



JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Director of Development

Reports to: Executive Director

Terms: Full-time / Salaried / Eligible for benefits

Location: 20 Palmer Court, White River Junction, Vermont

Organizational Profile

The [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](#) (VCE) advances biodiversity conservation in the northeastern US and internationally through scientific research and community engagement. Our work involves researching and monitoring biodiversity in a variety of ecosystems and delivering results to inform management and policy decisions. We engage thousands of volunteers in a wide range of projects through data collection and monitoring.

At VCE, we believe that kindness and collaboration are integral to effective conservation science. Our staff is committed to creating a workplace culture that respects and celebrates diversity and values the wellbeing of all employees. We accomplish this by fostering inclusivity and offering flexibility within the workday to encourage a healthy work-life balance.

Position Summary

The director of development manages a strategic, relationship-based fundraising program with a focus on expanding major gifts, growing the annual fund, increasing planned giving, and conducting periodic campaigns. The director of development reports to the executive director and collaborates closely with the director of communications, the director of conservation science, and the associate director. They supervise two development team members (the development assistant and the annual fund manager) in addition to managing vendor and contractor relationships.

Primary Responsibilities

Major and Individual Gifts

- Refresh and implement an annual development plan that incorporates short- and long-range goals, with an emphasis on expanding VCE's major gifts portfolio and increasing giving levels.
- Oversee relationships with individual donors assigned to the executive director, associate director, and senior science staff.
- Help board members connect people in their networks to VCE by arranging meetings, informal gatherings, and events with VCE staff.
- Coordinate engagement with major donors and prospects, including in-person, virtual, and written solicitations by the executive director and associate director and compile and manage records of such solicitations.
- Manage a personal portfolio of major donors and prospects.
- Develop goals, strategies, and plans for cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major and mid-level donors and prospects, ensuring that each receives regular personalized contact.

- Identify new prospects for the major gifts portfolio and opportunities for increased giving by current donors. Oversee prospect research and actively lead identification of major gift prospects to bring new supporters into the organization.
- Oversee the annual fund, including regular appeals led by the annual fund manager.
- Lead periodic campaign appeals in collaboration with the executive director, other members of the development team, board of directors, and volunteer committees as appropriate.
- Draft donor correspondence and maintain primary responsibility for developing messages, strategy memos, talking points, and donor materials.
- Work with the development assistant and annual fund manager to generate and analyze data to regularly track, evaluate, and report on performance.
- Work with the director of communications to implement a donor-focused communications plan, including development of messages and materials focused on VCE's work for use in annual reports, newsletters, and other communications that advance VCE's mission and visibility.

Planned Giving

- Identify and pursue opportunities to grow and strengthen VCE's planned giving program.

Foundations/Grants

- Maintain and expand a portfolio of foundation and other grant prospects; collaborate with the director of conservation science, director of communications, and associate director on the submission of grants.
- Maintain a foundation grants calendar of submissions and reporting cycles.
- Identify and cultivate strategic partnerships with businesses in coordination with the associate director and executive director.

Management

- Incorporate recommendations from the development program's 2026 review into a revamped fundraising approach with capacity to meet the organization's ambitious goal for development revenue growth (+80% within four years).
- Develop and oversee the implementation of VCE's annual development plan, managing the development program and personnel to meet fundraising goals and objectives.
- Supervise development staff, tracking their progress toward departmental goals.
- Serve as a contributing member of the senior leadership team to collaboratively set overall direction and strategy for the organization.
- Maintain accurate records using the Little Green Light donor database.
- Ensure development activities conform to organizational policies and accounting practices.
- Prepare progress and activity reports for the executive director and the Board of Directors.
- Oversee and staff the Development Committee, attend board meetings and work with board members to identify and connect with new and existing donors.
- Oversee the planning and management of strategic cultivation and stewardship events.
- Participate in the budgeting process, monitor development expenditures, negotiate and procure contracted services, and oversee their completion.
- Maintain working knowledge of VCE's programs, priorities, and needs.
- Perform other related duties as assigned by the executive director.
- Uphold high standards of integrity and embody the organization's core values.

Qualifications

- At least five years of leadership experience in fundraising, including significant experience identifying, cultivating, and stewarding major donors, supervising others, and managing budgets
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for proposals, donor communications, and presentations
- Ability to develop and implement comprehensive annual fundraising strategies
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with colleagues in a positive, team-oriented approach
- Demonstrated success in personal face-to-face gift solicitation
- High motivation to connect with new and existing donors on a personal level and solicit gifts
- Demonstrated ability to gain the respect and support of diverse constituents, including board members, colleagues, donors, prospective donors, and volunteers
- Strong interpersonal skills and ease working with these groups
- Excellent organizational and time management skills with ability to set and adhere to priorities
- Ability to meet tight deadlines
- Sound judgment in maintaining confidentiality of donor information
- Database and record-keeping proficiency, including donor database experience
- Experience working on multi-year capital campaigns or other major gift initiatives is a plus
- Ability to give and receive constructive feedback
- The ability to work some evenings, weekends, and irregular hours
- Ability and willingness to travel regularly in-state and occasionally out-of-state, when necessary
- Enthusiasm for VCE's mission of advancing wildlife conservation through scientific research and community engagement
- Familiarity with the New England philanthropic community is a plus.