Chief Development Officer

Position Summary

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is a senior leadership position responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive fundraising strategy that advances The Gathering Place's mission and ensures long-term financial sustainability.

The CDO leads all philanthropic activities, including major gifts, annual giving, corporate and foundation relations, grants, special events, planned giving, sponsorships, and donor stewardship. Working closely with the CEO, Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and community partners, the CDO builds meaningful relationships that inspire investment in the organization and help ensure that individuals and families impacted by cancer continue to have access to high-quality support services.

The ideal candidate is a strategic, relationship-focused fundraising leader who combines strong development expertise with compassion, integrity, collaboration, and a genuine commitment to The Gathering Place's mission.

Essential Responsibilities

Fundraising Strategy & Leadership

- Develop and execute a comprehensive annual and long-term development strategy aligned with organizational priorities and financial goals.
- Establish fundraising goals, strategies, metrics, and reporting systems to monitor progress and identify opportunities for growth.
- Partner closely with the CEO and senior leadership team on organizational strategy, revenue planning, and philanthropic priorities.
- Identify opportunities to diversify and strengthen contributed revenue.
- Develop and manage the annual development budget and fundraising projections.

Major Gifts & Donor Relationships

- Build and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects and donors through identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Develop meaningful, long-term relationships with individuals who are passionate about supporting people and families impacted by cancer.
- Create personalized cultivation and stewardship strategies for key donors and prospects.

- Partner with the CEO, Board members, and volunteers on donor engagement and solicitation.
- Strengthen donor retention and encourage increased and multi-year philanthropic commitments.

Annual Giving & Donor Stewardship

- Oversee annual fundraising campaigns, donor appeals, renewals, and stewardship initiatives.
- Develop strategies for acquiring new donors and deepening relationships with existing supporters.
- Ensure donors receive timely, meaningful acknowledgment and communication demonstrating the impact of their generosity.
- Collaborate with communications and program staff to translate organizational impact into compelling donor communications and stories.

Corporate, Foundation & Grant Support

- Build and strengthen relationships with corporations, foundations, and community partners.
- Identify new institutional funding and sponsorship opportunities.
- Oversee grant strategy, proposals, reporting, and stewardship in collaboration with appropriate staff.
- Develop sponsorship opportunities that connect corporate partners with the organization's mission and community impact.

Events & Community Engagement

- Provide strategic leadership for fundraising events, including sponsorship, individual giving, cultivation, and follow-up.
- Evaluate events based on revenue, donor engagement, stewardship value, and mission impact.
- Work collaboratively with staff, volunteer committees, and community partners to maximize fundraising and relationship-building opportunities.

Board & Volunteer Engagement

- Partner with the CEO to engage the Board of Directors in fundraising and relationship development.
- Provide Board members with the information, tools, and support needed to serve as effective ambassadors and fundraisers.

- Work with volunteer leadership and committees to expand the organization's network of donors, sponsors, and community partners.

Development Operations

- Ensure accurate and timely donor records, gift processing, acknowledgments, prospect tracking, and reporting.
- Maintain effective systems for moves management, donor segmentation, pipeline development, and stewardship.
- Monitor fundraising performance and provide regular development reports and forecasts to the CEO and Board.
- Ensure fundraising activities follow applicable ethical, financial, privacy, and gift-acceptance policies.

Team Leadership

- Lead, mentor, and develop members of the development team.
- Establish clear goals, responsibilities, and performance expectations.
- Promote a collaborative culture across development, marketing, programs, finance, and operations.
- Encourage innovation while maintaining disciplined fundraising practices and accountability.

Qualifications

Required

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and relevant professional experience.
- Significant experience in nonprofit fundraising, development, advancement, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding individual donors.
- Experience developing and executing comprehensive fundraising strategies.
- Strong written, verbal, presentation, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Ability to build authentic relationships with donors, Board members, volunteers, community leaders, staff, and organizational partners.
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines.
- Experience with donor databases/CRM systems and fundraising reporting.
- High degree of professionalism, discretion, integrity, and sound judgment.

Preferred

- Experience in a health, cancer support, human services, healthcare, or community-based nonprofit organization.
- Experience with major gifts, planned giving, corporate sponsorships, foundations, grants, and fundraising events.
- Experience working directly with a nonprofit Board of Directors.
- Experience managing and developing fundraising professionals.
- CFRE certification or demonstrated commitment to professional fundraising education.

Leadership Competencies

The successful Chief Development Officer will demonstrate:

- Mission-centered leadership: Keeps the needs of individuals and families impacted by cancer at the heart of fundraising.
- Relationship building: Develops genuine, lasting relationships rather than approaching fundraising as transactional.
- Strategic thinking: Connects philanthropic opportunities with organizational priorities and long-term sustainability.
- Fundraising leadership: Comfortably engages donors in meaningful conversations about philanthropy and investment.
- Collaboration: Works effectively across departments and recognizes fundraising as an organization-wide effort.
- Communication: Communicates the organization's mission and impact in a compelling, authentic, and respectful way.
- Accountability: Establishes clear goals, monitors results, and uses data to improve fundraising performance.
- Emotional intelligence: Approaches donors, participants, families, volunteers, and colleagues with compassion and sensitivity.
- Integrity: Maintains the highest standards of confidentiality, ethics, and donor trust.

Success in This Role

Success will be demonstrated by:

- Sustainable growth in contributed revenue.
- A healthy and expanding major-gift pipeline.
- Strong donor retention and increased donor engagement.
- Growth in corporate, foundation, and community partnerships.
- Effective stewardship that connects donors directly to mission impact.

- Strong Board participation in philanthropy and relationship building.
- Accurate forecasting, reporting, and development operations.
- A high-performing, collaborative development team.
- A fundraising culture that reflects the organization's mission, values, and commitment to those affected by cancer.

Working Environment

This position requires regular interaction with donors, volunteers, Board members, participants, staff, and community partners. Some evening and weekend availability may be necessary for organizational events, donor meetings, and community activities.

The position may also involve local travel for donor cultivation, community engagement, and organizational events.

Mission Focus

Above all, the Chief Development Officer serves as a champion of the mission, helping donors understand that their philanthropy directly strengthens the care, connection, education, and support available to individuals and families navigating cancer.