

Grants Manager

JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Grants Manager, Pilot Light

STATUS: Non-Exempt, Hourly

HOURLY RATE: \$31-\$43/hour

SCHEDULE: Part Time, estimated 20 hours/week

NOTE: increased hours of approximately 25-29 per week are anticipated during the first quarter of FY27 to support initial systems build.

This position offers a flexible schedule. Some weekend and evening availability is required to participate in meetings and professional development sessions with teachers and partners. Daytime availability during Pilot Light's regular business hours is expected for meetings and collaboration, including one in-office day per week for those living within 15 miles of the Pilot Light office at 2825 West Fifth Avenue.

LOCATION: Remote/Hybrid, operating on Central Standard Time, Chicago-based office

REPORTS TO: The Chief Operating Officer

SUPERVISES: The SnackTime Explorers Program Associate, and the SnackTime Explorers Program Coordinator

About Pilot Light

Pilot Light is a Chicago-founded 501(c)(3) Food Education nonprofit organization that partners with educators to support them in teaching their students through food and about food. Students develop knowledge and skills to advocate for informed food choices for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Pilot Light's teacher-led model is game-changing: through our approach, PreK-12 teachers are provided with the support and resources needed to integrate Food Education into their classrooms and engage students during implementation while also teaching them about food and its importance in their lives outside of school.

Over the past 10 years, Pilot Light has grown from one Chicago elementary school to reach over 143,000 students across the country. Our Food Education Center is a digital hub for educators, families and communities to freely access expertly crafted, standards-aligned Food Education resources that seamlessly integrate into PreK-12 curriculum across all subject areas.

Pilot Light leads in Food Education through programming and professional development rooted in our [Food Education Standards](#). We serve districts, schools, teachers, and learners through our Food Education Center, the annual Food Education Fellowship, Fellowship Alumni Network, and a variety of rapidly growing school and district partnerships.

Job Summary

The Grants Manager is responsible for the effective administration, compliance, reporting, and stewardship of Pilot Light's growing portfolio of awarded grants and active partnership agreements. From the point of award through completion or closeout, this role ensures that grant requirements, deliverables, budgets, timelines, and reporting obligations are clearly documented, tracked, and fulfilled, helping Pilot Light meet its commitments to funders and responsibly manage restricted funding.

Working closely with the Senior Strategy & Development Lead, the program team, Finance, the Evaluation Consultant, and organizational leadership, the Grants Manager translates complex grant terms and contract requirements into clear, trackable actions for colleagues.. This role builds and maintains the deliverable, milestone, and reporting calendar for each grant and partnership agreement (including Memoranda of Understanding and fiscal sponsorship arrangements); monitors allowable costs, budget-to-actual, and drawdowns for grants in partnership with the organization's accountant; coordinates milestone-based invoicing for partnership agreements; conducts subrecipient and partner monitoring; and keeps deliverables on track across program teams in adherence with committed timelines. The role also directly supervises the SnackTime Explorers Program Associate and grant-funded Program Coordinator, providing direction and support to ensure the team successfully delivers grant-funded activities and maintains the documentation and data required by funders.

By safeguarding deliverables, deadlines, compliance, and audit-readiness across the grant and partnership portfolio, this position protects funder and partner trust and the organization's ability to grow revenue from diverse institutional sources. The Grants Manager works closely with the Senior Strategy & Development Lead, who owns funder and partner relationships, the stewardship of agreement terms and the submission of grant reports, alongside program leads who execute funded and partnership work, the external accountant, and subrecipient and program partners. Stewardship, negotiation, and amendment of agreement terms, including intellectual property and scope, remain with the Director of Development; this role administers and tracks execution against those terms rather than setting or changing them. Through careful attention to detail, effective project management, and thoughtful cross-functional coordination, this role helps ensure that grant funding is used responsibly, program commitments are fulfilled, and Pilot Light can clearly demonstrate the reach, outcomes, and impact of its work.

Primary Job Functions

1. Grant & Agreement Administration

- Manage the post-award administration of Pilot Light's grant portfolio and active grant-funded agreements from award through closeout.
- Review grant awards and agreements to understand funding restrictions, budgets, timelines, deliverables, reporting requirements, and other conditions.
- Establish and maintain organized grant files, tracking tools, deliverable schedules, and reporting calendars for each award.
- Identify grant-specific compliance and reporting requirements and translate them into clear, trackable actions for relevant staff.
- Track the status of grant and agreement deliverables and maintain accurate records of commitments, communications, and completion.
- Monitor execution against agreed-upon scope and flag potential changes, risks, or term-related issues to the appropriate organizational leader for resolution.
- Support the development and continuous improvement of systems and processes for managing Pilot Light's growing grant portfolio.

2. Grant Compliance, Financial Management, & Reporting

- Monitor grant compliance and reporting requirements to ensure that financial and programmatic obligations are completed accurately and on time.
- Maintain a forward-looking calendar of grant reporting deadlines, financial requirements, reimbursements, drawdowns, invoices, and other funder deliverables.
- Monitor allowable costs and budget-to-actual spending in partnership with the organization's accountant and appropriate internal staff.
- Coordinate grant reimbursement and drawdown requests and milestone-based invoicing in accordance with funder requirements.
- Support time-and-effort certification and cost-allocation practices, as applicable to grant requirements.
- Work with the Senior Strategy & Development Lead, coordinating the content needed for financial, programmatic, and other required grant reports, working with internal staff and external partners to gather complete and accurate information.
- Complete grant closeout activities, including reconciliations and documentation retention, and maintain audit-ready grant records. *NOTE: The Senior Strategy & Development Lead is responsible for the submission of all grant reports to our funders.*

3. Grant-Funded Program Coordination & Impact

- Coordinate with program leads to ensure grant-funded activities and deliverables remain aligned with approved scopes, timelines, budgets, and funder commitments.
- Work with the Program Portfolio & Professional Learning Lead and other program staff to identify responsibilities, timelines, and information needed to fulfill grant requirements without assuming ownership of program design or professional learning.
- Partner with the Evaluation Consultant and program staff to identify required outcome measures and coordinate the collection and organization of data, participant information, stories, and other evidence needed to demonstrate grant impact.
- Monitor progress toward grant-funded milestones and proactively identify gaps, delays, or other risks that could affect successful completion or reporting.
- Coordinate information from program, evaluation, finance, and other staff to support accurate, timely, and compelling funder reports.
- Conduct monitoring of subrecipients or grant-funded partners, when applicable, to ensure required documentation, reporting, and deliverables are completed appropriately.
- Maintain clear records of grant accomplishments, outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned to support funder stewardship and future grant development.

4. Team Leadership & Program Oversight

- Directly supervise the SnackTime Explorers (STE) Associate and grant-funded Program Coordinator, providing clear expectations, regular feedback, coaching, and support.
- Coordinate the STE team's work to ensure grant-funded activities, timelines, participant engagement, documentation, data collection, and other deliverables are completed as required.
- Monitor progress toward STE grant commitments and proactively identify and address barriers, risks, or delays that could affect successful implementation.
- Ensure STE staff understand and have the resources needed to fulfill grant-related responsibilities and reporting requirements.
- Collaborate with relevant program leadership to ensure STE activities are implemented consistently with Pilot Light's established program approach and organizational standards.
- Foster a collaborative, accountable, and supportive team environment that enables staff to successfully fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the goals of the grant-funded program.

NOTE: The Program Portfolio & Professional Development Lead and the Director of Curriculum & Educational Content will assist this program team with PD sessions and curricula coaching.

Preferred Experience, Skills, and Abilities

- Three or more years of progressively-responsible professional experience in post-award grants management, grants administration, grants compliance, contract or partnership agreement administration, or a related field.
- Experience managing grants and/or partnership agreements, including federal and/or state awards, with a strong understanding of contracts, grant compliance, and the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), including allowable costs, procurement standards, and subrecipient monitoring.
- Experience managing federal and state grant reporting, reimbursement, and drawdown processes, including reports such as the SF-425.
- Demonstrated ability to track contract deliverables, milestones, and reporting obligations against agreement terms and deadlines.
- Strong grant and contract budgeting and financial tracking skills, with the ability to collaborate effectively with an external accountant.
- Familiarity with Pilot Light's mission, Food Education Standards, programs, and educational approach; prior participation in Pilot Light programming is highly valued.
- Experience synthesizing program data, evaluation findings, and stakeholder feedback to support grant reporting and communicate program impact to funders and other stakeholders.
- Strong project management, organizational, and prioritization skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and make sound decisions in a dynamic environment.
- Excellent communication, coordination, and relationship-management skills, including the ability to effectively engage funders, program staff, Finance, evaluators, and other grant stakeholders.
- Commitment to collaboration and respect for the diverse expertise, perspectives, and contributions of colleagues, partners, and community members.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, exercise sound judgment, and adapt to evolving organizational and partner needs within a small, mission-driven team.
- Experience using common workplace and data management platforms such as Google Workspace, Zoom, survey and evaluation tools, CRM systems, and project management software.
- Experience working in a small nonprofit organization or other mission-driven environment where collaboration, adaptability, and independent ownership of work are essential.
- Familiarity with food education, food systems, PreK-12 education systems and communities, school nutrition programs, youth-serving organizations, or related mission-driven sectors is preferred.
- Bachelor's degree in nonprofit management, business administration, finance, public administration, or a related field is a plus.

Working Conditions

Duties may require:

- Prolonged periods of stationary work at a computer workstation
- Frequent use of standard office equipment, including computer, keyboard, mouse, webcam, and headset
- Sufficient visual ability to read and interpret detailed digital documents, data systems, and on-screen information
- Sufficient auditory and verbal ability to participate in virtual meetings and communicate effectively in real time
- The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through written, verbal, and virtual modalities with internal staff, educators, and external partners
- Regular and sustained use of video conferencing platforms and standard digital communication tools to conduct meetings, trainings, and external partner engagements

This position can be fully remote. If so, it would require the ability to effectively perform all essential job functions in a self-designed, remote work environment.

Occasional in-person meetings or program-related events in the Chicago area or at school locations, conferences, or other related engagements may be required.

Disclaimer

This position description is a summary of the essential functions of the job, not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of the tasks that an employee may be required to perform. The responsibilities, tasks, and duties of the jobholder might differ from those outlined in this job description and other duties, as assigned, may be part of the job. Nothing in this job description restricts the organization's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time. All applicants must meet federal requirements to work legally in the United States.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Pilot Light is committed to providing fair and equal employment opportunities for all qualified individuals. We aim to create a workplace where people feel respected, supported, and able to do their best work.

We seek to attract, develop, retain, and promote a talented workforce in a culture where all employees will contribute to their fullest potential. We consider all applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy or parental status, marital status, genetic information, protected veteran status, status as a person with disability, or any other status protected by applicable law. Consistent with its obligations under the law, Pilot Light will provide reasonable accommodation to any employee with a disability who requires accommodation to perform the essential job responsibilities.

Our hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, training, and other employment practices are based on job-related qualifications, skills, and experience.

We value employees:

- ...from a wide range of backgrounds, and with a variety of professional experiences and strengths.
- ...whose perspectives and life experiences help deepen our understanding of the communities we serve.
- ...who are motivated by supporting young people, strengthening communities, and helping food become a meaningful part of learning,

We value the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions each employee brings to our organization and are committed to fostering a workplace where all team members can thrive and grow.