Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving

Organization: Homeless Garden Project
Location: Santa Cruz, California
Reports to: Executive Director, Senior Development Director
Status: Full-Time, Exempt

The Organization

The Homeless Garden Project is a nationally recognized nonprofit based in Santa Cruz that provides job training, transitional employment and support services to people who are homeless. Integrated with these programs, HGP operates a vibrant community volunteer and education program. The training, employment, education, and volunteer programs take place on an organic farm and in related enterprises.

Our impact is both personal and measurable. Over the past 10 years, more than 95% of our trainee graduates obtained employment, and 88% secured housing.

The organization operates with an annual budget of approximately $1.8 million, including more than $1.2 million in individual philanthropic support. Additional revenue comes from our social enterprise retail store and government grants. Last year, we grew more than 30,000 pounds of certified organic produce and donated nearly 12,000 pounds to local nonprofit partners.

Philanthropy is central to sustaining and expanding this impact.

The Position

The **Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving** is responsible for building and growing a strong major gifts and planned giving program to support the Homeless Garden Project's mission and long-term sustainability. This role identifies, cultivates, solicits, and stewards high-capacity donors and develops meaningful, long-term philanthropic partnerships.

The Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving manages an active portfolio of donors and prospects, develops personalized engagement strategies, and leads major and legacy gift solicitations. Working closely with the Executive Director, Director of Development, and Board of Directors, this position plays a key role in strengthening HGP's culture of philanthropy and advancing strategic fundraising goals.

The Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving works closely with the Development Director to cultivate donors who demonstrate interest and capacity for major gifts and planned giving.

The Director of Major Donors and Planned Giving focuses on building deep, relationship-based partnerships with high-capacity donors. This role assumes primary responsibility for major gift strategy, donor qualification, and long-term stewardship, while working closely with the Director of Development, who leads donor acquisition, annual giving, and corporate partnerships. Together, these roles ensure a strong and sustainable pipeline from initial engagement to transformational giving.

This position also contributes to the development of a strategic fundraising plan and helps identify the most promising opportunities to expand major donor engagement and establish a robust planned giving program.

Key Responsibilities

Portfolio Management

- Manage a dynamic portfolio of approximately 75–125 qualified major donor prospects and current supporters, with a focus on meaningful engagement and relationship depth.
- Develop and execute individualized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies.
- Maintain a strong pipeline of qualified major and legacy gift prospects.

Donor Cultivation and Relationship Building

- Identify, qualify, and build relationships with prospective and current major donors through in-person meetings, calls, farm visits, and events.
- Build authentic, mission-centered relationships that deepen donor engagement and investment.
- **Major Donor Engagement Through Events**
  Partner with the Development Director on fundraising and cultivation events by identifying and hosting major donor prospects, supporting relationship-building opportunities, and ensuring appropriate follow-up.

Donor Qualification and Portfolio Development

- Partner with the Director of Development to identify donors within the broader supporter base who demonstrate the capacity and inclination for major or planned gifts. Lead the qualification process and transition appropriate donors into an actively managed major gift portfolio.

Solicitation and Gift Closure

- Lead major gift solicitations, including preparing proposals, presentations, and gift agreements.
- Personally solicit and secure significant gifts, including multi-year and leadership-level commitments.

Planned Giving Program Development

- Design, launch, and grow a comprehensive planned giving program, including donor education, marketing, and stewardship strategies that build long-term legacy support for the organization.
- Identify and cultivate legacy gift prospects and integrate planned giving into donor engagement strategies.
- Establish systems and stewardship practices to support and recognize planned gift donors.

Stewardship and Donor Experience

- Ensure donors receive timely acknowledgment, meaningful recognition, and clear communication about the impact of their giving.
- Maintain accurate and complete donor records to support effective stewardship and relationship management.

Strategic Collaboration

- **Strategic Collaboration**
  Work in close partnership with the Director of Development to align strategies across annual giving, corporate partnerships, and major gifts. Provide guidance on donor segmentation, messaging, and upgrade strategies to support movement of donors along the giving pipeline.
- Partner with the Executive Director, Director of Development, and Board members to strengthen donor engagement and solicitation.
- Contribute to strategic fundraising planning and help expand the organization's major and planned giving capacity.

Qualifications

- Minimum of 5 years of nonprofit fundraising experience, with demonstrated success cultivating and securing major gifts from individual donors.
- Demonstrated experience managing major donor relationships and stewarding donors over time.
- Experience designing, implementing, or growing a planned giving or legacy giving program preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a donor portfolio with a focus on **qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship**
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to build trust with donors, Board members, and colleagues.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong organizational and strategic thinking skills, with attention to detail.
- Experience in nonprofit organizations, particularly those focused on human services, workforce development, or social impact, preferred.

- Commitment to the mission and values of the Homeless Garden Project.

Compensation and Benefits

The compensation package includes:

- Competitive salary, commensurate with experience
- Annual salary range: $93,600 - 95,680
- Health insurance, with access to dental and vision coverage
- Generous vacation and sick leave
- Access to a voluntary 401(k) retirement plan
- Professional development opportunities
- Meaningful work in a mission-driven organization

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter, resume and three references to Darrie Ganzhorn, Executive Director, darrieg@homelessgardenproject.org.