



We are excited to announce our search for a Director of Development to join Mystic Ocean Adventures and lead our fundraising and development efforts. Please read the description, below, and submit a cover letter detailing your relevant experience, résumé, and the contact information for three references to Mystic Ocean Adventures at Careers@sailmoa.org with the subject line Director of Development Application. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Mystic Ocean Adventures (MOA)

Santa Barbara, California

About Mystic Ocean Adventures

Mystic Ocean Adventures (MOA) is an emerging nonprofit based in Santa Barbara, dedicated to inspiring and empowering youth through transformative, hands-on ocean education experiences aboard the historic tall ship Mystic Whaler. MOA fosters curiosity, environmental stewardship, and leadership through programs that connect young people to the sea and to one another.

As a new organization with a bold vision and entrepreneurial spirit, MOA is building the foundation for long-term sustainability, visibility, and community impact.

Position Overview

The Director of Development is a key member of MOA's leadership team and will serve as the organization's chief architect of fundraising, donor communications, and philanthropic engagement.

Reporting to the Executive Director and working closely with the Board of Directors and Founding Benefactors, this individual will design and implement a comprehensive development program to support MOA's growth and sustainability — including major and leadership gifts, corporate and foundation support, grant preparation, special events, and annual and planned giving. The individual will collaborate with marketing operations, education, and program staff, and volunteers to connect donors meaningfully to the mission and impact.

A primary focus in the first year will be to help form, launch, and support Lodestar Leaders, a distinguished honorary advisory group of philanthropic leaders aligned with MOA's mission — and to leverage this circle to attract early philanthropic investment and visibility for the organization.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for a dynamic, relationship-driven, and creative development professional to help shape a new nonprofit from the helm.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Development Leadership

- Design and implement a multi-year fundraising strategy aligned with MOA's vision and growth goals.
- Build a culture of philanthropy within the organization, cultivating relationships with donors, partners, and community leaders.
- Partner with the Executive Director and Founders to identify and pursue significant gift opportunities from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

2. Major Gifts & Donor Relations

- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward major donors and founding philanthropic partners.
- Prepare foundation grants
- Develop personalized strategies for donor engagement and recognition.
- Establish systems for donor tracking, reporting, and stewardship (including database and acknowledgment processes).

3. Lodestar Leaders

- Provide strategic and administrative support to launch and manage Lodestar Leaders, MOA's honorary advisory circle.
- Coordinate founding member recruitment, onboarding, and engagement experiences.
- Plan and manage exclusive gatherings, including the annual Council reception aboard the Mystic Whaler and related cultivation events.
- Serve as staff liaison to Council members, ensuring follow-up, relationship building, and philanthropic activation.

4. Donor Events, Campaigns & Communications

- Lead the planning and execution of special events, sponsorships, and appeals.
- Oversee communications and storytelling across digital, print, and social platforms to raise awareness and inspire giving.
- Support the development of MOA's visual identity and donor communications, including newsletters, annual reports, and campaign materials.

5. Organizational Partnership

- Collaborate with operations, education and program staff and volunteers to connect donors meaningfully to the mission and impact.
- Work closely with the Founding Benefactors, Board, and key supporters to align messaging and outreach.
- Assist in developing and monitoring the annual development budget and fundraising projections.

Qualifications

Minimum Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree required.
- 5+ years of progressive experience in fundraising, donor relations, or related fields.
- Demonstrated success with individual and major gift cultivation and solicitation.
- Experience managing donor recognition events and philanthropic councils or affinity groups.
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and storytelling skills.
- Creative, organized, and self-motivated — able to thrive in a start-up, entrepreneurial environment.
- Familiarity with donor databases (e.g., Donor Perfect, or similar).
- Commitment to environmental education, youth empowerment, and maritime heritage.

Preferred:

- Experience with nonprofit start-ups or capital campaigns.
- Established connections within the Santa Barbara philanthropic community.
- Marketing, branding, or public relations experience.
- Familiarity with ocean, sailing, or experiential education organizations.

Work Schedule

This is a full-time, salaried position that is primarily in person and deeply connected to the communities MOA served. The Director of Development will regularly meet face-to-face with donors, partners, and supporters throughout Santa Barbara, Ventura, Oxnard, and the surrounding areas. While some flexibility for remote work may be available, a consistent local presence is essential. Candidates must be based within a reasonable driving distance (including the greater Los Angeles area) and able to travel frequently within the region. Some evening and weekend work is required.

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience, with a range of \$100,000 to \$125,000 per year.

Benefits include health, dental, and vision insurance, 80 hours of paid time-off, and professional development support.

Mystic Ocean Adventures is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply.

To Apply

Please submit a cover letter detailing your relevant experience, résumé, and the contact information for three references to Mystic Ocean Adventures at Careers@sailmoa.org with the subject line Director of Development Application. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

MOA is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply. MOA is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

January 13, 2026