



Position Title: Development Director

Reports to: Executive Director

Job Location: Wilmington, NC

Position Type: Exempt, Full-Time

Department: Administrative

About CFS

Established in Wilmington, NC in 1996, Canines for Service, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and the longest operating, internationally accredited (ADI) service dog provider in the state. Our mission is to inspire veterans through life-changing canine partnerships. CFS provides highly trained service dogs, at no cost or fundraising obligation, to Veterans from all conflicts with service-connected mobility challenges, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, and/or traumatic brain injuries.

Benefits

- Medical, dental, and vision insurance covered in part by Canines for Service
 - 401k plan with company match
 - Life insurance
 - Short -term disability
 - Cell phone stipend
 - PTO and paid holidays
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Position summary

The Development Director is responsible for leading all major donor engagement strategies and directly soliciting significant philanthropic gifts to support the mission and programs of Canines for Service. This role focuses on identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding individual major donors, while overseeing a comprehensive development strategy to grow and sustain long-term support. The Development Director is a key member of the Canines for Service leadership team, contributing to strategic planning, organizational decision-making, and cross-functional collaboration. This position requires a relationship-driven professional with strong communication skills, emotional intelligence, and a passion for advancing the CFS mission through high-impact donor relationships.

Essential Functions / Responsibilities

- Create and execute a strategic fundraising plan, including identifying prospects, building donor pipelines, and securing gifts at the \$5,000+ level.
- Cultivate and steward a portfolio of current and prospective major donors through personalized outreach, one-on-one meetings, and tailored engagement.
- Plan and lead major donor cultivation events, intimate gatherings, and one-on-one engagement opportunities.

- Collaborate with the Executive Director and Board to leverage networks for donor outreach and gift solicitation.
- Maintain detailed donor records and activity reports using the donor database to track moves management.
- Work alongside the communication team to develop compelling cases for support and customized solicitation materials that drive donations to Canines for Service.
- Ensure all major donors receive regular, personalized communication and timely acknowledgment.
- Oversee and support other development initiatives such as the Annual Gala, direct mail campaigns, and planned giving programs, with a focus on how these efforts support major gift cultivation.
- Work closely with the Board Fundraising Committee and provide guidance on major donor strategies.
- Serve as a key ambassador in the community to promote Canines for Service's mission and grow philanthropic partnerships.
- Maintains good standing with grant and family foundations, ensuring stewardship, grant reporting, and requirements are followed.
- Works alongside a part-time grant writer and the Executive Director on the grant process to ensure grants fit within the overall fundraising strategy of the organization.

Required Skills / Abilities

- Proven success in major donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Exceptional interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills.
- The ability to build trust and develop lasting relationships with donors.
- Highly organized with strong attention to detail and follow-through.
- Comfortable engaging donors and volunteers in person and virtually.
- Familiarity with donor management systems and CRM software, such as Salesforce
- Strategic thinker with the ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Belief in and passion for the mission of Canines for Service.
- Must be able to lift forty pounds and safely and comfortably handle active large breed dogs weighing up to 90 pounds.

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field; CFRE preferred.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional fundraising experience, including a track record of successful major gift solicitations.
- Experience working in a nonprofit environment; veteran-focused or disability service background is a plus.

EEO Statement

Canines For Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, military status, or national origin, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law.

This job description is provided to outline what is expected for the employee in this role during their employment with Canines for Service and is not to be constructed as an employment contract or guarantee of continued employment. This job description is not to be all inclusive of the responsibilities, duties, and activities of the position, this is subject to change.

To Apply

Interested applicants should email a cover letter and resume to the Executive Director, Bethany Leighton, at bleighton@caninesforservice.org