



Overview

Title: Director of Development

Supervisor: Executive Director

Department/Team: Development/Administrative Department Heads

Supervises: Development Manager (PT), Development Associate (PT), Grant writer and development strategy consultant

Works closely with: Senior Director of Programs, Director of Marketing and Communications, Special Events and Communications manager, Development Committee of the Board

Schedule: NMS is deeply rooted in a culture of collaboration and community. While the primary work location is on campus, some work-from-home time is permitted for focused work and to accommodate the varied schedule of development work, including donor and community meetings, events, and other relationship-building activities that may take place off campus or outside regular business hours.

Pay status: Salaried, Full-Time, Exempt

Salary range: \$100,000-\$110,000

Benefits and PTO: Health, dental, vision and Insurance, 4 weeks vacation plus holidays (in addition to winter and spring breaks), enrollment discounts, free dance and wellness classes, and 403(b) (currently no match)

Desired start date: January 2027

To apply: Neighborhood Music School (NMS) has engaged [LJN Advisory](#) to partner with them in hiring for this important role. Please email a cover letter and resume to LJN@lornajananorris.com by October 9th. Cover letters should be responsive to the [mission and values](#) of Neighborhood Music School and to the areas of focus as laid out in this position profile. Review of applications will begin immediately so early application is strongly encouraged. All applications will be personally acknowledged and reviewed.

[Website](#)

About Neighborhood Music School

Mission - *To deepen the human experience and build connections through the learning, practice, and presentation of the performing arts.*

Located in New Haven's Audubon Arts district, Neighborhood Music School ("NMS") is the largest nonprofit community arts organization in Connecticut and one of the largest in the country. Founded in 1911 as part of the settlement house movement serving immigrant families building new lives in New Haven, NMS was created around a

powerful idea: that opportunity should be shared, every voice has value, and the arts can bring people together across differences.

More than a century later, that commitment remains at the heart of NMS. Today, the School serves more than 2,000 students annually from across Greater New Haven and beyond, with programs reaching 92 different zip codes and 14 locations throughout Connecticut. Students of all ages participate in music, dance, drama, and film; receive individual and group instruction; and learn and perform alongside one another in a vibrant, intergenerational arts community. NMS is also home to an arts-integrated preschool and an independent, theatre-based middle school.

Access is fundamental to the NMS mission. Forty percent of students participate at reduced or no cost, supported by \$600,000 annually in financial aid and free programming. Across the organization, 172 employees, including 121 teaching artists, provide approximately 30,000 hours of instruction each year, while NMS performances welcome more than 10,000 audience members.

With an FY27 operating budget of approximately \$6 million, NMS generates nearly two-thirds of its revenue through programs while philanthropy provides approximately one-quarter. The School expects \$1.46 million in contributed revenue in FY27, with support coming primarily from foundations and individuals, alongside government, corporate, and event revenue.

At its core, NMS is more than a school. It is a cultural center that believes that the arts are a powerful means of building community. New Haven is a city of extraordinary cultural richness, but also one shaped by longstanding social and economic divides. NMS works to bridge those divides by creating opportunities for people of all cultures, ages, interests, and means to learn together, celebrate together, and imagine a stronger future together.

The Opportunity

The Director of Development ("DOD") will join Neighborhood Music School at an unusually exciting moment in its 115-year history. NMS is financially strong and poised for significant growth in both its reach and impact. The School is developing plans to expand its community partnerships and programming while exploring a significant expansion of its physical campus. A capital campaign is already beginning to take shape around this vision.

NMS has a strong fundraising foundation, including an annual fund that consistently raises approximately \$400,000–\$500,000, longstanding relationships with individual and institutional supporters, and significant untapped philanthropic potential. What NMS has not had in recent years is a dedicated senior development professional with the time

and expertise to bring these assets together into a comprehensive fundraising program.

Working in close partnership with Executive Director Noah Bloom, the Board of Directors, and a highly collaborative Administrative Leadership Team, the DOD will build the infrastructure and relationships necessary to significantly grow contributed revenue. Over time, success will mean that development is no longer something held primarily by the Executive Director, but an organizational capacity shared by a skilled development function, an engaged Board, and a leadership team that plays a vital role in philanthropy.

For a development leader energized by building, this is a rare opportunity to join a beloved, financially healthy institution with strong leadership, significant unrealized philanthropic potential, and big ideas about what's next.

Areas of Focus

Based on stakeholder feedback, the following **five priorities** emerged as the areas of greatest opportunity and focus for the Director of Development during their first several years in the role.

1. Build the Development Strategy, Infrastructure & Team

Assess NMS's current fundraising capacity and develop a comprehensive strategy aligned with the School's priorities and plans for growth. Strengthen the systems and processes that support effective fundraising, including donor data and research, grant and development calendars, reporting, and CRM use. Over time, develop the staffing and resources needed to build a high-functioning development operation.

2. Grow Individual Giving & Major Gifts

Build on NMS's successful annual fund to significantly grow individual giving. Deepen relationships with existing donors with the interest and capacity to increase their support through major, multi-year, legacy, and endowment gifts, while expanding the donor base by cultivating new supporters, including alumni, families, and members of the broader community. Key to this priority is a consistent approach to cultivation and stewardship, using NMS's programs, performances, and events to bring donors and prospects closer to the School and connect them to the impact of their giving.

3. Prepare for and Help Lead a Transformational Campaign

Play a central role in NMS's comprehensive campaign supporting capital expansion, endowment growth, and annual needs. Assess campaign readiness, strengthen the prospect pipeline, support feasibility and planning, help develop the case for support, and build the internal operating capacity needed to execute the campaign.

4. Strengthen Institutional, Government & Corporate Support

Bring greater strategy and coordination to institutional fundraising by identifying new regional and national opportunities, strengthening relationships with foundations and government partners, and developing corporate and business support to diversify contributed revenue streams ahead of several significant funding sources changing or concluding in the coming years.

5. Partner with the Executive Director and Activate the Board

Provide clear, concise reporting that enables the Board and Development Committee to become active and informed partners in fundraising. Serve as a close strategic partner to the Executive Director, translating complex development activity and opportunities into actionable priorities and ensuring he has the research, preparation, briefing materials, and follow-through needed to focus his time on high-value donor relationships and asks.

What we are looking for

NMS is seeking an experienced, relational, and highly collaborative development professional who listens deeply, builds trust, and connects easily with people across NMS's extraordinarily diverse community. They will understand that at NMS, the arts are both an end in themselves and a vehicle for something larger: learning, belonging, human connection, and opportunity. The next DOD will be able to connect donors with the dimensions of that impact that inspire them. They will value and cultivate donors at every level while having the confidence and experience to pursue significant gifts and transformational investment in NMS's future.

A self-directed builder and driver, they will bring fundraising expertise without creating a fundraising silo, learning the programs and drawing on the knowledge, perspectives, and relationships of students, faculty, families, staff, Board members, and the broader NMS and New Haven communities. They will bring structure to the work, distilling ideas and opportunities into clear priorities and actionable plans, creating the preparation and follow-through that allow the Executive Director and Board to contribute their relationships, influence, and leadership where they can have the greatest impact.

Required Skills and Experience

- Demonstrated success developing and implementing **fundraising strategies** that have resulted in meaningful growth in contributed revenue.
- Skilled at building and/or strengthening the **systems, tools, and processes** necessary for an effective development operation, including donor and prospect management, and CRM systems.
- Growing an **annual giving program** over multiple years.

- Success cultivating, soliciting, and closing **five-figure individual gifts**, with experience managing relationships across the full donor cycle.
- Meaningful experience working within a **capital or comprehensive campaign**, including campaign readiness and planning, feasibility, prospect development, case development, major gifts, and campaign execution.
- Experience with **foundation and institutional** fundraising, including prospect identification, grant management, reporting, and relationship stewardship.
- A record of developing **corporate and business partnerships** and securing **government and public-sector** funding.
- Demonstrated ability to **partner effectively with an Executive Director and Board**, independently driving the development work while organizing and leveraging the time, expertise, relationships, and involvement of both.
- Motivated to become an **integral part of an organization** and its community, building the relationships and understanding needed to fundraise for its mission with authenticity and credibility.
- Experience collaborating with and **contributing to a larger leadership team** to support overall organizational health and strategy.
- Commitment to **equity and inclusion**, and a desire to be part of fostering an anti-bias anti-racist culture.

Preferred Skills and Experience

- A background in **fundraising within the arts, arts education**, creative youth development, education, or community-centered organization.
- Familiarity with the **philanthropic landscape of New Haven** and/or CT.
- A **personal connection to the arts** and an understanding of their capacity to foster learning, creativity, human connection, and community.
- A **degree** is welcomed but not required.

Neighborhood Music School is an equal opportunity employer. In accordance with anti-discrimination law, it is the purpose of this policy to effectuate these principles and mandates. NMS prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type and affords equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability status, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. NMS conforms to the spirit as well as to the letter of all applicable laws and regulations.