



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ARKANSAS PBS FOUNDATION
Conway, Arkansas
[Arkansas PBS Foundation](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Arkansas PBS Foundation in the search for a Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer will serve as the primary strategic architect of the Foundation's comprehensive development program aimed at advancing and supporting the mission and goals of Arkansas PBS. The Chief Executive Officer will lead the Foundation in designing and implementing a comprehensive, results-oriented development plan that includes annual fundraising, major and planned-giving, campaigns, and special events. The Chief Executive Officer will take a leadership role in establishing a vision for fundraising at Arkansas PBS – including goals, strategies, benchmarks, and timetables – in order to identify new donors and deepen relationships with families and individual, corporate and foundation leaders.

The Arkansas PBS Foundation is committed to ensuring that Arkansas PBS, with its rich 50-year history and outstanding programming and services, continues to grow and thrive.

Arkansas PBS is Arkansas's only statewide public media network, serving as the state's essential daily source for community connection, innovative education, and stories that illuminate and inspire. The network delivers informative and entertaining multiplatform content and services on air and online to all Arkansans including the state's historically underserved groups. In public affairs, Arkansas PBS convenes communities to explore challenging topics and help find solutions. In PK-12 education, Arkansas PBS offers top quality professional development online to over 60,000 educators statewide as well as providing valuable classroom content and tools to students and teachers through Arkansas AMI and PBS Learning Media. The network serves as the backbone of the state's emergency alert system, celebrates student athletes and their communities with the broadcast of High School Sports Championships, and promotes greater transparency in state government through the online hub AR-CAN (Arkansas Citizen's Access Network).

Arkansas PBS creates and shares media and educational services highlighting history, science, arts and culture, producing distinguished local and national content and delivering award-winning trusted PBS programs aimed at sharing Arkansas and the world with viewers. Content is distributed through four distinct over-the-air channels: Arkansas PBS, Arkansas PBS Create, Arkansas PBS KIDS, and Arkansas PBS WORLD as well as via multiple digital platforms, including free local live streams of the network's main channel and on-demand and live-streaming services. Members with Arkansas PBS Passport have extended on-demand access to a rich library of public television content. Arkansas PBS connects deeply with Arkansans, bringing to light the local people, stories, and experiences that makes Arkansas a remarkable place to live.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Executive Officer will report to the President of the Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors, Dr. S. Lynne Rich and will work closely with the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive Officer will oversee a staff of eight professionals.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

The successful candidate for the newly established Arkansas PBS Foundation Chief Executive Officer position will have the opportunity to work with a dynamic Board of Directors and in close collaboration with Arkansas PBS leadership, and will lead the Foundation staff to strategically develop and significantly grow fundraising efforts in support of Arkansas's only statewide public media broadcaster at a time when public media's content and services are seen as more essential than ever.

During the past several years, Arkansas PBS has undergone a deep assessment of the organization, its relationship with the Arkansas community and its role in a rapidly shifting media environment. Strategic planning resulted in a future-facing vision for the network with a focus on vital community relevance and connection, digital content production and distribution across multiple platforms, a reinvention of over-the-air and digital broadcast for magnified impact in K-12 education, broadened efforts in public affairs and strength in storytelling for increased local and national production.

The network executed a vibrant rebrand from AETN (Arkansas Educational Television Network) to Arkansas PBS in early 2020 in alignment with a campaign to broadly communicate the network's own compelling story as the organization's services have become a daily essential for many Arkansans. During the current health crisis, the network has pivoted to providing critical over-the-air continued learning at home, serving students and families in the areas without broadband, while also offering the same learning tools via on-demand, a popular engagement app and new live-streams of the network's local broadcast channels. Public affairs specials and daily live-streams of state government proceedings via the station's online hub Arkansas Citizen's Access Network (AR-CAN) have kept Arkansans informed. The telling of Arkansas stories and strong digital engagement have kept Arkansans connected to each other. On-air fundraising is holding strong during this time with the Arkansas public's growing appreciation of Arkansas PBS content and services.

The Foundation CEO with support from the Foundation Board of Directors and the Arkansas PBS Executive Director/CEO, will have the flexibility to build the Foundation for the future by expanding community engagement, building major donor and corporate gift programs, developing increased digital fundraising functions, increasing underwriting and grant support, and promoting innovations for on-air campaigns, all in a highly receptive environment.

The Foundation's mission to support Arkansas PBS is vital to the future of this critical state resource. With the tremendous growth potential of the Arkansas PBS Foundation, the CEO will be at the center of the continued creative and operational transformation of Arkansas PBS, maximizing fundraising to benefit the statewide network and enabling the full realization of the organization's vision. In this leadership role, the successful candidate will experience the powerful satisfaction of supporting public media's mission to strengthen communities, expand the minds of children, provide a vital platform for civic discourse and encourage lifelong learning with content that informs, entertains, enlightens, and offers diversity of perspectives. The efforts of the Arkansas PBS Foundation CEO will be critical in assuring that Arkansas PBS remains central to the lives of Arkansas for many generations to come.

–Dr. S. Lynne Rich, President, Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Fundraising Strategy

The Chief Executive Officer will

- take responsibility for the integrated functioning of a comprehensive advancement program, with goals of assessing Arkansas PBS's fundraising potential and of creating short- and long-term development plans;
- promote and guide the adoption of best practices and innovative approaches to individual major giving, corporate and foundation grants, planned giving initiatives, annual appeals, and events;
- establish and monitor key metrics to make forecasts and evaluate ongoing performance, ensuring the Foundation will meet and exceed annual fundraising goals;
- identify, cultivate, and solicit principal gift donors for a capital campaign, while developing long-term donor relationships for furthering the campaign;
- clearly articulate and promote a strong case for support that grows the donor base and giving levels; and
- write and manage department budgets, ensuring fiscal responsibility and return on investment.

Department Leadership

The Chief Executive Officer will

- build, motivate, lead, and retain an advancement team, aligning structure with fundraising and organizational strategy;
- establish annual goals, provide regular performance reviews and recognition, and support ongoing professional development opportunities;
- ensure the adoption of a thorough and wide-ranging prospect research program that maximizes opportunities to engage new donor communities;
- steer the development of a best-in-class moves management and donor stewardship program designed to strengthen relationships with high-value and high-net-worth donors;
- oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures for gift processing and donor acknowledgement, database management, and financial reporting; and
- attend Arkansas PBS and Arkansas PBS Foundation events and activities and foster pride and excitement in fundraising efforts.

Board and Staff Engagement

The Chief Executive Officer will

- create and sustain a culture of philanthropy that ensures an optimal fit between the advancement program and Arkansas PBS's services and anticipates opportunities to expand program services;
- work collaboratively with the Arkansas PBS Executive Director to position advancement opportunities and integrate messages in news articles, publications, grant submissions, reports, and collateral materials;
- serve as the Foundation's primary liaison to the Arkansas PBS Foundation's Board of Directors, engaging members in the fundraising process, overseeing ongoing training, and supporting and managing philanthropic activities; and
- develop a plan to leverage the Board, senior leaders, and staff in the identification, qualification, and cultivation of strategic, high-value prospects, ensuring that all participants understand their roles and are fully briefed for meetings with prospects and donors.

KEY COLLEAGUES



Dr. S. Lynne Rich

President, Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors

S. Lynne Rich is an Associate Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator at the University of Central Arkansas in the Department of Sociology, Criminology, and Anthropology. Her two decades in the field have provided extensive experience with teaching and research, including grant writing, data collection, analyses, and publications for academic, nonprofit, and industry researchers and audiences. Her recent research projects focus on the impact of youth homelessness and survival trade; student success in higher education; and youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Examples of other work include the examination of interracial and inter-ethnic relations in American and Asian societies; the effect of abuse trauma on alcohol and drug

use and risky sex behavior of adolescent girls; and the impact of China's one-child policy on educational opportunities for girls.

Successful grant awards from the Henry Luce Foundation, UAMS, NIH, NIDA, and others have allowed Dr. Rich to collaborate with researchers from Arkansas and across the United States. Her research has been published in *Gender and Society*, *Deviant Behavior*, *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, *Global Studies Journal*, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, and others.

In addition to serving as President of the Arkansas PBS Foundation Board, Dr. Rich is an active member of the Arkansas Arts Center and a member of professional organizations, namely, the Arkansas Sociological and Anthropological Association, the Southwestern Social Science Association, and the American Society of Criminology. She has been an invited speaker on a variety of subjects, from literary journalism to sex trafficking, as well as the moderator for *A Conversation with Paula Kerger, President and CEO of PBS – Women and Girls Lead*.

Dr. Rich holds bachelor's degrees in sociology and anthropology from Millsaps College, and a master's and Ph.D. in sociology from Mississippi State University.



Philip E. Kaplan

Vice President, Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors

Philip E. Kaplan has practiced in the area of employment law, civil rights, and business litigation since his licensing by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He was a field attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in St. Louis. Since becoming licensed in Arkansas, he practiced with the firms of Williams & Anderson, McMath, Leatherman, Woods & Youngdahl, Walker, Kaplan & Mays and Kaplan, Brewer, Maxey & Haralson P.A. Kaplan has had an extensive litigation practice, primarily in the area of employment law, commercial litigation, and family law.

Kaplan is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL), and the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers (AAAL). He was a long-time adjunct law faculty member at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law, where he taught trial advocacy. He has been a member of the Board of Governors of the Arkansas Bar Association and the Chair of that organization. He is an emeritus member of the William Overton Inn of Court and a member of the Pulaski, Arkansas, and American Bar Associations. He is a Fellow of the American Bar Association Foundation.

Kaplan began his activity in class action cases when he was appointed to be the attorney for the inmate population of the Arkansas prison system, where the court ultimately declared the entire prison system unconstitutional. Kaplan appeared before the United States Supreme Court in his capacity as attorney for the inmates in the case of *Finney v. Hutto*, which resulted in a declaration establishing the constitutionality of 42 U.S.C. § 1988, the civil rights attorney fee act. Kaplan was also lead counsel on behalf of the University of Arkansas and its Board of Trustees in a challenge by the terminated head basketball coach in the matter of *Richardson v. Sugg et al.* He has throughout the years represented local, regional, and national companies on matters involving employment discrimination cases, non-competition agreements, and stock purchase agreements. In addition to his extensive trial work, Kaplan has successfully argued many cases before the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit and the Arkansas Supreme Court. Kaplan received an A.B. degree from Harvard University and an LL.B. degree from the University of Michigan.

Kaplan is listed in *Best Lawyers in America* under Appellate Law, Bet-the-Company Litigation, Commercial Litigation, First Amendment Law and Labor and Employment Law; in *Chambers USA* as a Senior Statesperson in the field of General Commercial Litigation and Labor & Employment Law; and in *Mid-South "Super Lawyers"* in the areas of Employment and Labor Law and Business/Corporate Law.



Jonathan Rhodes

Secretary and Treasurer, Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors

Jonathan Rhodes is President of American Land Company, LLC & King-Rhodes & Associates, Inc. Real Estate Company, and Community Developer of Cherokee Village, Arkansas.

As President of American Land Company, Rhodes leads the company's efforts to bring new development to the town of Cherokee Village, Arkansas. Located in the foothills of the Ozarks, Cherokee Village was established in 1954 by visionary developer John Cooper, Sr. to become the state's first planned recreation community. Cherokee Village encompasses 13,000 acres featuring seven lakes, two champion 18-hole golf courses, three recreation centers, and more than 30 parks, with property owners from every U.S. state and more than 20 countries.

Prior to returning to his hometown of Cherokee Village, Rhodes enjoyed a 15-year career in the public sector including service in the U.S. Senate as an aide to Senator Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas. In 2006, Rhodes accepted an appointment with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) serving in the agency's Rome, Italy headquarters followed by a two-year assignment in Sudan, Africa in what was then the agency's largest humanitarian operation.

In addition to his role at American Land Company, Rhodes also leads King-Rhodes & Associates, Inc., his family's long-standing real estate and property management businesses.

Rhodes is active in the community through membership in the Hardy United Methodist Church as well as service on a number of local boards including the Spring River Innovation Hub, Sharp County Community Foundation, Ozarka College Foundation, and the Cherokee Village Advertising & Promotion Commission.

In addition to serving as a member of the Arkansas PBS Foundation Board, Rhodes is a founding member of the Arkansas Master Planned Community Alliance. In 2015, Rhodes was recognized by Arkansas Business as one of the "40 Under 40" business and political leaders to watch in Arkansas.

Rhodes received his bachelor's degree from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, and holds a Masters Degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia.



Commissioner Annette Herrington
Commission Representative, Arkansas PBS Foundation Board of Directors
AETN/AR PBS Commission

Little Rock native Annette Herrington was appointed by Governor Beebe to the AETN/AR PBS Commission in March, 2012. Governor Hutchinson recently reappointed her to a second term which runs through March, 2028. Herrington has served two years as Treasurer, two years as Vice-Chair, Chair of the AETN Executive Director Search Committee, and two years as Chair of the Commission. She was recently elected to be the Commission Liaison to the AR PBS Foundation Board. She has represented AR PBS at several national PBS and APTS events. Herrington and her husband Phil were delighted to host the Antiques Roadshow cast and crew in their home when the Roadshow filmed in Little Rock in 2015.

Herrington has also served 20 years on the Board of the Central Arkansas Library System, serving as President, Treasurer, a member of the CALS Executive Director Search Committee and Strategic Planning Committee, as well as a Founding Member of the CALS Foundation Board. She has been active at the Arkansas Arts Center and the AAC Tabriz Gala and several other civic and charitable organizations in Central Arkansas.

A Certified Public Accountant, Herrington has experience on private company boards and projects from New York to Utah. She and her husband have two married daughters and two grandsons who live in Seattle, Washington.



Courtney Pledger
Executive Director, Arkansas PBS

Courtney Pledger joined Arkansas PBS as Executive Director in 2017. As Arkansas PBS's chief executive, she is responsible for policy implementation, strategic planning, budget preparation, and operations and management of the statewide educational network. Pledger has instilled a fresh vision for Arkansas's only statewide network with a focus on digital storytelling and distribution, universal elements in stories for broader appeal, refreshed local broadcast and education efforts, fundraising strategies, and community

connection.

Under Pledger's leadership, Arkansas PBS has launched AR-CAN (Arkansas Citizens Access Network), a hub for live-streaming coverage of state government proceedings and civic literacy; brought support to student athletes and their communities through the broadcast of high school championship football, basketball, baseball, and softball games statewide on Arkansas PBS Sports; and has driven digital production and engagement, as well as producing for national PBS distribution with "State of the Art," telling the personal stories of diverse artists at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Prior to joining Arkansas PBS, Pledger worked for more than three decades in the film and television industry in story development, production and management. She began her career at Hearst Entertainment, Rastar, and the IndieProd Company and has had senior leadership roles at multiple film and television organizations including Universal's Illumination Entertainment where she focused on IP for family-friendly films, London-based Jigsaw Films/Miramax, Radical Pictures, and the U.K.'s Aardman Animation where she served as a creative consultant. From 2012-2016, Pledger was director of Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, where she revitalized the longest-running nonfiction festival in North America, earning designation as an Oscar-qualifier in Documentary Short Subject for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Pledger is member of the PBS Board of Directors, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Educational Television Association (NETA), and serves as co-chair of the Organization of State Broadcast Executives (OSBE). She is on the advisory board for Arkansas Women in Film.



Ed Leon
Chief Operating Officer, Arkansas PBS

Ed Leon is Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Director of the Arkansas PBS, where he helps guide multiple operational areas related to strategy, content, and media operations. Leon joined Arkansas PBS in 2018 and has been instrumental in executing new Arkansas PBS initiatives in digital content expansion, statewide sports coverage and governmental transparency. He brings more than three decades of diverse experience in broadcasting, digital media, marketing, product development, and creative television production

to further Arkansas PBS's mission to educate and inspire.

Prior to Arkansas PBS, Leon served as Chief Brand Officer and SVP of Product Development for The Great Courses, leading an award-winning content studio that produced hundreds of video series on a spectrum of subjects; created content partnerships with National Geographic, Mayo Clinic, and the Smithsonian; expanded multiplatform distribution to Amazon Video, Netflix, Audible, Roku, Facebook Live, and SiriusXM; and launched The Great Courses Plus, a proprietary subscription video-on-demand streaming platform for mobile apps and connected media devices.

His deep media background in Los Angeles includes: SVP of Programming & Production of cable network SiTV (now FUSE), where he created original programming for multicultural audiences; senior producer of "Dr. Phil," where he earned multiple Emmy nominations; supervising producer of "The Other Half" starring Mario Lopez on NBC; creator and EP of the daily ensemble news show "That's Life" for FOX; producer-director for "Caryl and Marilyn: Real Friends" on ABC; writer-producer of the Emmy-winning "Good Day Live" on FOX; creator and executive producer of the animated "IQ Kitties" for Kids WB; producer-director of Disney's "One Saturday Morning" on ABC; producer of "Jones & Jury" with Star Jones; and producer of "The Montel Williams Show" for Viacom.

Leon has been a member of the DGA and WGA and has been awarded multiple honors including the Emmy and Golden Mike for news, multiple Telly Awards for digital media, and multiple Promax/BDA Awards in video marketing. A native of Havana, Cuba, The Imagen Foundation named him as "One of the Most Influential Latinos in Entertainment."

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

The Arkansas PBS Foundation seeks a Chief Executive Officer with

- a demonstrated ability to set and monitor the strategic direction of a complex advancement program and to ensure its alignment with organizational goals;
- experience establishing strong relationships with executive leaders and volunteer Boards and committees, and of leveraging them effectively in the fundraising process;
- a track record of personally securing five- and six-figure gifts from a range of constituencies, including individuals, corporations, and foundations;
- experience in at least one successful capital campaign;
- working knowledge of advancement best practices, emerging trends, and tools and technologies to support a variety of initiatives, including prospect research and digital campaigns;
- an ability to effectively utilize database systems within a data-driven and evidence-based organization (experience with Allegiance software is preferred);

- evidence of excellent leadership skills and knowledge of how to motivate and mentor a fundraising team to increase performance levels;
- experience engaging researchers and/or educators in the fundraising process (preferred);
- familiarity with the philanthropic community of Arkansas (preferred);
- a commitment to excellence in approach to advancement, development, and implementation;
- sincere passion for and commitment to Arkansas PBS's mission and to public media for all Arkansans;
- an ability to be a compelling ambassador for Arkansas PBS's values;
- a collaborative and engaging communication style in working with people of many backgrounds, including families, teachers, researchers, leaders, staff, volunteers, and donors;
- an ability to multitask and balance multiple priorities in a complex and multi-faceted development and advancement foundation; and
- unfailing discretion in dealing with confidential material about donors.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least seven years of progressively responsible experience in a comprehensive, direct, non-profit fundraising program with significant knowledge of major giving and annual/capital campaigns, including at least two years in a position with staff management responsibilities supervising a robust development team.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Arkansas PBS Foundation is committed to creating a working environment that values, respects, and utilizes the contribution of its staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was implemented to serve all segments of a diverse national society. Arkansas PBS and Arkansas PBS Foundation furthers that goal by enhancing public access to a full range of ideas and viewpoints for Arkansans to stay informed about the issues of the time. In controversial matters Arkansas PBS and Arkansas PBS Foundation assures fairness by offering different points of view and diverse group representation, including women, minorities, and the underserved.

Arkansas PBS Foundation fosters a diverse workforce by recruiting and hiring diverse candidates, welcoming suggestions from all employees on better ways to reach Arkansas PBS Foundation objectives and encouraging teamwork to maximize the contributions of every segment of its employee population. It values each member of Arkansas PBS Foundation's team and offers an environment in which everyone can achieve their full potential. Diversity makes Arkansas PBS Foundation stronger and better able to serve the state's population. In addition, it helps make Arkansas PBS Foundation a great place to work.

Arkansas PBS Foundation's diversity recognizes everyone and their individual talents. This includes all aspects of life – race, gender, background, interest, preferences – and relates to how they are treated. Arkansas PBS Foundation is committed to civil behavior, respect, and team participation available to all.

Arkansas PBS Foundation strives to reach all sections of the state population it serves and mirrors that population as much as possible in its workforce.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The Arkansas PBS Foundation offers a competitive compensation and benefits package.

LOCATION

Arkansas PBS and the Arkansas PBS Foundation are located in Conway, Arkansas. Conway's strong community spirit, high-performing schools and colleges, family friendly recreation, and vibrant economy have made Conway one of the top five fastest growing cities in Arkansas. With three major universities, Hendrix College, the University of Central Arkansas, and Central Baptist College, Conway has a young (median age 27.3) and educated (almost 40 percent with at least a bachelor's degree) population. Conway has enjoyed a decades-long reputation for growth. The city has doubled in size since the mid-1990s, and is among the nation's top 20 percent of fastest growing cities with populations over 50,000. The website *Travelocity* recognized Conway as No. 2 on their "Most Giving Cities in the U.S." list. Giving and volunteering are a way of life in the city. Through investment in schools and infrastructure and private capital campaigns to benefit nonprofits, Conway has a demonstrated record of success.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

To apply for this position, visit:

[Chief Executive Officer, Arkansas PBS Foundation.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Angelique Grant:

[angelique@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:angelique@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence