

GoodCitizen

Water Foundation
Chief Partnerships Officer
Remote, West Coast Preferred

Search Process Timeline

- Virtual screenings with GoodCitizen (April - May 2025)
- Virtual interviews with Water Foundation's team (June 2025)
- Offer, Negotiations, and References (July 2025)

About Water Foundation

The Water Foundation is a nonprofit philanthropy working to support lasting water solutions for communities, economies, and the environment. The Foundation complements strategic grantmaking with creative field-building and engagement with high-level decision makers and community leaders, and helps funders identify and act on opportunities to better manage water.

The Water Foundation works in key watersheds across the West, as well as on federal policy, recognizing that water crosses political boundaries and natural places face similar challenges across the country. As a singularly focused water funder, the Water Foundation serves the entire water field, deploying staff expertise to move resources to the groups that can most effectively improve water systems that affect people and nature. The Water Foundation's partners span a broad spectrum: conservation organizations, environmental justice groups, agricultural associations, water providers, business groups, and local, tribal, state, and federal agencies.

In 2024, the Water Foundation launched an ambitious strategic framework to guide the efforts and impact of the organization in the coming years. This strategy, which reflects extensive field input from partners and stakeholders, identifies the Foundation's approach to catalyzing and advancing lasting water solutions at the local, state, and federal levels. The Foundation prioritizes securing equitable, clean, and accessible water for people, restoring and sustaining freshwater ecosystems, and building climate resilient communities and watersheds. These three goals are critical to the future of water. In pursuing these goals, the Foundation supports the field in tackling immediate water problems, including polluted drinking water and collapsing ecosystems, in ways that alter system drivers, such as social inequality and outmoded infrastructure. The Water Foundation also works to mobilize new resources for water by convening the philanthropic community. In 2022, the Water Table funder collaborative joined forces with the Foundation, expanding such efforts. This integration offers the opportunity to channel additional resources toward sustainable and equitable water solutions.

Inequity and injustice underlie many of the challenges the Water Foundation is working to address, such as the failure to provide drinking water or access to free-flowing rivers and green space to all communities. The Water Foundation has engaged in a learning initiative to ensure that the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice are embedded in individual behavior, institutional operations, and strategic programming. There is a deep commitment to ongoing growth and learning in this area. The Water Foundation's work is driven by the following organizational values:

Collaboration: Strategize, act, and learn in partnership with colleagues internally and externally to advance our collective goals. Deepen connections across and between water sector networks and related issues like climate, health, nature, food, and equity.

Humility: Recognize and center the knowledge, experiences, and leadership of our partners and the communities we serve, while honoring the power of nature. Listen to and learn from our partners and nature, so that we support a community-led and nature-based vision for a resilient water future.

Sustainability: Advance resilient, intergenerational solutions that sustain the environment and those who depend upon it while honoring the intrinsic value of nature and strengthening organizations and communities that seek an equitable, alternative vision for the future.

Transformation: Shape our strategies, work, and practices for systemic change towards a collaborative, just, and sustainable water future in the US.

Justice: Align our policies, practices, and resources so that all people and ecosystems have genuine opportunities to thrive.

More information about the Water Foundation can be found at www.waterfdn.org.

The Opportunity

The Water Foundation seeks an experienced Chief Partnerships Officer (CPO) to build on the momentum and success of an organization operating at the forefront of one of the most pressing issues of our time. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and serving as an integral member of the executive team, the CPO will lead the development and implementation of the Water Foundation's fundraising and funder engagement strategy, portfolio, and systems. The incoming CPO will focus on elevating water as a philanthropic priority, diversifying and growing funding streams, and identifying and pursuing viable funding prospects that allow for continued growth, while maintaining clear alignment and connection with the Foundation's mission and strategy. The CPO will collaborate with the executive team to set organizational direction and goals and lead a strong and experienced Strategic Partnerships team responsible for raising approximately \$25 to \$30 million for the Foundation annually.

The CPO will have the benefit of joining an organization with an established culture of philanthropy and a robust institutional funder base, leading a seven-person Strategic Partnerships team at a time of growth and opportunity. The Strategic Partnerships team includes the development team responsible for direct Water Foundation fundraising, as well as the Water Table team that drives funder engagement and mobilizes aligned investments through the Water Table funder collaborative. As such, the CPO will oversee resource development for the Water Foundation and its 501(c)(4) affiliate, as well as support and advise funder engagement and coordination through the Water Table. More broadly, the CPO will play a critical role in mobilizing and organizing funders and aligned funding for the water sector writ large, including by shaping and resourcing an emerging multi-year campaign.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising Strategy

- In partnership with the CEO, senior management, the Board of Directors, and the Strategic Partnerships team, strengthen and implement the Water Foundation's annual and multi-year fundraising strategy

- Partner with the CEO and Board of Directors to guide and define the activities of the Board's Development Committee and effectively engage board members in fundraising and funder engagement efforts
- Collaborate with Water Foundation colleagues and funder partners to shape and resource an ambitious multi-year campaign aimed at shaping and securing clean water policy

Fundraising and Funder Engagement

- Directly cultivate, steward, and solicit a select portfolio of new and established funders
- Diversify current funding streams through proactive cultivation of new foundation partners and high-net-worth individuals, while also exploring the possibility of corporate partnerships and other potential revenue streams
- Partner with the Water Table team and the Water Foundation program team to ensure collaborative and strategic funder engagement, supporting the Water Foundation's role in encouraging and informing increased philanthropic investment in the water field writ large, while raising sufficient resources to support the Water Foundation's annual operations
- Maintain and deepen relationships with existing funders, with a focus on converting current donors to higher levels of giving and commitment

Organizational Leadership

- Participate on an ongoing basis in the Water Foundation's executive team, bringing the fundraising and strategic partnerships perspective to institutional direction and decision-making
- As a member of the executive team, set an example and demonstrate the values of the organization in cross-institutional collaboration and relationships
- Monitor and report regularly on the progress of the Water Foundation's resource development

Team Leadership, Systems, and Processes

- Lead a team of seven (as well as fundraising consultants as needed) to achieve the organization's annual fundraising and funder engagement goals, ensuring team members have what they need to succeed and thrive in their individual roles
- Contribute to the ongoing activities of the Strategic Partnerships team, including its Development and Water Table functions related to donor cultivation and engagement strategy, development of fundraising materials, event planning and execution, and systems and operations (Salesforce database, Asana, etc.)
- Directly manage and mentor the Strategic Partnerships Director, Water Table Director, and Senior Strategic Partnerships Associate
- Evaluate existing fundraising systems and processes to create efficiencies and make improvements

Ideal Candidate

Above all, the ideal candidate must lead with a genuine passion for the mission of the Water Foundation and excitement about joining a team committed to making systems-level, sector-wide change. The incoming Chief Partnerships Officer does not need to bring established expertise in the water space but must possess the intellectual curiosity to ramp up quickly on sector-specific knowledge. As a seasoned fundraiser, a successful candidate understands how to develop a robust fundraising strategy, cultivate trusted relationships, communicate powerful impact, and identify areas of strategic alignment to inspire funders to make substantial investments.

The Water Foundation seeks an individual who brings a strategic mindset and an understanding of how to keep pace with developments in philanthropic giving, anticipating where the Water Foundation can successfully position itself. The ideal candidate brings substantial frontline fundraising experience with a focus on foundation relations and high-net-worth individuals. They bring a proactive and ambitious approach to fundraising and work collaboratively and supportively with all relevant stakeholders. The ideal candidate also possesses a background engaging in a range of development systems and functions, including donor engagement, proposal and report development, and development operations. This person effectively partners with staff across the organization and serves as a primary contact for high-profile funders.

The Water Foundation's culture is one that values hard work, respect, kindness, and a sense of humor. As a thought leader in the organization, it is essential that the CPO has the ability to collaborate, listen, learn from others, and bring a sense of humility and balance to the work. The Water Foundation is an entrepreneurial and fast-paced environment, and Water Foundation staff are amiable, agile, and adaptable and will expect the same from the Chief Partnerships Officer.

Desired Qualifications

- A minimum of 15 years of fundraising experience is required, with experience in a senior leadership position and at least 3 years managing a team
- Proven track record of developing and implementing ambitious fundraising strategies with an eye toward growth
- Demonstrated experience securing six to seven-figure gifts from institutional funders and high-net-worth individuals
- Experience working with funders to align strategies and investments, with a strong understanding of how to manage complex restricted grants from foundations and government
- Impeccable communication skills with a natural affinity for relationship building and management
- Experience working in fast-paced environments and the ability to deliver high-quality work against competing priorities and deadlines
- Commitment to advancing the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the workplace and in the Foundation's work with its partners
- Must be personable, diplomatic, and possess the highest levels of integrity and ethics.
- Experience working at an intermediary is a plus

Water Foundation's EEO Statement

The Water Foundation welcomes all applicants and strongly encourages Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Trans and Gender non-conforming people; individuals from under-resourced communities; immigrants; differently abled people; and others with diverse perspectives and experiences to apply.

Location and Compensation

The Water Foundation offers an excellent benefits package and a competitive salary that is commensurate with experience. The starting salary for the position is \$200K to \$225K.

While the Water Foundation is a fully remote organization, the Chief Partnerships Officer will ideally be based on the West Coast; however, candidates with easy access to a major airport in the US will be considered. Intermittent travel within the US will be required. This position involves approximately 10 trips per year for Water Foundation board meetings, Water Table meetings, and

staff retreats.

To Be Considered

Please submit your resume and cover letter expressing your interest in the position and fit for the role via the "[Become a Candidate](#)" button. Letters may be addressed to Karen Rea.

Applicants applying by Monday, May 26th will be given priority consideration, with the position open until filled.

GoodCitizen has been exclusively retained by Water Foundation to lead this search. For questions, please contact Gabe Sapuay (gabe@goodcitizen.com).

Karen Rea
Managing Director

Melissa Merritt
Managing Director

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