Development Director

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Position Type: Full-time
Location: Washington, DC — Hybrid (in-office Tuesday–Thursday; telework Monday/Friday)
Reports To: Executive Director
Direct Reports: Associate Director and Events Associate
Compensation: $145,000 per year, plus a generous benefits package

Why This Role

For almost 60 years, WLC has been on the front lines of civil rights litigation in the region, and today its $5 million philanthropic portfolio is the engine behind that work. This is a genuine opportunity for an entrepreneurial development leader to step into an organization at an inflection point: a dynamic and supportive Executive Director, a committed board of directors, a small but experienced development team eager for strong leadership, and an active investment already underway to modernize WLC's donor database and reporting infrastructure.

As the director, you'll be raising money for work that speaks for itself. WLC's legal team brings decades of precedent-setting litigation and deep relationships across the region's civil rights community, giving you a stellar, credible story to tell donors and a program team that is genuinely invested in partnering with development, sharing their expertise, their client stories, and their time with donors and funders. And you'll have an engaged board of directors with members who are ready to open doors within their networks.

WLC is looking for someone who can be both a builder and a strategist: someone who sees a gap in the system and closes it, sees a donor relationship and wants to deepen it, and sees a team and wants to grow it. Right now, the most urgent need is a leader who can put fundraising best practices and infrastructure in place and execute reliably, with strategy and growth building from that foundation.

About Us

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (WLC) works to create legal, economic, and social equity through litigation, client and public education, and public advocacy. While WLC fights discrimination against all people, it recognizes the central role that current and historic race discrimination plays in sustaining inequity, and the critical importance of identifying, exposing, combating, and dismantling the systems that sustain racial oppression. For almost 60 years, WLC has been on the cutting edge of civil rights advocacy in the region, bringing precedent-setting litigation to address discrimination in housing, employment, the criminal legal system, education, and public accommodations. Our in-house legal team and network of pro bono law firm partners bring deep expertise and a track record of impactful, precedent-setting work, giving the Development Director a genuinely compelling program story to bring to donors. We partner with individuals and communities facing discrimination and with the legal community to achieve justice.

About the Role

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Development Director is the lead strategist and project manager for growing WLC's philanthropic revenue. This person will lead, manage, and coordinate all fundraising efforts across individuals, law firms, corporations, foundations, and government contracts — identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major donors, executing signature fundraising events, and building the systems and team that let WLC fundraise at the scale its mission deserves. Above all, this role is the executor who puts core development infrastructure in place: visible deadlines, clean data, coordinated budgets, while building a strategy for future growth.

What You'll Do

Systems, Data & Development Operations

- Own data integrity in WLC's CRM (Raiser's Edge): ensure campaigns, funds, appeals, and gift records are structured and used the way the system is designed to work
- Partner with the COO and outside database consultants on the CRM clean-up already underway, and put guardrails in place — documentation, standard operating procedures, and training — so the data stays reliable going forward
- Build and maintain a shared development and grant calendar, visible to program, finance, and leadership
- Maintain a robust pipeline of local, regional, and national grant opportunities, with a calendar tracking every upcoming application and report
- Partner with the COO and program leadership to build grant budgets before proposals go out the door
- Build a regular progress-to-goal report and a probability-weighted pipeline dashboard — covering individual giving, board giving, and foundations — for the Executive Director, COO, and Board Finance Committee
- Provide accurate, timely revenue reports to the Board Finance and Executive Committees
- Establish and monitor annual and long-term revenue goals and projections

Leadership & Development Strategy

- Develop, manage, and execute WLC's development and stewardship plans to hit annual revenue goals
- Refresh existing plans with new ideas, industry best practices, and data-driven analysis
- Build and manage a gift pipeline robust enough to meet annual revenue goals across individual donors, law firms, corporations, and foundations
- Partner with the Executive Director on non-philanthropic revenue streams, including government grants/contracts, attorneys' fees, and other fee-for-service opportunities
- Partner with an engaged, fundraising-minded board of directors, working with individual board members to build development goals based on their unique networks, and serving as the team's point of contact for board engagement on fundraising
- Plan for compelling 60th anniversary events and engagement activities

Fundraising & Donor Relations

- Design moves-management plans for major individual donors and corporate partners
- Manage and grow appeals and campaigns that acquire new donors and steward existing ones
- Expand prospect research capacity, using wealth-screening, psychographic, and other donor data already gathered to sharpen segmentation and identify new major-gift and event prospects
- Support the Executive Director's fundraising time, helping to guide where and how she spends her efforts

Development Communications

- Lead creative, mission-driven fundraising messaging that captures WLC's role in the racial justice movement
- Partner with program staff so their expertise and impact come through clearly to donors
- Coordinate with the communications team on a shared calendar so program and development milestones reinforce each other
- Grow fundraising through digital and social channels, and serve as an informed, decisive partner to WLC's outside digital marketing team

Fundraising Events

- Set the strategy for which events best support program and revenue goals, and design new ones as needed
- Produce fundraising events, including the annual Branton luncheon and donor house parties, with direct ownership of event revenue and budget targets

- Help negotiate vendor and venue contracts, and build the pre- and post-event stewardship plans that turn one-time attendees into long-term donors
- Partner with the Events Associate to right-size and target guest lists using donor data and prospect research

Team Leadership & Staff Development

- Supervise, coach, and develop two direct reports — the Associate Director and Events Associate — with clear priorities and consistent one-on-ones
- Act as a thoughtful liaison between the development team and organizational leadership
- Enhance onboarding and training plans for new development hires, including structured CRM training
- Champion professional development, including conference attendance and peer learning, for the development team

Champion the Use of AI

- Lead WLC's adoption of AI and other emerging technology across development — prospect research, drafting and messaging support, data analysis, and CRM-adjacent tools — to increase efficiency and free up time for relationship-building work
- Set practical, forward-looking norms and guardrails for how the team uses these tools, so WLC moves quickly and confidently
- Bring fresh AI-driven ideas to the team proactively, and model curious, hands-on experimentation

Who You Are

To thrive in this role, you are:

- A reliable executor first — someone who builds and runs systems well, and earns trust through consistent follow-through at the detail level, before layering on bigger strategic bets
- A seasoned development professional and project manager with a knack for working backward from a deadline to build a plan
- Comfortable running multiple projects with different deadlines at once
- An independent worker, self-starter, and self-manager
- A direct communicator who responds readily and closes loops
- A natural information-sharer who keeps everyone in the loop
- A trusted steward of sensitive donor and organizational information
- Comfortable partnering with attorneys and litigators, and translating complex legal work into language that resonates with donors and funders
- A creative thinker willing to test new ideas — and a systems developer committed to excellence and best practices

What You Bring

- A minimum of 7 years of nonprofit development experience, including direct staff supervision
- Hands-on fundraising generalist experience: institutional giving/grant writing, major gifts, donor-advised funds (DAFs), annual giving, corporate partnerships, special events, and online giving
- Deep, hands-on fluency with a major donor CRM — Raiser's Edge preferred — including how campaigns, funds, and appeals should be structured; candidates from other CRMs (e.g., Salesforce) are welcome if they understand sound database architecture
- Experience building or improving fundraising systems and processes, including grant tracking and close coordination with finance and program staff on budgets
- Experience partnering closely with senior leadership and board members on major philanthropic initiatives and campaigns
- Comfort negotiating vendor and event contracts

- Prospect research experience, including wealth-screening tools (e.g., DonorSearch, iWave, Foundation/corporate research tools)
- Enough digital fundraising fluency (email, paid social, analytics) to direct and approve strategy from an outside marketing partner
- Enthusiasm for proposing fresh ideas, openness to feedback on them, and persistence in bringing them to life
- A genuine, hands-on enthusiasm for using AI to work smarter
- Experience building onboarding or training programs for a small team, preferred
- Working knowledge of the Washington, DC funder community, preferred
- Experience in a unionized workplace, and enthusiasm for fostering positive labor-management relations, preferred
- Experience working alongside attorneys or in a legal/litigation environment, preferred

Location, Compensation & Benefits

- Must reside in DC, Maryland, or Virginia, within commuting distance of downtown DC.
- Hybrid schedule: in-office Tuesday–Thursday, telework option Monday/Friday
- Compensation: $145,000 per year
- Employer-provided health and dental insurance
- Group life, AD&D, short-term disability, and long-term disability coverage
- Flexible Spending Account
- Retirement plan
- Transit and parking savings

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs is an equal opportunity employer. Diversity is an essential component of the Committee, and we encourage all qualified persons to apply. Applicants are accorded an equal opportunity for selection without regard to actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

How To Apply

This search is being led by English Hudson. To apply, please send a resume and cover letter (not more than 2-pages in length) describing your interest in and experience relevant to the position to apply-WLC@english-hudson.com. Please use the subject line: WLC Development Director Search. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.