



Associate Director of Development

Job Description

About Mission Scholars

Located in Santa Barbara, Mission Scholars proudly supports 200 high-achieving, low-income students who aspire to be the first in their families to graduate from college. We empower these Scholars to realize their full potential by providing comprehensive college admissions guidance, dedicated college mentorship, and career development training that opens doors to lasting opportunity. Our Scholars are thriving: 93% are enrolled in four-year universities, with more than 85% of their educational costs covered by grants and scholarships.

We are a team of highly dedicated and passionate individuals who care deeply about our mission and the students and families we serve. Mission Scholars is also in an exciting phase of growth—entering our eighth year in 2026—and we’re seeking someone eager to join us in shaping this next chapter of impact.

Position Summary

This position is designed for a professional who brings both strategic vision and the ability to implement new ideas while building strong relationships with donors, partners, and the broader community. The Associate Director will collaborate with the Executive Director on shaping development strategy while leading the execution of fundraising initiatives across individual giving, grants, events, and stewardship. In alignment with the organization’s \$1.3 million annual revenue goal, the Associate Director will be expected to make a significant contribution toward annual fundraising results, with growing responsibility for securing major gifts, grants, and event revenue over time.

The position is available immediately, and applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Key Priorities

To achieve these goals, the Associate Director of Development will focus on the following key priorities:

1. Soliciting and Stewarding Major Donors

- Cultivate, solicit, and steward relationships with current donors and prospects.
- Build and manage a portfolio of major donors, with a focus on growing long-term giving and engagement.
- Partner with the Executive Director, board members, and Development Committee to maximize donor relationships.

2. Grant Writing

- Lead the preparation and submission of grant proposals to foundations, corporations, and government funders, either directly or in collaboration with external grant writing support.
- Manage reporting and compliance requirements for existing grants.
- Maintain strong relationships with grantors through consistent communication and stewardship.
- Develop and maintain a grants calendar to ensure timely submissions and renewals.

3. Leading Marketing, Communications, and PR

- Oversee the organization's brand, messaging, and external communications.
- Manage media relationships and PR efforts to raise visibility and support fundraising goals.
- Lead the development of fundraising collateral.
- Supervise and coordinate the work of volunteers, staff, and contractors who contribute to marketing, communications, and PR efforts.

4. Leading Events

- Plan and execute signature events such as fundraisers, donor cultivation gatherings, and partnership initiatives.
- Lead event committees, volunteers, staff, and contractors to deliver high-quality experiences.
- Evaluate event performance and identify opportunities for growth.

Candidate Profile

The strongest candidates will:

- Demonstrate exceptional written, verbal, and presentation skills, with the ability to craft persuasive donor communications, compelling proposals, and clear reports.
- Exude confidence and professionalism in both internal and external communications.
- Work independently with initiative and creativity.
- Build strong, collaborative relationships with donors, partners, and colleagues.
- Demonstrate success in prior nonprofit fundraising and community engagement.
- Be proficient with Google Workspace, Canva, Bloomerang, Mailchimp, and related platforms.
- Show flexibility and a team-first attitude by stepping into other roles as needed, including providing administrative support, to ensure the organization's success.
- Bring experience with data and reporting, including database management, performance analysis, and donor reporting.

Ideal education and experience include:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience.
- Minimum of three years of demonstrated success on a nonprofit development team.

- Proven ability to meet or exceed fundraising goals through individual donor cultivation, grant writing, and execution of fundraising events.
- Strong background in research, data management, and reporting.

Compensation & Benefits

- Salary range: \$85,000–\$100,000 DOE
- Full-time exempt, hybrid position
- Health, Dental & Vision Insurance
- Vacation & Sick Pay

How to Apply

For consideration, applicants should submit:

- Résumé
- Cover letter connecting qualifications to this role and sharing brief anecdotes that showcase impact.
- Up to three different types of writing samples (e.g., donor appeal, grant proposal, stewardship letter, data/reporting memo) with 1–2 sentence context notes for each sample. You may remove or redact names or other details as needed to maintain confidentiality.
- Two professional references (name, title, organization, email, phone number).

Submission: Please combine materials into one PDF and email to Cassie Lancaster at clancaster@missionscholars.org.