

**Position:** Director of Individual Giving  
**Department:** Advancement  
**Status:** Full-Time, Exempt, 40 hours weekly  
**Reports To:** Chief Advancement Officer

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## **About Descanso Gardens**

An urban retreat located 20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles, Descanso Gardens is a place of year-round natural beauty, with internationally renowned botanical collections and spectacular seasonal horticultural displays. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums as a museum of living collections, Descanso Gardens welcomes more than 950,000 visitors annually and has over 30,000 members.

With a mission to connect people with nature and one another, Descanso Gardens offers free admissions and nature programs to those who otherwise might not be able to visit—including EBT cardholders and students from Title 1 schools. Descanso Gardens also gives complimentary entry to veterans, active military personnel, teachers, students, and the general public on Free Tuesdays. In 2022, over 50,000 guests visited Descanso as part of these free admission programs.

The principal collections of the garden include California native plants and oak woodlands; one of the largest collections of camellias in the Western Hemisphere; a rose garden with specimens from all corners of the globe; and significant presentations of lilacs, maple trees, cherry trees and iris. The Gardens are operated by the Descanso Gardens Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in a public-private partnership with Los Angeles County. The annual budget of \$17 million is funded primarily by memberships, philanthropic gifts, and admission fees, as well as financial support from Los Angeles County.

Building on the success of blockbuster seasonal events such as Enchanted Forest of Light, Descanso Gardens has increased its visibility both regionally and nationally, and doubled its budget, membership, and visitation in the past six years. With a wider base of support and a 10-year master plan, Descanso Gardens is now embarking on a capital campaign for the first time in its history, with \$30 million of a \$60 million effort raised to date. Projects in this first effort include, but are not limited to, improved visitor amenities, a new children's garden, and several water projects – stormwater capture, water recycling, lake habitat improvement and more – that will make Descanso Gardens a leader in sustainable and beautiful garden design. Subsequent phases of the campaign effort will be rolled out over the next five to seven years, with the intention to complete all of the projects set out in the master plan.

## **Job Description**

Reporting to the Chief Advancement Officer, the Director of Individual Giving is responsible for the individual giving program at Descanso Gardens, including leadership and major giving, annual giving, and planned giving. The Director of Individual Giving is responsible for managing the Perennial Circle membership group, and establishes strategies for upgrading members into this group. The Director will contribute to the success of the capital campaign, while ensuring continued robust annual giving and growing a new planned giving program.

This is a full-time, exempt position, with 80% dedicated to Individual Major Gifts, and 20% dedicated to Annual Giving. Generally, the work schedule is 40 hours per week, Monday-Friday, but evening, weekend and holiday work may be required depending on the needs of the organization. This position reports to work onsite at Descanso Gardens. This is not a remote job.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS and RESPONSIBILITIES include but are not limited to:**

- Identify, qualify, and solicit major giving donors with the capacity to make gifts ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000.
- Assist with the identification and qualification of donors with the capacity to make gifts over \$250,000.
- Manage, with the assistance of the Advancement Specialist, the Perennial Circle level of membership (\$1,000 and up), including renewal, upgrade, and acknowledgement processes. Plan and execute stewardship events, with a focus on growing support from this group.
- Manage, with the assistance of the Advancement Specialist, the Tribute bench giving program.
- Lead annual and seasonal giving campaigns, including solicitations in the spring and fall. Work closely with the Communications team to design effective annual giving messages.
- Track major gifts activity and coordinate with the Advancement Specialist, the Campaign Manager, and others, to create proposals and pledge agreements.
- Lead the Planned Giving program, including identifying, qualifying, and soliciting legacy giving prospects. Work with the Communications team to produce marketing materials.
- Serve as a critical partner to the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Advancement Officer, and Campaign Manager to ensure alignment of annual and major giving asks with campaign priorities.
- Ensure donor recognition is appropriately reflected on the website, signage, and print materials.
- With the assistance of the Data Specialist and Advancement Specialist, ensure all gifts are acknowledged appropriately and in a timely manner. Write content for solicitation and acknowledgment letters.
- Collaborate with colleagues in Communications and Guest Services to support a robust membership upgrade program, and to ensure member and donor messaging is aligned throughout the organization.
- Manage the work of, and serve as a mentor for, the Advancement Specialist.
- Other duties as assigned.

**EQUIPMENT USED and PHYSICAL DEMANDS:**

This position requires the use of computers, standard office equipment including photocopier, postage meter, ten key, credit card processing machine, printer, hand-held (two-way) radio, projectors, golf cart.

This position requires flexibility to work in an office and an active outdoor environment which includes public interaction, exposure to various noise levels, and other distractions throughout the Gardens. Must be able to walk long distances and on occasion access various areas of the Gardens including areas not accessible by paved roads or dirt trails. This position occasionally requires lifting of up to 15 pounds.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

- 3-5 years of fundraising experience, including both major and annual giving.
- Demonstrated success in building long-term relationships with donors.
- Ability to articulate the importance of the mission and programs of Descanso Gardens in conversation as well as in written proposals and correspondence.
- Ability to supervise, motivate and coach staff.
- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field or combination of education and experience.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with demonstrated ability to build relationships with colleagues, donors, members and others.
- Big picture thinker with the ability to work independently toward organizational goals.
- Demonstrates excellent judgment and decision-making skills.
- Flexible and adaptable to change; able to rebalance priorities when needed.
- A high degree of appropriateness and ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Knowledge of donor databases and best practices for recording the donor lifecycle.
- Strong Word, Excel and Powerpoint proficiency for the creation of letters, proposals, reports, and presentations.
- A valid California Driver's license.

**COMPENSATION:** \$90,000-\$100,000, commensurate with experience

**To apply:** Interested parties may apply by submitting a MS Word or PDF Letter of Interest and Resume to [jobs@descansogardens.org](mailto:jobs@descansogardens.org) with ADV2023 in the subject line. We will accept resumes until the position is filled. No phone calls, please.

Descanso Gardens Guild Inc. acknowledges that equal opportunity for all persons is a fundamental human value. Each employee will be considered based on individual ability and merit, without regard to race, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or marital status