Development Director

Florida Trail Association
Location: Florida-based / Remote Within FL
Reports to: Executive Director
Status: Full-Time, Exempt

Position Summary

The Florida Trail Association is seeking a strategic, relationship-driven **Development Director** to lead and grow the organization's fundraising efforts. This role is responsible for expanding and diversifying FTA's funding sources, strengthening donor relationships, building corporate and foundation partnerships, and developing a sustainable fundraising pipeline that supports the long-term health of the organization.

The Development Director will work closely with the Executive Director, Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and external partners to create and execute a comprehensive development strategy aligned with FTA's mission and future growth.

This position is ideal for someone who enjoys building relationships, opening doors, telling compelling stories, and turning community support into measurable impact for one of Florida's most important outdoor recreation and conservation organizations.

The position is fully remote. Must reside in Florida. Preference given to candidates in the Citrus County area but flexible. Travel will be required throughout the state to meet with donors and sponsors and attend events. Approximately 25% travel with expenses reimbursed.

About the Florida Trail Association

The Florida Trail Association builds, maintains, protects, and promotes the Florida Trail, one of only eleven National Scenic Trails in the United States. Working with volunteers, agency partners, land managers, communities, and supporters across the state, FTA helps connect people to Florida's wild places while supporting stewardship, outdoor recreation, conservation, and public access.

Key Responsibilities

Development Strategy and Planning

- Develop and implement a comprehensive annual fundraising strategy.

- Identify priority funding sources, including individual donors, corporate sponsors, private foundations, grant opportunities, and government or institutional funding programs.
- Build and maintain a fundraising pipeline that supports long-term financial sustainability.
- Establish clear fundraising goals, timelines, tracking systems, and reporting processes.

Donor Engagement and Relationship Building

- Cultivate, steward, and expand relationships with individual donors, major donors, and prospective supporters.
- Re-engage existing donors and supporters through meaningful outreach.
- Coordinate donor meetings, cultivation opportunities, and stewardship communications.
- Work with the Executive Director and Board members to support donor introductions and relationship development.

Grant and Foundation Development

- Identify grant and foundation opportunities aligned with FTA programs and priorities.
- Coordinate, prepare, and submit grant applications, letters of inquiry, and funding proposals.
- Track grant deadlines, reporting requirements, funding prospects, and award outcomes.
- Work with staff to gather program information, budgets, outcomes, and impact stories needed for funding requests.

Corporate Partnerships and Sponsorships

- Identify and cultivate corporate partnership opportunities.
- Develop sponsorship proposals tied to FTA programs, events, trail projects, public access initiatives, and statewide visibility.
- Build relationships with businesses, community partners, and institutional supporters.
- Secure sponsorships and partnership agreements that strengthen FTA's mission and financial capacity.

Campaigns and Fundraising Initiatives

- Support targeted fundraising campaigns, including annual appeals, special campaigns, Giving Tuesday, year-end giving, donor challenges, and other initiatives.
- Collaborate with communications staff to develop compelling donor messaging, impact stories, and campaign materials.
- Help create fundraising language that connects donors to the real-world impact of their support.

CRM, Reporting, and Tracking

- Maintain accurate donor records, contact notes, prospect lists, and pipeline tracking.

- Provide regular development reports to the Executive Director.
- Track donor meetings, grant submissions, sponsorship proposals, revenue secured, pending opportunities, and pipeline growth.
- Use data to evaluate progress and refine fundraising strategy.

Primary Focus Areas

The Development Director's work will focus on high-impact fundraising activities, including:

- Individual donors and major gifts
- Corporate partnerships and sponsorships
- Private foundations
- Grant funding opportunities
- Legacy and planned giving initiatives
- Strategic fundraising campaigns
- Institutional funding partnerships

Qualifications

Required

- Strong relationship-building skills with donors, partners, board members, volunteers, and community stakeholders.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to develop funding proposals, donor communications, sponsorship packages, and campaign materials.
- Strong organizational skills and ability to manage multiple prospects, deadlines, and funding opportunities at once.
- Proficiency using donor databases, CRM systems, spreadsheets, or similar tracking tools.
- Ability to work independently while collaborating closely with staff and leadership.

Preferred

- Demonstrated experience in fundraising, development, donor relations, grant writing, sponsorship development, nonprofit advancement, or a closely related field.
- Experience working with nonprofit organizations, conservation groups, outdoor recreation organizations, trails, public lands, environmental organizations, or community-based nonprofits.
- Experience securing grants, sponsorships, or major donor gifts.
- Familiarity with Florida communities, conservation partners, outdoor recreation networks, or public/private funding sources.

- Experience working with boards of directors on fundraising strategy and donor cultivation.
- Knowledge of planned giving, legacy giving, or campaign-based fundraising.
- Relevant college degree AND/OR real world experience equivalent.

Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate is a connector, storyteller, and strategist with a passion for promoting outdoor activities such as the Florida National Scenic Trail. They understand that development is not just asking for money, but building trust, showing impact, and helping people see how their support becomes something real.

They are comfortable reaching out to new prospects, following up consistently, building systems, tracking progress, and moving relationships from interest to investment. They can speak with individual donors, corporate partners, foundations, agency partners, board members, volunteers, and staff with professionalism, warmth, and confidence.

They should also be comfortable helping build a development program that is still growing. This role is not just about maintaining existing relationships. It is about building the next layer of FTA's fundraising future, brick by trail-shaped brick.

Performance Expectations

Within the first several months, the Development Director will be expected to:

- Develop a written development strategy.
- Identify priority donor segments and funding opportunities.
- Build a prospect list of donors, foundations, businesses, and institutional funders.
- Conduct donor and prospect meetings.
- Identify grant opportunities aligned with FTA programs.
- Submit grant applications or letters of intent.
- Develop corporate sponsorship proposals.
- Establish and maintain a fundraising pipeline.
- Provide regular written development reports to the Executive Director.

The internal framework identifies measurable expectations around donor meetings, prospect development, grant submissions, corporate sponsorship proposals, revenue generation, and active pipeline growth during the first 90 days and first six months of employment.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary starting $50k to $70k based on experience. Compensation will be re-eevaluated on an annual basis with adjustments made based on performance. Benefits include paid time off, paid

holidays, health insurance options, fully paid for vision/dental insurance, phone/internet/travel reimbursement, 5% employer contribution to SAR SEP IRA, and other benefits as determined by the Florida Trail Association's current personnel policies.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter describing their relevant experience and interest in the Florida Trail Association.

Applications should be sent to:

director@floridatrail.org

Please include **Development Director Application** and **Last Name** in the subject line.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The Florida Trail Association is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds and experiences who are committed to advancing our mission and helping connect people to Florida's public lands, trails, and natural places.