

Press Forward

**Search for the
Director
Press Forward
The Miami Foundation**

[The Miami Foundation](#) seeks a strategic and collaborative leader with a demonstrated passion and commitment to American democracy to serve as the inaugural Director of [Press Forward](#), a national initiative to strengthen communities and democracy by supporting local news, rebuilding local journalism, and improving the dissemination of civic information throughout the United States. This is an opportunity to be forward-thinking on how to support the reimagination and revitalization of local news, and strategically fund efforts that will rapidly enhance and help sustain local news.

Under a set of shared values and priorities to guide their grantmaking, a coalition of twenty-two donors have come together with a more than \$500 million investment over the next five years to re-center local news as a force for community cohesion; support new models and solutions that are ready to scale; and close longstanding inequities in media ownership, philanthropy, and journalism.

The Director will forge new connections across the ecosystem of local news, to ignite greater interest and enthusiasm for inclusive journalism that is community-centered and identify opportunities for innovation. The successful candidate will be responsible for making important decisions on the strategic allocation of resources based on active consultation with those in the field closest to communities and must communicate fundamental decisions with reason and clarity to build consensus. Ensuring long-term success for Press Forward will mean securing additional support and strengthening existing funding partners, therefore, the Director needs to be an excellent relationship builder, with instincts and appetite for fundraising. They should be able to articulate a compelling vision that excites donors and takes Press Forward into the future.

The Director will work closely with the Management Committee and Advisory Council of Press Forward, comprised of founding donors, partners, journalism experts, and practitioners from the field.

The Miami Foundation, as the fiscal sponsor of Press Forward, has engaged Karen Avery and Berlinda Mojica, of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this important search. Inquiries,

nominations, and/or applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT PRESS FORWARD

Press Forward is a new, \$500 million national initiative to expand local journalism at an unprecedented scale. Press Forward will invest in the strongest ideas, seed new ideas that have not yet had a chance to emerge, build powerful networks, and engage people, institutions, and organizations with substantial new resources to join the movement.

Press Forward was created to support the reimagining, revitalization, and rapid development of the local news ecosystem in the United States. Originally conceived by the MacArthur and Knight foundations based on their decades of experience supporting nonprofit journalism, Press Forward has grown into a multi-funder collaboration of more than 20 donors. The initiative has created an early theory of change that will result in new norms, conditions, policies, culture, and structure to ensure the work achieves its goal of creating strong journalism for a stronger democracy. The focus of Press Forward's early momentum will be to:

- **Catalyze Philanthropy** - Rallying the field by creating a campaign and outreach to make local news a philanthropic priority on par with arts and education across national foundations, local funders, and individual donors.
- **Grow Civic Media** – Building momentum to mobilize resources to scale models that work, close longstanding inequalities in journalism coverage and practice, and change the norms of journalism to encourage pro-democracy coverage and information.
- **Expand Public Financing** – Locking in new dynamics by building coalitions and advocates needed to transform policy frameworks to drive significantly more public funding into a reimaged media sector.

GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Press Forward is a national initiative that is fiscally sponsored by The Miami Foundation. The team hired will be employees of The Miami Foundation for the duration of the initiative and will work closely with members of the Local News program at the MacArthur Foundation. The Press Forward initiative has an expected duration of at least five years, with the possibility of an extension. The chosen leader is expected to commit to launching and leading this effort through the full arc of the program.

The Management Committee sets the overall strategy for Press Forward; has legal and fiduciary oversight by the fiscal sponsor; is authorized for hiring approval and to provide grant recommendations for the pooled fund; and serves as an advocate for the initiative. Recruitment and appointment on the Board is

occurring in tandem with this executive search. Membership will be nine to eleven individuals representing founding donors, journalism experts, partners, and practitioners in the field. The work of the Management Committee and Director will also be supported by an advisory council of journalism and democracy experts, as well as practitioners to provide input and feedback on Press Forward strategies and implementation. Funders who contribute to the pooled fund are invited to participate in the Pooled Fund Steering Committee to provide input and help advise on pooled fund investments and broader strategy.

The intention is to hire the top position of Director first, and then conduct the search for the Press Forward Network Manager before actively recruiting for any other potential roles for the initiative.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

The Director will build on the momentum of the last decade of increased investments in journalism experimentation to catalyze diverse and impactful solutions that are deeply and widely felt by local communities. At a time when there is both significant and growing disinformation across the country and profound social inequities, Press Forward is poised to play an ever more vital and transformational leadership role in the American media landscape. The position calls for collaborative leadership and strategic management experience at the intersection of journalism and democracy.

The broad objectives for Press Forward are as follows:

Design the strategy, development, and execution for grantmaking

Building upon groundwork underway, the Managing Director will galvanize the Board and partners to design and execute an effective grantmaking strategy for Press Forward that is relevant, focused, and responsive to community needs, especially for historically marginalized communities. There is ample opportunity to assess increasing focus on a few well-defined areas where Press Forward's resources and convening power could have a large impact. The Director will be expected to consult widely across civic media to frame areas where philanthropic partners can provide sustained support. Currently, Press Forward has identified three avenues of participation for donors interested in the [shared vision and priorities](#) of the initiative: the pooled fund with dedicated staff and advisors; aligned grantmaking for funders with internal staff capacity; and local funds aimed at establishing collaborative funds across states or regions. Across these various avenues Press Forward will focus on fostering open, transparent, and ongoing opportunities for shared learning, deeper connection, and lowering the bar of entry for grantees and partners.

Inspire and cultivate new interest to dramatically strengthen and expand local news

Beyond traditional grantmaking, Press Forward will increase its impact and effectiveness by amplifying the voices of grantees and community partners who are on the ground innovating and transforming the

local news landscape. The Director must be an authentic leader who can establish meaningful relationships with practitioners in the field and identify opportunities with funders in the public, private, and civic sector who have the capacity to support scaling the work that will transform and revitalize local journalism and information access. This astute and diplomatic communicator will collaborate productively with a range of partners, from grassroots organizers to funders, and government decision-makers, defining Press Forward as a reliable and trustworthy facilitator.

Provide thought leadership and represent Press Forward across a wide array of stakeholders

As the landscape and needs of local journalism continue to evolve, the Director will serve as a trusted partner and advisor for Press Forward's staff, funders, partners, and fellow leadership. This opportunity provides ample space for an experienced leader to both execute and be essential in developing a thoughtful and timely strategy for Press Forward's impact and approach, for the present and the future. The Director will be trusted with taking a proactive approach to fundraising, fund management, and relationship building, and will often be called upon to develop and share strategy approaches with other leaders and stakeholders. To fulfill this role successfully, the Director will remain informed on trends and insights that reflect and impact the industry and have previous experience with translating strategic thinking into impactful results that advance public policies and create positive change across organizations and sectors.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Skilled fundraising experience with the proven ability to effectively increase funder engagement, and bring more funding partners to the table
- A strong record of strategy development, program design and implementation, innovation, and collaboration, at least 15 years of relevant experience with 5 to 7 years of deep leadership, supervisory, and management experience
- Design thinker, strategist, visionary, and process leader with demonstrated experience developing and implementing innovative and complex initiatives
- Experienced coalition builder who will mobilize leaders within a large national context
- Profound understanding of the challenges facing local news, information ecosystems, and the dynamics of public policies and current thinking relevant to the work
- Effective people leader who attracts and retains great talent
- An authentic and skilled public speaker with exceptional written communication skills
- A keen awareness and an ability to negotiate through power structures, privilege differentials, and institutional systems that foster systemic inequities
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Self-confident, with strong diplomatic skills, and a record of accomplishment of maintaining high professional standards and good judgment

- Experience in program evaluation and/or working for a philanthropic institution is preferred
- Demonstrated alignment with The Miami Foundation's team values and enthusiasm to launch high-paced national effort within a larger community institution

LOCATION

This position is remote. The candidate can live anywhere in the continental United States. The candidate must be willing and able to travel frequently (up to 50% of the time).

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The expected salary range for this role is \$200k to \$225k annually.

Individual compensation packages are based on a variety of factors, including skill set, experience, and location.

The Miami Foundation offers a comprehensive and generous benefits package which includes medical, dental, and vision insurance, a 403(b)retirement plan, flexible spending and dependent care accounts, professional development stipend, paid time off, cell phone stipend, and gym reimbursement.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/press-forward-miami-foundation/director> Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Karen Avery, Partner
Berlinda Mojica, Senior Associate
Alexis Ditaway, Associate
Isabelle Atkinson, Senior Search Coordinator

The Miami Foundation will not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, and firing of staff, selection of volunteers, selection of vendors, and provision of services.

The Miami Foundation practices and champions inclusiveness. We honor the diverse strengths, needs, voices, and backgrounds of all members of our community. Candidates from traditionally marginalized communities are especially encouraged to apply.