Executive Director

Accessa Education Foundation

THE OPPORTUNITY

Accessa Education Foundation is seeking it's inaugural Executive Director to lead the organization from early-stage build-out to national-scale execution. Accessa is positioned to become a leading national voice on educational affordability through strategic investments, advocacy initiatives, research, awareness-building, and learner focused granting programs.

With recruitment of its first Executive Director, Accessa is entering a transformational phase, preparing to implement its inaugural strategic plan and position itself as a nationally recognized advocate for educational affordability and access in Canada.

Reporting to the Board of Directors of the Foundation, the Executive Director will bring an entrepreneurial mindset and operational approach to translating the 2026-2028 Strategic Plan into action and impact through disciplined implementation, trusted policy leadership, and measurable learner outcomes.

In this role, the Executive Director will serve as both strategic leader and hands-on builder, establishing the Foundation's operations, cultivating key partnerships, and building the capacity needed to advance Accessa's vision and deliver impact. The successful candidate will shape its initial operating model, coordinate external resources and expertise while establishing the processes and systems required for effective operations and building the foundation for a strategic grant-making program aligned with Accessa's mission and intended learner impact.

The Executive Director will bring strong business and financial acumen, builder discipline and public credibility to lead Accessa's growth as a leader in the education sector. Pairing strategic and innovative thinking with disciplined financial stewardship and mission-driven leadership, the successful candidate will build and strengthen Accessa's position as a distinctive national voice for educational affordability.

With governance experience, operational discipline, grant-making expertise, and the ability to build trust and credibility with a diverse range of stakeholders, the Executive Director will be adept at translating evidence and insight into measurable learner outcomes and be strongly committed to equity and learner success.

ABOUT ACCESSA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Accessa Education Foundation is a newly established organization dedicated to breaking down financial barriers to post-secondary education. The foundation's core operations will focus on improving access to post-secondary education by providing grants to students and charitable organizations that directly reduce education costs; supporting policies that lower financial barriers and expand access; and conducting campaigns and activities that increase students' awareness of available post-secondary education funding options.

Purpose:
Open doors for Canadian Learners to dream about their tomorrow.

Vision:
A Canada where educational opportunities are defined by ambition rather than financial means.

Mission:
Invest in and advocate for post-secondary learners to overcome financial barriers to education.

Strategic Priorities:
The Foundation intends to become a leading national voice on educational affordability through strategic investments, advocacy initiatives, research, awareness-building, and learner-focused granting programs.

Its aim is to close the 32-point Post-Secondary Enrolment/Participation Gap between Canada's highest and lowest income families.

To meaningfully move the needle, the Foundation will focus on three areas of action and investment:

Education Financial Support

Subsidize the cost of education through grants and awards delivered directly to students.

Policy Advocacy

Champion increased government funding and improved financial aid so that more students can access and afford post-secondary education.

Financial Literacy

Build Awareness of savings strategies and affordable pathways, including RESPS, co-ops, internships and more.

2026 – 2028 Strategic Plan:
The Foundation is entering a transformational phase as it implements its inaugural strategic plan and positions itself as a nationally recognized advocate for educational affordability and access in Canada.

The three-year strategy is designed to build momentum over time. **Year 1** focuses on establishing the programs, staffing and infrastructure needed for long-term success. **Year 2** moves into program implementation, and **Year 3** focuses on realizing and demonstrating impact.

Year-one success will be demonstrated through an approved operating plan, implemented governance and reporting systems, launch-ready grant infrastructure, early learner-focused programs, a board-supported advocacy strategy, and clear evidence that Accessa is emerging as a credible voice on educational affordability.



KEY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership, Governance & Strategy

- Serve as principal advisor to the Board, support effective governance, and provide regular reporting on strategy, risk, finances, impact, and organizational objectives.
- Establish the governance, financial controls, policies, reporting systems, and operating discipline required to deploy significant charitable funding responsibly.
- Build the organizational infrastructure, policies, processes and resources required to deliver on the Foundation's mandate.
- Lead implementation of the Foundation's inaugural strategic plan.

Grantmaking & Impact

- Lead the planning, delivery and assessment of programs, events and initiatives to ensure they achieve their intended outcomes and advance the Foundation's charitable purpose.
- Oversee the effective stewardship and deployment of the Foundation's charitable investments, ensuring resources are directed strategically to advance the Foundation's mission and achieve meaningful impact.
- Design and scale direct-to-student, needs-based grant and award programs with broad accessibility, partnership-enabled delivery, disciplined risk management, and clear impact measures.
- Implement impact measurement, track progress against strategic objectives, and provide clear quarterly board reporting and annual public impact reporting.
- Build meaningful relationships with grantees and understand the outcomes and impact of the Foundation's investments.

Advocacy, Public Awareness & Engagement

- Build trusted relationships with governments, educational institutions, community organizations, foundations, sector leaders, and research partners to strengthen Accessa's national presence.
- Serve as the Foundation's primary ambassador and spokesperson.

- Lead the development and positioning of the Foundation's brand, establishing a clear and compelling identity that resonates with its stakeholders and reflects its mission, values and aspirations.
- Position Accessa Education Foundation as a respected, non-partisan voice on educational affordability, access, and learner opportunity.
- Develop a focused education affordability policy agenda grounded in evidence, learner need, and the Foundation's charitable mandate.
- Lead targeted awareness initiatives on education affordability, savings strategies, RESPs, work-integrated learning, supported by baseline measures and progress tracking.

Financial Stewardship & Risk Management

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Foundation, including the budget, resource allocation, and transparent charitable expenditure across direct funding, advocacy, awareness, and administration.
- Work with the Board and its subcommittees to oversee the investment and management of Accessa's assets, subject to Board delegated authority., ensuring sound investment decisions and responsible stewardship of assets.
- Identify and manage organizational, financial, reputational and operational risks.
- Ensure appropriate internal controls, policies and processes are in place.
- Ensure the Foundation's compliance with applicable legislation, regulatory requirements and governance standards.
- Ensure the organization has the appropriate technology and external service providers to sustain effective operations.

Team Leadership & Resource Planning

- Develop the initial team and culture, including determining what capabilities should be developed internally versus through external expertise.
- Assess and evolve the Foundation's organizational capacity over time, ensuring its people, structure and resources are appropriately aligned with its mandate and stage of development.
- Manage compensation, performance management, and overall compliance regarding human resource matters.

QUALIFICATIONS & COMPETENCIES

Required

- Significant and progressive senior leadership experience, including accountability for strategy, operations, resources, and external relationships.
- Experience leading in charitable, foundation, education, public policy, public-sector, or social-impact environments where credibility, governance, and public trust are essential.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and implement strategy; establish organizational priorities; and build the structures, systems, processes and capabilities required to achieve a new or evolving mandate.
- Understanding of Board governance; experience working effectively with Boards and committees, advising on strategy, performance, risk, and impact.
- Experience in strategic planning, business operational planning, and execution.

- Strong business and financial acumen including experience managing significant budgets, risk, compliance, and complex stakeholder environments.
- Direct experience designing, governing, or scaling grant-making programs with clear eligibility, accountability, impact measures and evaluation frameworks.
- Exposure to program development, implementation, and evaluation, such as educational events and training programs.
- Ability to recruit, develop and lead high-performing teams, aligning people, structure, resources, and culture with strategic priorities.
- Experience leading or supporting government relations and public affairs, is desirable.
- Ability to develop and position an organization's brand in alignment with its mission and strategic direction.
- Knowledge of Canadian charitable sector legislation and CRA requirements.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills and experience supporting and effectively engaging volunteers.
- Comfortable working in an inaugural leadership role and building an organization from the ground up including strong organizational skills, and the ability to effectively manage multiple projects and priorities.
- Self-motivated with the ability to move from ideas to action while remaining open to learning and evolution.
- Passion for access to education and the mission of Accessa Education Foundation. Familiarity with education access, post-secondary affordability, student financial assistance, philanthropy, or public policy.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent education and experience.
- Ability to communicate in French is an asset.

Location & Work Environment: Accessa is initially being established as a remote organization, which is likely to change once operations are established, wherein the Executive Director will be expected to be the primary leader in office. Candidates from across Canada are welcome to apply, with a preference for those based in Toronto or Ottawa. Travel will be required for in-person meetings and events (anticipated to up to 20% in first two years).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Josee Morin, *Chair*

Strategic Start-Up Advisor: Renata Rusiniak

Andrea Bolger

Sherry Dondo

David Forster

Angela Lin

FOR MORE INFORMATION

KCI Search + Talent has been retained to conduct this Executive Director search on behalf of Accessa Education Foundation. For more information about the new Foundation and exciting opportunity, please reach out to Ellie Rusonik, SVP/Lead or Jill Anderson, AVP, at Accessa@kcitalent.com

Interested candidates should send their resume and letter of interest to the email address listed above by **November 13, 2026**. *Early applications are encouraged, as candidates will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.* All inquiries and applications will be held in strict confidence.

The salary range for this role is $170,000 - $220,000.

Access Education Foundation is committed to equitable and inclusive hiring practices. If you require accommodation, please notify KCI and they will work with you to meet your needs.