Development Director
Irvine Nature Center | Owings Mills, Maryland

Reports to: Executive Director
Status: Full-time, exempt
Salary: $100,000 - $120,000
Benefits: Paid vacation and sick leave; medical, dental, and vision insurance; discounts on Irvine's preschool, camps, and programs; and a 403(b) employer match.
Schedule: Full time, in person with occasional evening and weekend commitments required. Hybrid working available depending on organizational need.

About Irvine

Irvine Nature Center inspires people to explore, respect, and protect nature. Founded in 1975, Irvine connects children and adults with the natural world through environmental education, nature-based early childhood learning, community programs, and stewardship of its 211-acre campus of forests, wetlands, and meadows. Through its Cultivating Community capital campaign and a planned Education Center, Irvine is investing in its next chapter of learning, conservation, and access to nature.

The Opportunity

Irvine seeks an experienced, collaborative Development Director to grow philanthropic support and build lasting relationships with people and organizations who share our mission.

Reporting to the Executive Director and serving on Irvine's leadership team, the Director will lead a comprehensive development program encompassing annual giving, major gifts, corporate partnerships, foundation and public grants, fundraising events, planned giving, and the Cultivating Community capital campaign.

This is a hands-on leadership role for someone who enjoys meeting donors, making thoughtful asks, coaching colleagues, and turning strategy into consistent action. The Director will personally manage a portfolio of donors and prospects while strengthening the plans, practices, and systems that support the development team's success.

Working closely with the Executive Director, Board of Trustees, campaign leadership, and staff, the Director will connect philanthropy to meaningful outcomes in environmental education, land stewardship, and access to nature.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising Strategy and Performance

- Develop and execute an annual fundraising plan, supported by a multi-year strategy, with clear revenue goals, priorities, timelines, budgets, and responsibilities.

- Balance immediate revenue needs with long-term growth, strengthening donor retention, attracting new supporters, reengaging lapsed donors, and increasing sustained and multi-year support.
- Maintain a realistic fundraising pipeline and regularly update revenue forecasts based on donor relationships, proposal progress, anticipated timing, and likelihood of support.
- Use a concise set of measures, including revenue, donor retention, new and returning donors, proposal outcomes, and progress toward gifts, to guide decisions and communicate results.
- Evaluate fundraising activities for net revenue, relationship value, staff capacity, and alignment with Irvine's mission; recommend where to invest, simplify, or discontinue efforts.

Major Gifts and Capital Campaign

- Manage an appropriately sized portfolio of current and prospective major donors, with individualized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship plans.
- Build relationships through personal outreach, meetings, campus visits, and conversations that connect donor interests with Irvine's priorities.
- Personally solicit gifts and prepare the Executive Director, trustees, and volunteers for effective donor conversations through briefings, clear roles, and timely follow-up.
- Partner with the Executive Director and campaign leadership to advance the Cultivating Community campaign, secure remaining commitments, and steward campaign supporters.
- Coordinate capital and operating requests so donors understand Irvine's needs and campaign relationships contribute to lasting support.
- Strengthen planned giving outreach and coordinate complex gift opportunities with appropriate professional advisors.

Annual Giving and Donor Engagement

- Oversee a coordinated annual giving program that includes direct mail, email, digital giving, recurring gifts, and targeted personal outreach.
- Develop thoughtful approaches for first-time, recurring, mid-level, and longtime donors, creating clear opportunities for deeper engagement.
- Ensure timely, accurate acknowledgments and meaningful follow-up that reflects donor preferences and demonstrates how gifts support Irvine's work.
- Partner with communications staff to develop compelling appeals, proposals, impact updates, and other fundraising materials across print and digital channels.
- Work with program and land stewardship staff to communicate credible outcomes through accurate, respectful stories and evidence of impact.

Institutional Giving, Corporate Partnerships, and Events

- Guide the development team's foundation, corporate, and public funding strategies, maintaining a coordinated schedule of cultivation, proposals, renewals, and reporting.
- Partner with program and finance colleagues to develop fundable projects, accurate budgets, and achievable commitments.
- Grow corporate relationships through sponsorships, philanthropy, employee engagement, and other mission-aligned partnerships.
- Lead fundraising strategy for Pumpkins on the Green and other development events, including sponsorships, donor engagement, and follow-up.
- Coordinate with colleagues responsible for event production, establishing clear ownership, timelines, and realistic staffing requirements.

- Help convert event participation and corporate engagement into ongoing philanthropic relationships.

Team, Executive, and Board Partnership

- Supervise, coach, and support development staff through clear expectations, regular feedback, professional development, and shared accountability.
- Establish practical workflows and meeting practices that clarify priorities, coordinate donor outreach, and support sustainable workloads.
- Partner closely with the Executive Director to identify where their involvement will have the greatest fundraising impact.
- Support the Development Committee and campaign volunteers with actionable plans, useful information, and consistent follow-through.
- Help trustees participate confidently in philanthropy through introductions, cultivation, stewardship, solicitation, and personal giving.
- Contribute to organizational planning and a collaborative culture in which fundraising is understood and supported across Irvine.

Development Operations and Ethics

- Oversee effective use of Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT, ensuring accurate donor records, timely contact reports, documented next steps, and useful reporting.
- Partner with Finance to reconcile contributions and track pledges, restrictions, payment schedules, and fundraising results consistently.
- Develop and manage the department budget and recommend investments in tools, training, and support.
- Uphold donor intent, confidentiality, communication preferences, and professional fundraising ethics.
- Use prospect research and digital tools, protecting sensitive information and applying human judgment to research, content, and decisions.
- Advance inclusive engagement and accessible giving opportunities while respecting the dignity and perspectives of the communities Irvine serves.

Qualifications

We are looking for demonstrated fundraising ability, sound judgment, and collaborative leadership. Relevant experience may come through a variety of career paths.

Required

- At least seven years of nonprofit fundraising experience, including personal cultivation and solicitation of major gifts.
- Demonstrated success developing and implementing a fundraising plan and contributing substantially to a development program of comparable scope and complexity.
- Experience supervising or coaching staff and coordinating work across colleagues or volunteers.
- Ability to translate organizational priorities into compelling funding opportunities and clear donor communications.
- Strong relationship-building, listening, writing, and presentation skills, with the confidence to invite philanthropic support.
- Ability to set priorities, manage deadlines, and maintain consistent follow-through.

- Experience using a donor database and fundraising data to manage relationships, assess results, and guide decisions.
- Commitment to ethical fundraising, inclusion, and Irvine's mission.

Preferred

- Experience with capital campaigns and multi-year commitments.
- Experience partnering with executive leadership, trustees, and fundraising volunteers.
- Familiarity with corporate partnerships, institutional giving, annual giving, and planned gifts.
- Experience with Raiser's Edge NXT and Microsoft 365.
- Experience in environmental, conservation, education, or other community-serving organizations.
- CFRE certification or other relevant professional development.

What Success Looks Like

During the first year, the Director will work with the Executive Director and team to establish baseline measures and agreed-upon goals. Success will include:

- A clear, achievable fundraising plan and reliable revenue forecasts.
- An active major-gift pipeline with documented next steps and shared participation from executive and volunteer leadership.
- Progress toward annual operating and capital campaign goals.
- Stronger donor retention, stewardship, and opportunities for continued giving.
- A development team with clear responsibilities, effective systems, and consistent coaching.
- Fundraising communications that demonstrate Irvine's impact and build lasting trust.

To Apply

Please send your résumé and a cover letter describing your interest and relevant experience to HR@ExploreNature.org**.** References will be requested from finalists.

Employment is contingent upon successful completion of required background screening and fingerprinting.

Irvine Nature Center is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome applicants with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives and do not discriminate on the basis of characteristics protected by applicable law. Applicants who need an accommodation during the hiring process may contact HR@ExploreNature.org.