JOB TITLE

Major Gifts Officer

Location
Remote

Salary
$83,524.42–$91,876.86, depending on the approximate cost of living in your area.

For a complete description of how we set and raise salaries, see our salary algorithm.

Application deadline
9 am ET Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Position mission statement:
As Wild Animal Initiative's first Major Gifts Officer, you will lead the development and execution of strategic initiatives to nurture current donors, identify prospective major donors, foster relationships, and drive fundraising efforts. You will join a growing Development team and be our first staff member dedicated to personally cultivating relationships with new and current donors to solicit the gifts that make our work possible.

You will use a donor-centric and moves-management approach to set a major gifts strategy and meet annual and long-term fundraising goals. This means that you will focus on perceiving our donors’ needs, interests, and motivations and strategically guide them through various stages of engagement and solicitation. The ultimate goal is to increase funding by carefully nurturing connections and aligning donor interests with the goals of Wild Animal Initiative (WAI).

You will develop and implement strategies that foster strong donor relations and ensure that our supporters feel valued, engaged, and connected to what we’re doing. You will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with other Wild Animal Initiative departments, using your communication skills to cultivate partnerships and drive support.

You should consider applying for this role if you are a proven, clear, and compelling communicator with a passion for our mission of understanding and improving the lives of wild animals, and a demonstrated ability to pursue and nurture relationships with donors.

Application materials
Please submit an application using this form. You are welcome to preview all questions before beginning. We estimate that completing the application form will take you no longer than 1 hour, but there is no time limit.

If you’re interested, this academic paper provides an overview of the reasons to favor application forms that collect specific kinds of information over resumes and cover letters.
The form will ask you to provide the following:

1. Answers to multiple choice and restricted answer questions regarding your skills.
2. Short answer replies relating to your previous work experience and interests related to the qualifications listed for this role.

Application process & timeline

Stage 1 - phone screening: early to mid-June 2024

Stage 2 - compensated skills assessment: mid-June 2024

Stage 3 - video interview: late June 2024

Terms of employment

Expected start date:
July 2024 (flexible)

Reports to

Development Director Casey Darnley (he/him)

Location:

Full-time remote; exempt position.

Accepting applicants based in the United States, United Kingdom, or Germany only. All applicants must be able to maintain the schedule requirements below. Note: We do not sponsor work visas. We are only considering applicants eligible to work in the country where they plan to reside and work.

Must be able to meet with colleagues in Eastern Time (US) (GMT-4) and Mountain Time (US) (GMT-6) most days of the week, as well as communicate with donors based in various US time zones every day to every few days. Additionally, the role may involve occasional meetings with colleagues in Pacific Time (US) (GMT-7) and European time zones (GMT+1 & GMT+2). Due to the global nature of our operations, some meetings may fall outside of local business hours.

Benefits:

- US only: Comprehensive health and dental insurance with vision insurance available.
- Generous paid time off and leave policies. The typical structure includes:
  - Four weeks of paid vacation, 13 holidays, plus a two-week paid organization-wide break in late December.
  - Two weeks of paid sick leave, which may also be used for caring for human or non-human family members.
  - Note: Leave policies vary slightly by country of employment due to local regulations.
- A remote framework that allows you to balance work and personal commitments, along with a technology stipend to cover associated costs.
- A friendly, open culture that encourages feedback, collaboration, experimentation, and evidence-based innovation.
- Opportunities for advancement as our team and programs continue their growth trajectory.
● Dedicated leadership and colleagues committed to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We have an internal JEDI committee, provide annual staff and manager training to learn about biases at work, and support employees with visible and invisible disabilities.

● Reimbursement for books you buy and read for professional development.

**Public health:**
We prioritize public health in how we do our work. We encourage measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases including but not limited to COVID-19. These may include vaccinations recommended by public health authorities.

In times of elevated public health risk, such as outbreaks or pandemics, we expect employees to cooperate with precautionary measures recommended by public health authorities. These may include regular testing, masking, social distancing, or other safety protocols aimed at reducing the risk of transmission.

When there are recommendations made by public health authorities regarding vaccinations, we will consider requests for reasonable accommodation based on medical or religious reasons, in accordance with our policy and applicable law.

**Travel:**
We estimate approximately five weeks of travel is required for:

- Annual staff retreats: Maximum of two per year, alternating between locations in the United States and Europe.
- Annual team meetings: Predominantly held in the United States for the Development team, occurring once per year.
- Donor meetings within the United States.

Professional Development: Attending in-person conferences or training workshops, subject to approval.

Ability to self-organize travel in the United States and Europe; travel by either car, train, bus, or plane for extended durations is required.

Must be able to obtain legal permission to make such trips (e.g., by having a valid passport and obtaining any necessary visas for travel).

**Responsibilities**

**Supervisory responsibilities:**
None currently, but as the Development team grows, there may be opportunities to manage staff in the future.

**Core duties and responsibilities:**

1. **Donor discovery and research**
   - Prospect research: Gather data on potential donors and various donor communities. Identify their interests, financial capacity, access, and giving history, and identify how best to ask for support from these prospects.
   - Data management and engagement coordination: Efficiently manage donor data, including contact information, donor meeting notes, and relevant details. Assign follow-up steps and ownership to yourself or other staff as necessary.
   - Strategic engagement: Proactively seek out and maintain up-to-date knowledge of Wild Animal Welfare (WAW) developments by engaging with key contacts (donors, researchers, influencers) to gather
insights, understand trends, and identify emerging players in the field to inform decision-making, foster collaboration, and contribute to WAI's strategic objectives.

2. Relationship cultivation
   - Donor relationship building: Cultivate meaningful connections with potential donors, fostering trust and engagement in alignment with organizational values. Engage with and build relationships with donors within a remote framework and travel to meet with donors in person as necessary.
   - Strategic donor engagement: Own the development and implementation of major donor and planned giving engagement strategies. Proactively manage and grow a robust portfolio of prospective and existing major donors to solidify relationships and maximize giving potential.
   - Coordination and delegation: Work with the Executive Director, Development Director, and others to coordinate engagement efforts to ensure a seamless and personalized donor experience. Efficiently schedule, prepare for, and facilitate donor meetings.
   - Coaching: Provide necessary coaching to colleagues, enhancing confidence for successful donor interactions, strengthening relationships, and advancing WAI's fundraising goals.

3. Gift acquisition and acknowledgment
   - Strategic fundraising solicitation: Execute targeted fundraising solicitations through persuasive conversations and the ability to contextualize WAI's programmatic achievements and organizational goals, focusing on securing gifts of $5,000 and above to drive organizational growth and impact.
   - Donor alignment: Develop pitch decks and cases for support that resonate with various donors and donor communities, enhancing donor engagement and satisfaction.
   - Major gift fundraising: Secure five- and six-figure gifts from existing and new donors. Independently develop strategies that drive increased contributions and long-term support for organizational initiatives.
   - Prospect engagement strategy: Develop self-directed and tailored approaches to engaging high-impact donors, utilizing major gifts, planned giving, and event-based methods as appropriate.
   - Gratitude and acknowledgment management: Express gratitude to donors through thoughtful and personalized communications, ensuring donors feel valued and appreciated for their gifts. Manage appropriate delegation of this task to designated staff, such as the Development Director, the Executive Director, or Board members.

4. Other duties: As a young nonprofit, our organization's needs are still evolving, necessitating flexibility and openness to new duties as they may be assigned on short notice. We're seeking someone adaptable and responsive to changing requirements.

Qualifications

Note that we do not require any specific academic credentials or prior work experience for you to be considered for this position.

This role will require you to have the following qualifications:
   - Interpersonal awareness: Demonstrate empathy, concern for others, cooperation, and positive relationship-building. Show sensitivity to cultural differences, curiosity, and respect for others' perspectives and feelings.
   - Integrity: Maintain unwavering integrity in all professional activities. Uphold honesty and ethical principles, ensuring transparency and trust in donor relationships.
• Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI): Motivated to understand and counteract the ways that personal biases, cultural differences, and systemic inequities can hinder our decision-making, work culture, and programmatic effectiveness. A basic awareness of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion concepts, including their relevance to the workplace.

• Independence: Capable of thriving in a remote work environment within a supportive team: adept at independent work, dependable in meeting commitments, and proactive in taking initiative without constant supervision. Able to autonomously manage donor relationships, drive fundraising initiatives, and implement strategic engagement tactics to achieve major gifts and organizational objectives.

• Software: Ability to utilize various software and technology tools such as CRM systems (e.g., Salesforce), project management platforms (e.g., Asana), and productivity tools (e.g., Google Workspace) to streamline fundraising processes and increase efficiency.

• Communication skills: Clearly and respectfully express oneself in both written and verbal communication; demonstrate active listening. Tailor communication to meet the needs of diverse audiences and utilize strong networking abilities to engage high-net-worth individuals and key stakeholders effectively.

• Writing: Ability to write effectively for various formats, such as emails, proposals, fact sheets, presentations, etc. You will collaborate with our Communications department on evergreen pieces like cases for support and template pitch decks, but you will need to have the ability to write at a high volume, producing clear and compelling correspondence that effectively communicates our mission and work to donors and other stakeholders.

• Donor alignment: Demonstrated ability to conduct thorough research and analysis to gain insights into donor interests, ensure alignment with organizational priorities, and foster strategic engagement. Demonstrated success in making persuasive presentations and negotiations to garner support or alignment.

• Critical thinking: Ability to use logic and reasoning to evaluate alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches. Strategically assess donor engagement opportunities and navigate complex fundraising solicitation processes.

• Persuasion skills: Demonstrated ability to passionately advocate for our mission verbally and in writing in order to effectively tailor our message to diverse audiences, anticipate objections, and inspire donors through compelling storytelling and data-driven evidence.

• Resourcefulness: Proven creative problem-solving, adaptability, and persistence, even in challenging situations. Quickly grasp our organization's mission, values, and guiding philosophies to communicate confidently. Understand donor motivations and identify connections with diverse communities.

This role might also benefit from you having some of the following qualifications. You could still be a highly competitive candidate even if you don’t have any of these qualifications.

• CRM familiarity: Preferred candidates will have a basic grasp of CRM software, particularly Salesforce. While prior experience in using Salesforce to track interactions is not required, adaptability and a willingness to learn our specific CRM processes are valued attributes. We recognize that CRM systems can vary in their implementation, and candidates' familiarity with CRM software can be supplemented through training.

• Environmental, wildlife, and conservation advocacy community engagement: Preferred candidates will exhibit an appreciation of community motivations, norms, and culture within these spheres. They should demonstrate a nuanced approach to animal welfare fundraising, acknowledging donors' emotional connections to animals. This involves understanding various animal welfare causes and promoting compassion toward animals. Candidates skilled in navigating these complexities and building connections with diverse philanthropic communities are highly valued.

• Familiarity with effective altruism: Most of our current major donors are influenced by effective altruism. Although membership in the effective altruism community is not required, we want to recognize that perceiving and meeting the needs of those donors will be aided by familiarity with the movement's core concepts (e.g., cause
priority, counterfactual impact), common norms (e.g., calibrated confidence estimates, openness about failures), and related cause areas (farmed animal advocacy and longtermism). Candidates willing to learn and adapt are encouraged to apply.

- Adaptability in fundraising techniques: Candidates with cause-based, academic, or research fundraising experience may find their skills more readily applicable. Traditional engagement methods like site tours won’t be standard in our remote, research-focused model, so we encourage applicants to consider how their skills can translate creatively. Effective communication of our research impact to donors is key in our organization.

About our mission

Wild Animal Initiative is a remote 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to accelerating science that helps wild animals. We conduct original research, fund cutting-edge research projects at other institutions, and support the global network of scientists in our field with services and training.

We are looking to work with people who approach our mission as an inherently inclusive endeavor and celebrate the differences of others. We strongly encourage Black, Brown, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and people of other historically marginalized communities to apply and welcome applicants of any religion, age, origin, class, citizenship, parental status, disability status, genetics, veteran status, sexual orientation, and gender. We view a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and ways of understanding the world and wild animals as an asset that can improve the performance, collective intelligence, innovation, and quality of science at Wild Animal Initiative while also addressing the exclusionary aspects of the spaces we operate in. We integrate these values into all aspects of our work and seek to constantly improve our implementation of them. We seek to benefit and share power with everyone at Wild Animal Initiative.

Please note that we are unable to sponsor work visas at this time. Candidates must be eligible to work in their respective jurisdictions.

If you have any questions about our hiring process or open positions, or if you would like to recommend excellent candidates, please reach out to us at hiring@wildanimalinitiative.org.

To express your interest in working with us in a capacity not currently open, please submit your information via our Job Interest Form. By doing so, you will be added to our talent database, which we consult for new roles, and when recommending candidates to other mission-aligned organizations.

Thank you for considering Wild Animal Initiative as the next part of your vocational journey. We hope to hear from you!

Requests for accommodation: If you are a qualified individual with a disability, we welcome requests for reasonable accommodations if you are unable or limited in your ability to apply for this job as a result of your disability. You can request reasonable accommodations by contacting Hiring Manager Emily Sharp at emily.sharp@wildanimalinitiative.org.