



**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**January 2018**

**PRESIDENT**

*Ackerman Institute for the Family (<http://www.ackerman.org/>) is recognized nationally and internationally as a preeminent provider of innovative approaches to professional training, clinical services, and community programs for families facing major life challenges in our complex society.*

**THE POSITION**

The President will lead with a sense of innovation and agility in an increasingly complicated and competitive environment to: 1) build the postgraduate training program; 2) support the development of innovative clinical research projects; and 3) provide the highest standard of assistance to vulnerable families – all in the context of the Institute’s commitment to social justice and racial diversity.

**BACKGROUND**

One of the first training institutions in the United States committed to promoting family functioning and family mental health, the Ackerman Institute for the Family is dedicated to helping all families at all stages of family life.

Founder, Nathan Ackerman, was committed to developing clinical innovations to address the myriad of psychosocial problems facing families and couples. This tradition of developing innovative family therapy techniques to address mental health problems faced by families is at the core of Ackerman’s work.

Through its dynamic commitment to research, treatment, and training, Ackerman’s work positively affects generations of families, provides mental healthcare professionals with new knowledge and skills, and brings innovative perspectives to community service agencies and other healthcare facilities.



## Ackerman Institute for the Family

President

Page 2.

Ackerman's success is based on the Institute's core beliefs: that couples' and families' problems are best addressed through a systematic examination of the family's interactional patterns, organizing relational beliefs (learned often in one's family of origin); as well as the impact of race, gender identity, ethnicity, financial circumstance, and education. Also, the Institute believes that treatment goals are best achieved when therapist and family develop a collaborative, non-hierarchical relationship which focuses on identifying the family's unique strengths as well as constraints. This multigenerational approach is reflected in Ackerman's training guide: *The Ackerman Relational Approach*.

Clinical/research projects further extend the reach of the Institute by focusing on specific topic areas and by developing both clinical and preventative models. These ideas are fed back into the postgraduate training program and disseminated to community agencies and other educational institutions. A sample of some of the current Centers and Projects include: Center for Relational Trauma; Center for Families and Health; Center for the Developing Child and the Family; Gender and Family Project; Foster Care and Adoption Project; Latino Youth and Family Immigration Project; Talk Race Group Project; the Justice Project; and the Multiracial Family and Couple Project. (Please see the website for more detailed information.)

The faculty has committed to studying together the impact of race and racism in the service of creating a more inclusive environment at Ackerman and to deepen its clinical work in terms of the impact of marginalization and racism on the families served. This has resulted in new clinical research projects, new organizational groupings, and new processes for how faculty are chosen and promoted.

Ackerman can be described as a combination "think tank" and implementer of innovative practices where teaching methods and clinical models are continually invented, practiced, and refined. The Institute provides: 1) direct services to families and couples through an onsite OMH clinic; 2) postgraduate training in couple and family therapy both on site and in community service organizations; and 3) clinical research initiatives known as "special projects" that focus on the development of new treatment models and training techniques. Many projects at the Institute have led to articles, books, and training tapes. Additionally, the Institute has an international training program with relationships with other family institutes in Chile, Argentina, and Mexico.

Located in New York City, Ackerman trains more than 1,000 clinicians a year through extensive onsite and community-based programs. The Clinic provides over 6,000 family therapy sessions at its onsite clinic. The Institute's operating budget for the 2017 fiscal year was \$4.5 million, with an administrative staff of 19 and a part-time teaching/supervisory faculty of 35.



## Ackerman Institute for the Family

President

Page 3.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The President, who reports to the Board, is charged with the basic goal to maintain Ackerman's preeminence in fields of research, clinical programs, and training. He or she works with the organization's senior management team to create strategies and programs that will assure achievement of the vision and mission set forth by the Board. To this end, the President is responsible for leading the planning and execution efforts of the basic areas of the Institute to ensure that they work with each other toward successful implementation of organization-wide strategies. In this effort, the President must:

- Develop an organizational structure, leadership process, and operating culture that facilitate and encourage a spirit of collaboration and communication among the faculty and staff.
- Maintain an operating culture that attracts the highest quality faculty and students.

While the Institute is preeminent in the treatment and study of families and for the training of family therapists, this position will be maintained only through the continuation of high-quality work of the outstanding faculty and students at the Institute. In this effort, the President must:

- Ensure that the organization has strong faculty leaders who will oversee and manage the research, clinical, and educational activities of the Institute.
- Support the existing research, clinical, and educational programs in the Institute's fields of expertise, and consider the addition of new initiatives working with faculty for their expertise and input in making such decisions and implementing them.
- Foster the growth of existing clinical programs and consider the creation and development of new clinical programs to significantly increase the Institute's patient base and revenues.
- Develop active recruiting efforts to continue to attract a world-class faculty, a talented and vibrant student population, and an experienced and dedicated administrative staff.

The environment in which the Institute operates is increasingly complicated and competitive. The operation of the Institute must be held to high ethical and financial standards, while it carries out its responsibility to conduct high-quality therapeutic services, research, and teaching. In this effort, the President must:

- Develop sound financial and operating strategies and programs with the senior management team, and gain Board support for them.
- Create an organizational structure that supports the Institute's strategies and programs, and provide the human and financial resources necessary to achieve the Institute's goals.



## Ackerman Institute for the Family

President

Page 4.

- Actively participate, both locally and nationally, with committees and organizations that are of importance to the Institute.

One of the most important responsibilities of the President is to provide entrepreneurial leadership toward the development of new revenue-generating programs. The goal of such programs is to productively extend the work of the Institute and to increase revenues to support the Institute's work. To accomplish this, the President must:

- Develop a model for the exploration and validation of new ideas to increase the outreach of the Institute using its resources in the research, clinical, and educational arenas.
- Maintain an ongoing review of new directions and programs to be certain they are meeting their intended purposes and their financial assumptions.
- Work closely with internal leadership and external resources, as necessary, in the design and development of any new programs to ensure that they will fully utilize the institute's expertise and knowledge and will result in new revenue streams.

Fundraising is one of the President's top priorities. Both philanthropic support and non-philanthropic grants, contracts, and programs are essential to the efficacy of the Institute's research, training, and community programs. To carry out this major initiative, the key responsibilities are to:

- Lead the creation and execution of development strategies to substantially increase revenues for the Institute's ongoing operations and long-term endowment through close collaboration with the Board, the faculty, and the Director of Development.
- Play an active role in the execution of fundraising programs through leadership and oversight. Represent Ackerman to the many constituencies necessary to the Institute's continued success.
- Work with the academic leadership within Ackerman to develop non-philanthropic sources of income including grants and contracts.
- Create plans for a separate effort focused on achieving a major increase in the Institute's endowment.
- Build a creative and active media relations effort in direct support of fundraising and other capital formation programs. Utilize all media avenues to raise the Institute's profile and the public's awareness of Ackerman's many accomplishments.
- In all of Ackerman's fundraising efforts, tap the faculty's talent and resources, as well as the Institute's considerable outside resources, including Board members and others close to the Institute, to ensure achievement of outstanding results.



## **Ackerman Institute for the Family**

President

Page 5.

### **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- The Institute is now positioned to focus on its core mission and to increase the fundraising streams to support and grow its programs. The new President will lead this effort.
- Given that the majority of the organization's public support comes in the form of restricted funding to support the various programs, the new President will need to focus on the development of new funding streams.
- Public and private funders are beginning to require that mental health providers, like Ackerman, demonstrate outcomes and assess and document practices, given the trend in health care, social services, and public education toward greater accountability for results. The new President will have an opportunity to construct and clearly define outcome evaluation strategies for all programs and activities.
- Trends in mental health reimbursement in the state of New York may be changing, thereby affecting clinic economics. The President must include this inevitable characteristic of the mental health field in his/her strategic vision for the Institute.
- The President will develop a communications strategy to disseminate the top quality clinical care, research, and educational opportunities provided at the Institute to critical yet diverse constituencies.
- As the Ackerman Institute continues to expand its services and grow as an organization, new space will be needed. The new President will work with the Board to evaluate how and where to expand as its services increase.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

To effectively lead the Ackerman Institute in its diverse training, research, clinical, fundraising, and operating activities, the successful candidate must be or have:

- An acknowledged leader in the family therapy field, with the requisite leadership, fundraising, and program building experience. Individuals who are not extensively trained in family therapy but who are systemic thinkers and offer exceptional related experience, a demonstrated track record of related success, and a commitment to the Ackerman mission are also encouraged to apply. Examples of such candidates include but are not limited to leaders in the mental health field, academia, and health care.
- A deep commitment to social justice and racial equality. The ability to see how social justice manifests itself in the social fabric of the Institute and in the clinical dilemmas of the families seen in the clinic.
- Demonstrated success in developing, leading, and implementing fundraising efforts on a regional or national basis.



## Ackerman Institute for the Family

President

Page 6.

- The ability to provide leadership in a complex organizational framework, with diverse initiatives and disciplines, including academic, clinical, educational, and financial elements.
- A visionary who can lead the thinking and development of future directions and initiatives for Ackerman.
- The charisma and energy that will attract a new generation of supporters to the institute, and the ability to creatively and productively utilize them for both fundraising and institutional governance.
- An excellent recruiter who can attract and retain top-quality students and staff so important to the efforts of Ackerman.
- Experience in and understanding of all aspects of nonprofit management including research, marketing, finance, operations, and human resource development.
- A reputation as a leader with a high level of integrity who values and encourages open communication, collaboration, and outstanding performance.
- Intelligence, creativity, high energy, and adaptability, with a sense of humor and personal perspective.
- The ability to clearly communicate an organization's vision and imperatives to its employees and gain their active support and enthusiasm.
- An articulate and charismatic speaker, effective in large and small group settings, who can excite listeners about Ackerman and its accomplishments.
- Graduate or professional degree expected: MD, PhD, MSW or related mental health graduate degree. Expertise in one or more of the following fields is highly preferred: family therapy; psychiatry; clinical psychology; social psychology; social work; or public health.

*Ackerman Institute for the Family seeks a diverse pool of candidates and will offer a competitive salary. Applications, including cover letters and résumés, and nominations should be sent to the attention of Jane Phillips Donaldson and Paul Spivey at [Ackerman@PhillipsOppenheim.com](mailto:Ackerman@PhillipsOppenheim.com).*

Ackerman Institute for the Family  
January 2018



PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM