SAN MATEO PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Executive Director

Salaried exempt, with a flexible schedule | San Mateo, CA | $90,000

The Opportunity

Public libraries are among the most democratic institutions in America: free, open to all, and transformative for the communities they serve. The San Mateo Public Library Foundation (SMPLF) seeks an innovative, strategic, and relationship-oriented leader to guide our next chapter.

SMPLF began by raising more than $10 million toward a new Main Library, which opened in 2006. Today we generate over $450,000 a year from donors, businesses, and foundations to fund what public dollars can't. That includes the Summer Learning Challenge for nearly 7,000 children, adult literacy tutoring through Project Read, and San Mateo Celebrates!, a community-wide celebration of reading. In 2024, we were named a California Nonprofit of the Year.

We've strengthened corporate partnerships, expanded grant funding, grown annual giving year over year, and built a sizable endowment. We're bringing our fundraising and operations together under a single Executive Director, so one leader can own the strategy and results. We're looking for a self-driven leader who loves building programs, relationships, and systems, and who can help SMPLF grow its capacity, revenue, and impact.

The Role

The Executive Director is SMPLF's strategic and operational lead. You'll develop the Foundation's fundraising strategy and annual plan, bring it to the Board for approval, and lead its execution. The Board sets the mission, approves the plan and budget, and partners with you to extend its reach. You report to the Board through the Board President.

This role offers:

- **A four-day week.** 32 hours on a flexible schedule built around results, with part-time administrative support, as needed.
- **Real ownership.** You set the fundraising strategy and run it, with the full picture and the authority to act.
- **A board that partners with you.** Our board is a group of community leaders, engaged citizens and ambassadors who love the library and want to build community around it. They open doors, host events, and roll up their sleeves.
- **A home in the Library.** Your office is in the Main Library, alongside the people and programs you raise money for.
- **A strong base to build on.** Growing revenue, loyal donors, an endowment, and a Library partner with clear needs.

Responsibilities

In year one, the priorities are to run both annual campaigns well, retain and deepen Leadership Circle relationships, and get donor data and gift processing in good shape.

Fundraising and development

- Annual giving. Lead two multi-channel campaigns each year: a spring campaign around Library Giving Day and a fall/year-end appeal. Grow individual giving through acquisition, retention, and upgrades.
- Leadership giving. Steward and grow the Leadership Circle, and cultivate major and multi-year gifts.
- Corporate partnerships. Build relationships with local businesses, with board members opening doors and joining key asks. Grow sponsorships, especially for San Mateo Celebrates!, and workplace giving.
- Foundations and institutional giving. Manage the grant calendar and write proposals, with support from Library staff and Board members. Coordinate with the City's grant resources on opportunities.

Partnerships

- Board. Develop the annual plan with input from the Executive Committee, bring it to the Board for approval, and report on progress. Help each board member find where they can make the biggest difference.
- Library and City. Serve as our primary liaison to the City Librarian, Library leadership, and the City, so every dollar we raise meets the Library's greatest needs.

Communications and events

- Marketing and communications. Share the impact of donor support through the website, social media, the monthly newsletter, and campaign mailings and emails. Keep SMPLF's look and feel consistent.
- Events.Lead fundraising and community events with the Board and volunteers, including some evenings and weekends.

Operations and finance

- Day-to-day operations. Run daily operations, vendors, and technology, and direct part-time administrative support.
- Donor data. Oversee gift processing, the donor database, and reporting. Ensure that donors are acknowledged promptly and personally.
- Finance and compliance. Build and manage the annual budget with the Treasurer, keep policies current, and meet all filing and compliance requirements.
- Systems. Find and put in place tools and processes that save time and support growth.

What Success Looks Like

The Executive Director will build on SMPLF’s existing strengths and position the organization for continued, sustainable growth.

- Fundraising grows about 5% a year, with more donors retained and upgraded.
- Deeper Leadership Circle, corporate, and foundation relationships.

- Simpler systems that save time and support growth.
- Strong partnerships with the Library, the City, and local businesses.
- An engaged board, and a team that grows responsibly with revenue.

Experience and Qualifications

- Several years of progressive fundraising or nonprofit leadership, including senior-level responsibility.
- A track record of growing contributed revenue across individual, corporate, and foundation giving.
- Strong writing and communication skills, including donor communications and fundraising materials.
- Experience with a fundraising CRM (ideally Bloomerang).
- Experience partnering with a volunteer board and community stakeholders.
- Comfort moving between strategy and hands-on execution in a small organization.
- Strong organizational and financial skills, with the judgment to manage competing priorities.
- A genuine commitment to public libraries and their role in accessible, equitable, thriving communities.

Preferred: experience leading a small nonprofit, cultivating major and corporate donors, creating materials in Canva, Adobe, or similar tools, or ties to San Mateo, public libraries, or local government.

Compensation and how to apply

- **Salary:** $90,000, salaried, exempt, 32 hours per week.
- **Benefits:** Health coverage support through an employer-funded HRA, plus paid vacation, sick leave, and holidays.
- **To apply:** Send a resume and a short cover letter on why this role and why now to president@smplf.org. We review applications on a rolling basis.

SMPLF is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applicants of all backgrounds to apply.