Position Title : Chief Development Officer
Organization : Chautauqua Institution
Salary: $275,000 - $325,000
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DEADLINE TO APPLY: Open

Chief Development Officer

Institution Overview
Internationally renowned for its nine-week Summer Assembly Season from June through August, Chautauqua Institution curates a stunning variety of programs in arts, religion, education, and recreation. More than 100,000 visitors engage each summer in daily lectures, performances, worship services, classes, workshops, and recreational offerings—drawn by a shared desire for intellectual growth, meaningful dialogue, an unparalleled sense of community, and personal relaxation and renewal.

Chautauqua's grounds comprise 750 acres located on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York State and within a 2-hour drive of Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Between 7,500 and 10,000 people reside on the grounds during the 9-week summer season.

Chautauqua hosts a diverse and compelling lineup of artists, lecturers, and performers. On any given day, Chautauquans may attend lectures and master classes from the likes of Ken Burns, Morgan Freeman, Doris Kearns-Goodwin, and Thomas Friedman. They may enjoy religious leaders like Rev. Raphael Warnock, Rabbi Peter Berg, Rev. Winnie Varghese, or Rev. Otis Moss III. They may experience authors such as George Saunders, Kwame Alexander, Amor Towles, or Amy Tan. They may attend performances by the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, Diana Krall, Wynton Marsalis, Mary Chapin-Carpenter, Denyce Graves, Laufey, Sheryl Crow, or The Roots.

Chautauquans may also immerse themselves in classic works and world premieres performed by Chautauqua's Theater Company, Opera Company, and Symphony Orchestra, or they can choose to support and nurture the future artistic leaders developed by the Schools of Performing & Visual Arts. However they choose to spend their time, Chautauquans have the opportunity to

experience creativity of all forms in a distinctive environment that is uniquely conducive to interaction, collaboration, and the formation of relationships. In fact, many speakers and performers stay for multiple days, bring their families, expand the scope of their involvement, and return to Chautauqua again and again. That is the power of the one-of-a-kind experience Chautauqua provides.

Role Summary & Context for Recruitment
The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is responsible for conceptualizing, organizing, and implementing a comprehensive and strategic fundraising program in support of Chautauqua's mission and strategic priorities. The CDO will serve as a thought partner to President Mark Johnson, to whom the position reports. The CDO will work closely with the Senior Vice President/Chief Program Officer, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, and fellow members of the Executive Team. Other close partners include the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director and the Board of Directors of the Chautauqua Foundation, and a wide circle of volunteer leaders. Together they will build a sustainable culture of philanthropy throughout the Institution, cultivate transformative gifts, and elevate and support Chautauqua's mission.

The CDO leads a team of approximately 10 professionals across the following areas: major, principal, and planned gifts; annual giving; institutional grants and sponsorships; prospect research, donor relations and events; and development services. The CDO will be tasked with sustained growth of the Chautauqua Fund, Chautauqua's annual fund, which raised $5.9 million in FY25. The CDO will also help to build the strategy for Chautauqua's next comprehensive campaign.

Chautauqua Institution enters this search at an inflection point. Its Boundless campaign set a goal of $150 million and closed six months ahead of schedule in December 2025, raising $166 million during one of the most successful fundraising efforts in the Institution's 152-year history.

Since then, Chautauqua has undergone a period of leadership transition and financial realignment. Among other changes, Chautauqua welcomed Mark Johnson as President at the close of the 2026 Summer Assembly Season. He brings a conviction that Chautauqua, long a national platform for ideas and civil conversation across difference, can help restitch the fabric of American civic life. As President Johnson leads the development of a new strategic plan and master plan for the Chautauqua grounds, he has identified the recruitment of the CDO as

a top priority. He is seeking a strategic partner who will build a modern, disciplined, data-informed development program equal to the generosity of the Chautauqua community and the scale of its ambitions.

Candidate Profile
Chautauqua Institution will consider a broad range of backgrounds. The ideal candidate will align with the following qualifications:

Professional Skills and Competencies

Twelve or more years of experience in development with progressive levels of leadership responsibility, including experience with the following: individual giving, major and principal gifts, annual giving, planned giving, stewardship, development operations, donor events, board relations, and leadership in a major fundraising campaign (planning, implementation, and successful conclusion).
Demonstrated success in change management, conceptualizing fundraising program growth, and setting and meeting philanthropic goals. Preference for candidates with fundraising experience in a complex, multi-program environment, such as higher education, performing arts and culture, or another institution serving many distinct constituencies.
Demonstrated success building or rebuilding a development program: assessing structure and staffing, putting in place policies, systems, and metrics, and creating the operational discipline that allows frontline fundraising to thrive.
Balances strong management and administrative skill with personal effectiveness as a fundraiser.
Track record of personally identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major gifts from individual and institutional donors at the level of six and seven figures and greater, including blended gifts that combine outright and planned commitments. Demonstrated ability to open doors to high-net-worth prospects, drawing on a broad professional network for prospect discovery.
Knowledge of and adherence to the principles, ethics, and best practices of modern fundraising, including the integration of annual, major, planned, and endowment giving to diversify the funding base and cultivate greater donor commitments. Working knowledge of endowment gift administration, gift acceptance and counting policies, and the stewardship of donor intent.
Demonstrated experience engaging, preparing, and working collaboratively with executives, program and artistic leaders, board members, and volunteers on

development activities, giving them the support necessary to increase their comfort level and success in fundraising.
Experience working with governing and affiliated boards to strengthen their fundraising engagement. Experience working with an affiliated foundation or other multi-entity structure is a plus, as is the ability to evaluate organizational models and recommend a structure that best serves donors.
Ability to lead, recruit, evaluate, mentor, and develop a team of development professionals and to build a high-functioning, results-oriented culture with clear goals and shared accountability. Dedication to both the personal and professional growth of team members.
Ability to extract and analyze data to make effective, efficient decisions about donor strategy, prospect identification, and process. Working knowledge of prospect research, analytics, and modern CRM platforms. Experience with leading a CRM transition is a plus.
Demonstrated success developing an impactful case for support, working in close partnership with marketing and communications colleagues on donor-focused storytelling and messaging.
Knowledge of the philanthropic landscape of Western New York, Northeast Ohio, and Western Pennsylvania is preferred, though not required.
Ability to be on site throughout the Summer Assembly Season and the weeks that precede and follow it, and flexibility to travel extensively throughout the year.
Additional Personal Characteristics

Passion for Chautauqua's mission and its four pillars of arts, religion, education, and recreation, and for its role as a place for ideas and civil conversation across difference. The ability to authentically engage and inspire others as a senior representative of the Institution.
Eager to be part of the Chautauqua community and to build relationships within it. Understands that fundraising at Chautauqua happens among neighbors, where donors expect to know their development leaders personally.
A team player in every sense: collegial, low in ego, willing to roll up one's sleeves, and generous in sharing credit and the stage with the President, program leaders, and volunteers.
A self-starter who is highly organized and detail oriented. Works independently, brings well-formed recommendations to the President, and keeps colleagues informed.

A decisive leader and clear communicator who makes decisions, explains them, and adjusts course when needed. Brings calm and steadiness to high-pressure moments.
Emotionally intelligent and diplomatic, with the interpersonal skills to build trust among donors, board members, staff, and community members who care deeply about Chautauqua. Respects the Institution's history and traditions while bringing the confidence to ask questions and advance change.
Commitment to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and transparency; mature judgment in handling sensitive information. Leads by example and with humility.
Effective oral and written communication skills, with the stature, demeanor, and comfort level to serve as a highly visible and public-facing ambassador of Chautauqua. Ability to articulate goals and progress clearly, and how fundraising strategy advances larger institutional goals.
Motivated to build for the long term, with a desire to lay a foundation that will serve Chautauqua well beyond the next campaign.
Commitment to IDEA
Chautauqua Institution values Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) as a priority in its strategic plan, 150 Forward. One of Chautauqua's five core values is "The dignity and contributions of all people." The Institution is committed to creating conditions in which everyone feels that they can engage as full and valued participants in the Chautauqua experience. To learn more about the IDEA strategic plan and other IDEA related resources, please visit chq.org/idea.

The Institution is an equal opportunity employer committed to equitable and inclusive hiring practices and applicants will not be discriminated against based on any status protected under federal, state, or local law. We especially welcome applications from those who can demonstrate past experience, engagement and professional expertise in IDEA.

Download the full position description via the following link:
https://dsgco.com/search/23413-chautauqua

Chautauqua Institution has retained DSG Fundraising & Advancement of DSG Global to assist in this confidential search process. Inquiries, nominations, and applications (current resumes and cover letters) may be submitted via the following link or directed to the leader of the search team:

https://talent-profile.dsgco.com/search/v2/23413

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