



## Chief Financial Officer

### ABOUT ACHIEVEMENT FIRST

Achievement First (AF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supporting 39 public charter schools across New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. For more than 25 years, AF has been recognized as one of the top tuition-free public charter school networks in the country. We are committed to creating schools of academic excellence within nurturing environments — schools that prepare students to be college-ready and to pursue and succeed in whatever paths they choose in life.

The majority of AF students are Black and Latinx children from low-income families, many of whom will be the first in their families to graduate from college. Across our network, we employ more than 2,200 staff members — 64% of whom identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color — who collectively educate nearly 15,000 students in Brooklyn and Queens, NY; New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford, CT; and Providence and Cranston, RI.

**Our mission is to prepare every student to excel in college, career, and life; deepen their understanding of self and community; and lead lives of purpose. We believe in the limitless potential within our students and their power to shape a more just society.** That belief drives our deep commitment to student achievement: we aim to set a high bar for learning and create warm, demanding classrooms where rigorous instruction is paired with the care, encouragement, and consistency every student deserves.

Each of our schools is a vibrant learning community shaped by its local context yet guided by a shared set of values: leading for racial equity, striving for excellence, embracing challenge, caring for the whole person, choosing joy, and going further together. These values guide our work across the organization and reflect both who we are and who we aspire to be.

At Achievement First, we are strengthened by being one network — united by shared values, a common mission, and a deep belief in what's possible for our students. At the same time, we know that education is a deeply local endeavor, which is why we work in close partnership with families and local communities to ensure each school has the resources and support it needs to thrive.

Together, we're building a future where every student receives an excellent education grounded in the strengths of their community, and where the impact of our collective work endures for generations.

## THE CFO ROLE & IMPACT

Achievement First stands at a pivotal moment in its evolution. Building on a strong and deeply rooted history, Achievement First recognizes the need to adapt its operational model to meet the aspirations and demands of its ambitious strategic plan. To support this transformation, Achievement First seeks a values-first and mission-driven, hard charging strategic financial leader who will cast a forward-looking vision for the financial function while remaining hands-on in delivery and execution.

Achievement First is operating from a place of financial health with a strong balance sheet and healthy reserves. With an annual overall operating budget of approximately \$400M, the ideal candidate will have a background of thriving in large and complicated organizations.

The ideal candidate will thrive in a dynamic environment and will be instrumental in shaping the financial approaches, systems, and organization-wide mindsets necessary for sustainability and long-term innovation. Reporting to the CEO, and collaborating closely with colleagues across the leadership team and organization, the CFO will lead across the following domains:

### **Strategic Financial Leadership**

- Partner with the CEO to ensure the financial function at AF enables and supports the organizational mission and impact ambitions.
- Lead the development of a multi-year financial plan that supports AF's strategic goals and long-term sustainability.
- Rebuild and enhance financial systems, structures, and policies to match the current and future scale of the organization.
- Ensure the financial strategy fuels both operational excellence and program innovation.

### **Team and Culture Builder**

- Collaborate closely with the Chief Operating Officer, Chief People Officer, Chief of Development, and other organizational leaders to ensure tight alignment between financial planning, program needs, and organizational strategy.
- Serve as a trusted thought partner to senior leadership and the board, fostering shared ownership of financial goals.
- Build internal financial acumen, including guiding school and program leaders to understand and manage their budgets effectively.
- Structure finance organization to deliver timely and excellent service to schools.
- Mentor and develop team to have a best-in-class department receiving consistently excellent feedback from front-line leaders.

### **Stewardship and Innovation**

- Maintain and strengthen a strong balance sheet and ensure healthy reserves.
- Optimize the use of public and philanthropic dollars: shift operational reliance from philanthropy and redirect philanthropic investments toward innovation and strategic initiatives.

- Champion a healthy and mission-driven approach to resource allocation, recognizing the impact and intent behind each funding source.

### **Operational Excellence**

- Lead Achievement First through significant transformation with clarity and confidence, helping the organization adapt systems to support growth and scale.
- Support AF's proactive and strategic approach to real estate.
- Build financial infrastructure that supports daily excellence in service to schools while preparing for future innovation.

## **QUALIFICATIONS & CHARACTERISTICS**

While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

### **Mindset & Values**

- Passionate about educational equity and organizational impact.
- Committed to building systems that support equity and sustainability.
- Humble, team-oriented, and driven by a strong sense of purpose.

### **Leadership Qualities**

- Both strategic and hands-on; able to toggle between vision-setting and day-to-day execution.
- Deep commitment to cross-functional collaboration and shared leadership.
- Transparent, communicative, and a natural relationship-builder with staff, board, and external stakeholders.
- Excited to engage deeply with programmatic work and understand how financial strategy supports mission delivery.
- Track record of translating complex financial information into actionable insights for diverse stakeholders, including board members, executive leaders, program leaders, and external partners.
- Proven manager and talent developer.

### **Skills & Experience**

- Proven experience leading financial strategy in complex, mission-driven organizations including budgeting, strategic forecasting and planning and overseeing financial, accounting, compliance, and risk management.
- Experience in large, multi-state or multi-entity nonprofits, government organizations, and/or school systems is preferable.

- Track record of building systems and leading organizations through operational and financial transformation.
- Strong knowledge of public, grant, and philanthropic revenue models and requisite policies and reporting.

#### **Education & Licensure**

- Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting or related field required;
- Advanced degree in a related field, MBA and/or CPA strongly preferred.

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

The salary for this role is \$275,000. Additionally, Achievement First offers to all regular, full-time employees a comprehensive benefits package that includes paid time off, medical, dental, vision, and life insurance, a 403(b) retirement benefit package with match, and paid Family Leave. This position is hybrid with an expectation that the CFO will be in one of the Achievement First offices at least 3-4 days a week.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Evaluation of candidate materials (resume/CV and letter of interest) will begin immediately and continue until a new CFO is named. Interested candidates may apply using the following Talent Profile link: <https://talent-profile.dsgco.com/search/v2/22356>.

Inquiries and nominations may be sent in confidence to: [AchievementFirstCFO@dsgco.com](mailto:AchievementFirstCFO@dsgco.com)



**Katie Vivalo Rouse**, Managing Director

**Kamilah Allen**, Senior Search Associate

**Erin Fadden**, Senior Search Coordinator

For more information about Achievement First, please visit <https://www.achievementfirst.org/>

#### ***Equal Employment Opportunity***

*Achievement First is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that values diversity. People from all diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Spanish language proficiency is a plus. You can learn more about diversity at Achievement First here:*

<http://achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/>