

# The Good Food Institute Jobs: FAQ (2017)

Thank you for your interest in The Good Food Institute! If you are applying or considering applying for a position at GFI, we hope this document will help you get a sense of what's ahead. It is based on the questions we hear most often from applicants, with bits of unsolicited grandstanding here and there. Of course, we can't cover everything, so if you find yourself with questions that aren't answered here, please feel free to reach out to Innovation Coordinator [Cameron Meyer Shorb](#).

We also encourage you to check out these other documents for more information on GFI:

- [GFI Strategic Plan \(March 2017\)](#)
- [GFI Organization Structure](#)
- [Current GFI Staff, Interns, and Advisors](#)
- [2016 Annual Review](#)

Finally, we want to stress that we are actively seeking to build a more diverse team and a more inclusive work environment. We strongly encourage women, people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans to apply. See our full [Equal Opportunity Statement](#) below.

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## **WORKING AT GFI**

### **What does a day in the life of someone in this job look like?**

We don't know exactly what your day-to-day work will look like for two reasons. The first reason is simple history. We are filling all of these positions for the first time, so there is no precedent. Every single person is breaking new ground for the organization. The second reason is principle. At GFI, autonomy is central to our management model. If we hire you, that means you are qualified to be GFI's in-house expert on your domain, and you will be treated as such. You will lead the discussion on the most strategic use of your time, and one of your first projects will be to draft your quarterly goals (Q1-5, Y2-5).

Of course, we wouldn't be hiring if we didn't feel an urgent need for your expertise, so we have plenty of ideas for things you can work on (see the strategic plan). But we also expect you to tell us if we're wrong, missing something, or setting the wrong priorities. We depend on these discussions to do our best possible work, and we hope to hire people who are excited by the freedom and responsibility that comes with this very high level of autonomy.

### **Do I have to be in Washington, D.C.?**

Probably not. Most of our positions can be performed remotely. When we have geographic preferences, we list them in the job posting.

### **Why do some jobs require me to live in a major metropolitan area?**

Those jobs require easy access to policy-makers, major airports, startups, or donors.

### **Do I have to be a U.S. citizen?**

Not necessarily, but you do have to already have permission to work in the U.S. when you apply. For example, people with residency, green cards, or H1-B visas are encouraged to apply. Unfortunately, we cannot sponsor first-time visa applications.

### **What systems do you have to facilitate remote collaboration?**

Our work would not be possible without constant collaboration within and between departments. We use many of the same tools any office would, or their closest virtual equivalents. Google Drive lets us share common documents and edit them together in real time. We use Asana to assign tasks, set deadlines, and track project progress. For scheduled meetings, we host video conferences on Zoom. Although we can't pop into each other's offices to ask a quick question--or share a dumb joke--we can always send an email, pick up the phone, or shoot off a text.

But remote work does have its challenges, and we would be remiss if we simply tried to replicate traditional systems. Rather, we make an extra effort to build in regular times to share updates, solicit advice, and bond as a team. We start our week off with a Monday all-staff meeting to go over operational issues, discuss ways to improve our organization, and catch up on events in each other's non-work lives.

On Wednesdays, we convene again to listen to department-specific updates, with one or two departments presenting on a current project each week. This gives a chance to learn in depth about what everyone else is working on, ask questions, and see if there are ways we can help each other. Finally, on Fridays, we compile a weekly report consisting of three highlights (we try to keep this brief--the three most exciting or interesting thing from each staff member's week) and a step-back thought (What's working? What's not? What should we be doing that we're not? Blue sky ideas?) from each person.

How do we know our systems are working? One piece of evidence comes from a Monday call this spring. The discussion topic was "Is the remote system working for you?" The answer was a unanimous "yes," with plenty of ideas for how to improve it, which we've implemented. Perhaps most interestingly, two people mentioned that they couldn't remember who they had met in person and who they hadn't, because they felt like they already knew everyone. Sounds like we passed the Turing test for remote work!

**Do you ever meet in person?**

Yes! Twice a year the whole team gathers in one place (location varies) for a staff retreat, where we focus on bonding with our team and tackling big-picture questions. We meet in smaller groups more frequently when team members attend the same conference or simply cross paths while traveling.

**Do office hours still exist, or is one expected to always be available day and night?**

Staff members coordinate with their supervisors on this question. There is not an organizational policy, but most people work something like 9-6 in their time zone. Some take time out during the day and work more during the mornings, evenings, and/or weekends.

**How are new employees trained?**

We do a new employee orientation during the first week of employment, and supervisors meet with new staff on their first day to talk about projects and expectations. Training is somewhat fluid in that we do it as the need arises for certain things. If you don't need to use a certain database right away, for example, we won't train you to use it until you do.

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**How many people work at GFI?**

Twenty-two, as of the end of August. Around 39 by the end of 2017.

### **How is the organization structured?**

See the organization chart [here](#).

### **What are the major sources of funding for GFI?**

GFI is funded entirely by philanthropy: from individuals and individual- or couple-run foundations. We do not receive any government or corporate funding.

We raised \$2.9 million in 2016, so our planned budget for 2017 is that amount. The Open Philanthropy Project, an initiative of Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife Cari Tuna, was our largest donor, at \$500,000 (they are also giving \$500,000 this year). Our next two biggest gifts were \$300,000 and \$125,000, both from anonymous donors, and it went down from there. Almost everyone who gave money by this point in 2016 has given more in 2017. For example, the \$125,000 donor gave \$300,000 this year and pledged \$300,000 for 2018 and 2019.

### **Is the funding for these positions sustainable?**

Absolutely. We are extremely happy with our performance last year, particularly given the constraints we were under: (1) we did not have a full time development person, (2) donors gave largely based on the merit of our ideas and the strength of our leadership--we didn't yet have results to show them, and (3) our donors primarily came from the animal advocacy community. Our goal for this year is to raise \$4.66 million dollars. We are excited about achieving this goal because we are removing all of last year's constraints. (1) We are increasing our development staff to 4.5 (see staff chart, linked above). (2) Donors are now giving based on on accomplishments. If you do not presently receive our monthly highlights and would like to, please email [Toube Benedetto](#), and she will add you to the list (feel free to ask her for the most recent month or two, also, if you would like to see them). (3) We are expanding our reach to new communities of support.

Moreover, we adhere to nonprofit budgeting best practice, which is to maintain 8-12 months operating expenses in reserves, which will put us in the upper echelon for nonprofit job security ([fewer than 25% have even 6 months in reserve](#)). We currently have about a year's worth of reserves.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **How does the application process work?**

The application process consists of four stages:

- **First round: Cover letter, resume, screening questions, and general mental ability test.** After submitting your online application (cover letter, resume, and responses to screening questions), you'll be invited to take a 15-minute general mental ability test. Your cover

letter should explain why you are right for the job for which you are applying. The GMA test provides an objective approximation of general mental ability, which studies show is one of the best predictors of job performance. It's important to us to include an objective test to serve as a check on unconscious biases; this is part of our plan to increase the diversity of our hires. Taking the test is straightforward: it's like a simpler version of an SAT or ACT test.

- **Second round: Written interview.** The written interview consists of ~10 questions about your skills, experience, and approach to the job. It also includes 1-3 short writing projects. This helps us assess your qualifications, fit, and relevant writing skills. We set an extremely high bar for writing skills because we need to know that everyone on the team can be a spokesperson for GFI.
- **Third round: Working interview.** The working interview consists of 2-4 projects that simulate the type of work you would be asked to do in the position you applied for. You will be asked to complete these tasks to the best of your ability within four hours. This serves as a double check on the written interview. Because we are a remote organization, we need to be absolutely certain that everyone we hire can turn out high-quality work quickly and consistently.
- **Fourth round: Verbal interviews.** The final round consists of three separate interviews conducted via Google Hangouts. Typically, you would have one interview with Executive Director Bruce Friedrich, one with Board Chair Nick Cooney, and one with the director or staff member(s) of the department you would join. This step serves several purposes: 1) it allows us to ask questions that are hard to gauge from written responses, 2) it allows us to follow up on any specific concerns we have about your application, and 3) it allows you to ask us any remaining questions you may have.

We aim to make ourselves as available to you as possible. If you have questions, ask [Cameron](#) or [Reannon](#) at any point in the process. We invite all semi-finalists and finalists to interview any staff member they wish (see our [team page](#)) as well.

**If I am interested in multiple positions, should I submit multiple applications?**

Yes. Your resume and screening question responses may remain the same, but we expect you will want to tailor your cover letter to each position. We will also inform you if we think you may be a better fit for a position you did not apply for, and invite you to apply if you're interested.

**If I emailed you a resume and cover letter, do I still need to apply through the website?**

Yes. To be considered, all applications must be submitted through the web form below the job posting. This ensures that your information is saved in our applicant database.

**What is the hiring timeline?**

The timeline varies by position, but we try to respond to all applications within two weeks. The full application process often takes several weeks.

**What is the deadline to apply?**

All our positions are reviewed on a rolling basis. We continue to accept applications until we fill a position or have enough promising finalists that we are confident we can fill it from the current pool. If a position is listed on the website, you are welcome to apply.

**I haven't heard from you in a while. Have I been rejected?**

Not unless our email went into your Spam filter. We always inform candidates of our decisions as soon as we make them, whether or not the candidate is moving to the next round. If you haven't heard from us, that probably means we haven't reviewed your application yet. However, it is also possible that we have tried to reach you and our emails went to your spam folder. Please check your spam folder regularly (e.g. weekly) during the application process.

***Equal Employment Opportunity Statement:*** *Women, people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans are strongly encouraged to apply. In compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, the Good Food Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran. GFI complies with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the organization operates. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.*