



**University of Southern California
Executive Director of Principal Giving, USC Athletics**

About the University of Southern California

The University of Southern California (USC) is one of the world's leading private research universities. An anchor institution in Los Angeles and a global center for arts, technology, and international business, USC is also one of the largest private employers in the City of Los Angeles. We are searching for exceptional individuals to help us fulfill our mission: developing individuals and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit. As an employee of USC, you will be part of a world-class research university and a member of the "Trojan Family," which is comprised of the faculty, students, and staff that make the university what it is.

World-renowned for its unparalleled combination of academic and athletic prowess, USC has a storied history of collegiate and Olympic success. The vision of the USC Department of Athletics is to be the most student-athlete centered athletics program in the country. USC Athletics is committed to serving and empowering its student-athletes by providing the support, resources, and environment for student-athletes to pursue a world-class education; engage in a meaningful and fulfilling college experience; transform into the best versions of themselves; compete for championships; and prepare to thrive after USC. A member of the Big-10 Conference and Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, USC is proud to support nine men's (baseball, basketball, football, golf, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo) and 12 women's (basketball, beach volleyball, cross country, golf, lacrosse, rowing, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo) teams across 12 athletics venues.

About the Position

USC Advancement is seeking a strategic, relationship-centered, results-oriented fundraising leader to serve as Executive Director of Principal Gifts, USC Athletics, who will be responsible for building and securing high-level philanthropic support of one of the nation's premier athletics programs. Reporting directly to the Associate Senior Vice President of University Advancement, with a dotted line into USC Athletics (to the Senior Associate Athletic Director/Chief Development Officer), this individual will play a hands-on, donor-facing role focused on cultivating, soliciting, and closing seven and eight-figure gifts (\$1M+) to advance the strategic priorities of USC Athletics. The Executive Director will be a frontline fundraiser who thrives on the challenge of building relationships, developing creative solicitation strategies, and achieving ambitious goals that directly enhance the student-athlete experience, expand facilities, and strengthen USC's position as a leader in collegiate athletics. This individual will hire and manage one direct report, Director of Principal Gifts, USC Athletics.

This is a hybrid position under USC's current work arrangement plan. Evenings, weekends, and travel are required for this position.

Roles and responsibilities:

Principal Gift Fundraising & Strategy

- Serve as a frontline principal gift officer, personally managing a robust national portfolio of prospects with the capacity to give \$1M+
- Lead every stage of the donor lifecycle from identification and cultivation to solicitation and stewardship, with a goal of securing multiple seven- and eight-figure commitments annually

- Develop and execute customized, data-informed cultivation strategies that align donor interests with USC Athletics priorities
- Partner and provide support to the Director of Athletics and advancement leaders to design compelling proposals and gift opportunities that drive transformational support
- Schedule donor visits utilizing key athletic department leaders including the Director of Athletics and Head Coaches/General Managers.
- Achieve and exceed defined performance metrics, including annual visit, solicitation, and revenue goals
- Travel and attend marquee games and events to build meaningful connections with donors and prospects while representing USC with pride

Donor Engagement & Collaboration

- Work closely with the Director of Athletics, Athletics Major Gifts team, and University Advancement leadership to advance strategic priorities and ensure cohesive donor engagement
- Attend regular Athletics and Advancement staff meetings to maintain strong alignment between development initiatives and programmatic goals
- Coordinate donor strategies with peers across campus to ensure holistic relationship management and institutional alignment
- Engage and inspire alumni, parents, and friends of USC Athletics through events, game-day experiences, and regional programs that deepen donor connection to the Trojan spirit
- Work collaboratively with Advancement Communications and Athletics staff to deliver personalized donor experiences that showcase impact and gratitude

Leadership

- Represent USC Athletics with professionalism, discretion, and credibility when engaging high-profile prospects and partners
- Provide mentorship and strategic guidance to development colleagues, modeling best practices in principal gift fundraising
- Contribute to overall campaign planning and execution within University Advancement, ensuring Athletics fundraising efforts align with broader institutional priorities
- Maintain a disciplined approach to prospect management, documentation, and reporting within the Advancement CRM (Salesforce)
- Directly supervise one full-time professional staff member and may provide functional oversight of additional staff, as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree (or combined experience/education as a substitute); Master's degree preferred
- Minimum of 8–10 years of progressive professional fundraising experience, preferably in higher education, intercollegiate athletics, or related nonprofit environments, including advancement or development leadership roles
- Proven success securing major and principal gifts, managing a national principal gift portfolio, and achieving ambitious fundraising and revenue goals
- Experience developing and executing comprehensive advancement strategies aligned with institutional priorities
- Strong leadership and team management skills, with the ability to guide, mentor, and motivate high-performing teams
- Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills, with demonstrated success engaging high-level donors and institutional stakeholders
- Highly organized with exceptional strategic thinking, analytical, problem-solving, and project management abilities

- Ability to navigate complex organizations, exercise sound judgment, and manage multiple priorities with discretion and professionalism
- Strong understanding of intercollegiate athletics, donor motivations, and the role of philanthropy in sports programs
- Experience with donor and development management systems (e.g., Salesforce, DonorPerfect, Raiser's Edge NXT, eTapestry, Bloomerang, easyTithe)

Application Process

The University of Southern California invites letters of nomination, applications or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the University. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted at Parker Executive Search's website. For additional information, please contact:

Daniel Parker, Vice President and Managing Director

DeLaina Sarden, Principal

Khristian Carr, Executive Recruiting Coordinator

dsarden@parkersearch.com | kcarr@parkersearch.com

770-804-1996 ext. 119 | 770-804-1996 ext. 134

Additional Information

The budgeted salary range for this position is \$185,214 – \$240,000. When extending an offer of employment, the University of Southern California considers factors such as the scope and responsibilities of the position, the candidate's work experience, education/training, key skills, internal peer alignment, federal, state, and local laws, contractual stipulations, grant funding, as well as external market and organizational considerations.

To support faculty and staff well-being, USC provides benefits-eligible employees with a broad range of benefits and perks to help protect their and their dependents' health, wealth, and future. These benefits are available as part of USC's total rewards package.

University Advancement is committed to non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all, where all advancement staff and our stakeholders have the opportunity to connect, belong, and grow while supporting the University of Southern California's mission, values, and goals.

Equal Opportunity Statement

USC is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, protected veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law or USC policy. USC observes affirmative action obligations consistent with state and federal law.

USC will consider for employment all qualified applicants with criminal records in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including the Los Angeles County Fair Chance Ordinance for employers and the Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring Ordinance, and with due consideration for patient and student safety. Please refer to the [Background Screening Policy Appendix D](#) for specific employment screen implications for the position for which you are applying.

We provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees with disabilities. Applicants with questions about access or requiring a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or hiring process should contact USC Human Resources by phone at (213) 821-8100, or by email at uschr@usc.edu. Inquiries will be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law.