



The Trail Conservancy Chief Development Officer Job Announcement

Reports to: CEO
Salary Range: \$125,000-135,000, commensurate with experience
Status: Full-time Exempt (occasional evening and weekend work required)
Benefits: Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance; 401(k) with up to a 2% match
Leave: 120 hours PTO + 11 Paid Holidays + Days Between December 25 & New Years Day

About The Trail Conservancy

The mission of The Trail Conservancy is to protect, enhance, and connect the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake for the benefit of all.

The Opportunity

This is a pivotal moment for The Trail Conservancy (TTC). With a strong brand, an engaged community, and a proven fundraising program in place, TTC is poised for its next phase of growth and impact. The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is a key member of the executive leadership team, playing a central role in organizational decision-making and ensuring alignment between fundraising strategy and TTC's mission.

The CDO leads an established Development team—comprising a Development Director (Operations Funding), a Development Manager (Memberships), and a Grants Manager—responsible for raising TTC's \$4.5 million annual operating budget and advancing a dynamic pipeline of capital projects. These multi-year projects range from approximately \$150,000 to \$15 million and directly enhance the Trail and surrounding public spaces.

This role offers a rare opportunity to step into a mature, high-functioning development program and help shape what comes next. The CDO will build on existing success while setting strategy for the future—leading both operating and capital fundraising at scale, partnering closely with an engaged Board, and working alongside a collaborative executive team and a CEO who values trust, strategic thinking, and thoughtful stewardship.

For the right leader, this role connects philanthropy to something tangible and lasting—protecting and enhancing one of Austin's most beloved public assets—and represents a true legacy opportunity.

Key Responsibilities

Strategy & Leadership

- Develop, implement, and track outcomes for a multi-channel fundraising strategy that maximizes philanthropic support from individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Secure revenue through major gifts, memberships, annual fund campaigns, year-end appeals, events, grants, online giving, sponsorships, and corporate partnerships.

- Lead and manage the Development team by setting goals and benchmarks, guiding priorities, and ensuring fundraising targets are met or adjusted as needed.
- Partner closely with the Chief Marketing Officer to ensure strong alignment and execution between Development and Marketing & Communications efforts.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Board of Directors' Development Committee, working closely with the Committee Chair to engage members in fundraising strategy and execution.
- Attend monthly Finance Committee meetings and quarterly Board meetings to report on progress toward revenue goals; attend other board committee meetings as needed.

Donor Cultivation, Stewardship, & Major Gifts

- Oversee annual fund activities, including a robust and segmented direct mail strategy, membership and adoption programs, and annual giving days.
- Maintain an active portfolio of prospects and manage progress using a moves management approach.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward restricted and unrestricted major gifts in partnership with the CEO, board members, committee members, and donor advocates.
- Develop, coordinate, and support the CEO's major donor portfolio.
- Collaborate with the Marketing and Communications team to execute an annual fundraising gala and other donor and member events.
- Fundraise concurrently for operating needs and capital projects, including managing regular donor communications and project updates for capital supporters.

Grants & Database Management

- Supervise and develop the grants strategy with the Grants Manager, including:
 - Grant research, identification, writing, and budget creation;
 - Serving as the primary liaison to grant funders and prospects; and
 - Ensuring timely approval and submission of grant proposals to private and public funders.
- Oversee development operations, including donor database management, data integrity, and fundraising systems and procedures.

Capital Campaigns & Projects

- Work closely with the CEO, Capital Projects Team, and Park Operations Team to understand current trail needs, future capital opportunities, and donor recognition strategies.
- Develop campaign strategies and set sub-goals for potentially multiple, consecutive campaigns.
- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward capital gifts from individual, corporate, and foundation donors.

Other Duties:

- Foster a collaborative, cross-departmental work environment in a fast-paced organization.
- Review monthly financial reports and support the annual audit as needed.
- Support and attend TTC programming events (e.g., Music on the Trail, Plant it Forward), requiring occasional evening and weekend participation.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

What We're Looking For:

Strong candidates will bring significant experience leading successful nonprofit fundraising programs, including both operating and capital fundraising. We are seeking a collaborative people leader who values staff well-being, proactive donor stewardship, and community-building, and who brings strong project management skills. A personal connection to the Trail is not required, but enthusiasm for TTC's mission is essential. We recognize that no candidate will meet every qualification, and we encourage candidates who meet many—but not all—criteria to apply.

Minimum Qualifications

- 8+ years of nonprofit development experience; prior experience leading capital campaigns strongly preferred. An equivalent combination of experience and demonstrated results will be considered.
- At least 5 years of people management experience, including 2+ years leading a development team
- Demonstrated success in major gifts, annual giving, grant writing, corporate and foundation fundraising, direct mail, and special events
- Proven grant writing and grant-securing experience; government grant experience is a plus
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong organizational and project management skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines
- Experience using a comprehensive donor database (TTC currently uses Bloomerang)
- Experience building and sustaining long-term donor relationships
- Ability to motivate and engage boards and committees in fundraising efforts
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace

Application Process

Applications must be submitted through our application portal at:

<https://the-trail-conservancy.breezy.hr/p/c7e8811912a4>. Applications submitted through other platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Indeed) will not be considered.

Submission deadline: Thursday, March 12, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.

Applicants will be required to submit:

- A cover letter that includes three professional references at the end (references will only be contacted during the hiring phase)
- A resume

To ensure a fair and equitable hiring process, please do not contact TTC staff directly regarding this position.

The Trail Conservancy values diversity, equity, and inclusion and strongly encourages candidates with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences to apply.