BALLET ARKANSAS

CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

POSITION DESCRIPTION

REPORTS TO Executive and Artistic Director

STATUS Full-Time

LOCATION Little Rock, Arkansas

COMPENSATION Commensurate with experience

POSITION SUMMARY

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) leads Ballet Arkansas's contributed-revenue strategy, securing philanthropic investment to advance the Company's artistic excellence, education initiatives, and community impact. Reporting to the Executive and Artistic Director, the CDO is accountable for developing and achieving annual fundraising goals across individual giving, corporate sponsorships, foundations, government grants, and special campaigns.

Working in close partnership with the Executive and Artistic Director, Board leadership, and organizational staff, the CDO cultivates meaningful donor relationships, builds a sustainable pipeline of philanthropic support, and maintains a disciplined, responsive development operation. This is a senior, hands-on role combining strategic leadership, direct solicitation, persuasive communication, and exceptional follow-through.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Fundraising Strategy and Revenue Development

- Lead the planning, execution, and evaluation of annual and long-range fundraising strategies aligned with organizational priorities and revenue targets.
- Personally identify, cultivate, solicit, and secure gifts and commitments from individuals, corporations, foundations, and public funding sources.
- Develop and manage a diversified portfolio of major gifts, annual giving, institutional grants, corporate sponsorships, campaigns, and special initiatives.
- Establish measurable fundraising objectives, manage prospect pipelines, and report progress, forecasts, and results to executive leadership and the Board.
- Partner with the Executive and Artistic Director and Board leadership to advance high-value donor relationships and philanthropic opportunities.

Donor Cultivation and Stewardship

- Build and maintain strong relationships with current and prospective donors, sponsors, foundation representatives, and community leaders.
- Lead donor cultivation, solicitation, renewal, recognition, and stewardship efforts, with particular emphasis on retention and increased giving.
- Prepare persuasive proposals, personalized correspondence, sponsorship materials, donor briefings, impact updates, and acknowledgements.
- Represent Ballet Arkansas at performances, donor meetings, receptions, and civic and community events.

Institutional Giving, Grants, and Sponsorships

- Research, pursue, write, and submit competitive grant applications, letters of inquiry, sponsorship proposals, and funding reports.
- Manage institutional and corporate funding relationships, including direct sponsorship requests and negotiations in coordination with leadership.
- Maintain grant and sponsorship calendars; ensure timely applications, renewals, reporting, recognition, and fulfillment of commitments.
- Coordinate with program and finance staff to prepare accurate budgets, outcomes, and supporting materials and monitor funding restrictions.

Development Operations and Data Management

- Oversee accurate, confidential donor and prospect records, gift histories, pledges, relationship notes, and follow-up activities.
- Monitor revenue against goals and maintain fundraising dashboards, donor lists, projections, and reports for leadership and the Board.
- Coordinate gift processing, receipts, acknowledgements, and reconciliation with finance staff.
- Establish efficient, consistent procedures for prospect management, solicitation tracking, stewardship, and reporting.

Campaigns, Events, and Communications

- Direct fundraising components of annual giving, year-end appeals, special initiatives, and donor-centered events.
- Collaborate with artistic, education, marketing, and administrative colleagues to communicate program impact and funding needs.
- Develop clear, compelling fundraising messages for appeals, proposals, impact reports, and donor communications.
- Support sponsor activations, donor receptions, and development-related recognition and promotional content; general social media management is not a primary duty.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Demonstrated record of securing philanthropic support through individual donations, grant awards, and corporate sponsorships; direct solicitation experience is essential.
- Excellent writing, presentation, interpersonal, and relationship-management skills, including the ability to communicate persuasively with senior donors and institutional partners.
- Strong strategic judgment and organizational skills, with the ability to manage simultaneous fundraising priorities, deadlines, and detailed administrative processes.
- Proficiency with donor databases, spreadsheets, reporting tools, and standard office software; commitment to data accuracy and confidentiality.
- Self-directed, resourceful, collaborative, and comfortable working closely with executive leadership, Board members, artists, and community partners.
- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent relevant professional experience preferred. Knowledge of Arkansas’s philanthropic and business community and experience in the arts or nonprofit sector are advantageous.

WORK EXPECTATIONS

Full-time position based in Little Rock, Arkansas, with regular business hours and periodic evening and weekend responsibilities for performances, donor engagement, and events.

Local travel for donor meetings and community activities may be required.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Ballet Arkansas offers a robust health and wellness benefits package; traditional employer-sponsored health insurance is not currently provided. Specific benefits and employment terms will be discussed during the hiring process.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit a resume and cover letter describing relevant fundraising accomplishments, qualifications, and interest in Ballet Arkansas.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Ballet Arkansas is an equal opportunity employer. Employment decisions are made without regard to any status protected by applicable law.