

San Francisco Playhouse Director of Development

The Artistic and Producing Directors seek a proven fundraiser and relationship builder to personally drive donor solicitations and to engage staff, artists, and Board members in outreach to individual, business and foundation donors.

San Francisco Playhouse is the Bay Area's premiere mid-sized theatre company and a vital cultural cornerstone in downtown San Francisco. The theatre company was founded by Artistic and Producing Directors Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003. Its core mission is to share stories that uplift spirits, deepen self-awareness, and nurture community.

[San Francisco Playhouse](#) serves as what its co-founders call "an empathy gym", a transformative space where audiences and actors share theatrical experiences and cultivate the power of compassion. From its home at 450 Post Street with its 299-seat mainstage and intimate venues, this acclaimed non-profit theatre company annually presents over 400 performances including six mainstage productions and three world premieres.

The organization operates with impressive financial stability, maintaining a healthy \$5.9 million budget with a robust 55:45 earned to contributed revenue mix, a loyal patron base with growing subscriptions, and a dedicated team of fifty regular staff members. San Francisco Playhouse has garnered exceptional critical recognition making it the most award-winning theatre in the Bay Area, while also nurturing world premieres that have achieved national and international acclaim. These include works by Theresa Rebeck, Aaron Loeb, Lauren Yee, and George Brant. The 2025/26 season showcases this breadth with productions including *Noises Off*, *Into the Woods*, *M. Butterfly*, *Flex*, *Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, *Really* and *Hairspray*.

The Development Director will manage a 3-person team and lead transformational annual, capital and endowment campaigns.

The objective of the capital campaign is to reshape the artistic home of the Playhouse into the beating theatrical heart of San Francisco's Union Square. With the 10-year lease renewal secured, the Development Team will spearhead vital infrastructure investments that include cutting-edge sound systems, enhanced patron amenities, and other elements that dramatically expand the capacity to create, produce and present great theater, and cultivate theater artists and audiences.

Even more thrilling, the Director will champion the growth of innovative programs, including scaling the **Sandbox Series** as a premier incubator for bold world premieres, and expanding the **Rising Star** program to connect hundreds of young people to live theatre's transformative power. The Development Director and the San Francisco Playhouse Team will build lasting legacies that define the organization's next decade of artistic excellence and community impact.

The Development Director will have a central role in advancing the recently adopted three-year strategic plan, helping donors and friends of the Playhouse to contribute to its artists, programs, infrastructure and financial strength.

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Artistic and Producing Directors and working closely with members of the senior staff and Board members, the Director is a member of the senior management team and provides day-to-day leadership, management and coordination of all fundraising activities. Responsibilities of this role include targeting all major individual and institutional fundraising efforts, capital and endowment campaigns, designated giving campaigns, planned giving fundraising, mass outreach and solicitation efforts, event-based fundraising, and donor recognition, retention and stewardship.

The Director will be a personally involved fundraiser and relationship builder responsible for specific fundraising targets delivered through an “all-hands-on-deck” approach that engages willing members of the Board, the Artistic and Producing Directors, and all artistic and professional staff and volunteers in solicitation efforts. The Director will collaborate closely with Playhouse staff and board leaders to evolve the fundraising capabilities of the Board, and with individual Board members to secure contributed revenue.

The Director will oversee the delivery of a high-touch stewardship and donor recognition program. will interact regularly with major donors and represent San Francisco Playhouse at social functions and other events in the community that include potential Playhouse donors.

Additionally, the Director will execute the following responsibilities on an ongoing basis:

- In collaboration with the Artistic and Producing Directors, evolve and update the fundraising plan that includes donor segmentation, objectives by donor category, success metrics, identification of staff and trustees who will be actively involved in fundraising, and definition of roles fundraising goals.
- Implement a more systematic approach to prospecting, donor cultivation and patron engagement; in partnership with Marketing, ensure that data is shared and harvested to optimize contributed revenue and earned revenue from ticket sales.
- Manage and personally engage a portfolio of at least 50 major donors in solicitation and stewardship activities in collaboration with the Artistic and Producing Directors and others.
- Cultivate and manage the foundation landscape that functions as a vehicle for major gift-giving by individuals (including Community Foundations and certain private family foundations), and foundations that give to advance live theatre. Supervise the writing of grant proposals and identify potential grant sources.
- Demonstrate the ability to act independently, including making calls, setting appointments, and arranging meetings autonomously, leveraging existing staff resources to maximize potential fundraising.
- Be confident and comfortable with making cold calls and engaging directly with affluent and influential individuals.

For the first four months, the Director’s immediate priorities are to:

- Thoroughly understand San Francisco Playhouse – its history, culture, traditions, programs, personalities, constituencies and governance structure; understand its base of financial support and the short and long-term funding requirements.

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- Work with Artistic, Producing and Marketing Directors to ensure San Francisco Playhouse's messaging, image, and branding is clear and applied consistently to all materials; review all development collateral, emails, website and social media messages, printed materials, grant proposals, etc.
- Immediately assess the "state of play" of in-process fundraising efforts and provide support for those efforts as needed; assume a hands-on leadership role in the identification, cultivation and solicitation of major gifts.
- Use data, trends, individual and corporate contacts, and knowledge of the community to develop strategies to expand the current base of philanthropic revenue.

DESIRED EXPERIENCE and QUALIFICATIONS

The Director of Development should have the following experiences and qualifications:

- Substantial and proven experience attracting financial support from individuals, foundations, businesses, and/or government sources; demonstrated results in personally cultivating donors.
- Broad-based knowledge of various development activities including web, social media, direct mail, membership, proposal and grant development, planned giving, capital campaigns, event planning and management, direct solicitations, leveraging fundraising databases and support systems for donor segmentation, research and volunteer management; familiarity with Salesforce as a CRM would be a valuable asset.
- An exceptional communicator, both in writing and orally; an extrovert who gets energy from connecting with individuals and enjoys creating opportunities for engagement; one with social grace, honesty and integrity who can build enthusiasm for the art and artists; have a personal presence at evening and weekend performances and development events throughout the year.
- A keen ability to manage and juggle competing priorities; excellent follow-through and attention to detail; a resourceful individual with a high energy level and can-do attitude.

The Director of Development role involves an intense focus on direct solicitation and leveraging others to solicit directly. Planning is fine; asking is better.

COMPENSATION

\$100,000 - \$150,000 annually, with base and variable compensation components.

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