



EXECUTIVE SEARCH SPECIFICATION FOR THE POSITION OF

Chief Advancement Officer



DALLAS ARBORETUM
AND BOTANICAL GARDEN

DALLAS, TEXAS

VICTORY SEARCH GROUP TEAM:

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- CONFIDENTIAL -

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Scottsdale, Dallas, Chicago, Milwaukee, Miami, New York, Charlotte

THE ORGANIZATION

The mission of [The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden](#) is to build and maintain a public venue that promotes the art, enjoyment and knowledge of horticulture, while providing opportunities for education and research. The Arboretum is committed to excellence, inclusion, good management and fiscal responsibility. The Arboretum has been listed among the top arboretums in the world and it is [often recognized](#) as one of the city's top attractions.

It is proud to offer a wide array of popular annual events, educational programs for children and adults, and an emphasis on family-oriented activities attracting more than a million visitors annually. A few of its most renowned events include Dallas Blooms, Autumn at the Arboretum, Holiday at the Arboretum, Cool Thursdays Concerts Series, and Seated Tea. Ground-breaking horticultural research conducted in the Trial Gardens continues to contribute to an important body of knowledge, both regionally and nationally.



The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden cultivates a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility by providing a safe and beautiful space that welcomes all to enjoy. It inspires people of all backgrounds by creating an open, positive and impactful environment. By continuing to build sustainable relationships with people from diverse communities, organizations, and businesses, it furthers the commitment to these principles.



Members of the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden are a source of vital support for the organization. The Dallas Arboretum boasts a robust membership base of more than 45,000 members and a loyal donor circle. Many donors participate in the Friends of the Arboretum (giving \$3,500+ annually) and the Caroline Rose Hunt Society (giving \$10,000+ annually). With a variety of events annually, its Blooming Beds Programs, and robust volunteer programs, the opportunities for sponsorship and donor recognition are bountiful.

Following the retirement of its nearly 30-year CEO, [Sabina Carr](#) was selected to serve as the Arboretum's President and CEO in October 2023. Sabina brings over twenty years of professional garden experience, including most recently serving as the CEO of the San Antonio Botanical Garden. As the Arboretum embarks on its next chapter, its leadership is preparing a five-year strategic plan and vision for the future.

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden is owned by the City of Dallas, supported in part by the Dallas Park and Recreation Department and is operated by the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Society, Inc., a nonprofit organization. Located on the shores of White Rock Lake, the Arboretum's 66 acres include a complete life science laboratory with endless potential for discovery. The Arboretum has a 75 member [Board of Directors](#), 220+ paid staff members, and more than 400 active volunteers. The organization is in solid financial condition, with an annual operating budget of \$27M and net assets of \$89.7M for fiscal year ending December 2022.



History of The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden was founded upon the dreams of a few visionaries with a passion for preserving both history and nature. Though the gardens themselves are comparatively young, the work that went into creating the current gardens began long ago.

- In 1974, the Dallas Arboretum & Botanical Society, Inc. (DABS) adopted bylaws, elected officers and incorporated as a nonprofit organization.
- In 1977, the City of Dallas Park Board recommended that the grounds of the DeGolyer Estate, which the city purchased from Southern Methodist University, be the official location of the botanical garden. The city encouraged DABS to raise funds for the initial costs.
- By 1980, DABS had raised over one million dollars and purchased the 22-acre Alex Camp House, which is adjacent to the DeGolyer Estate. Both houses are located on White Rock Lake.
- In 1982, the City of Dallas and DABS signed a contract creating an arboretum and botanical garden on the combined 66 acres of the DeGolyer and Camp properties. The gardens opened to the public for the first time in 1984.

The Arboretum completed an update of its 2001 Master Plan for the development of the remaining undeveloped spaces at the Arboretum. A cornerstone development included the creation of the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden with 17 interactive learning galleries to explore. Since its opening in the Fall of 2013, the Dallas Arboretum has hosted nearly 700,000 students in formal education programs and more than 1,000,000 visitors have walked through the beautiful butterfly gates.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) will lead the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden's strategy for contributed and earned streams of revenue that provide significant support for all aspects of this beloved green icon for the city of Dallas. Responsible for planning, integration, external relations, and collaborations related to the organization's fundraising, membership, marketing and facility rental programs – representing 80% of the total annual operating budget of this number one rated cultural attraction in Dallas. The CAO will serve as a member of the Leadership Team, responsible for Arboretum leadership initiatives, institutional direction, strategic planning, and policy development. The ideal candidate is a strategic leader with a proven track record in nonprofit fundraising, membership development, revenue generation, and guest services management. The CAO will work closely with the President/CEO and board of directors to advance the institution's mission and long-term goals.

A summary of the essential functions of the Chief Advancement Officer includes the following:

- Serve as the principal fundraising strategist for the Arboretum, working in concert with the President/CEO, board of directors, senior management, staff, donors, and consultants as necessary.

- Maintain a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects and donors. Build relationships with current and prospective individuals, corporate, foundation, and government supporters. Cultivate prospects by providing effective stewardship and ongoing communication.
- Oversee all aspects of development, including major gifts, giving societies (Friends Level and the Caroline Rose Hunt Society), corporate and foundation giving, annual campaigns, and planned giving programs.
- Supervise and support the VP, Development’s leadership for the organization-wide restricted giving program, including a centralized grants pipeline and proposal process implementation, compliance, reporting and tracking. Also assist with major sponsorship and support for blockbuster exhibitions.
- Supervise and support the AVP, Sales & Special Events’ leadership for the continued growth and development of the membership program as the prospective donor pipeline for a strong philanthropic program.
- Organize and support the fundraising activities of the President/CEO and board to ensure maximum effectiveness. Ensure the management of fundraising engagement and activity of board members.
- Working with the President/CEO, act as primary staff liaison to the Contributed Revenue (CR) Committee of the Board of Directors.
- Working with the President/CEO and CFO, support strategic growth of the Arboretum’s endowment, structured as a separate 501(c)(3) entity, ensuring its sustainability and alignment with the organization’s long-term financial goals.
- Support SVP, Marketing & Guest Experience to continuously improve the overall marketing and communications, along with guest experience by ensuring high standards of customer service and engagement throughout the Arboretum’s operations.
- Ensure proactive mission-centric program learning, understanding, and engagement by all members of the advancement team, and the ability to effectively communicate the mission stories of the Arboretum and advance a compelling case for support. Build the narrative with marketing and be effective storytellers in raising support for the Arboretum.
- Demonstrate alignment with the Arboretum’s core values to always be learning, show innovation, remain community focused and provide sustainability to keep the Arboretum exceptional.
- Other duties as assigned.

The CAO will serve in a supervisory capacity of three senior leaders (VP, Development; AVP, Sales & Special Events, and Senior VP, Marketing & Guest Experience), providing leadership guidance and communicating the organization's goals. This includes:

- Hiring, training, coaching and developing team members, by providing recognition and feedback, and evaluating performance.
- Ensuring that team members adhere to the Arboretum’s policies and procedures, and maintaining a safe and compliant work environment.
- Building and maintaining positive working relationships with team members, colleagues, and other partners to foster a collaborative and supportive work environment.



The successful candidate will lead a department of approximately 20 full-time staff members and 30+ part-time staff. The Chief Advancement Officer serves on the executive leadership team, along with the President and CEO, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operations Officer.

Successful candidates will demonstrate the following qualifications, competencies experiences, and personal attributes:

- Bachelor's degree required, master's degree or CFRE a plus.
- 15+ years of experience in fundraising required, preferably in a cultural, environmental, educational, or related organization.
- Experience at the leadership level and fundraising strategy development required.
- Specific knowledge of the philanthropic and not-for-profit environment in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) metropolitan area.
- Demonstrated direct, individual major gift solicitation and comprehensive campaign experience required.
- Proven ability to effectively motivate, coach, and manage a successful staff required.
- As a leader of the Arboretum, exhibit behavior and work ethics that provide a model for other employees.
- Special emphasis must be placed on a positive attitude, energetic effort and initiative, active public relations and service, and deep commitment to institutional mission.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills required.
- Ability to maintain the highest level of personal and professional integrity required.
- Must be proficient with Microsoft Office or Google applications, and have experience using donor database systems such as Blackbaud Raiser's Edge.

Success Factors:

- Earnest appreciation for the mission and work of a botanical garden and/or arboretum.
- Exceptional leadership, planning, and organizational skills.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills including the ability to discern and respond to donor interests to meet both donor and institutional goals.
- Ability to successfully motivate, engage and interact with philanthropists, corporate/foundation leaders, and government officials, senior leadership, trustees, volunteers, and employees from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- Recognizes the importance of financial and accounting integrity.
- Driven to meet or exceed fundraising goals, and ability to motivate staff to do the same.
- Effective in leading a fundraising program that is integrated in a membership program.
- A commitment to, and ability to effectively convey, the Arboretum's mission with genuine passion, and the willingness to continually learn about the programs and mission.

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden offers a wide range of benefits including comprehensive healthcare, a 401k and Paid Time Off (PTO) so you may relax, recharge and be there for the people you care about.

The Dallas Arboretum is committed to being a workplace that is not only free of discrimination, but one that genuinely fosters inclusion and belonging. It strongly believes that workforce diversity creates an

environment in which its employees can thrive and best serve the community. The Arboretum understands and embraces the variety through which people gain experiences whether through professional, personal, educational, or volunteer opportunities.

The Dallas Arboretum is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, age, color, ancestry, national origin, place of birth, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, military or veteran status, genetic characteristics or disability unrelated to job performance.



VICTORY SEARCH GROUP PROFILE

Victory Search Group is a senior level retained executive search firm serving a select group of clients from seven offices across the United States. For over 20 years, [Victory Search Group](#) has successfully identified, assessed, and recruited senior leadership. Victory Search Group is highly collaborative and focused on customer service; we prize partnering with our clients and are trusted by them for our judgment, integrity, and responsiveness.

For confidential consideration or more information, please contact.



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