

# Job Description: Chief Advancement Officer

Status: Full Time, Exempt, 37.5 - 40 Hours / Week



## Who We Are

*The Virginia Living Museum is where nature, science, and discovery come to life. For more than six decades, the VLM has inspired curiosity and conservation by connecting people to the natural world through immersive exhibits, native wildlife habitats, outdoor trails, hands-on learning environments, and a state-of-the-art planetarium. Accredited by both the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the American Alliance of Museums, the Museum serves as a regional leader in environmental education and conservation.*

*As the Museum looks to the future, it seeks a visionary and relationship-driven Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) to lead and elevate its philanthropic strategy. This is an opportunity for a dynamic fundraising leader to help shape the next chapter of growth, sustainability, and impact for one of Virginia's most beloved cultural institutions.*

## General Statement of Duties

The Chief Advancement Officer will serve as a key member of the senior leadership team and a strategic partner to the Executive Director & CEO, and Board of Trustees. The CAO will design and execute a comprehensive fundraising program that strengthens annual support, grows major and principal gifts, expands corporate and foundation partnerships, and builds a vibrant culture of philanthropy throughout the organization.

This leader will help articulate a compelling case for support rooted in conservation, education, and community access, ensuring the VLM has the philanthropic resources necessary to sustain and expand its programs, facilities, and long-term vision. This position reports directly to the Executive Director / CEO.

## Qualifications

The ideal candidate is a strategic leader who brings both vision and execution. They understand that fundraising at its best is about building authentic relationships grounded in shared values and impact. Successful candidates will bring:

- At least 8 years of progressive fundraising leadership experience, preferably in zoos, aquariums, museums, cultural institutions, education, or conservation nonprofits.
- A demonstrated record of major-gift and annual fund growth.
- Experience leading comprehensive fundraising programs, including major gifts, annual giving, corporate and foundation relations, and planned giving.
- A collaborative leadership style that inspires staff, volunteers, and board members.
- Exceptional communication skills and the ability to demonstrate impact across all aspects of the VLM's mission.
- A deep appreciation for conservation, environmental education, and community engagement.
- Experience with data management and CRM systems and reporting.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Chief Advancement Officer will build deep and lasting relationships with donors, prospects, and community partners who believe in the VLM's mission. In partnership with leadership and volunteers, the CAO will:

- Lead and mentor a talented advancement team, fostering a results-oriented, donor-centric culture.
- Establish clear revenue goals and performance metrics aligned with the VLM's newly adopted strategic plan.
- Identify, qualify, and personally cultivate a portfolio of high-capacity prospects and current donors.
- Partner with the Executive Director & CEO and Board of Trustees to strengthen engagement, giving, and major donor outreach.
- Oversee annual giving efforts including membership campaigns, annual fund solicitations, direct mail, and digital fundraising.
- Expand corporate sponsorships and foundation partnerships.
- Work collaboratively with marketing, education, finance, and program teams to ensure alignment of fundraising and organizational goals.
- Ensure robust use of donor management systems for tracking, reporting, and donor segmentation.
- Grow and formalize planned giving and legacy initiatives.
- Ensure strong stewardship practices and data-driven fundraising systems that support accountability and growth.

## **Essential Job Requirements:**

- Ability to work occasional evenings and weekends
- Must be able to hear and speak clearly
- Physical requirements include medium work, exerting up to 40 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 30 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects
- Must be able stand for extended periods of time and move about on foot to accomplish tasks
- Must be able to stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl, reach, push, pull, lift, grasp, feel, and utilize repetitive motions.
- Must have close visual acuity to perform activities such as: preparing and analyzing data, transcribing, viewing a computer, and extensive reading

## **Benefits and Salary Range**

The Virginia Living Museum offers a comprehensive benefits package for regular, full-time staff and their eligible dependents, which includes medical and dental insurance (cost-sharing involved), as well as term life insurance, long term disability insurance, flexible spending accounts and a 401(k) plan. The Museum offers paid vacation, sick leave, and personal time to all regular, full-time staff. Salary Range: \$125,000 - \$145,000

## **How to Apply**

Please visit [theVLM.org/Employment](http://theVLM.org/Employment) or click [HERE](#) to apply.