leaders, and other stakeholders as needed.

TEAM AND CULTURE

- Supervises, coaches, and develops the IT team, promoting its continued professional development and enabling appropriate learning opportunities.
- Advances the Foundation’s commitment to DEI and fosters a culture aligned with the organizational values of curiosity, respect, equity, and stewardship.
- Demonstrates skill and/or the willingness to engage in continued competency-building around DEI, including cultural competence, emotional intelligence, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving.
CORE COMPETENCIES

All leaders at McKnight are expected to display the following attributes:

- Strategic mindset
- Communicates effectively
- Instills trust
- Drives results
- Manages complexity
- Builds networks
- Collaborates effectively
- Models resiliency

These qualities are specific to the Director of IT role:

- Strong intellectual curiosity, with the ability to think analytically and critically evaluate relative strengths and weaknesses of concepts or proposals. Feels comfortable managing ambiguity and balancing taking action with the appropriate level of risk.
- Proven skill in mapping out specific, actionable paths for strategy execution, effectively deploying resources, time, and people to reach objectives.
- Displays a demonstrated commitment—in will and actions—to supporting cultural competence that includes striving for understanding between people, showing respect for and openness to diverse cultural perspectives, and working towards equality in opportunity.
- Inspires the organization to identify new opportunities or approaches that drive value through data and insights. Supports well-conceived risk and welcomes new ideas.
- Adaptable and agile in the face of change, with skill in navigating through evolving circumstances and with limited information, providing support for and inspiration in others to do the same.
- Unfazed by tough challenges, with demonstrated ability to problem-solve by reducing conflict, building consensus, and maintaining focus on objectives.

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Bachelor’s degree and a minimum of 7 years of professional work experience in the field of IT, in positions of progressive responsibility, including 3 or more years of management experience, or a combination of equivalent experience and training. Experience working in a similarly-sized, technology-enabled enterprise is preferred. Familiarity with foundations and/or the philanthropic or nonprofit sector is helpful.
- Experience in participatory management of the IT function within an organization of similar size (approximately 60 staff members), and based on industry-accepted best practices for core IT processes, including those around operation; support; change, user, problem, configuration and incident management; upgrades; and backup and recovery.
- Emphasizes customer services and displays a flexible, hands-on work style.
- Demonstrates the ability to manage and implement package application software. This includes management of vendor relationships, interaction with vendor support, and performing updates.
- Experienced with Microsoft platforms, systems, software, and servers; cloud-based platforms and tools; systems migration and implementation, and related change management strategies.
- Experience with virtual server environments is ideal, with specific knowledge of VMWare preferred.
- Familiarity with storage technologies and networking architecture - including firewalls, switches, routers and other TCP/IP based networking infrastructure.
• Skill in developing and managing budgets.
• Manages variable and often heavy workloads and meets deadlines.

For more information or to send your credentials, please email theresa@ashtalentsolutions.com
All inquiries will remain confidential.

The McKnight Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity.
We encourage candidates of all backgrounds to apply.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Protected Veterans/Individuals with Disabilities

The contractor will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions cannot disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge, (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or (c) consistent with the contractor’s legal duty to furnish information.