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EXECUTIVE SEARCH FOR PHILANTHROPY & NONPROFITS

Position Specification



Executive Director

12 December 2023, vF



Carlson Beck advises **Friends of the San Francisco Public Library** on the basis of an exclusive consulting assignment. The following details are for your information and should be shared with discretion.



FRIENDS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

POSITION SPECIFICATION

THE POSITION:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REPORTS TO:	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LOCATION:	SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

OVERVIEW

The Organization

Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library (“Friends”) is a diverse community of individuals, families and institutions who love the San Francisco Public Library and who work to make it exceptional. They champion free public access to information, resources, and opportunities for all people. **Their mission is to strengthen, support and advocate for a premier public library system in San Francisco.**

History

Friends of the San Francisco Public Library was founded in 1961 by Marjorie Stern, Mary Louise Stong, Hilde Kolb and Grace Macduff Parker. For the first few years, volunteers performed every task, including organizing book sales, processing membership contributions, staging special exhibits and sponsoring citywide poetry contests. By the 1980s, Friends began to play a more active role as an advocacy organization for the Library. Those efforts first culminated in 1988, when Friends helped San Francisco realize the City’s longtime goal of a new Main Library through a campaign for Proposition A, a \$109.5 million bond widely supported by City voters. Further, Friends also helped pay for the cost of furniture, fixtures and equipment not covered in the bond. With these successes, and an extraordinary outpouring of more than 17,000 donations from residents and organizations throughout the City and beyond, the vision of a new Main Library (“the Main”) became a reality when it opened its doors on April 18, 1996.

Advocacy and Community Financial Support

In 1994, after years of protracted budget fights at City Hall which often left the San Francisco Public Library system underfunded, under-staffed, and with mandated closures, Friends developed and championed the City’s first-ever Library Preservation Fund, winning passage of Proposition E with 70% of the vote. This community-led effort by Friends to establish the Library Preservation Fund which guaranteed 15 years of dedicated funding without raising taxes.

In 2007, San Franciscans expressed their strong desire for the renewal of the Library Preservation Fund when



they overwhelmingly passed Proposition D by 74.5%, more votes than any other proposition on the ballot. Subsequently, in November 2022 Friends led a second successful renewal campaign for the Library Preservation Fund, with City residents passing Proposition F by a record-breaking 83% affirmative vote; the Proposition is for 25 years, ending in June 2048. The Library Preservation Fund is critical to the current and long-term health of San Francisco’s premier urban public library. It has enabled the increase of operating hours by 53%, the expansion of the budget for books and materials by almost 400%. and has made the San Francisco Public Library one of the only systems in California with every branch (28 of them) open seven days per week.

Friends grants nearly \$1 million annually directly to the Library to support a broad array of programming in children and youth, library excellence and innovation, lifelong learning, as well as arts and culture at the Main and the 27 neighborhood branches. In 2023, there can be as many as 350,000 visitors per month to the Main and the library branches. Pre-pandemic, this could be as many as 563,000 visitors per month.

Friends also led the successful advocacy effort in 2000 for 74% voter-approval of a \$106 million bond to build and refurbish 24 of the neighborhood branch libraries citywide. Similar with the Main’s rebuild before it, Friends raised \$16 million for furniture, fixtures, and equipment. The Neighborhood Library Campaign’s fundraising success helped to fulfill the citywide dire need to revitalize San Francisco’s neighborhood branch libraries and equip them for the 21st century.

THE POSITION

The Board of Directors is seeking the next executive leader at Friends. The Executive Director provides vision, strategic direction, fundraising prowess, and general management for the organization. This work falls into five broad categories:

1. Working closely with the Board of Directors to develop and implement Friends’ strategic framework.
2. Providing direction, management and oversight of Friends’ staff.
3. Leading the fundraising strategy and earned revenue plans to ensure Friends’ sustainability.
4. Assuring that Friends’ operations are sound and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations as well as Foundation policies.
5. Working with the broader community to build relationships, engage allies, and leverage resources to help accomplish Friends’ goals.

The Challenge and Opportunity

The Executive Director will work in partnership with the Board and the staff, as well as the Library and its staff, to achieve the Friends’ mission of supporting the Library. The Executive Director will lead the strategic planning process, develop and oversee the implementation of the operating plan, and ensure fiscal and organizational stability and sustainability. The Executive Director plays a leadership role in major gifts fundraising and community advocacy. The Executive Director reports to the 20-member Board of Directors through the Board Chair. The Executive Director manages a staff of 17 FTEs, including six direct reports, and an annual operating budget of approximately \$3 million.

This is the opportunity to continue San Francisco Public Library’s exemplary reputation for cutting edge innovation in community access and literacy, reaching vulnerable populations in San Francisco to make library resources available to all community members. The COVID pandemic shone a bright light on the socioeconomic disparities in communities, including access to information and technology resources. The San Francisco Public Library and this Executive Director strive to be a source of library-enabled exploring, discovering, and learning. Friends of the San Francisco Public Library make the Library both a national leader



and an essential part of the City's civic life by providing free resources for all.

Responsibilities

Vision and Strategy Planning

- Provide inspirational leadership to engage and motivate Friends' Board, staff, volunteers, key stakeholders and community.
- Partner with the City Librarian and his staff, and the San Francisco Library Commission in identifying key priorities and initiatives for Friends' support.
- Develop the strategic plan that builds on the success of the Neighborhood Library Campaign; and create the operating plan that supports the Friends' strategic goals.
- Expand Friends' network of community groups with whom it works and increasing impact in the City.

Financial and Organizational Leadership


- Work in partnership with the CFO and board treasurer to create the annual budget and forecasting models.
- Develop realistic budgets and ensure strong financial management with evaluation metrics.
- Work closely with the finance staff to ensure a clean audit.
- Ensure operational systems and infrastructure meets organizational needs and allows maximum effectiveness and outcomes.
- Work closely with the Board of Directors and its committees to ensure strong and appropriate governance and engagement.
- Maintain sound human resources policies and practices to support optimal staff and volunteer performance. Assess staff to ensure maximum fit within position, allow professional development, as warranted, oversee staff members being deployed to their highest and best use.
- Ensure management of workstreams and initiatives by staff teams to achieve Friends' organizational goals and objectives.

Revenue Generation and External Relations

- Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy to support the organization's mission and goals.
- Work closely with the Board and the development staff to maximize contributed revenue. Expand the donor base to reach new sources of revenue.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations; ensure a high level of donor engagement and stewardship.
- Plan and execute fundraising events and campaigns to meet annual revenue targets including identifying and pursuing new funding opportunities to diversify revenue streams.
- Oversee grant writing and reporting processes, ensuring compliance with funder requirements.
- Create and oversee programs that raise funds and build support for the Library.
- Oversee the used book sales operations.
- Review and optimize performance of existing earned revenue sources.
- Identify and analyze efficacy and appropriateness of new potential earned revenue opportunities.
- Increase communications to donors, community groups, Board, and stakeholders, ensuring transparency, frequency, high value content.

Advocacy and Library Support

- Articulately advocate for the Library in the public and private sectors.

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- Develop and oversee advocacy plans that build strong support for the Library among public officials (e.g., mayor, supervisors and library commissioners) and in the community.
 - Oversee Friends' grants and other financial support for the Library.
 - Develop and support projects that serve all communities in San Francisco including lower-income areas and areas with limited access to San Francisco Public library branches.
 - Support literacy programs with the lens of access and social justice.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS / EXPERIENCE

Education: Bachelor's degree strongly preferred. Comparable and relevant lived and professional experience will be considered.

Experience: Five years' progressive experience in a senior leadership role at nonprofit organization(s), or a similar combination of professional and volunteer experience.

Successful track record of leading organizational strategic planning, designing the implementation plan, and managing the tactical execution thereof.

The ability to lead and manage an exceptional team. This includes identifying team members strengths and areas for professional development, assessing fit with positional responsibilities and realigning as necessary, providing support and mentoring while effectively delegating and sharing responsibility to achieve organizational goals and priorities.

Excellent multi-directional verbal and written communications skills, including up to the Board, down to staff team members, and externally to stakeholders and community partners. Well-developed public speaking abilities are highly valued.

A track record of successfully developing and implementing a comprehensive fundraising strategy to support an organization's mission and goals, including generating funds across all revenue channels, i.e., individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundation funders, as well as earned revenue.

Experience in identifying and optimizing the financial drivers of organizational success including developing and monitoring annual operating budgets, forecasts, strategic fundraising plans, organizational infrastructure and operating needs, to ensure operating stability and sustainability.

COMPETENCIES/ATTRIBUTES

The successful candidate will **be**:

- A strong believer in public libraries and access to library services for all.
- Bold and decisive leader with a track record of leading a nonprofit or similar organization through a period of significant change.
- A successful fundraiser who enjoys fundraising activities with major donors and grassroots constituents, foundation funders, and corporate sponsors and underwriters.
- Highly relational in working with the Board, staff, volunteers, community partners.
- Politically savvy and comfortable working with diverse constituencies.

- A compelling, transparent communicator, comfortable with internal audiences as well as external stakeholders and community partners; able to inspire and motivate action via public speaking and presentations.

The successful candidate will **possess**:

- A thorough understanding of working in a public/private partnership.
- Experience in developing and executing a multi-year strategic plan for a nonprofit organization. Strong financial management skills and analytical rigor to arrive at best decisions.
- Excellent people management skills as a highly competent, “high-EQ” leader and manager, able to recruit, mentor, professionally develop, and terminate, as warranted, high caliber, high performing staff members.
- Experience with a channel of generating earned revenue similar to the used book operations program.
- Strong project and time management skills, with ability to keep multiple workstreams in process simultaneously.
- Creativity, openness to new ideas, collaborative encouragement to others, adaptability.
- Ability to work well under pressure, maintaining calm demeanor, and ability to make difficult decisions.
- Empathy and high emotional intelligence (“EQ”).
- A sense of humor and a containable ego.

It is not necessary to meet all the criteria above to apply and be considered for this critical position.

COMPENSATION

A competitive salary commensurate with experience, starting at \$171,000 annually, will be offered plus a comprehensive benefits and PTO (Paid Time Off) package.

Friends of the San Francisco Public Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to the fact or perception of their race, creed, religion, color, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, domestic partner status, marital status, disability, weight, height or AIDS/HIV status.

HOW TO APPLY

To initiate consideration for this opportunity, **please submit a resume and cover letter**, speaking to your qualifications as per this Position Specification, to the Carlson Beck representatives below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

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