

JOB OPENING

Director of Finance and Operations

Global Designing Cities Initiative

Job Title: Director of Finance & Operations

Start Date: Q1/Q2 2026

Salary: Compensation is based on the country of hire and within the range of the local nonprofit/NGO industry.

Location: Remote - Work from Home. We encourage applications from candidates around the world. Please note that all applicants must possess an unrestricted legal right to work in their country of residence or the country of hire.

Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI) is seeking a **Director of Finance and Operations** to join its mission to transform streets around the world. Founded by transportation pioneer Janette Sadik-Khan, GDCI is one of the world's most influential and inspiring organizations that redesigns city streets from dangerous and congested corridors into safe, attractive, and inviting new places for people of any age to walk, cycle, and take public transportation.

GDCI is fiscally sponsored by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) and employs staff in nearly twenty countries, having supported over seventy cities worldwide. This role will be responsible for the overall health of GDCI's finances, operations, and people management; liaising with RPA, employers of record, funders, and GDCI's advisory board. Reporting to the Executive Director, this role will have extensive experience in budget oversight, people operations, managing remote and dispersed teams, and the ability to build infrastructure that is equitable and sustainable across different cultures and contexts. They will serve as part of the executive leadership for GDCI, contributing to decision-making and overall strategic direction.

Who we are

The [Global Designing Cities Initiative](#) (GDCI) was launched in 2014, with a mission to transform streets around the world. We inspire leaders, inform practitioners, and invite communities to imagine what's possible when we design streets that put people first. We are a team of designers, planners, and urban strategists committed to reimagining streets as places for people, shaping cities that are safe, healthy, accessible, and equitable for everyone.

The strategies and best practices in our [Global Street Design Guide](#) are the foundation of our work, and they have been applied in cities across the globe, helping to update policies, build local capacity, implement and evaluate projects, and scale up impact.

What you'll do

This role will provide executive-level leadership over all essential non-programmatic functions: Finance, Grant Management, Human Resources, and Global Operations. You will design, implement, and oversee the equitable and inclusive infrastructure, including policy, process, and staffing, that sustains our globally dispersed team. This role requires high emotional intelligence to navigate cultural differences, ensures GDCI's operational framework is strategically aligned and compliant with regulations, and empowers staff to deliver on our mission.

You will lead a small team, collaborate with leadership to execute on strategic plans, and serve as the critical liaison between staff and our external partners, championing best practices in policy and organizational culture.

More specifically, you will do activities such as:

Financial Strategy and Stewardship

- Own the organization's financial health and ensure sustainability by leading the creation, management, and mid-year adjustment of the annual operating budget.
- Provide strategic financial analysis and projections to executive leadership and the advisory board to inform key decision-making and drive organizational strategy.
- Oversee all core accounting functions (monthly reconciliations, revenue tracking, and financial policies) in liaison with the fiscal sponsor (RPA) and manage the indirect/overhead budget, ensuring nonprofit regulatory compliance.
- Work with program managers and leads on budget oversight.

Grants & Revenue Management

- Lead all financial reporting to funders and support the creation of new grant proposals or extended budgets.
- Develop new proposal budgets to support fundraising efforts.
- Track accounts receivable and the spend down of grant revenue.
- Oversee the full sub-grant lifecycle, in liaison with the fiscal sponsor (RPA), including due diligence, financial reporting template management, and report and payment approval, working closely with the fiscal sponsor, RPA.

Human Resources

- Design and own the global talent strategy through the development and enforcement of the compensation philosophy, salary policies, and international salary ranges, accounting for inflation and market volatility across countries of hire.
- Manage the full employee lifecycle, including the creation and oversight of equitable policies for recruitment, hiring, onboarding, benefits, and offboarding across all global locations.
- Oversee the performance management process (annual reviews, calibration, merit, and promotions) and champion the overall organizational culture, including professional development and DEI initiatives.
- Manage key external relationships with employers of record and the fiscal sponsor (RPA), acting as the primary liaison for all personnel matters.

Global Operations

- Develop, maintain, and enforce the operational backbone of the organization, including the Operations Manual, organizational norms, and all essential operational policies.
- Ensure organizational efficiency by overseeing contract management and equipment inventory, as well as acting as the administrator for all GDCI software platforms.
- Manage key external relationships with the fiscal sponsor (RPA), acting as the primary liaison for all operational matters.

Leadership

- Serve as a core member of the executive team, contributing to high-level decision-making and strategic direction, as well as leading team meetings and staff initiatives as needed.
- Work with executive leadership to create and implement organizational goals to ensure alignment between operational plans and the strategic vision.
- Manage and mentor the finance & operations team, developing their skill sets and providing guidance to strengthen the overall function.

Other tasks as assigned.

Who you are

GDCI is seeking an individual with extensive experience overseeing finance, HR, and operations for a dispersed and remote team. You must have proven success overseeing an operating budget of at least \$5 million and have served in a leadership capacity for a minimum of five years.

The ideal candidate will manage the whole employee lifecycle, including coaching staff on performance, professional development, and promoting equity and inclusion. You must be able to think strategically and successfully implement new policies and significant organizational changes. Experience coordinating with third parties (like fiscal sponsors or employers of record) and managing international teams is highly desirable. Knowledge of urban planning, urban design, transportation, or public spaces/policy is preferred, but not required.

You must be highly self-directed and willing to accommodate a schedule of a globally based team; as such, there may be some instances of required phone calls/meetings that are outside of normal work hours. This role may travel one to three times a year, not to exceed more than two weeks at a time.

To be successful in this job, you will excel in five areas:

- **Strategic Budget and Grant Management:** You are skilled in overseeing and controlling an operating budget of \$5m or more, with a proven ability to implement proactive course corrections for variances. You possess expertise in the complete lifecycle of multi-million dollar, multi-year grant budgets, including ensuring strict regulatory and donor compliance, meticulous cost allocation, and reliable financial forecasting and reporting to grantors.
- **Organizational Infrastructure & Change Management Leadership:** You can drive continuous process improvement and the strategic development of organizational infrastructure, while effectively managing and serving as the primary liaison to key external partners to ensure operational integrity, compliance, and efficiency. You know how to design, implement, and standardize scalable policies, systems, and protocols across multiple functional areas (e.g., Finance, HR, Operations) to enhance efficiency, equity, and compliance. You are advanced in change management, effectively able to secure buy-in, communicate major organizational shifts, train staff, and manage resistance.
- **Global People Operations Strategy & Execution:** You possess expertise in the whole employee lifecycle with experience managing international or dispersed staff. You know how to design and administer competitive, equitable compensation and benefits packages, lead effective, values-aligned performance management cycles, and develop, implement, and enforce consistent, legally compliant HR policies across various jurisdictions.

- **Values-Driven Performance & Development:** You have high emotional intelligence and a proven ability to successfully navigate and lead within a globally diverse and dispersed team. You lead by example by modeling a focus on priorities and effective/smart performance. You take the time to teach, offer valuable and actionable feedback, make sure that people feel appreciated, and treat mistakes as learning opportunities.
- **Executive Strategy & Stakeholder Engagement:** You understand how to align management, strategy, and operations to produce lasting results. You are comfortable providing strategic analysis and projections to executive leadership and the advisory board, confidently making high-stakes decisions, and competently engaging across diverse internal and external stakeholders.

Baseline Experience

At GDCI, we do not have minimum requirements for education or relevant professional experience. We encourage all candidates with relevant and differing experiences and professional backgrounds to apply.

Generally, we expect that qualified candidates will have the following baseline experience for a Director position:

- 14 years of relevant professional experience; OR
- 12 years of relevant professional experience with an undergraduate degree; OR
- 10 years of relevant professional experience with a master's degree

We recognize that candidates may not possess every single qualification listed. We are looking for candidates who can make a real impact and are mission driven. If you believe you have the core skills and the passion to succeed, we urge you to submit your application. We encourage women, people of color, and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to apply.

How to Apply

- **Deadline for applications:** Applications accepted on a rolling basis—please don't delay! Final deadline is **January 30th, 2026**.
- **Submit applications:** Through GDCI's [application portal](#). If you need support, please contact careers@gdci.global.

- **Attachments:** Include a cover letter and resume (CV) detailing relevant work experience.
- **Benefits:** GDCI offers a competitive compensation and benefits package, including health coverage, retirement benefits, paid sick leave, vacation, and holidays. Salary is based on local markets within the nonprofit/NGO industry and commensurate with experience and skills.

GDCI is a fiscally sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA). We are committed to workplace diversity and inclusion. We are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate in hiring or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. We offer competitive salaries, excellent benefits, and a passionate working environment. Salary is based on a nonprofit scale and commensurate with experience.