



Waco Symphony Association, Inc. Development Director

Position Title: Development Director

Location: Waco, TX; Office located at 600 Austin Avenue, Ste. 10, Waco, TX 76701

Reports to: Executive Director

Status: Full-time, Exempt

Compensation: Competitive; commensurate with experience

Funded initially by a three-year grant from The Cooper Foundation; the goal is for the Development Director to be raising more than their annual salary in contributed revenue after one full year in the position. The intent is for this position to be fully integrated long-term into the organization's budget and staffing plan.

Benefits: Monthly stipend for health insurance and medical reimbursements, cell phone stipend, Simple IRA matching dollar-for-dollar up to 3% managed by Raymond James Financial Services, accrued vacation time after 6 months, paid holidays (including two weeks around the Christmas and New Year holidays), professional development and related professional memberships, laptop provided and specialized software to be agreed upon to optimize job performance

How to apply: Interested individuals should send a cover letter, résumé, and three references to ED@wacosymphony.com with the subject line "Development Director Application." **Apply by November 19, 2025 for priority consideration;** job will be open until filled.

Organization

For more than 60 years, the Waco Symphony has been a vital part of Central Texas's cultural landscape, presenting live classical music that enriches the life of our community. Under the leadership of Music Director Lawrence Loh and Executive Director Carolyn Bess, the orchestra brings world-class performances to Waco, featuring renowned soloists and diverse programming that inspires audiences of all ages. Special guest artists have included Yo-Yo Ma, Van Cliburn and a long history of presenting Cliburn Competition medal-winning pianists, André Watts, Emmanuel Ax, Renée Fleming, Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Branford Marsalis, Lyle Lovett and his Acoustic Group, and more. Committed to artistic excellence and community engagement, the Waco Symphony continues to play a leading role in shaping the region's musical identity. For more information, visit wacosymphony.com.

About Waco: inWaco.com

Position Description

The Development Director will manage fundraising programs for the Waco Symphony Association, creating strategy and executing plans for maximizing contributed revenue. The Waco Symphony has an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.4 million. Our top priorities for this position include devising a comprehensive fundraising strategy and securing sponsorships and major gifts from individuals and businesses in our community. In light of that, we are seeking a self-starter with a strong work ethic and interpersonal skills with demonstrated experience in building relationships and generating revenue.

This position will collaborate closely with the WSA Executive Director, Music Director Lawrence Loh, Board of Directors, as well as leadership of the Waco Symphony Council and Waco Symphony Foundation to ensure the overall financial health and long-term sustainability of the organization. Demonstrating a high degree of versatility and personal accountability, the Development Director will work to bring creative solutions to meet fundraising goals and make data-driven decisions that help the organization achieve its objectives. The Office Manager supports the Development Director in receipting and acknowledging donations and invoicing sponsorships.

Primary duties and responsibilities will include:

Fundraising Strategy and Implementation

- Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy aligned with the orchestra's mission and goals.
- Create annual fundraising plans, including setting fundraising targets, timelines, and strategies for achieving revenue goals.
- Identify and prioritize potential funding sources, focusing on individual, foundation, and corporate giving prospects.

Donor Cultivation and Stewardship

- Cultivate, maintain, and grow relationships with existing donors, patrons, sponsors, and potential supporters.
- Actively seek and initiate contact with lapsed and new potential donors, with an eye to the evolving demographics of the region to grow the donor base annually.
- Before each concert week, secure and schedule donor meetings for Maestro Loh and Executive Director Carolyn Bess, ensuring that donors feel connected to WSA leadership and are aware of WSA's programming and budget needs.
- Develop tailored cultivation and stewardship plans to deepen engagement and encourage increased giving.
- Ensure timely and personalized acknowledgment letters are sent to donors and provide updates to donors on the orchestra's activities and impact.

- Invite supporters and new potential donors to Sneak Peek Meet & Greet / open dress rehearsals and follow-up to encourage deepened engagement. Manage the logistics for donor events during each concert cycle, collaborating with the Board of Directors' Audience Development Committee on that initiative.

Sponsorship, Annual Fund, and Special Initiative Campaigns

- Work closely with the Executive Director, Board of Directors' Sponsorship Vice-President and WSA sponsorship committee, and other stakeholders to secure concert sponsorships. Set strategy, prepare annual sponsorship campaign packet, and lead efforts in securing and tracking sponsorships.
- Develop strategy for increasing annual fund gifts (current strategy involves securing donations with benefits provided at various membership levels coupled with season ticket renewals).
- Identify and secure donors who will help Waco Symphony expand funding for educational, wellness, and outreach initiatives.
- Ensure recognition of donors and sponsors in concert programs and on website.
- Oversee annual benefit fulfillment for donors and sponsors with support from Office Manager.

Major Gifts and Donor Engagement

- Identify and engage prospective major donors, personally managing relationships and solicitation strategies in collaboration with Executive Director. Work independently and creatively to match donor interests with institutional priorities, develop funding proposals, and negotiate complex gifts.
- Track donor retention and growth, seeking feedback from donors.
- Develop a plan to engage and retain Belles & Brass families as donors and season ticket purchasers after their participation in that Waco Symphony Council program ends.

Building Endowment

- Identify top prospects for estate gifts and secure estate commitments, fueling growth for the Waco Symphony Foundation.
- Work actively and strategically to secure endowed chair gifts supporting principal positions in the orchestra with the goal of growing the Waco Symphony Foundation endowment.

Grant Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with WSA's contracted grant writer to provide information needed for grants and edit grant proposals before submission. The grant writer is the primary person focused on securing grants.
- Develop relationships with foundation leaders in Waco, identifying how the WSA's needs and priorities may align with local foundation giving and grant programs.

Special Events

- Plan and coordinate WSA donor cultural and stewardship events by:
 - Securing hosts/homes for Encore After Parties after concerts and invite donors.
 - Planning annual Conductor's Dinner to engage with top-level donors.
- Collaborate with Waco Symphony Council Patron Party Chair to plan annual event thanking key donors and sponsors.
- Collaborate with Waco Symphony Council leadership on their annual fundraiser, providing guidance so that their efforts complement, but do not compete with Association's sponsorship and major gift campaigns.
- Represent WSA at Council Preview Parties, Sneak Peek Meet & Greet at Dress Rehearsals, concerts, Encore After Parties, key community and partnership events in order to build relationships, and conferences as requested by the Executive Director.
- Collaborate with WSA's contracted marketing agency to promote events and fundraising campaigns.

Board Engagement

- Work closely with the Waco Symphony Association and Waco Symphony Foundation Boards of Directors as well as Waco Symphony Council leadership to inspire and engage them in fundraising efforts, providing support and resources to help them fulfill their various fundraising responsibilities.
- Serve as an advisor and liaison to select board committees as designated by the Executive Director.
- Regularly update leadership on fundraising progress, strategies, and challenges.

Community Engagement

- Assist in the general promotion of the organization by being available for public appearances, media interviews, meetings with key community leaders, and by speaking at events as needed.
- Foster partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to create mutually beneficial relationships.

Data Management and Analysis

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date donor records and fundraising database.
- Import sponsorship history into customer relationship management database BetterUnite.
- Monitor, analyze, and report to the Executive Director and Board on fundraising performance, highlighting progress toward goals and areas for improvement. Adjust strategies as needed.

Continuous Learning and Professional Development

- Stay current with fundraising trends, best practices, and legal regulations relevant to non-profit performing arts organizations.
- Attend conferences, workshops, and networking events to enhance fundraising skills and gain knowledge that can be directly applied to this role.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education:

- Bachelor's degree required; CFRE or CNP preferred (if not attained yet, a willingness to work towards achieving either of those credentials is desirable)
- Knowledge of fundraising techniques, including planned giving
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications and relational databases, such as BetterUnite

Experience:

We are seeking someone with 5+ years of progressive experience and training with a proven track record in fundraising. Experience with non-profit and performing arts organizations is preferred. Experience and connections within the Waco community are helpful, but we also welcome relevant experience from other comparable cities and organizations.

Job-Related Skills and Abilities:

- Strong interpersonal skills to build lasting relationships and interact effectively with a diverse range of personalities; possesses a friendly, positive, and customer service mindset.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills; ability to be an effective and articulate spokesperson for the WSA in a variety of settings.
- Creative and flexible self-starter with ability to set and meet strategic goals.
- Excellent organizational and project management skills; possesses ability to multi-task, track multiple projects, and meet deadlines.
- Experience in leading development efforts including individual giving and corporate donations; grant writing experience is a plus, but is not the main focus of this position.
- Possesses analytical and problem-solving skills as well as attention to detail.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and sensitive information.
- Self-motivated individual who is also a collaborative team player, working in an office with up to three other team members.
- Appreciation of music and a passion for the arts desired; basic knowledge of symphonic music is a plus.
- Ability to work evenings and weekends as required for performances and events.

- Has a reliable means of transportation including a car, valid driver's license, and auto insurance.
- Ability to lift 20-25 pounds and perform repetitive office tasks.

The Waco Symphony Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. The WSA is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable work environment.