

Associate Director of Development & Communications

Reports to: Development Director

Department: Development

Status: Full-Time, Exempt

Salary Range: \$60,000–\$72,000 (commensurate with experience)

Location: Westport, Connecticut

About Earthplace

Earthplace connects people with nature for life. Established in 1958, Earthplace has spent more than 70 years providing environmental education, nature-based learning, wildlife rehabilitation, and community science programs to the region. Through our accredited preschool, summer camps, nature education programs, animal care, and Harbor Watch water quality research, we offer hands-on experiences that build curiosity, environmental literacy, and a lifelong relationship with the natural world.

With a dedicated team of more than 60 employees and an annual operating budget of approximately \$3.5 million, Earthplace serves as a trusted community resource for families, educators, students, and conservation partners across Fairfield County and the broader region.

We are equally committed to cultivating an internal culture that reflects our values—collaboration, inclusion, respect, and continuous learning. Our goal is to build a workplace where every team member can thrive, contribute their strengths, and grow within a supportive, mission-driven community.

Position Summary

The Associate Director of Development & Communications is a key supporting partner to the Development Director and plays an essential role in advancing Earthplace’s mission through annual giving, donor communications, and stewardship systems. This role is designed to complement the Development Director’s leadership by owning the planning and execution of annual fund activity and ensuring donors experience consistent, thoughtful, and mission-aligned engagement.

The Associate Director serves as the primary lead for donor communications across channels and coordinates internal partners and external contractors to support this work. The role collaborates closely with the Marketing Department to ensure alignment in voice, branding, and storytelling across all donor-facing materials.

Primary areas of responsibility include annual giving, donor communications, stewardship coordination, and development operations support (CRM management, reporting, and donor insights). The Associate Director also supports signature fundraising events by managing communications, donor follow-up, and stewardship activities in partnership with the Development Director.

Key Responsibilities

Annual Giving & Campaign Execution

- Lead planning, strategy, and messaging for all annual giving campaigns, including year-end, spring appeals, and special initiatives.
- Collaborate with the Marketing Department to develop and execute multi-channel donor communications (email, print, web, social, direct mail).
- Manage donor segmentation, donor journeys, and tailored ask strategies based on giving history and engagement indicators.
- Track appeal performance, KPIs, gift tracking, and progress-to-goal reporting; share insights with the Development Director.
- Ensure solicitation, acknowledgment, and stewardship workflows align with industry best practices.

Donor Communications & Stewardship Systems

- Lead donor-facing communications including newsletters, impact updates, annual fund messaging, stewardship updates, donor stories, and campaign collateral.
- Design and manage an organization-wide stewardship calendar including acknowledgments, thank-you calls, impact reporting, and personalized donor touches.
- Develop donor call scripts, stewardship briefs, and talking points for leadership and Board partners as needed.
- Ensure donor communications reflect Earthplace's values of inclusion, transparency, accessibility, and gratitude.

Donor Data, Reporting & Development Operations

- Support CRM integrity, donor record accuracy, and data standards in partnership with the Development Director.
- Create donor reports, dashboards, and segmentation lists to support strategy, stewardship, and Board reporting.
- Track renewals, upgrades, lapses, pledges, and donor movement indicators.
- Support finance reconciliation and reporting processes aligned with internal controls and ethical fundraising standards.
- Maintain organized systems and documentation to support efficient development operations.

Major Gifts Pipeline Support

- Manage a portfolio of mid-level donors, implementing cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies.
- Support the Development Director with donor research, qualification, cultivation planning, and moves management.
- Identify donors with major gift potential and support early-stage relationship building.

Events & Donor Engagement

- Support donor-facing events including the Woodside Bash, Cocktails & Clams, cultivation gatherings, and donor salons.
- Coordinate event communications, RSVP tracking, donor follow-up, and post-event stewardship.
- Assist with sponsorship materials, tracking, and benefits fulfillment in partnership with the Development Director.

Cross-Department Collaboration

- Collaborate with Program, Finance, and Marketing colleagues to gather impact data, outcomes, and stories for donor communications.
- Ensure donor communications align with organizational priorities, program initiatives, and revenue goals.
- Provide support to relevant Board committees as requested.

Qualifications

Experience

- Minimum 10 years of progressive experience in annual giving, donor communications, stewardship, and/or development operations.
- Demonstrated success managing multi-channel donor communications and annual appeals.
- Experience managing a donor portfolio and supporting a major gifts pipeline.

Skills

- Exceptional writing, editing, and storytelling skills with a donor-centered orientation.
- Strong project management, organization, and deadline reliability.
- Proficiency with donor CRM systems (Neon, Salesforce, Raiser's Edge, or similar).
- Ability to use data and metrics to inform strategy and improve donor engagement.
- Strong interpersonal skills and collaborative working style.

Education

- Bachelor's degree required (or equivalent professional experience).
- CFRE certification or intent to pursue CFRE preferred.

Mission Alignment

- Genuine passion for environmental education, sustainability, and connecting people with nature for life.

Work Environment & Conditions

- Primary work location is on-site at Earthplace in Westport, CT.
- Occasional evening or weekend hours required during peak fundraising periods and special events.

Physical Requirements

- Ability to conduct presentations, analyze data, and communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- Ability to lift up to 25 lbs and participate in occasional outdoor or event-related activities.

Compensation & Benefits

Earthplace offers a competitive salary commensurate with experience, along with a generous benefits package including health insurance, program discount, and paid time off.

To Apply

Please send a resume and cover letter describing your interest in the position and alignment with Earthplace's mission to l.harris@earthplace.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.