

Executive Director

Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation
Hutchinson, Kansas

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) serves as the chief executive officer of the Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation and is responsible for advancing the Foundation's mission to support, enhance, and preserve the Kansas State Fairgrounds through fundraising, strategic leadership, community engagement, and operational excellence. The ED works at the direction of and in partnership with the Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation Board of Directors; in addition, the ED works in partnership with the Kansas State Fair Board and leadership, donors, and community stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of the Foundation.

The Foundation exists to “further the renovation, construction, preservation and beautification of the Kansas State Fairgrounds” and to promote education and awareness of the Kansas State Fair and its role in Kansas agriculture, industry, and culture.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Vision

- Lead the development and execution of the Foundation's strategic plan aligned with its mission and vision.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to expand impact, including capital projects, programming, and partnerships.
- Serve as a visible and influential leader in the community, representing the Foundation locally, regionally, and statewide.

Fundraising & Development

- Design and execute comprehensive fundraising strategies including major gifts, sponsorships, grants, and events.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward relationships with donors, corporate partners, and foundations.
- Lead capital campaigns and special project fundraising initiatives (e.g., facility improvements, historic preservation efforts, and new developments such as event venues).
- Oversee donor engagement programs and giving opportunities.

Board Relations & Governance

- Partner with the Board of Directors to support governance, policy development, and strategic direction.
- Provide regular updates on financial performance, fundraising progress, and organizational impact.
- Support board recruitment, engagement, and development as a working, fundraising-focused board.

Operations & Financial Management

- Oversee all Foundation operations including budgeting, financial management, and compliance with nonprofit regulations.
- Ensure proper stewardship of funds, transparency, and accountability.
- Oversee the management of contracts, vendors, and operational activities including event and facility management (e.g., 1861 Club, and programs).

Programs, Projects & Events

- Lead execution of Foundation-supported projects including facility improvements, beautification efforts, and educational initiatives.
- Oversee fundraising events and revenue-generating activities that support the Kansas State Fair and year-round use of the fairgrounds.
- Ensure alignment of programs with the Foundation's mission to enhance the fairgrounds and promote the Kansas State Fair and Fairgrounds.

Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

- Serve as the Foundation's primary liaison with the Kansas State Fair, community leaders, government entities, and partner organizations.
- Build strategic partnerships that expand awareness, funding, and utilization of the fairgrounds.
- Promote collaboration with agricultural, educational, and industry stakeholders.

Marketing, Communications & Brand

- Oversee branding, marketing, and communications strategies to elevate the Foundation's visibility and impact.
- Promote the Foundation's mission through storytelling, digital presence, social media, and events.
- Increase public awareness of the Foundation's role in supporting the Kansas State Fair experience.

Staff Leadership & Culture

- Recruit, lead, and develop a small, high-performing team.
- Foster a culture of accountability, collaboration, and mission-driven performance.
- Provide leadership across fundraising, marketing, events, and administrative functions.

Qualifications & Experience

- Bachelor's degree required.
 - 5–10+ years of leadership and management experience or related field; experience in nonprofit management, fundraising, and development is beneficial.
 - Demonstrated success in major gift fundraising, sponsorship development, and/or capital campaigns.
 - Experience working with or reporting to a Board of Directors.
 - Strong financial management and organizational leadership skills.
 - Proven ability to build partnerships and engage diverse stakeholders.
 - Passion for agriculture, community development, events, and/or mission-driven organizations preferred.
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Core Competencies

- Strategic thinking and execution
 - Relationship building and donor development
 - Leadership and team development
 - Financial and operational management
 - Public speaking and written communication skills
 - Understand branding, traditional marketing and social media
 - Ability to understand and use technology across all areas of responsibilities
 - Proven ability to manage major gift fundraising efforts, including cultivating relationships and securing large-value donations
 - Event and project management
 - Community engagement and advocacy
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Work Environment & Expectations

- Full-time, salaried leadership position based in Hutchinson, Kansas.
 - Regular evening and weekend commitments, particularly around events and fundraising activities.
 - Active presence at Kansas State Fair events and Foundation initiatives throughout the year.
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Measures of Success

- Growth in fundraising revenue, donor base, and sponsorships
- Successful execution of capital and improvement projects on the fairgrounds
- Increased visibility and community engagement
- Strong financial health and operational efficiency
- Effective board engagement and organizational alignment

Compensation

The Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation offers a competitive compensation package aligned with experience and qualifications, along with benefits and the opportunity to make a lasting impact on one of Kansas' most important cultural and community assets.

About the Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation

The Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation is a nonprofit organization established to raise funds and support projects that preserve and enhance the Kansas State Fairgrounds. Since its founding, the Foundation has funded improvements, supported educational programs, and developed facilities that enrich the Fair experience and benefit the community year-round.

How to Apply:

Please submit a resume and cover letter outlining your leadership and experience to: Leadership@ksfgf.org. For additional information on the position please contact the Foundation office at: 620-615-7388