



Chief Development Officer

Sorrell is proud to partner with Houston Parks Board in its search for a new Chief Development Officer. Houston Parks Board (HPB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to expand, improve, and protect parks and greenspace in the Greater Houston region. Since its inception in 1976, the organization has raised and leveraged more than \$500 million dollars to invest in the region's parks and trails, including the development and management of the Bayou Greenways initiative, a 150-mile hike-and-bike trail network.

Following the success of Bayou Greenways, HPB's current *Great Parks for Houston* campaign will leverage the momentum of the past decade to create a healthier, more vibrant future for all Houstonians. To date, the campaign has secured over \$275 million dollars toward its \$415 million dollar goal. *Great Parks for Houston* is a historic initiative that continues Houston Parks Board's long commitment to creating a connected and equitable park system. The campaign focuses on expanding access to great parks for every Houstonian by improving trails and greenways, revitalizing neighborhood parks, creating landmark destinations along Bayou Greenways, and strengthening the long term stewardship of Houston's park system. This work builds on the momentum of Bayou Greenways and reflects HPB's role as a collaborative partner to communities, public agencies, and civic leaders.

The Development Department plays a vital role supporting HPB's mission by raising funds that are essential to the organization's operation and to its park development projects. The Development program is diversified, with funds raised from foundations, corporations, individuals, and governmental entities. Public/private partnerships are key to all of its fundraising efforts. The Development team works closely with other departments within HPB, in particular the Projects, Communications, and Finance teams. This integrated approach ensures that donors receive consistent, timely updates on the progress of projects and the impact of their support.

HPB offers a collaborative, high-performing, and entrepreneurial culture. The organization has grown in recent years to a staff of 44 individuals, with plans to add additional FTEs in the next year. Some of HPB's greatest assets are its board members, who represent many of Houston's most generous and active philanthropists and thought leaders. The opportunity to work closely with such a high-caliber board is one of the compelling aspects of this role. HPB will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2026; the Chief Development Officer will have an opportunity to truly shape the future of the organization by supporting the President & CEO and the Board in laying out a vision for the next 50 years.

For more information on Houston Parks Board and its high-impact work in the community, please visit www.houstonparksboard.org.

Position Overview

Reporting to the President & CEO and working closely with the Board of Directors and other executive staff, the Chief Development Officer (CDO) will advance a sustainable and innovative

philanthropic development program to achieve HPB's short and long-term goals. While serving as a member of the executive team, they will provide strategic leadership in philanthropy to advance HPB's mission through annual giving, government and foundation grants, individual and major gifts, and events. They will assist the President & CEO in developing and leveraging an actively engaged volunteer Board of Directors. The CDO will be a highly relational professional with a passion for HPB's mission and drive to engage and steward relationships spanning Greater Houston and beyond. This position offers a unique opportunity to serve a key role in HPB's growth and to build and lead the Development team. The CDO will be responsible for expanding the team and adding capacity in core areas such as major gifts, institutional giving, stewardship, and development operations.

The CDO will also help shape fundraising strategies that align with the goals of the *Great Parks for Houston* campaign and ensure that donor engagement supports the organization's long term commitments to neighborhoods and community partners.

The ideal candidate will have a successful track record in fundraising and relationship building, will be knowledgeable about and well networked in Houston's philanthropic community, as well as nationally, will have a deep understanding of public/private partnerships, and experience growing a Development team. Relevant experience working with public realm, greenspace or park projects is highly beneficial, as is having some understanding of public funding sources (at the local, state and national levels). Priorities for this position are to grow and manage a team, increase fundraising results, cultivate and steward donor relationships, play a major role in development strategy, and to fully leverage HPB's Board toward fundraising efforts. Effectiveness in this role will require quickly learning the organization's work, meeting partners who support Houston Parks Board's mission, and developing a practical understanding of the projects that shape the organization's impact.

Highlights of the CDO's responsibilities follow:

Strategy, Vision, and Leadership

The CDO is an executive team member and is an active participant in strategic decision-making for HPB. The CDO works with local, regional, and national funders; develops and maintains strong donor relations; works closely with the Board of Directors; formulates and implements HPB's fundraising efforts in support of the organization's long-term strategic business plan; and is expected to provide leadership in identifying, soliciting, and retaining high-level donors. The CDO is an integral part of the budget process and is responsible for the line items directly related to the fundraising function.

Specifics include:

- Developing and implementing short-term and long-term fund development strategies consistent with HPB's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, to grow and sustain the organization's capital program and operating needs, all while establishing and managing public/private and multi-sector collaborations.
- Growing the Development team by recruiting and onboarding new staff in major gifts, institutional giving, and related areas, managing their performance, setting clear goals and expectations, mentoring team members, and fostering HPB's values and culture.

- Serving as a key member of the executive team, collaborating with the other senior leaders to develop and implement HPB's strategic initiatives.
- Cultivating a dynamic relationship with HPB's Board of Directors and encouraging board engagement that supports the goals of the *Great Parks for Houston* campaign.

Fund Development and Endowment Strategy

- Directing all ongoing activities to diversify and increase charitable contributions from new individuals/major donors, corporations, foundations, and government entities.
- Strengthening relationships with donors, professionals, and community foundations to enhance HPB's solicitations of unrestricted, planned giving, and possible endowment funds. Developing new contacts and strengthening existing relationships to increase Houston Parks Board's visibility among potential donors and funding partners. Having primary responsibility for development and execution of all funding proposals, in line with a strategic program as stated above. This includes understanding the public sector and managing grant requests to government entities, as applicable.
- Overseeing the strategy, planning and execution of events that advance stewardship and fundraising goals, including HPB's annual luncheon and any other fundraising events that may be introduced.
- Develop a robust data analytics program to manage and grow HPB's fundraising; developing and presenting statistical analysis to the President & CEO, executive leadership, and the Board of Directors.
- Collaborating closely with HPB's Projects, Finance, and Communications departments to ensure fundraising strategies reinforce project goals and the priorities of the Great Parks for Houston campaign.

Essential Skills and Experience

The ideal candidate will be an exceptional leader with strong relationship, managerial and organizational experience, and skills including, but not limited to, the following qualifications:

- Strong affinity for HPB's mission; parks or greenspace background/familiarity a plus.
- Bachelor's degree in a related field; master's degree a plus; Certified Fund-Raising Executive (CFRE) preferred.
- Ten or more years of professional fundraising experience, including annual campaigns, major gifts, grant writing, government grants, marketing, communications, and public relations; successful track record of raising funds and managing relationships; experience working closely with nonprofit boards and development committees, and how to raise both public and private dollars. Experience in administering planned giving a plus.
- Understands philanthropic landscape of Greater Houston and adept at cultivating and stewarding relationships with top philanthropic and community leaders.
- Strong leadership skills and experience in effectively building, managing, and developing a team; someone who can put the staff and volunteer infrastructure in place and nurture it through support, inspiration, and mentorship.

- A senior leader at the C-suite level who brings strong subject matter expertise, , communicates effectively, and knows how to manage up to optimize and leverage the President & CEO with the Board; someone who is effective in external relations and helps the President & CEO engage the Board in outward-facing work. Technological proficiency, including significant experience/level of comfort with Microsoft Office Suite and Raisers' Edge.

Desired Personal Attributes

- Visionary: a big-picture thinker who also pays attention to details.
- Demonstrated ability to motivate and support team members and to build strong, trusting relationships with peers and potential partners.
- Highly relational, high touch, politically savvy and intuitive with high emotional intelligence.
- Entrepreneurial and creative in taking smart risks and leveraging resources.
- Effective multi-tasker and disciplined self-starter who establishes and follows priorities to meet deadlines under pressure while also able to navigate seasons of ambiguity and/or change.
- Takes initiative and makes independent judgments when appropriate; at the same time is collaborative and a strong team player.

Compensation

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience. Attractive benefits package.

Application and Referral Process

Applicant review is currently underway and will continue until the candidate has been selected. To nominate or be considered for this position, please contact Priscilla Plumb at priscilla@sorrellco.com / 281.224.0881 or Stacie Gaff at stacie@sorrellco.com / 832.594.1925. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

About Sorrell

Sorrell is a highly relational provider of executive recruiting. Our mission is to serve as partners with our clients to accelerate their efforts to attract, hire and retain talent that impacts the future of the organization. For more information, call 713.840.1870.