



SENIOR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
Houston, Texas
[Houston Grand Opera](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Houston Grand Opera in the search for a Senior Development Officer.

The Senior Development Officer will manage a portfolio of individual and select corporate donors and major gift prospects and actively work to upgrade their support. The Senior Development Officer will work closely with the Director of Development to manage special underwriting opportunities for the HGO Studio, Houston Grand Opera's training program for young singers and opera coaches. This includes underwriting opportunities for current HGO Studio artists, guest faculty, HGO staff, and former Studio artists returning to the mainstage.

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. HGO was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year at the 2019 International Opera Awards.

Houston Grand Opera's vision is to inspire opera's future. Its mission is to advance the operatic art to serve an ever-evolving audience. It produces great operatic works that create and sustain a new American art form and fuse them with historical repertoire to inspire the next generations of opera lovers—both in its own community and globally through technology.

In fulfilling its mission, HGO leads the field in commissioning new works (67 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO's pioneering community engagement initiative, HGOco, has served as a model for other arts organizations.

HGO leads the field in commissioning and producing new works, almost exclusively from American composers, including 66 world premieres at the end of the 2018–19 season. HGO has also staged seven American premieres. The company presents six to eight productions per season, and has an operating budget of \$27M devoted exclusively to its live performances at this time, due to the impact of Covid-19. Houston Grand Opera performances are held in the Wortham Theater Center, a venue with two performance spaces: the Alice and George Brown Theater and the smaller Roy and Lillie Cullen Theater. Their combined capacity is more than 3,300. HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and three Emmy awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

HGO seeks to be a global leader in the evolution of the art form, by inspiring it, developing it, training people to deliver it, documenting it, and most importantly, composing it. It identifies and trains the next generation of gifted artistic, creative, and leadership talent who will create opera's future.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Senior Development Officer will report to the Director of Development, Individual Giving David Krohn.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

As the Senior Development Officer for Houston Grand Opera, you will manage a portfolio that is unique and exciting, containing one hundred current donors and opera lovers to fully qualify for major gift potential. The Senior Development Officer has a focus on building meaningful relationships with these donors, learning their passions and interests, and bringing them to higher levels of support for the organization.

In this role, you will also be working as the Development team's liaison with the HGO Studio Committee, a standing committee comprised of HGO Board members and Trustees dedicated to supporting the work of the HGO Studio, one of the world's leading training programs for young opera singers and coaches. The Senior Development Officer coordinates and leads the team's Studio underwriting efforts, working closely with these gifted artists and their generous supporters.

–David Krohn, Director of Development, Individual Giving

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Development Officer will

- cultivate, solicit, and steward an assigned portfolio of Patrons Circle (\$5,000+), Trustee (\$10,000+), and Underwriter individual and corporate donors (\$25,000), qualifying for upgrade, major gift, and planned gift potential whenever possible;
- work with current HGO Patrons, Trustees, and Board members to identify and leverage their relationships in the identification of potential new and increased corporate and individual donors to HGO;
- assist in the management of HGO's Studio Committee efforts and quarterly meetings;
- coordinate and manage special underwriting opportunities for the Houston Grand Opera Studio, in support of HGO's training program for young singers and opera coaches, including those for current Studio artists, guest faculty, HGO staff, and former Studio artists returning to the mainstage;
- maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all donor activity through Tessitura, HGO's Customer Relationship Management (CRM), using Plans and Donor Information Sheets; and
- assist the Development team in staffing special events and performances, as required.

KEY COLLEAGUES



David Krohn

Director of Development, Individual Giving

David Krohn currently serves as Director of Development, Individual Giving for Houston Grand Opera, where he oversees the individual giving team of five officers, responsible for approximately \$3M in annual revenue. The team manages the annual fund program, Patron, Trustee, and Underwriter donor program, National Patron, and Young Patron programs, three standing Trustee committees, and over 580 donors in officer portfolios.

David first came to HGO in 2013 as Corporate Development Officer after serving two seasons as Institutional Giving Associate for Seattle Opera.

Prior to his work in Development, David was an operatic baritone and spent two seasons with the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program. He holds a Master of Business Administration from University of Houston, a Master of Music from the Juilliard School, and a Bachelor of Music from Peabody Conservatory of the John Hopkins University.



Greg Robertson

Chief Advancement Officer

A Houston native and alumnus of the University of Houston, Greg Robertson is the Chief Advancement Officer of Houston Grand Opera. Greg along with Managing Director Perryn Leech and Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers comprise the executive leadership team of HGO.

Greg leads and oversees all aspects of HGO's comprehensive development and marketing programs. HGO has raised a record amount of contributed support during his tenure and completed a comprehensive fundraising campaign that raised \$172.9 million—the largest and most successful campaign in the history of the performing arts in Houston.

Prior to joining HGO in 2006, Greg served as Assistant Vice President at Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, the largest not-for-profit healthcare system in Texas. At Memorial Hermann, he was the chief architect and strategist of a multi-million dollar campaign for Life Flight®, the nation's most respected air ambulance service. He developed a major gifts program and led a comprehensive strategic planning process for the Memorial Hermann Foundation.

In 1996, Greg joined the University of Houston Law Center as Director of External Affairs. By the time he left in 2004, he had been promoted to Assistant Dean for Advancement and was Executive Director of the University of Houston Law Foundation. While there, he oversaw the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major gifts and gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations. He reactivated their planned giving society, developed their board leadership, and supervised the marketing, public relations, media relations, and public relations office.

From 1992 to 1996, he was Director of Membership and Marketing at UH's Houston Alumni Organization, where he was responsible for all membership and revenue producing marketing programs. His previous experience includes serving as Vice President of Associated Inspection Services; and Congressional Aide to United States Congressman Ron Paul (R, Texas). Greg is a frequent presenter at local, national and international industry and fundraising conferences.



Deborah Hirsch
Senior Director of Development

Deborah Hirsch has served as Senior Director of Development at Houston Grand Opera since March of 2006.

In that role, and with the Chief Advancement Officer, she is responsible for leading a well-orchestrated fundraising effort across the programming areas of individual donor giving, institutional giving, and special event fundraising, with emphasis on major gift giving in each of these areas. She is also responsible for devising and executing special project campaigns. In the last several years, that special project campaigning has included fundraising for Hurricane Harvey and COVID relief. Deborah has direct management responsibilities for the Director of Development/Individual Giving, the Director of Patron Services, and the Director of Major Gifts/Legacy Giving. She also manages a portfolio of donors, for whom she continues to cultivate and strengthen relationships toward increased giving.

Deborah is a member of Houston Grand Opera's senior management team, and along with the Chief Advancement Officer, participates as a staff liaison to HGO's Development Committee, Governance Committee, Finance Committee, and Endowment Board. She is also currently one of two staff offering support to the Vanguard Committee, a group of dedicated HGO donors who are exploring new work.

Prior to joining Houston Grand Opera, Deborah served as Vice-President for Development for DePelchin Children's Center. Before her time at DePelchin, Deborah worked at the University of Houston Law Center for over twenty years as Assistant Dean for Career Services, building and growing the career advising and resource division of the law school for its students and alumni, and then, as Assistant Dean for External Affairs, the law school's arm for fundraising and alumni activity.



Kelly Nicholls
Director of Development, Acquisitions

Kelly Nicholls is HGO's Director of Development, Acquisitions, leading the Acquisitions team efforts to screen and acquire new donors to the Patrons Circle, in addition to her own donor portfolio management of Patrons, Trustees, and Underwriters. She also leads and supports the activity of HGO's Patron Recruitment Committee and works closely with the HGOco Committee. Kelly serves as a staff representative on HGO's newly formed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. Passionate about music and the arts, Kelly began her Development career in Houston's Theater District in 2012 with Society for the Performing Arts and Theatre Under

The Stars, before joining the HGO team three years ago.

Kelly is a California native, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Prior to her work in the performing arts, she taught ESL classes to corporate professionals and young adults in both Costa Rica and San Francisco. Kelly is an active donor and member of the Philanthropy Committee for The Montrose Center supporting local LGBTQ+ efforts, as well as a member of the Associated Fundraising Professionals, Houston Chapter.



Sarah Long
Development Officer

Since coming to Houston Grand Opera in August 2019, Sarah has managed the Young Patrons Circle program (\$2,500-\$5,000), overseeing a committee of ten Young Trustees, recruiting new members, and upgrading memberships within the group.

Sarah also manages a new leadership program at HGO, working closely with Board members and senior management to identify and upgrade high-capacity donors to greater levels of giving.

In addition to her role in these special programs, Sarah cultivates a robust portfolio of mid-level donors. For key members of her portfolio with major gift potential, Sarah works with the Senior Development Officer to strategize Studio underwriting asks at the \$25,000 level.

Before coming to HGO, Sarah worked as a Development Assistant at Prospect Park Alliance in Brooklyn, where she coordinated membership renewals, organized fundraising event committees, and sometimes petted goats.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Houston Grand Opera seeks a Senior Development Officer with

- a passion for performing arts;
- a proven track record of experience in donor cultivation and in-person solicitation;
- excellent writing and oral skills;
- knowledge of the principles of fundraising and sales techniques;
- experience with Microsoft Office and relevant fundraising software, preferably Tessitura;
- an ability to maintain confidentiality;
- knowledge of opera (preferred); and
- an enthusiastic belief in the mission of Houston Grand Opera.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. At least five years of experience in major gift fundraising and/or campaign management is preferred.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Houston Grand Opera believes opera has a vital role to play in the lives of an audience hungry for art, beauty, and meaning. Diversity is no longer just a poetic reference, but a joyous cultural reality the company fully embraces. HGO will honor the classic masterworks but also evolve the art form to serve future generations. The creative dreams for Houston Grand Opera are vital to the cultural pulse of the city of Houston and add immeasurably to the quality of life of its many communities. All cultures use words and music to tell their distinct stories, and HGO has the ability to use opera as a connector to join those communities.

HGO welcomes candidates of all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, sexual identities and gender expressions, abilities, classes, ages, and political ideas. It recognizes that diversity also includes a range of geographic locations, communication styles, family makeup, educational background, military service, and other unique life experiences.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Houston Grand Opera offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

LOCATION

This position is located in Houston, Texas.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Houston Grand Opera.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Senior Development Officer, Houston Grand Opera.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:

annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence