

## Burning Man Project

### Director of Philanthropic Investment

***The Director will engage visionaries who fund new civil society ideas, art and change-maker gatherings to financially strengthen Burning Man's events, initiatives, infrastructure, collaborations and global outreach in ways that are consistent with the organization's principles.***

#### **BACKGROUND**

Since its founding in 1986, [The Burning Man Project](#) has invited the world to reinvent civil society with a focus on [10 Principles](#) that challenge generally accepted conventions of modern societies and facilitate collaborative reinvention.

Each year at the end of August, 80,000 inventors, artists, futurists, makers, thinkers, experimenters, storytellers and participants come together in the Nevada desert to design, build, temporarily inhabit and then remove [Black Rock City](#), a wildly imaginative temporary metropolis that functions as a demonstration platform, showcase and proof of concept for new ways of being. Participants annually attend from throughout the USA and dozens of countries, and the resonance of Burning Man affects millions of people around the world.

During the event, there are not commercial transactions, no sponsorships, no branding, no hierarchy of activity, and there are no trash cans. Black Rock City exists and then disappears. Once the event closes, the objective is to leave the desert as it was and also ignite the light of the Burning Man experience within each participant. Left behind is no trace... except the resonance of new ways of thinking and being. Participant "burners" can then beneficially affect society as they see fit.

In this sense, Burning Man programs, including Black Rock City, are laboratories and experimental sandboxes. Every facet and cultural attribute of Burning Man is shaped to protect and advance inventiveness, collaborative effort, irreverence, and challenge convention so that people are free to play, create and reconsider. Burning Man's leadership preserves a balance that respects egalitarian principles yet has room for driven opinionated people, that encourages consensus and collaboration yet preserves individual and idiosyncratic voice.

***This kind of experimentation is expensive, and shaping a non-commercial space to host art, experiences and ideas for improving civil society has particular challenges.***

To support an ecosystem that culminates in the annual Black Rock City event, Burning Man's \$70m budget supports 160 year-round staff and an ever-evolving community of artists, inventors and storytellers. To ensure operating resilience the organization must strengthen its infrastructure. To expand Burning Man's footprint beyond the Nevada desert to a global audience and beyond in-person attendance, the organization must develop additional ways to engage the community and encourage energized year-round interactions in the spirit of Burning Man.

The irony is lost on no one that huge investment is required to build and share temporary utopias of civil society reinvention. The irony is lost on no one that these investments can only be lightly directed by any individual, including by donors, to ensure that the delicate balance of the organization's creative, irreverent and positive culture is preserved.

***Reporting to the CEO, the Director of Philanthropic Investment collaborates with the Board, management team and community to fund imaginative ideas on how society might function and expand Burning Man's infrastructure and global impact.***



**BASIC FUNCTION**

Burning Man’s CEO is the fundraiser-in-chief. The Director provides support to the CEO on all fundraising matters, shapes and drives fundraising strategy, and works cooperatively across the organization with other members of the staff, Board, partners and community members to increase contributed income.

As part of their responsibility to shape and drive fundraising strategy, the Director manages a team responsible for: development planning, targeting and direct fundraising solicitations; messaging, communications and public relations that relate to fundraising activities; and friend-raising events that build funding and other types of in-kind philanthropically contributed support for Burning Man programs.

With the CEO and the leadership team, the Director will serve as a Burning Man spokesperson and representative, grow Burning Man’s visibility and advance its reputation among donors of various types, and will keep the CEO and other internal and external constituencies well informed of in-process outreach to donors. The Director’s primary responsibility and metric will be to maximize contributed income.

Emphasis will be placed on the identification, cultivation and stewardship of new philanthropic contributors, and deepening interests of existing investors. The Director will be a hands-on, fearless, energetic fundraiser who spends time in the community developing strategically important relationships; however, the Director is NOT a solo act. Consistent communication with the CEO and leadership team members is absolutely essential, because Burning Man functions as a kind of neural network where intelligence and relationships helpful to a fundraising effort might come from various quarters. Burning Man has the culture of a research and development organization staffed by inventors, story tellers, artists and out-of-the-box thinkers. Its philanthropic investors are similarly inclined, and successful approaches to such investors are not necessarily linear.

There is, however, a certain structure to this endeavor. Central to achieving significant philanthropic investment is targeting & segmentation of donors according to their investment interests, and defining how those interests map to supporting:

- **Ten Principles** (Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-reliance, Radical Self-expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, Immediacy)
- **Programs** (Arts, Philosophical Center, Leadership Programs, Burners Without Borders and other Community Resilience Programs, Sustainability Programs, etc.)
- **Infrastructure** (Buildings & Warehouses; Information & Energy Tech; Safety & Security; Shelter, Sanitation & Supply Infrastructure; Permanent Facilities and Land Acquisitions & Improvements; etc).
- **Events and Sharing Platforms** (Black Rock City, Regional & Micro Events, On-Line Community Platform, Hive Learning Platform, etc.)

Together, these categories form the basic context for different kinds of philanthropic investments into building Burning Man’s capacity as a laboratory for different ways of being. The intent is to provide sufficient structure so that resources can be responsibly managed, yet even here the ability to experiment, challenge assumptions and explore new ideas is key to how

Burning Man will engage with philanthropic investors. The above is meant to be an enabling mechanism, not a straightjacket.

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES**

In the first six months the priorities for the Director are to:

- Immediately assess the “state of play” of in-process fundraising efforts and provide support for those efforts.
- Thoroughly understand Burning Man - its culture, history, strategic vision, programs, personalities, constituencies, and base of financial support.
- Create a development strategy that identifies possible low-hanging fruit for the short-term, opportunities for the medium-term, and aspirations for the long-term. This might include donor/investor segmentation according to capacity or interest, objectives for individual and institutional fundraising and success metrics, identification of staff and Board members who will be actively involved in fundraising, and definition of roles, targets and fundraising goals.
- Work with the CEO and Board to determine whether there is sufficient support to run a capital and endowment campaign, and if so determine its scope, leaders, case, and delivery timeframe within the next 18 months.

On an ongoing basis, the Director will be responsible for the following:

- Build and manage infrastructure for donor tracking that is flexible and scalable for current and future reporting and segmentation.
- Oversee and manage all aspects of an annual campaign, individual and major donor cultivation, and special fundraising events.
- Work with the Communications group to ensure that fundraising messaging collateral and appropriate sections of the website’s page is refreshed.
- Identify philanthropic investors whose interests may align to Burning Man; identify giving opportunities.
- Recruit and manage a team whose skills and experiences will ensure goals are met.
- Manage and personally engage in solicitation and stewardship activities in collaboration with the CEO and other members of the staff and Board team; provide training and support to those who have a range of fundraising skills and abilities.

**IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The successful candidate will have a professional or personal alignment to Burning Man’s mission and the following professional attributes:

- A strong track record of working together with Boards and management teams to engage those interested in making significant investments in experimentation and in changes that benefit society.
- Experience with big project and venture funding, and with multi-cultural and international constituents, are considered to be essential.
- A successful track record of personally raising gifts from individuals and institutional

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sources; broad-based knowledge of various development activities including: direct solicitations, online giving, social media, direct mail, proposal and grant development, planned giving, capital campaigns, event planning and management; practical experience in using data to manage the fundraising process, enhance donor cultivation and drive fundraising priorities.

- Strong management skills that include planning, budgeting, outreach strategies and tactics, and a demonstrated ability to organize, manage, motivate and inspire others to productive action.
- A strong commitment to Burning Man’s culture and values with an ability to internalize how the Ten Principles and other cultural attributes of the organization affects fundraising; an openness to be guided by others; a good listener and strategist comfortable receiving input from many sources.
- Able to analyze and formulate disparate information into a sound, well-organized plan. Demonstrated skills in motivating, directing, and developing a team, and in coordinating and supporting the fundraising activities of others; holds team and self accountable for reaching or exceeding targets.
- Superior written and oral communication skills, with exceptional attention to detail and the ability to articulate a compelling case in person and in writing for Burning Man programs. Outstanding speaking, writing, and editing skills. Demonstrated success in bringing regular, positive media attention to an organization.
- A creative thinker and doer who is inspired to take successful ‘real world’ financial principles and strategies and apply them to a world-changing cultural movement in ways that meet the organization’s objectives to be financially thriving.
- Emotionally mature with a sense of perspective, humor, fun and experimentation.

**SALARY RANGE**

The salary offered for this position is a flexible range from \$210,000 to \$250,000.

To apply, nominate others, or for further information, please contact:

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