



Job Title: Director of Development  
Reports to: Executive Director  
Supervises: Community Engagement Manager  
Starting Wage: \$75,000- \$85,000, commensurate with experience  
FLSA Status: Full-time, Exempt

Benefits:

- Medical, dental and vision insurance
- 401k Employer retirement match
- Vacation (80 hours-increases with tenure), IL Paid Leave for All (40 hours) and sick leave (64 hours)
- 6 paid holidays, 2 paid floating holidays and December 24th-January 1st off (paid)

**WHO WE ARE.** Severson Dells Nature Center links people to nature through education and research. We promote awareness of the natural world, fostering respect, enjoyment and preservation now and in the future. The Severson Dells Nature Center is housed in a converted Deer Lodge situated on a 369-acre county forest preserve. There are four miles of trails through diverse ecosystems including prairie, savanna, oak woodland, creek and pond. We have recently acquired an old golf course that we will be restoring to native habitat and building a new nature center. We aspire to be the local leader in nature education and create meaningful experiences with and for all ages. We seek to create a diverse, inclusive culture focused on serving our community.

**YOUR ROLE.** This position will support and carry out the mission of Severson Dells Nature Center by providing leadership to advance the mission and strategic plan goals, with a specific emphasis on managing a multi-million dollar capital campaign in partnership with the Executive Director and the Severson Dells board of directors. This role oversees annual giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation support, and special campaigns and supervises the Community Engagement Manager. The Director of Development is a key leadership position that builds relationships with donors and partners to ensure long-term support for the center's programs, initiatives, and sustainability.

**WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT.** Working at Severson Dells Nature Center is an opportunity to be a part of an innovative, agile and forward thinking team that thrives on collaboration, both internally and externally. The staff are a passionate, knowledgeable group that are dedicated to the organizational mission. Severson Dells is a storied organization with deep roots in the Northern Illinois community, serving residents since 1976.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### *Fundraising Leadership*

- Develop and execute a comprehensive development plan, aligning with the organization's strategic goals and mission.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward donors, ensuring a robust pipeline of individual, corporate, and foundation supporters.
- Build and maintain meaningful relationships with current and prospective donors, sponsors, and partners.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director, Community Engagement Manager and Board of Directors to identify new opportunities for fundraising and donor engagement.
- Provide leadership for planned giving efforts to grow long-term financial sustainability.

### *Marketing and Communications*

- Supervise the Community Engagement Manager, ensuring alignment of communication, marketing, outreach and fundraising goals.
- Supervise the development and execution of a strategic marketing plan and budget to increase visibility and support for the nature center
- Oversee the production of marketing materials, newsletters, press releases and digital content

### *Capital Campaign Management*

- Help lead the strategy development and implementation of the campaign, working collaboratively with the Executive Director and Capital Campaign Steering Committee to support Severson Dells' capital project at the old Elliot Golf Course.
- Develop and implement campaign strategies, timelines, and goals in partnership with the Executive Director, Community Engagement Manager, Board of Directors and Capital Campaign Committee.
- Manage the capital campaign budget with support from the Administrative Assistant
- Oversee the planning and implementation of cultivation and recognition events
- Provide leadership and plans to Community Engagement Manager and consultants to develop capital campaign print, web, and social media communications materials

### *Event Planning and Community Engagement*

- Support the Community Engagement Manager in planning and executing fundraising and member events.
- Leverage events to cultivate new donors, strengthen relationships, and highlight Severson Dells Nature Center's mission and impact.

### *Corporate, Foundation and Government Relations*

- Identify, pursue, and manage corporate sponsorships and foundation and government grants that align with the organization's priorities.
- Supervise the preparation of grant proposals and reports in collaboration with the Community Engagement Manager and program staff.

**REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE** To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed are representative of the knowledge, skills, and experience required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions unless undue hardship and/or a direct threat to the health and/or safety of the individual or others would result.

- Minimum of 7 years of experience in leading fundraising campaigns, developing associated communications and marketing materials, with demonstrated success in major gift cultivation, annual giving, with at least 2 years in a leadership role of a capital campaign.
- Strong leadership skills, with experience supervising staff.
- Experience in grant writing, corporate partnerships, and donor database management.
- Passion for environmental conservation, education, and the mission of Severson Dells Nature Center.
- Ability to work independently, meet deadlines, and manage multiple projects simultaneously.
- Experience supporting the development of diverse and inclusive environments, and demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Relationship-builder with demonstrated highly collaborative work style who can effectively work with all constituent groups including staff, volunteers, visitors, and donors
- Excellent writing, editing and verbal communication skills
- Comfortable with public speaking to groups of all sizes and demographics
- Project management skills: ability to multitask, problem-solve, and prioritize
- Strong customer service focus
- Ability to maintain the highest level of discretion and confidentiality
- Ability to easily adapt to change
- Ability to maintain regular attendance and punctuality
- Adheres to all risk management and safety programs
- May be required to work some evenings and weekends to accommodate programming needs
- Experience with:
  - Google and Microsoft Suites
  - CRM Systems
  - Social Media platforms for nonprofit marketing and development
  - Willingness to learn new applications and identify innovative ways for technology to support organizational objectives.
- A valid Driver's License, reliable transportation and current proof of insurance are required (mileage reimbursed at the IRS rate).

#### **PREFERRED SKILLS and EXPERIENCE**

- Familiarity with northern Illinois philanthropic community
- Experience with NEON One CRM
- Experience in nature or science-related nonprofit operations and an understanding of issues Severson Dells is trying to address

- Certified Fund Raising Executive certification or willingness to obtain is desired

## **EDUCATION**

- Bachelor's degree in nonprofit management, business, marketing, communications, or a related field or equivalent professional experience.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS.** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to walk, stand, sit, talk or hear. The employee is frequently required to use hands to handle, feel or operate objects such as a computer or controls, and includes repetitive motions of the wrists, hands and/or fingers; and is required to reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to climb or balance; stoop, kneel or crouch. Sufficient vision, hearing and stamina to perform the above functions is required.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT.** While performing the duties of this job, the employee works in an office environment, but may be exposed to outside weather conditions. The noise level in the work environment is usually quiet while in the office or moderately noisy when in the field.

**TO APPLY:** Please submit a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to Ann Wasser [ann@seversondells.org](mailto:ann@seversondells.org) with the email subject: Director of Development. Initial resume review will begin **Monday, February 3, 2025.**

Severson Dells Nature Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to creating an inclusive work environment. We do not discriminate based on race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Research shows that women, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) may hesitate to apply for opportunities unless they meet every listed qualification. If you believe you have the skills and experiences to succeed in this role, we strongly encourage you to apply.

Final offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of a background check that may include national criminal background check and national sex offender registry search.

*This position description reflects Severson Dells Nature Center's best effort to describe the essential functions and qualifications of the job described. It is not an exhaustive statement of all the duties, responsibilities, or qualifications of the job. This document is not intended to exclude the opportunity for modifications, providing reasonable accommodation.*