



INNOVATION PROGRAM MANAGER

ASSOCIATION FOR ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITY (AEO) is the leading voice of innovation for microfinance and microbusiness. Our mission is to create economic opportunity for underserved entrepreneurs throughout the United States. We engineer transformational change through research, convening, incubation, and advocacy to foster a robust and inclusive marketplace. For more than 30 years, AEO and our 2,700+ member organizations have helped millions of entrepreneurs support themselves and their families while contributing to their communities through business ownership.

AEO's Innovation Hub leverages its deep understanding of the needs of underserved and diverse entrepreneurs and translates them into compelling solutions. Integral to the Innovation Hub are pilot projects where ideas, financial product prototypes, and new models of service delivery are tested for their viability and impact with diverse entrepreneurs. AEO uses a highly collaborative and agile process working with entrepreneurs, corporate partners, lenders and other AEO members organized into a structured cohort.

The Innovation Program Manager is a member of the Innovation Hub team and is responsible for the design, structure and execution of a portfolio of projects. The Innovation Program Manager will serve as the project lead with internal and external stakeholders, sharing and capturing information and knowledge integral to the success of the pilot projects. This position will also work with AEO's Research Team in developing measurement and evaluation tools for its portfolio.

The ideal candidate must excel in a virtual, remote work environment and be an experienced professional who is entrepreneurial, thrives to make things better, values a co-creative process in which they listen, learn, share, repeat, and recognizes that ideas are nice, but impact is everything. The successful candidate will demonstrate the ability to engage effectively with Black business owners, and a range of other stakeholders and can lead functional, operational, and relationship problem-solving discussions with a broad range of individuals. The Innovation Program Manager reports to the Director of Innovation Engineering.

Key Responsibilities

Program Management:

- Own the execution and successful implementation of multiple pilot projects from ideation to proof of concept with the goal of identifying, developing, and launching scalable products and services aimed at the needs of microbusinesses across the country.
- Serve as expert and point-of-contact on the Program internally and, as necessary, with external partners. Share insights on Program progress, learnings, and areas of concerns.

- Obsess over the transparency and visibility of Program – ensure that all relevant teams have necessary information to support the successful execution of deliverables. Leverage internal meetings, Enterprise-Wide Project Manager, and Monday.com as necessary to communicate relevant updates in an effective and timely way.
- Document and track project risks and issues, establish mitigation plans, and take corrective actions as necessary
- Onboard and train cohort of relevant stakeholders and serve as point of contact for all individuals involved.
- Assess the landscape and perform field analysis to identify and evaluate trends and emerging themes
- Understand and monitor any shifts that could impact the adoption and implementation of proposed products and services once pilot projects are completed.
- Develop, in concert with the research team, metrics, tracking, and reporting tools for projects and cohorts.
- Contribute to research/development by assisting with data collection, analysis, and reporting
- Assist with writing reports capturing lessons learned and insights from cohorts and products and service pilots
- Assist in the development of standardized processes for cohort onboarding and overall project management.
- Support leadership efforts in bringing proven concepts to market.

Relationship Management:

- Build strong relationships with member organizations engaged throughout the portfolio
- Confidently engage with staff at all levels and across multiple stakeholder groups, and use poise, tact, and persuasiveness to motivate others by sharing points of view while listening and learning from others.
- Coordinate and lead meetings as necessary, fostering an environment conducive to sharing and learning.

Professional Experience/Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree required; Master's Degree preferred
- 5+ years of progressively responsible experience
- Education in economics, mathematics, social science, or related degree
- Knowledge of non-profits, entrepreneurship, and small business lending
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, especially PowerPoint and Excel
- Demonstrated track record of performance using field research, data analysis, human-centered design, and project management skills
- Exceptional attention to detail
- Ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously, and thrive in a fast-paced environment with multiple priorities
- Expertise in project management methodology and techniques

Ideal Experience

- Leading initiatives for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color especially programs focused on women or underserved communities
- Diverse personal and professional experience working with Black/Brown women initiatives
- Empathetic skillset
- Excellent critical thinking skills and the ability to derive innovative solutions to complex problems

We Offer

- Competitive compensation based on experience, including retirement matching
- Fully paid medical, dental, and vision coverage for the employee
- A collaborative and high-performing work environment

TO APPLY

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to careers@aeoworks.org. In your cover letter, please include: your unique qualifications for this position, your salary requirements, and how you learned of this vacancy.

AEO is clear of its vision to be a place where a diverse mix of talented people want to come, to stay, and do their best work. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or veteran status.