CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

Department: ADVANCEMENT

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Direct Reports: Director of Advancement, Communications Manager, Development Assistant, Part-time Grant Writer, Intern

Location: Hybrid (162 Columbus Ave, Boston, MA)

WHO WE ARE

Ellis Early Learning (Ellis) is a vibrant nonprofit with a proud history dating back to 1885. We are redefining what it means to deliver inclusive, equitable, and high-quality early education. Ellis is among the most socio-economically, racially, and culturally diverse organizations serving children in Boston. Ellis provides early education and care for infants, toddlers, and preschool children and is among only 6% of early childhood programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Ellis is a **nationally recognized model for diversity and innovation in early childhood education**. Serving more than 390 children annually across two vibrant campuses in the South End and Jamaica Plain, as well as a Family Child Care Network, we ensure every child, regardless of their background, develops the social, emotional, and academic skills to thrive in school and life.

MISSION

Ellis Early Learning partners with families to provide high-quality early childhood education in a warm, nurturing environment. A recognized leader in our field, we support children across the socio-economic spectrum, treasure diversity in all forms, and celebrate the joy of childhood.

VISION

Every child thrives, and every educator flourishes in an inclusive and equitable environment.

WHY ELLIS?

At Ellis, you will join a dynamic team leading bold initiatives to shape the future of early education. Thanks to a seven-figure transformative gift, we have launched a Center for Teaching and Learning to elevate teaching quality and child outcomes and make groundbreaking improvements in programming, fundraising, leadership, and evidence-based practices, setting new benchmarks for early learning outcomes.

Ellis collaborates with organizations such as the New England Conservatory for on-site music instruction and partners with Boston Public Schools on four Boston Pre-Kindergarten (formerly known as UPK) classrooms, enriching our early learning environment. Partnerships with the **Boston Ballet**, **JumpStart** and **Raising a Reader** add even more depth to our work.

WHAT SETS US APART?

- ✓ **A Rich Legacy and Visionary Future**: With over a century of impact, Ellis combines tradition with trailblazing initiatives that inspire and lead.
- ✓ **A Thriving, Inclusive Community**: Ellis is a socio-economically, racially, and culturally diverse organization serving Boston's children.
- ✓ **Recognition and Results**: Ellis's commitment to quality and inclusion has earned us widespread accolades and positioned us as a leader in the early education field.

Ellis does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, homelessness, or military status. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all team members.

ELLIS EARLY LEARNING
WHERE ALL CHILDREN THRIVE

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) is a key strategic partner to the CEO, and will lead and empower a high-performing advancement team, developing and executing innovative fundraising strategies to secure the resources necessary to propel Ellis into its next era of impact. This role demands a visionary leader with a proven track record in managing development operations and creating comprehensive advancement strategies. The CAO must be proactive, results-driven, and possess exceptional interpersonal skills to inspire support and drive meaningful impact.

The CAO will lead all fundraising, external communications, and advancement efforts for the organization, including individual giving, grants, and corporate partnerships. In collaboration with the CEO, the CAO will set the vision and strategy for Ellis's advancement efforts and serve as the organization's primary fundraiser, cultivating and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders to drive revenue and elevate Ellis's programs and mission.

As a member of Ellis's executive leadership team, the CAO will report directly to the CEO. A central focus of the role is to build and sustain a robust individual giving program, engaging Ellis's parents and grandparents, alumni, and the broader community. With an initial fundraising target of $2.5M annually, the CAO will lead efforts to double this impact by 2028, developing sustainable revenue streams that support Ellis's long-term vision.

The CAO will play a vital role in supporting the CEO's management of the Board of Directors, providing strategic guidance and staffing for the Development, Nominating and Governance, and Program Committees, and lead Board recruitment and orientation efforts to strengthen Ellis's leadership network.

Primary Responsibilities

- **Strategic Fundraising Leadership:** Develop and implement a comprehensive annual fundraising plan focusing on individual and corporate giving, foundation funding, signature events, communications, and donor stewardship.
- **Inspiring a Culture of Philanthropy:** With the support of the CEO, further advance a culture of philanthropy across all stakeholder groups, including board members, trustees, staff, parents, alumni families, and the broader community.
- **Financial Alignment:** Work closely with the finance team to ensure accurate budgeting, forecasting, monthly reconciliation, proactive cash flow monitoring to support fundraising goals, and grant compliance.
- **Team Leadership:** Supervise, train, empower, and retain the Advancement team, fostering a culture of accountability, professional growth, and high performance.
- **Corporate and Foundation Partnerships:** Strengthen and expand relationships with corporate partners by creating innovative engagement opportunities that showcase Ellis's mission and impact. Identify new non-government grant opportunities to diversify revenue streams, guide and supervise the preparation of grant applications, submissions, and compliance.
- **Major Gift Cultivation:** Identify and cultivate prospective donors while stewarding existing donors through relationship management, events, strategic outreach, and generating major gift proposals.
- **Communications:** Oversee the creation of compelling, donor-facing materials on behalf of the CEO and Board, including the annual report, newsletters, campaign collateral, and digital communications.
- **Board Engagement:** Serve as the senior staff liaison to the Development and Nominating & Governance Committees. Lead efforts to identify, recruit, and onboard new board members, ensuring their orientation

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and alignment with Ellis's mission and goals.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Oversee donor database management (Salesforce), ensuring data accuracy and insights to inform strategy. Regularly prepare and present donor metrics and progress reports to the CEO and Board of Directors.

QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 10 years of experience in development with a strong track record of major gift cultivation and solicitation, successfully raising at least $3.5M annually.
- Deep belief in the importance of early childhood education and a growth mindset that aligns fundraising efforts with the organization's mission and impact.
- Resourceful and entrepreneurial, with a hunger for tackling challenges, taking initiative, and thriving in a dynamic, multi-faceted role that spans various functions.
- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to cultivate relationships, inspire donors, and effectively represent the organization externally.
- Demonstrated success in securing and managing grants and the ability to craft compelling proposals and impactful stewardship reports.
- Advanced understanding of nonprofit finance as it relates to fundraising, coupled with strategic planning skills to chart actionable courses and achieve measurable goals.
- Working knowledge of database management, with a preference for Salesforce experience
- A strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a passion for creating opportunities for children and families.
- A strong work ethic, with a positive, flexible attitude and a willingness to work extended hours, including attendance at early morning and evening events.
- Must be authorized to work in the United States by the first day of employment.

Benefits

At Ellis, you will be part of a mission-driven team that is redefining early childhood education. We offer a competitive salary and benefits package—including vacation and sick time, health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, 403(b) plan, flex spending account, life insurance—along with opportunities for professional growth (e.g., trainings, memberships) and making a lasting impact on children, families, and educators.

Please send a cover letter and résumé detailing your experience and qualifications to hr@ellisearlylearning.org. Join us and help shape the future of early childhood education.

Salary Range: $175k-200k

This job description outlines the core responsibilities of the role. As this opportunity evolves, the person in this position will be instrumental in shaping the Advancement function at Ellis. New responsibilities may emerge as the work progresses.

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