



PRESIDENT
THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY
Location — Remote



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with The Better Angels Society in the search for a President.

The President will oversee and direct strategy, relationships with major stakeholders, and programmatic outreach for The Better Angels Society. In partnership with the Board of Directors, the President will facilitate the design and implementation of a long-term growth strategy that furthers the Society's mission to be the preeminent organization supporting American history documentary filmmakers. As the organization strengthens relationships among philanthropists, public organizations, and documentarians, the President will develop deep connections among stakeholders to further their mutual impact. To advance the historical knowledge and civic engagement of American society, the President will lead a team of professionals, working alongside external partners and consultants, to provide a range of experiences and events across a diverse range of stakeholders.

The Better Angels Society (the "Society") is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating Americans about their history through documentary film. Founded in 2013 by supporters of Ken Burns, the Society's goal is to educate, engage, and provoke thoughtful discussion among people of every political persuasion and ideology. The work of the Society ensures that historically significant films are completed, broadcast, promoted, and shared in ways that reach as many people as possible. The Society is currently raising funds for Ken Burns' films in production and planned over the next ten years. In addition, the Society is working to make certain that the next generation of documentary filmmakers receives the education, mentoring, training, and support it needs to continue the legacy of Ken Burns.

The Society oversees and supports the *Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film*—a national award for history documentary filmmaking. In its fifth year, the award was created to provide finishing funds, including outreach and marketing, for feature-length U.S. historical documentaries. The Society is also committed to inspiring young documentary filmmakers through the annual *Next Generation Angels Awards*, in coordination with National History Day. Presented to six middle and high school documentary filmmakers, the *Next Generation Angels Awards* recognize excellence in well-researched history filmmaking. To further enhance the work of these aspiring young documentarians, the six recipients are celebrated with a series of events, including a mentorship session with Ken Burns and the *Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film* finalists. All *Next Generation Angels Awards* films also receive a copyright and will exist in perpetuity in the Library of Congress.

A third award, the *Better Angels Lavine Fellowship Program*, was established in 2021 as a component of the *Library of Congress/Lavine Ken Burns Prize for Film*. The Lavine Fellowship is for promising filmmakers whose films are not selected as finalists for the *Lavine Prize* but demonstrate the potential for excellence. With a special emphasis on film projects telling stories of America's diversity, the filmmakers receive mentorship, guidance, and advice from a panel of expert filmmakers on the film projects they submitted for the *Lavine Prize*. This fellowship supports five filmmakers each year.

Beyond seeking out the filmmakers of the future, the Society supports Ken Burns' films in production that explore topics ranging from the history of the American Buffalo to the life of Leonardo da Vinci. The Society also ensures that Ken Burns' films are available for use in classrooms across the country—something that was especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through grants to PBS's *Ken Burns in the Classroom*, students and educators can view film clips and access lesson plans and research tools that challenge them to go beyond a film's specific topic and explore the themes that are central to American life. Having been developed around key curriculum subjects, these educational materials are closely aligned with content-based and common core standards. The Society is also dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Ken Burns' works. These films, some of which are over thirty-five years old, have begun to deteriorate in storage. Saving these exceptional documentaries requires restoration to high definition to ensure that future generations can view history in vivid detail.

The Society currently operates remotely with four staff and an annual operating budget of \$1.2 million. The organization annually raises and regrants an average of \$10 million in support of films and other projects and events.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The President serves at the will of The Better Angels Society Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, chaired by Bobby Stein. The President is the primary contact between and among the Board, staff, audiences, and external partners.

FROM THE CHAIR

We appreciate your interest in leading The Better Angels Society as our next President.

A decade ago, we set out to become the preeminent organization supporting American history documentary filmmakers. The enormous support we've received has been driven by the belief that understanding our complicated history will help us tackle contemporary issues through informed civil dialogue and lifelong education. Ten years and over \$100M of philanthropic donations later, we've helped to fund and air both the important work of Ken Burns and his team of dedicated filmmakers and that of other highly talented and yet lesser-known American history documentary filmmakers.

We're in an excellent position to seek new leadership to steer the organization into the future. The Better Angels Society is well-recognized and highly admired. Our name and our work are intimately associated with the unmatched quality and excellence of a Ken Burns film. Moreover, our goal of securing Ken's legacy through our support of the next generation of filmmakers has been implemented and is thriving beyond our wildest dreams.

With this solid foundation, further strengthened by a dedicated Board, a strong staff, and excellent partners in public media, we're looking for a unique individual to run the organization, expand our existing programs and fundraising trajectory, and lead the organization to new heights and areas of educational impact and civil dialogue. Among other key qualities, therefore, the next President will have an entrepreneurial outlook, working with the Board to identify and fund new initiatives, and identify ways to best achieve our mission of "advancing historical documentary filmmakers to promote civic engagement and educate generations of students and lifelong learners."

The building blocks are in place to expand and deepen the impact of our work in new and exciting ways. It's a fulfilling position and we're a fun group, pulling together for a great cause, and looking forward to an exciting future. We hope you'll join us.

—Bobby Stein, Chair, Board of Directors

THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Better Angels Society is committed to supporting a diverse community of organizations and individuals through inclusive excellence. We recognize the value of differences, and differences of opinion, and promote inclusion reflecting the multicultural nature of our nation, including those that experience discrimination or under-representation.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The President will

- be responsible for fundraising and friend-raising in support of the films and legacy of Ken Burns and other filmmakers;
- maintain and enhance positive relationships with partners, donors, and grant recipients;
- strengthen the infrastructure of the organization and its network of prospective donors;
- meet metric driven, Board-established goals to advance the organization over the long-term;
- closely manage the organization's financial affairs and keep the Board closely apprised;
- maintain strict compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and adhere to best practices in nonprofit leadership;
- support the preparation of Board meetings and, together with the Board, collaborate on donor identification, development, solicitation, and engagement;
- provide oversight and direction to the staff on the execution of responsibilities;
- foster a strong team, identify improvement opportunities, and address challenges;
- serve as the lead spokesperson for the Society, nurturing connections with audiences through media and mentoring those participating in various programs; and
- develop and advance mutually beneficial relationships to leverage the missions and capacities of The Better Angels Society.

ABOUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Society is governed by an engaged nineteen-member Board of Directors—a close-knit and dedicated group who provide the organization with time, wisdom, and resources. The Board is comprised of highly-respected leaders from the nonprofit sector, government, business, and philanthropy—all passionate about the impact that documentary films have on the nation's understanding of history and ability to provide a solid foundation for civil dialogue and lifelong education. The Board of Directors is supported in its mission by an eight-member Founders Board and three-member Next Generation Advisory Board. Bobby Stein, President, The Regency Group serves as Chair. Other officers include Phil Kent, Retired Chief Executive Officer, Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., Vice Chair; Meredith DeWitt, Principal, MJD Associates, LLC, Secretary; and John Fullerton, President, JPF Capital, Inc., Treasurer. You may learn more [here](#).

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Better Angels Society seeks a President committed to its mission to be the preeminent organization supporting American history documentary filmmakers—advancing the use of their work to promote civic engagement and educate generations of students and lifelong learners.

Furthermore, The Society seeks a President with

- knowledge and appreciation for the importance of history and social context, the capacity of film and social media to advance understanding, and the need to be attentive to social justice issues;

- deep knowledge of the nonprofit sector including an understanding of the operations of federally funded organizations;
- experience with philanthropy and funding, including partnerships with federal grant makers, foundations, and high-net-worth donors;
- an ability to move readily between strategic, analytical thinking and pragmatic, execution actions;
- an ability to build, manage, and inspire a cohesive team towards the achievement of strategic goals and vision;
- exceptional communication skills including both formal and informal writing and public speaking skills;
- an ability to partner with highly diverse stakeholders and constituencies internally and externally;
- an ability to identify and resolve conflicts easily and quickly;
- a desire to welcome and validate others whose perspectives and experiences may be unique and different from one's own; and
- an ability to manage with equanimity, acting with a balanced sense of self-confidence and modesty.

The Better Angels Society will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. A bachelor's degree and at least ten years of progressively responsible experience, including fundraising experience in nonprofit, government, or national organizations, is preferred.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The target compensation for this position is a salary of \$225,000 plus benefits.

LOCATION

This is a remote position with a preference for candidates located on the East Coast—within driving distance of Washington, D.C. or New York City.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of The Better Angels Society as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Preference will be given to applications received by May 1, 2023.

To apply for this position, visit: [President, The Better Angels Society](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Ron Schiller, ronschiller@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.