

Vice President of Facilities and Capital Financing

Start Date: Immediate
Team: Team Finance
Location: New Haven, CT or Brooklyn, NY

About Achievement First

Achievement First, a non-profit 501(c)3 charter school management organization, operates over 30 public charter schools in Brooklyn, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race or economic status. Achievement First currently educates more than 12,600 students in historically underserved neighborhoods, with over 90% of our students identifying as Black and Latino. With its college-preparatory focus, the Achievement First approach is attaining breakthrough academic gains throughout the network. Beyond our students and schools, Achievement First is an engaged and prominent partner in the larger conversation about how to improve public education and student achievement in our country.

Achievement First's approach to teaching and learning enables every student to succeed at the highest levels. This involves:

- Recruiting and developing successful teachers and school leaders and empowering them to use student data to strategically drive instruction;
- Creating a joyful school culture where it is "cool to be smart" that emphasizes character education and focuses students on college;
- Providing students with more time on task and intense intervention when they are struggling so that no child falls through the cracks.

For more information about Achievement First's mission, approach, schools and team, please visit our website at www.achievementfirst.org.

Summary

The Achievement First network currently has more than one million square feet in leased, owned, or occupied real estate holdings. Achievement First oversees the space planning, site acquisition, construction oversight, maintenance and repairs, regulatory compliance for all of this real estate. Achievement First also secures the capital required to invest in and maintain these real assets. Since 2008, AF has managed or served as owner's representative in more than \$300 million in construction and has added 350,000 square feet to its portfolio. Reporting to the CFO, the VP of Facilities and Capital Financing will supervise all capital projects, plan and secure all capital financing for these capital projects, and plan and manage support our growing network of schools – from 36 today to 50 in 5 years – in their school maintenance and repair projects.

The ideal candidate will have experience in construction management, facilities, property acquisition, securing public, private, and non-profit capital financing within a broad network of schools and central offices. Given our multi-state (NY, CT, RI presently) and five city footprint, this job is unique in that the individual needs to deeply understand the facilities, financing and cash content, while taking meticulous care to ensure that the properties and facilities inspire learning and education, all while working within the political context of the cities and communities we serve.

Responsibilities of the VP of Facilities and Capital Financing will include but are not limited to:

○ **Facilities Responsibilities:**

- Site Assessment, Negotiation & Acquisition: Supervise all efforts to conduct space needs assessment, conduct site viability and feasibility analyses, generate budget and cost analyses, and conduct negotiations and acquisition process to secure appropriate properties.
- Capital projects over \$100,000: Supervise efforts to develop scope and schedule for capital projects, assemble professional design and construction team with adequate qualifications for the project, develop project budget, manage design review with the school, serve as owner's representative and manage all aspects of the construction project, manage project budget and schedule throughout construction, review and approve all invoices and payment requisitions, secure close-out documentation, and coordinate turnover from construction team to the school Ops team.
- Site Improvement Projects (>\$5000 but <\$100,000): Supervise efforts to provide assistance to Directors of School Operations (DSOs) in developing the scope of work and bidding and reviewing invoices or payment requisitions as needed
- Site improvement projects (<\$5000): Supervise efforts to provide guidance to DSOs as needed
- Building Management: Supervise efforts to provide as-needed assistance and guidance to DSOs on any facility issue that arises (e.g., security systems, acoustic improvements, roof leaks), provide standard forms and procedures to help DSOs save time and protect AF's interests, including standard contract language, standard insurance and license requirements, standard maintenance procedures, and standards for emergency response, work with DSOs to identify and implement cost-saving strategies, help DSOs negotiate with and manage contracts, and help schools best use their space - to optimum performance and best aesthetic standards (e.g., spatial analysis, graphic installation, furniture selection), provide custodial service standards, and review proposals and invoices for compatibility with industry standards.
- Environmental Issues (Asbestos, PCBs, Radon, and Mildew/Mold): Create, maintain, and update all hazardous material management plans for schools, provide training for staff on hazardous material awareness, management, and emergency responses, Work with schools to maintain compliance, Provide guidance to DSOs on environmental situations that arise.
- Procurement: Work with team members and DSOs to identify and implement cost-savings opportunities in procurement areas (e.g., electricity rates, custodial services, furniture, vaults), Provide cost analysis and assist with rate negotiation, Provide advice on complex contract management solutions, Help develop systems to evaluate vendors and provide feedback and ensure high levels of customer satisfaction.
- Network-Wide Facility Information: Maintain copies of all leases/ memoranda of understanding, facility statistics (square footage of rooms, capacity of large assembly spaces), and floor plans (In progress; this info is available for some but not all schools).

○ **Financing Responsibilities:**

- Work with Team Finance and Team Development to establish capital targets for fundraising and financing
- Develop partnerships with private lenders for capital project financing
- Market opportunities to lenders, negotiate terms with lenders, coordinate the process to provide lenders with information required for underwriting

- Work with Board of Directors to share information and secure approval for all capital project financing
- Coordinate with legal representation to close lending deals
- Serve as AF's primary liaison with lender
- Serve as lender's liaison to all aspects of the construction project
- Coordinate the conversation from a construction to permanent loan
- Develop and maintain business relationships with organization's bankers and lenders
- Evaluate long-term borrowing strategies and make recommendations in accordance with capital structure guidelines
- Understand, manage and advise on large cash management transactions, including capital projects and the timing of debt repayment

Skills and Characteristics

The VP will be expected to meet challenging assignments with a creative problem-solving mentality, tenacity, and a strong sense of the organization's mission. Specific skills desired of the ideal candidate include:

- Strong proven track record with capital project planning, construction management, real estate negotiations, capital financing, and facility operations
- Extremely strong management skills with a heavy focus on excellent results and interpersonal relationship development
- Ability to deliver on-time and on-budget capital projects despite any and all obstacles and challenges that arise
- Ability to spot, proactively mitigate, and address risk
- Ability to develop complex multi-site real estate strategy plans, layered in with political context, timing requirements and financing constraints
- Ability to negotiate and manage contracts extremely effectively
- Familiarity with design and space planning principles and architectural drawings
- Awareness of laws, ordinances, and regulations applicable to building construction
- Ability to establish and maintain effective cross-functional working relationships
- Strong commitment to 100% accuracy and close attention to details
- Advanced financial modeling skills, especially of borrowing/lending transactions and their impact on financial statements
- Ability to conduct technical analysis of information (both data and financial)
- Highly developed organizational skills
- Excellent people and performance-management skills, with a proven track record of developing capacity within a team
- Strong communication skills and keen judgment
- Commitment to see projects through from beginning to end
- Commitment to customer service
- Experience with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- Motivation, maturity, humility, strong work ethic, sense of humor, "roll-up-my-sleeves" attitude
- Belief in the Achievement First mission and educational model

Educational Background and Work Experience

- Bachelor's degree is required from a competitive college or university
- Master's degree is required from a competitive college or university in a related field
- Minimum of 15 years of work experience

Compensation

Salary for this position is competitive and commensurate with experience. Additionally, Achievement First offers a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Send resume and cover letter to:

Victor De La Paz
Chief Financial Officer, Team Finance
victordelapaz@achievementfirst.org

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://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/>.