



Director of Major and Planned Gifts
Los Angeles Opera
Los Angeles, CA
<https://www.laopera.org/>

Send Nominations or Cover Letter and Resume to:
Carmel Napolitano
Vice President
617-262-1102
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The Opportunity:

The Los Angeles Opera (LAO), one of the world's leading opera companies, is seeking a Director of Major and Planned Gifts to build a strong and sustainable planned and legacy giving program. The Director will join a successful development effort that raises close to \$40 million annually and participate in the planning and strategy for a \$250 million capital and endowment campaign.



The Director will report to the Senior Director, Development and will be a senior member of the Development team. The Opera is seeking candidates who are ready to create, build, and direct a planned giving program. The Director will be responsible for promoting, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding deferred gifts. They will also play a key role in building the department's major gift dollars through their own portfolio and by training and partnering with Major Gift officers on blended gifts. Working closely with LAO staff, volunteers, board members, and outside counsel, the Director will also cultivate and steward the 100-plus member [Bella Voce Society](#) the LAO's established estate giving affinity group.

Partnering with the Executive Vice President, Senior Director, Development, and five major and leadership gift officers, the Director will coordinate all aspects of a planned giving program. This is a high-touch and active solicitor role. The Director will be expected to not only cultivate and steward current estate donors, but to identify and solicit potential donors.



Overview



Founded in 1960, LA Opera began producing its own opera productions in 1986 and is now one of the four largest opera companies in the nation. The company is dedicated to bringing artistic excellence to the stage and throughout the community by presenting world-class opera that includes imaginative new productions, world premiere commissions, and inventive staging's of the classics. LA Opera is the resident company at The Music Center in downtown Los Angeles, and mainstage performances take place at the historic [Dorothy Chandler Pavilion](#). Special [community performances](#) and [Off Grand](#) performances — including musical theater pieces and classical concerts — take place throughout the city. Performances range from classics to world premieres, and movie directors are often invited to stage their own operatic visions during the Opera's September through May season.

Since its creation, LA Opera has been committed to making the arts and opera a vibrant part of all Los Angeles communities. The company is steadfast in its efforts to strengthen the community through education and accessibility via [lectures, classes](#), and more. Its [Opera for All](#) program provides free subscriptions for high school students, low-cost tickets for nonprofits and senior centers, and special performances for children and families, among other initiatives. [Classroom integration opportunities](#), meanwhile, include special performances for students, backstage tours, career days, teacher training, and assistance in staging an opera at schools throughout the city. Finally, the Opera's [Young Artist Program](#) offers up to three years of paid residencies for singers and pianists of exceptional talent transitioning from their academic training to a professional career, paving the way for the next generation of artists.



[Video: LA Opera Connects](#)

The Role

Key Responsibilities:

- Create and execute a comprehensive planned giving program with the goal of increasing the overall number of planned giving donors and the total amount of their gifts. Devise an action plan,

corresponding budget, and set of goals, and reporting on progress to internal and external constituents.

- Identify, qualify, cultivate, solicit, and steward individual donors and, as needed, their families.
- Personally responsible for soliciting and closing major gifts of \$100,000 or more.
- Manage a personal portfolio of at least 150 prospects having six- to eight-figure major and planned giving potential.
- In partnership with the Senior Director, Development, monitor, analyze, and support the planned giving and major gift work of the Development Department.
- Develop and maintain personal contact with individual prospects, their attorneys, and financial advisors to determine the appropriate level and approach for closing deferred gifts; track and report on gift impact and provide follow-up with executors and lawyers.
- In partnership with the Executive Vice President and Senior Director, Development, identify and leverage opportunities to cultivate estate gifts from board members and other volunteers.
- Work with the Executive Vice President and Senior Director to incorporate planned giving strategies into LAO's capital and endowment campaign.
- Educate potential prospects and professional advisors about planned giving opportunities at LAO, including working alongside donors' attorneys, executors, and other donor representatives to review and complete all gift documentation such as tracking wills in probate and monitoring settlement costs.
- Respond to requests through LAO's website and actively identify new giving potential, in conjunction with development research and other development staff. Oversee the online presence for planned giving and create all planned giving collateral and manage all events related to planned giving including the annual Bella Voce Society dinner.
- Assist in the creation of policies and guidelines for long-term pledges, estate gift commitments, and recognition for donors of planned gifts. Improve systems for maintaining and monitoring donor and prospect information.
- Enhance recognition and solicitation opportunities through the Bella Voce Society of donors who have included LAO in their estates.
- Provide ongoing planned giving training to Major Gift Officers and other LAO staff.
- Help manage the relationship with the Music Center Foundation, which provides endowment support to the resident companies through asset management and planned giving fundraising, regarding donors of endowment and planned gifts.
- Assist with other fundraising projects as assigned.

Position Requirements:

- A minimum of 7 to 10 years of substantial, progressively responsible, and successful major gift and/or planned giving fundraising experience.
- Significant experience managing gifts of tangible personal property and real estate, unitrusts, annuity trusts, bequests, and other deferred giving vehicles.
- Proven success and personal experience in the formation, presentation, and negotiation of high-level gift arrangements, including a track record of cultivating, soliciting, and closing six-figure and higher outright and deferred gifts. Customer-service orientation.

- Experience in planning, leading, and managing projects, including coordinating with peers to achieve desired outcomes.
- Ability to create powerful, compelling written and oral communications for fundraising, and experience presenting materials to external audiences.
- Possess an outgoing and externally focused demeanor as well as exceptional interpersonal skills and judgment, along with a commitment to promote LAO by developing productive relationships with donors, volunteers, and staff. An entrepreneurial attitude and the proven ability to deepen existing relationships and to forge new ones.
- Ease in dealing with leadership donors and volunteers in conversations around end-of-life issues.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically and creatively through donor engagement and to develop plans of action and follow through.
- Experience with strategic planning, budget preparation, and resource management.
- Sound judgment and superior ability to solve problems creatively and effectively. A high level of integrity, initiative, creativity, and energy is required. Able to work nights and weekends.
- Knowledge of the Los Angeles philanthropic community, although not required, is helpful. A sincere and genuine interest in opera is important.
- Passionate belief in the important role of the arts in creating vibrant communities.
- A Bachelor's degree is required. Advanced degree preferred.

Leadership



Christopher Koelsch
President and CEO

[Christopher Koelsch](#) has been the Sebastian Paul and Marybelle Musco President and Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles Opera since 2012. Mr. Koelsch oversees all aspects of artistic planning and defines the artistic vision of the company in addition to overseeing board development, fundraising, branding, marketing, public relations, educational programs, and outreach. He has also served as the executive producer for 10 television recordings, two live simulcasts, and two audio-only recordings for the Opera.

Under his leadership, the Opera has gone through a remarkable period of reinvention, including a renewed focus on community inclusivity and fiscal responsibility. The Opera has also launched several critical artistic initiatives designed to expand the reach of the institution and diversify its artistic product, including its Off Grand program.

Mr. Koelsch trained as a dramaturge and stage director at Colgate University and the University of Michigan, beginning his career at the Spoleto Festival USA as a rehearsal administrator. He relocated to the West Coast to become the company manager at Opera Pacific before beginning his tenure at the Los Angeles Opera.

Advancement Overview

Los Angeles Opera has one of the most robust fundraising programs for the performing arts in the country. It is supported by generous gifts from individuals, government, [corporate partners](#), [foundations](#), and [community groups](#). The Opera also hosts an annual [Opera Ball](#), which celebrates the opening of the new season and raises funds for its productions. This event is one of the Opera's most important fundraisers each year.



In fiscal year 2018, the Opera received more than [\\$41 million in private support](#), with 75% of that from individual giving. LAO enjoys the support of major funders such as the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Annenberg Foundation, Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Over 80% of the Opera's funding is spent directly on artistic programming, services, and community outreach.

Background Checks:

Prior to submitting your resume for this position, please read it over for accuracy. Lindauer does verify academic credentials for its candidates, and our clients frequently conduct background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

**To learn more, call
Carmel Napolitano, Vice President at
617-262-1102
or send nominations or cover letter and resume to
cnapolitano@LindauerGlobal.com.**

All inquiries will be held in confidence.



Setting the Standard in Nonprofit Talent
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