



Director of Development Position Announcement



About the Role

Saddle Up! seeks a strategic and relationship-driven Director of Development to serve as a key partner to the CEO and lead the organization's fundraising strategy through its next phase of growth and expansion. The Director of Development will be responsible for building and executing a comprehensive development program that drives sustainable revenue, deepens donor engagement, and strengthens philanthropic partnerships. As Saddle Up! continues to expand its programs, facilities, and community impact, this leader will cultivate meaningful relationships with individual, corporate, and foundation partners—aligning their passion with the mission to create long-term investment in the organization's future.

A key measure of success in this role will be the ability to grow and diversify revenue streams through strategic donor cultivation, innovative campaigns, and effective use of data and technology to inform decision-making and stewardship. This includes elevating major gifts, enhancing donor retention, and expanding corporate and community partnerships that align with Saddle Up!'s vision for growth .

This role is well-suited for an experienced development leader who combines strategic thinking with authentic relationship-building and thrives in a mission-driven environment—someone who understands how to translate impact into investment and inspire a community to support a future where every child has access to the life-changing power of horses.





About Saddle Up!

In the heart of Middle Tennessee, Saddle Up! stands as a testament to the power of dignity, access, and the transformative connection between horse and rider. For more than 35 years, Saddle Up! has gone beyond traditional therapy models — providing children and young adults with disabilities the opportunity to grow, develop, and thrive through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.

As a PATH International Premier Accredited Center, Saddle Up! delivers high-quality, individualized programming that meets each rider where they are, creating an environment grounded in inclusion, safety, and respect. Through adaptive riding, therapy services, and equine-assisted learning, participants build confidence, strength, and independence - skills that extend far beyond the farm and into everyday life.

Now, as the need continues to grow across the region, Saddle Up! is embarking on a transformational expansion to increase access and deepen impact. This next phase includes a purpose-built volunteer wing designed to support and equip the more than 300 weekly volunteers who power the mission; expanded therapy access through a new therapy gym and dedicated sensory room; and a purpose-built equine-assisted learning classroom to serve riders, families, and community partners. At the heart of the expansion is an 18,000-square-foot covered outdoor riding arena, creating a three-season riding environment that will increase capacity, reduce wait times, and allow more children timely access to services.

With a strong foundation, a deeply committed community, and a clear vision for the future, Saddle Up! is poised to expand its reach while staying rooted in what matters most; ensuring every child has access to the dignity, connection, and life-changing power of the horse.



Our Mission

Saddle Up!'s mission is to provide children and youth with disabilities the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational and recreational activities with horses.

Our Vision

Saddle Up! seeks to be an essential community partner, enriching the lives of children with disabilities through constantly improving the excellence and accessibility of the highest quality equine assisted activities.

Our Values

Dignity, Access, Inclusion,
Safety, Connection, Growth,
Stewardship



PATH
INTERNATIONAL

Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International



The Position

The Director of Development is a senior leader responsible for the leadership, planning, implementation, and management of Saddle Up!'s comprehensive fundraising program. This role drives strategic donor engagement, including the identification, cultivation, and stewardship of individuals, corporations, and partners who are inspired to make long-term investments in the mission. The Director leads the development and execution of innovative fundraising strategies, leveraging data, database management, and emerging technology to strengthen performance and expand revenue streams. With a focus on transformational giving, this position provides creative campaign leadership across individual, major, and corporate philanthropy, while also guiding efforts related to grant writing, major fundraising events, and stewardship initiatives. In partnership with the CEO and Board, the Director of Development plays a critical role in advancing capital and endowment campaigns and ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of Saddle Up!.

The Director of Development will:

- Lead and execute a comprehensive, mission-driven fundraising strategy
- Cultivate and steward major donors, corporate partners, and foundations
- Drive revenue growth through diversified funding streams and campaigns
- Partner with the CEO and Board to advance philanthropic engagement
- Build and manage development operations, systems, and performance metrics
- Translate Saddle Up!'s impact into compelling opportunities for investment



Key Responsibilities



Fundraising Leadership & Revenue Accountability

- Develop, execute, and continuously refine a comprehensive annual and multi-year fundraising strategy aligned with organizational goals and expansion priorities
- Own and achieve annual revenue targets across all giving streams, with clear performance metrics and regular reporting to the CEO and Board
- Build, manage, and actively steward a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects, including direct solicitation and closing of high-level gifts
- Lead donor pipeline development from identification through cultivation, solicitation, and long-term stewardship
- Expand and diversify revenue streams, including individual, corporate, foundation, and planned giving

Major Gifts & Relationship Management

- Serve as a primary relationship manager for top-tier donors, sponsors, and community partners
- Design and implement individualized engagement strategies to deepen donor investment and retention
- Partner with the CEO and Board to strategically engage in donor cultivation and solicitation efforts
- Establish a culture of high-touch, timely, and meaningful stewardship

Campaign Strategy & Execution

- Lead the planning and execution of capital, endowment, and special campaigns, ensuring clear timelines, benchmarks, and accountability
- Develop campaign case statements, prospect strategies, and volunteer leadership structures
- Track campaign performance and adjust strategies to ensure successful outcomes

Special Events & Sponsorships

- Provide strategic oversight of all fundraising events to ensure strong net revenue and alignment with brand and mission
- Drive corporate sponsorship strategy, including identification, solicitation, fulfillment, and long-term partnership growth
- Evaluate event ROI and implement improvements to increase revenue and engagement year over year



Grants & Institutional Giving

- Oversee a comprehensive grants strategy, including prospect research, proposal development, submission, and reporting
- Ensure a well-managed grants calendar with clear deadlines, accountability, and outcomes tracking
- Strengthen relationships with foundation and institutional partners

Operations, Systems & Data Management

- Ensure effective use of CRM systems to manage donor data, track engagement, and inform strategy
- Establish data-driven decision-making practices, including dashboard reporting and performance analytics
- Maintain compliance with all gift processing, acknowledgment, and reporting requirements

Marketing & Communications Alignment

- Collaborate with internal teams to align fundraising messaging across newsletters, campaigns, social media, and annual reports
- Oversee donor communications strategy to ensure consistency, clarity, and impact

Team Leadership & Culture

- Lead, mentor, and manage development staff, setting clear goals, expectations, and accountability measures
- Build a high-performing, collaborative team culture grounded in service, professionalism, and results
- Engage and support volunteers and committees in meaningful and productive ways

Board & Community Engagement

- Partner with the CEO and Board to strengthen board engagement in fundraising, including giving, getting, and relationship development
- Represent Saddle Up! at community events, speaking engagements, and networking opportunities to elevate visibility and support





Candidate Profile

The Successful Candidate will bring:

- A deep commitment to dignity, access, and mission-driven impact
- Proven success securing major gifts and building sustainable revenue
- Exceptional relationship-building with donors, partners, and community leaders
- Strategic thinking paired with strong execution and accountability
- Ability to translate impact into compelling stories and investment opportunities
- Collaborative leadership style that strengthens culture and team performance

Leadership Competencies:

- Visionary leadership grounded in mission, dignity, and access
- Strategic decision-making that drives sustainable growth
- Relationship-centered leadership that builds trust and engagement
- Results-oriented accountability with clear performance expectations
- Adaptive leadership that navigates growth and change effectively
- Team development and empowerment that strengthens culture and impact

Success Looks Like:

- Achieves or exceeds annual fundraising goals with diversified revenue growth
- Secures new major gifts and strengthens retention of existing donors
- Builds a healthy, active donor pipeline with clear moves management in place
- Deepens engagement of Board and key stakeholders in fundraising efforts
- Launches or elevates at least one strategic campaign or initiative tied to expansion
- Strengthens development systems, data tracking, and reporting for better decision-making
- Increases corporate and community partnerships aligned with mission and expansion
- Enhances donor experience through consistent, meaningful stewardship and communication



Compensation

Saddle Up! provides a competitive salary for the Director of Development role, as well as benefits that include: generous PTO, health and wellness benefits partially paid for by SU!, and 401k matching program.

Apply Today!

Interested applicants are invited to apply by sending a cover letter and resume to info@saddleupnashville.org. Please no phone calls, applicants will be reached out to by staff to move through the interview process.

Saddle Up! is an Equal Opportunity Employer, committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, and encourages candidates from all backgrounds to apply.