Merit School of Music | Chicago, Illinois

Full-time Position Announcement:
Annual Giving & Events Manager

Description

Merit School of Music seeks a full-time Annual Giving & Events Manager to continue to grow our annual fundraising efforts focusing on individual donors and special event planning. The ideal candidate will be a creative, organized, dynamic development professional with an entrepreneurial spirit. Passion for music and diversity, equity, and inclusion is a must!

Organizational Overview

Merit School of Music is a community music school located in Chicago’s West Loop. Our primary goals are to help young people transform their lives and experience personal growth through music by providing access to sustained participation. For more than 40 years, we have been home to a diverse community of talented young musicians and have acted as a springboard for achieving full musical and personal potential. Our 146 passionate and experienced teaching artists provide access to high-quality music education, engaging over 3,000 students annually at our downtown location and in area schools and community centers.

Our students, who reflect the socioeconomic and ethnic diversity of Chicago, have the rare opportunity to learn together, dream together, teach each other, and broaden their horizons as they build inspiring lives through music. Merit develops musicians and provides young people with the tools they need to excel in life, with virtually 100 percent of our graduates going on to conservatory or college.

Merit School of Music is committed to building a world where historically underrepresented groups can access quality music education. Simultaneously, Merit is continually working towards becoming an organization that truly reflects the city’s demographics and the students we serve. Merit is dedicated to being an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and anti-racist organization and continually examining our efforts in this area.

Learn more about Merit at www.meritmusic.org.

Reporting Relationship

The Annual Giving & Events Manager reports to the VP for Development & Marketing.
Job Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Annual Giving & Events Manager include, but are not limited to:

Manage Annual Giving for Individual Donors – approx. 35%
- Create, implement, and manage various efforts to secure renewed and new financial support from individuals who donate annually up to the $5K level with support from the VP for Development and Marketing, key Merit staff members, and knowledge of fundraising best practices.
- Coordinate solicitor strategy sessions in partnership with Development team members, prepare contact and statistical reports, and develop and promote a variety of giving opportunities for annual donors.
- Ensure all aspects of direct mail and electronic appeals.
- Ensure appropriate moves management steps are followed to ensure stewardship and gift renewals.
- Support prospect research and prepare donor profiles/giving histories in collaboration with the Director of Development Operations for major gift prospects.
- Support monthly donor newsletter content creation in partnership with the Development and Marketing team; write stories and edit content
- Utilize Raiser's Edge/NXT to track activity and goals and report results to VP for Development & Marketing.

Special Event Management – approx. 25%
- Lead and manage the development side of cultivation and special events such as performance-centered donor engagement events at Merit, “friendraisers” at donor homes or community sites, family-friendly concerts, and partnership events; Lead and coordinate logistical details such as donor invitations, catering, and other details as needed in collaboration with other team members.
- Work closely with the Development and Marketing teams to raise funds for, produce, and execute Merit's Annual Gala; Collaborate with the VP for Development & Marketing and the Director of Marketing and others on the Development team on the production of materials such as the gala invitation, program, videos, etc. to ensure a successful event.
- Help secure gifts for the annual gala by working with peer fundraisers to identify prospects and submit applications, including to corporate partners, as appropriate.
- Support the Director of Development Operations with planning and execution of the annual Play On event led by the Associate Board.

Development Operations Support – approx. 15%
- Print and prepare acknowledgment letters and other correspondence in collaboration with the Donor Database Coordinator.
- Forward donation checks to the Donor Database Coordinator and the Executive Assistant for data entry and deposit.
- Field phone calls and donation inquiries.
- Act as backup for gift and donor data entry as needed.

Support Major Gift Activities – approx. 20%
- Help to draft proposals, gift agreements, reports, and other written materials that support gift solicitation and stewardship of the major gift portfolios of the VP for Development & Marketing and the President/Executive Director.
- Work, as appropriate, with donor leadership volunteers to secure visits with those in their peer networks.
- Ensure excellent customer service is provided to donors through
accessibility to appropriate staff and leadership (as granted), timely responses to communication, quality in all interactions, and personalized communications; be purposeful about every visit and communication and the desired outcome for each “touch.”

Manage Student Scholarships & Stewardship – approx. 5%
- Work closely with the Director of Development Operations and Program team staff to assist in the organization, selection, and stewardship of student scholarships and awards; coordinate scholarship distribution with Finance staff.

Other duties are assigned as needed.

Personal Skills/Attributes/Qualifications

To be successful in this job, you will exemplify the following traits:

**Relationship-building:** Build and maintain relationships with donors and prospective donors, can develop collaborative and warm relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders, including executives, high-level volunteers, high-net-worth individuals, internal stakeholders, and staff and board leadership.

**Highly organized time management:** Demonstrate an effective system for managing an ambitious workload and identify and proactively address priorities.

**Attention to detail:** Exemplify high standards for performance and personal responsibility through a commitment to accuracy in communications while following through to maintain credibility and trust.

**Initiative:** As a self-starter who can take initiative, work independently in a fast-paced environment, and fluently manage multiple projects and competing priorities professionally.

**Communication:** Strong writing skills are required to communicate compelling fundraising appeals that successfully encourage donors to provide financial support. Strong interpersonal skills for listening and speaking are critical.

**Flexible mindset:** Willingness to learn new skills and think outside the box to support various projects is required. The right candidate will be comfortable working independently and on projects with team members. Openness to working a flexible schedule, including evenings and weekends, is required at times to support committee meetings or concerts and other events.

**Commitment to Merit’s mission:** A strong commitment to Merit’s mission and accessibility to music education is a must to connect with donors and prospects successfully.

**Technical skills**
Familiarity with donor databases is required, and Raiser’s Edge is a plus. MS Office proficiency is required (Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Excel). Experience with software such as iWave or other donor research tools, HubSpot or similar CRMs, Canva, or other design tools is desired but not required. Experience with special event planning or similar planning experience is a must.

**Educational and Experiential Requirements**

- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent work experience
- 2+ years of direct, relevant experience
- Experience with arts or education is a plus
Schedule

- This is a full-time, overtime-exempt position.
- Please plan to work in person at Merit at least two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays preferred)
- The successful candidate should have a flexible schedule to attend evening and weekend events/concerts/meetings as necessary.

Compensation & Benefits

Merit offers a comprehensive employee benefits package, including the following items:

- Compensation is commensurate with experience but based on a yearly starting salary of $50,000.
- Your first 90 days of employment are considered a probationary period. You will be eligible to participate in Merit's employee benefits package on the first of the month following 30 days from your hire date. We offer a robust healthcare package including medical (BCBS PPO and HMO options), Delta Dental (PPO and HMO), EyeMed vision care, and voluntary life insurance coverage.
- Paid time off (PTO) beginning at one day per month increases each fiscal year, seven paid holidays, and an additional winter break (approximately one week).
- Complimentary Headspace for Educators subscription with your Merit email address
- Following one year of employment, you will be eligible to invest in Merit’s 401(k) plan, including a 3% safe-harbor contribution made by Merit.

Further information on Merit's benefits package and employee policies is available on request.

To apply, please upload your resume detailing your relevant experience and qualifications for this role using this link. Applications will be accepted through Wednesday, July 5, 2023. Materials should be compatible with Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of their materials through Airtable and further guidance and updates about the hiring process by email, with interviews provided for finalists.

ALAANA/BIPOC people, trans and gender-nonconforming people, and women are encouraged to apply.

For more information about the Merit School of Music, please visit www.meritmusic.org.

Merit School of Music is committed to enhancing the diversity of our musical community, recognizing that by providing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for our students, we are preparing them for personal and professional success in an increasingly multicultural and global society. The Merit community recognizes that it has a responsibility for creating and sustaining a learning and working environment where difference is valued, and where equity and inclusion are practiced.