



Position: Development Director

Exempt/Nonexempt: Exempt

Hours: 40

Schedule: Full-time (40 hours/week), hybrid (Houston-based)

Reports To: Executive Director

Salary: \$80,000 - \$90,000, commensurate with experience

About Us

At Writers in the Schools (WITS), we believe storytelling reveals our truest selves, that creativity prepares children for a successful future. To that end, our mission is to connect children and youth with professional writers and spoken word artists to unlock the joy and power of storytelling and creative expression. Our vision is that all young people will possess the skills and confidence to share their stories, experiences, and ideas with the world.

Role Summary

The Development Director serves as the strategic leader of WITS' revenue efforts, overseeing contributed income and partnering with the Executive Director to align earned and contributed revenue strategies.

This role is responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive, multi-year fundraising plan; cultivating major donor and institutional relationships; activating board engagement in fundraising; and building systems that strengthen long-term financial sustainability.

The Development Director is both relational and analytical—comfortable cultivating major gifts while also managing pipeline forecasting, revenue tracking, and strategic planning.

Core Responsibilities

Revenue Strategy & Planning

- Develop and implement an annual and multi-year revenue plan aligned with WITS' strategic priorities
- Partner with the Executive Director to align earned revenue (after-school, school partnerships, summer camps) and contributed revenue strategies
- Lead revenue forecasting, pipeline management, and reporting to support informed decision-making
- Monitor and evaluate fundraising performance relative to goals

Major Gifts & Institutional Giving

- Serve as primary relationship manager for major individual donors and select institutional funders
- Lead strategy for donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship
Oversee foundation and corporate grant strategy, including proposal development and reporting in collaboration with program staff

- Identify and cultivate new funding opportunities across individuals, foundations, and corporate partners

Board & Volunteer Engagement

- Develop and implement strategies to engage board members in fundraising and relationship-building
- Support the Development Committee with clear goals, reporting, and cultivation plans
- Provide coaching and tools to strengthen board participation in revenue efforts

Events & Community Engagement

- Oversee strategy and execution of the annual gala and other fundraising events as part of the broader revenue plan
- Evaluate event ROI and ensure alignment with long-term fundraising goals
- Collaborate with communications to ensure cohesive donor messaging

Systems & Infrastructure

- Maintain accurate CRM records and donor data integrity (Salesforce or equivalent)
- Implement and manage moves management systems
- Develop fundraising dashboards and regular reporting cadence
- Ensure consistent donor communications and stewardship practices

Team Leadership & Management

- Supervise and support the Grants Manager/Writer and Development Coordinator, providing clear direction, accountability, and professional development
- Establish clear goals and performance expectations aligned with organizational revenue priorities
- Conduct regular check-ins and annual performance evaluations
- Foster a collaborative, respectful, and high-performing development team culture
- Ensure workload alignment, cross-functional coordination, and clarity of roles
- Model steady communication, responsiveness, and professionalism across the team

Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree (Required)
- 5+ years of progressively responsible fundraising experience, including major gift development (Required)
- Demonstrated success managing or contributing to annual fundraising targets of \$1M+ Experience developing and executing strategic fundraising plans
- Strong relationship-building skills with individuals, foundations, and corporate partners
- Experience engaging board members in fundraising efforts
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- CRM proficiency (Salesforce preferred)
- Knowledge of the Houston philanthropic landscape is highly preferred
- Ability to travel throughout the Houston area; reliable transportation required

Preferred Qualities

- Strategic thinker with strong analytical skills
- Comfortable working in a mission-driven, relationship-centered organization
- Able to balance long-term planning with hands-on execution
- Collaborative leader who communicates clearly and directly
- Appreciates the role of earned revenue within a broader sustainability model

First-Year Priorities May Include

- Develop a formal revenue plan aligned with strategic goals
- Strengthen major donor cultivation pipeline
- Establish consistent forecasting and reporting systems
- Evaluate gala strategy and performance
- Align messaging around earned revenue programs with development strategy

Why This Role Matters Now

WITS is entering a new chapter of leadership while operating from a position of stability and discipline. The Development Director will play a central role in ensuring that growth is thoughtful, sustainable, and aligned with the mission. This is an opportunity to build on a strong relational foundation while shaping the next phase of revenue strategy.

About the Position

The Development Director reports to the Executive Director. The position is full-time (40 hours/week), with some evening and weekend events, and the position is classified as exempt. This is a full-time role based at our Houston office.

Benefits

WITS offers a generous benefits package, including medical, dental, and vision insurance, short-term and long-term disability, and life insurance. First-year full-time staff receive 22 personal time off days per calendar year, and a robust paid holiday schedule.

Thinking of Applying

If you are excited about the role and see a connection with what we are looking for, but don't meet every single requirement, we'd encourage you to apply anyway.

Application Process

To apply, please submit the following to Dajah Stevenson at dstevenson@witshouston.org:

- A cover letter that provides an introduction and gives us a sense of your writing style
- A résumé or CV
- Please include a bulleted list of fundraising achievements related to individual giving revenue increases, board engagement, gala target goals, or other relevant development-related successes.
- Work product samples that give us a sense of the scope of your development experience. We would like to understand the tone, style, and scope of your past work. Consider materials such as stewardship letters, event invitations or programs, project plans for past development events, white papers, or impact reports.

Application deadline: Friday, April 17, 2026 - Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

WITS is an equal opportunity employer. WITS' policy prohibits unlawful discrimination against any applicant or employee based on any legally-recognized basis, including, but not limited to: veteran status, uniformed service member status, race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information or any other consideration protected by federal, state or local law.