



The
Lemelson Foundation
improving lives through invention



Finance and Grants Accountant

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Foundation Overview

The [Lemelson Foundation](#) uses the power of invention to improve lives.

Established by prolific US inventor Jerome Lemelson and his wife Dorothy in the early 1990 and guided today by the Lemelson family, we believe invention can solve many of the biggest economic and social challenges of our time. That's why we work to strengthen the ecosystems where inventions can take shape, grow, and flourish. For more than two decades we have inspired young people from diverse backgrounds to tackle the world's most daunting problems, advanced the field of invention education with a goal of reaching all children, and equipped entrepreneurs with the skills they need to start successful invention-based businesses. A private philanthropy, The Lemelson Foundation has investment assets of around \$370 million and an annual budget of approximately \$18 million. All told, we have provided over \$200 million in [grants](#) and other investments to hundreds of organizations around the world.

We aspire to strengthen the invention ecosystem and empower inventors to solve the biggest global challenges and opportunities of our time, whether it's ensuring equal access to a healthy life, providing clean water and sanitation, developing clean energy alternatives, rethinking how the world grows, shares and consumes its food, or building a strong and stable economy. We approach our work using a three-part framework we call impact inventing:

- Inventions should have positive social impact;
- Inventions should be environmentally responsible—from the materials and processes used through final products that go to market; and
- Business models should become financially self-sustaining.

The Lemelson Foundation has created a culture of collaboration, continuous learning, and innovation. An entrepreneurial environment with huge flexibility and opportunities for impact has allowed the small team of 10 staff to create a large footprint and outsized presence for the Foundation. Commitment to diversity is one of The Lemelson Foundation's core values as we work to foster an inclusive work environment. We cannot do our work without collaboration among people with diverse skill sets and backgrounds.





Position Summary

Serving as a bridge between the finance and grants management departments, the Finance and Grants Accountant works with all members of The Lemelson Foundation team to provide general accounting services, and support the Foundation's grants management function. Reporting directly to the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) and the Grants, Contracts and IT Manager, the Finance and Grants Accountant will serve in a key support capacity to ensure proper reporting, compliance, quality control, and data management across the two departments; and will work to integrate financial information between systems in support of financial planning and overall financial accountability. S/he will work with the rest of the staff to provide assistance and training on systems and assure integrity of databases; and participate in and provide support to internal working groups and team projects related to the annual management and programmatic priorities of the Foundation.

Key Accounting Responsibilities

The Finance and Grants Accountant will play an active role in supporting the Foundation's strategic planning process and strategy implementation, particularly in the case of the administrative budget. S/he will contribute to the Foundation's learning and to the adaptation and evolution of Foundation strategy. The primary goals of the Finance and Grants Accountant position are to ensure the Foundation's Board and executive leadership have accurate financial information to inform strategic decisions; to support the Foundation's reporting to the IRS; to ensure that accounting policies and procedures are current and in compliance with all regulations and accounting processes are efficient and cost effective; and ensure financial reporting supports Foundation priorities, strategy, and both short- and long-term financial planning.

Working closely with the CFAO, the accountant will trouble-shoot resolving finance-related issues and ensure proper reporting, compliance and quality control. Specific responsibilities include:

- Processing accounts payable
- Processing payroll and benefits
- General accounting
- Preparing financial reports
- Processing payments for grants and program-related investments (PRIs)
- Investment accounting





Key Grants Management Responsibilities

The Finance and Grants Accountant performs essential grants management functions focused on maximizing the impact and effectiveness of grant making at the Foundation. The Grants Management team works across every program and on every grant and serves as a critical partner to program officers in the management and implementation of strategy. Key grants management duties include:

- Process grant payment requests and communicate with grantees regarding payment status
- Maintain schedule of outstanding grants payable and grant payments
- Work with program officers to ensure pipeline items are entered in grants management system and communicate with CFAO to verify grant payout and projections
- Review and analyze grantee financial reports
- Track expenditure responsibility grants and enter data in grants management system
- Prepare expenditure responsibility report for 990PF
- Provide customer service to grant applicants and current grantees, guiding them on how to use the grantee portal for submitting applications and/or grantee reports
- Administer the unsolicited process, including screening letters of inquiry, managing the inquiries in the grants management system, and explaining process and proposal guidelines to cold callers
- Conduct basic due diligence for new grant applications and prepare the electronic file for the Grants, Contracts and IT Manager's review
- Help maintain grants management system, generate reports for Grants, Contracts and IT Manager, and CFAO, provide assistance with training staff on systems, and assure integrity of data system
- Work with Grants, Contracts and IT Manager to refine grants management processes
- Participate in strategic annual planning process
- Become familiar with all grants management responsibilities and take on additional assignments as needed





The Ideal Candidate

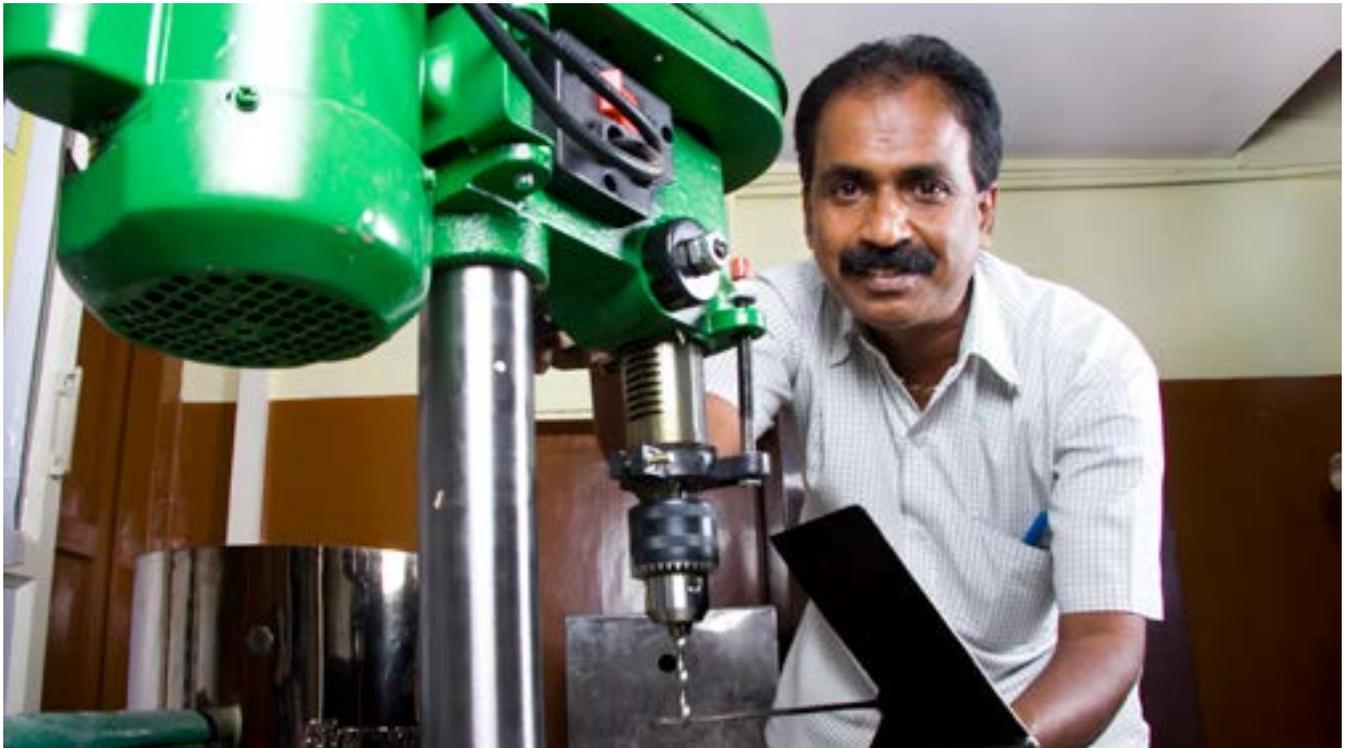
The ideal candidate will be intellectually agile: equally skilled with systems as well as numbers; possess the ability to pivot to support multiple departments simultaneously, and effectively prioritize to meet competing deadlines in a fast-paced environment. A strong ability to read, analyze, and interpret financial information is key, as is a strong attention to detail, accuracy, and follow-through in all areas.

We seek candidates who are analytical, with highly-tuned communication skills, discretion, and tact. This role requires a team player who brings an enthusiasm for working with a range of functions, and the ability to work at all levels, from strategy development to daily execution. The ideal candidate is intellectually curious and confident enough to speak up with questions.

This role will work across the Foundation, both internally and externally, and as such the ideal candidate must have the facility to work with a variety of departments and with diverse partners including educators, technologists, engineers, entrepreneurs, governments, non-profits, and for-profits, among others. S/he must be able to work independently and reliably, be proactive, forward-looking, solutions-oriented, and consistently bring a customer service orientation to the work. Successful candidates will be problem-solvers at heart with an appreciation and clear vision for the most effective processes and systems to support the Foundation's granting efforts, and continually integrate the work of the program and finance staff. Candidates should bring an interest to learning about the work of the program teams in order to effectively serve as a consultative partner from the financial and grants management perspectives.

Personally, the ideal candidate should be a natural bridge builder who enjoys bringing people together, coupled with strong interpersonal skills, an approachable style, cultural sensitivity, and an ability to listen empathetically. S/he will be positive, self-aware, self-confident, and eager to grow personally and professionally, and possess a sense of humor.





Qualifications

The Finance and Grants Accountant will be enthusiastic and passionate about The Lemelson Foundation's mission and motivated by the opportunity to play a leading role supporting the next generation of impact inventors. Every Foundation employee should feel a deep personal connection to our work and embrace our commitment to positive social change and environmental responsibility. The ideal employee has the motivation to be a key contributor and leader within the organization, regardless of role, bringing a positive influence to our culture of collaboration, creativity, and continuous improvement.

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration, or a related field
- Minimum of eight years of increasing responsibility in general accounting, accounts payable and accounting for investments
- Excellent knowledge of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and foundation accounting procedures
- Comfort with and command of databases and systems, including sophisticated online grants management databases, from set up, ongoing improvement, and use (Salesforce preferred)
- Strong command of Microsoft Office suite
- Experience in philanthropy, preferably at a private foundation
- Experience working in a small dynamic and highly interactive organization
- Experience monitoring legal requirements, including requirements for grantmaking
- Experienced at explaining financial accounting principles to non-accounting colleagues
- Experience working with on-line general ledger system, highly preferable (Intacct would be a plus)

The position is based in Portland, OR, and may include domestic and international travel, including travel to developing countries.





Ongoing Learning Opportunities

In the spirit of collaboration and continuous learning, all Foundation staff have the opportunity to periodically accompany program officers on site visits and engage directly with grantees and partners for ongoing exposure to the work of the Foundation and its grantees.

To Be Considered

The Lemelson Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. To be considered, please submit your resume and a cover letter expressing your passion for the mission and fit for the role via [Waldron's candidate webportal](#).

The search for a the Finance and Grants Accountant is being assisted by a team from Waldron:

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Waldron is honored to work with The Lemelson Foundation in the search for a Finance and Grants Accountant. The Lemelson Foundation does amazing work, and we are doing our best to recruit a talented team member who will accelerate this mission. As the consulting partner strategic leaders choose to help attract, engage, and inspire effective leaders, Waldron provides a unique combination of executive search, leadership development, and career transition services across sectors and industries. Our passion is helping people and organizations realize their full potential and increase their impact.