

FRESHWATER

2550 University Ave Suite 212N | St. Paul, MN 55114 | 651.313.5800 | freshwater.org

We are on a mission to inspire and empower people to value and preserve water – join us!

Development Director

Full-Time, Exempt | 40 hours/week with Benefits

Location: Hybrid – Based in St. Paul, MN (Court International Building – Highway 280 and University Ave.)

Remote-friendly with regular in-person collaboration and occasional travel required.

Salary range: \$96,000 – \$110,000, depending on experience

About Freshwater

Freshwater Society is a Minnesota-based nonprofit on a mission to inspire and empower people to value and preserve water. Since 1968, we have been a trusted leader in water education, research, and policy advocacy, working across sectors to build a future where clean, accessible, and sustainable water resources are available to all.

We're a collaborative, equity-driven, science-rooted organization with a strong reputation and network across the state and region. Our team-based culture fosters shared leadership, continuous learning, and innovation. We believe water connects us all—and that community-led, evidence-based solutions are the key to lasting impact.

The Opportunity

Freshwater is entering an exciting period of growth and we are seeking a seasoned, strategic, and relational Development Director to lead our fundraising efforts and deepen our culture of philanthropy. This position is ideal for a development professional with demonstrated success in major gifts, donor engagement, and revenue strategy who is energized by mission-driven teamwork and systems-level thinking.

Reporting to the Executive Director, this director-level role is a key member of the Leadership Team. The Development Director will design, lead, and implement Freshwater's resource development strategy in close collaboration with the Executive Director, as well as other staff and board leadership. While the position does not currently include supervisory responsibilities, Freshwater anticipates this for the future as fundraising success allows the development team to grow.

This is not a role for someone new to fundraising—we are seeking an experienced professional with a strong record of securing major gifts, engaging donors, and creating revenue-growth strategies that balance immediate results with long-term sustainability, while thriving in a collaborative, mission-driven environment.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Planning (20%)

- Collaborate with the Executive Director to set organizational fundraising goals and implement the Development Plan, balancing short-term revenue needs with long-term strategies for sustained growth.
- Monitor donor trends, identify new funding opportunities, and use data (Bloomerang, reports, prospect pipelines) to track performance, inform strategy, and adjust approaches as needed.

- Serve as staff liaison to the Board's Development Committee, organizing meetings and equipping board members with training and tools to build confidence in their role as ambassadors.
- Provide strategic leadership as a member of the Leadership Team, contributing to overall organizational direction, decision-making, and long-term planning.

Major Gifts & Individual Giving (35%)

- Lead all aspects of Freshwater's major donor program—qualify, cultivate, solicit, steward, retain, and upgrade donors across giving tiers.
- Partner with the Executive Director and Board on high-level donor engagement strategies and meetings.
- Build lasting donor relationships through regular, personalized engagement designed to increase retention, deepen commitment, and move donors up the pipeline.
- Track donor goals and program outcomes, using data and feedback to refine cultivation strategies.
- Maintain accurate donor records and ensure data integrity in CRM systems (Bloomerang).

Sponsorship & Institutional Partnerships (20%)

- Develop and manage Freshwater's sponsorship program for events, campaigns, and initiatives.
- Cultivate and steward corporate, foundation, and community partners.
- Collaborate with program and communications staff to design, promote, and connect partnership opportunities aligned with our mission.
- Support the development of general operating and capacity-building grant proposals in collaboration with staff.

Event Leadership & Donor Stewardship (10%)

- Lead planning and execution of Freshwater-led fundraising and donor engagement events (e.g., *Water Connects Us*, *Big Island & Back*, *The Great Minnesota Icebreaker*).
- Ensure excellent donor experiences through thoughtful stewardship, compelling materials, and consistent branding.
- Evaluate event effectiveness and implement improvements using donor and participant feedback.
- Coordinate with the communications team to align fundraising messaging with organizational branding and voice, including donor communications and the annual Impact Report.

General Staff Participation & Time Off (15%)

- Actively participate in regular staff meetings and contribute to team discussions.
- Engage in internal planning sessions to align development strategies with organizational priorities.
- Attend board and committee meetings as needed to provide development updates and support governance.
- Take part in organizational retreats and trainings that build team cohesion and professional capacity.
- Utilize paid holidays and PTO to rest, recharge, and maintain balance.

Qualifications

Required Experience

- At least 3 years of progressive nonprofit development experience, with a strong focus on major gifts, donor engagement, and sponsorship.
- Proven success securing gifts of \$10,000+ and developing cultivation pipelines.
- Successful track record in creating and delivering annual fundraising strategies aligned with organizational goals.
- Major gift and campaign strategy experience.
- Experience leading development strategy and supervising staff.
- Proficiency in donor databases/ customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

Skills & Attributes

- Strategic thinker with strong relationship-building skills and emotional intelligence.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong organizational, project management, and problem-solving abilities.
- Collaborative, solutions-oriented team player with proven managerial skills.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in implementing and evaluating fundraising programs.
- Deep commitment to Freshwater's mission and values, including equity and sustainability.

Preferred Qualifications

- CFRE designation or a master's degree in nonprofit management, public administration, or a related field (equivalent professional experience will also be considered).
- Experience in nonprofit management, including understanding of organizational operations and strategy.
- Knowledge of nonprofit finance, budgeting, and grant reporting.
- Experience building strong relationships with boards and supporting their engagement in fundraising.
- Familiarity with Minnesota's philanthropic landscape.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion in fundraising, including engaging a broad and diverse spectrum of donors and partners.
- Experience with Bloomerang donor management and fundraising software.

Compensation & Benefits

Freshwater's overall benefits package consistently ranks in the 90th percentile of Minnesota nonprofits (based on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Salary & Benefits Survey), demonstrating our commitment to offering competitive compensation, comprehensive coverage, and meaningful work-life balance for our staff.

- Salary Range: \$96,000–\$110,000 annually, based on experience (benchmarked against the 2024 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Salary & Benefits Survey).
- Medical & Dental Insurance: Comprehensive coverage with employer contributions. Employees can choose from plan options designed to fit different priorities—one with lower monthly premiums and higher cost-sharing, or another with higher monthly premiums, no deductible, and lower out-of-pocket costs. *Eligibility begins the first of the month following hire.*
- Wellness Stipend: Employees who opt out of Freshwater's health benefits receive a monthly stipend—equivalent to 20% of the individual premium for the lower-premium health plan—paid directly through payroll. This flexible benefit can be used in any way that supports personal health and well-being.

- Income Protection Benefits: Short-Term Disability, Long-Term Disability, and Life/AD&D insurance are 100% employer-paid for employees working 20+ hours per week.
- Retirement: Freshwater offers a 401(k) plan with a generous employer match—100% of employee contributions up to 3% of gross pay, plus a 50% match on contributions from 4% to 5%. *Eligibility begins the first day of the month following your start date.*
- Pre-Tax Savings: Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) for eligible medical and dependent care expenses, offered under Freshwater's Section 125 cafeteria plan.
- Voluntary Benefits: Available options include additional life insurance - spouse and dependents eligible - and vision benefits, with employee-paid premiums via payroll deduction at group rates.
- Paid Time Off: Generous PTO accruals beginning with the first payroll, plus 14 paid holidays annually.
- Work-Life Balance: Flexible hybrid work arrangements with remote options and a culture that supports using earned time off.
- Professional Development: Freshwater invests in staff growth with up to \$1,000 annually for professional development activities (subject to budget availability).
- Other Benefits: wellness initiatives, and access to transit options near our St. Paul office.

Location & Start Date

This position is open to candidates based outside the Twin Cities metro area, with the understanding that some travel and in-person meetings will be required. The anticipated start date is between November 2025 and January 2026.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references (emails and phone numbers) to: Michelle Stockness, Executive Director at mstockness@freshwater.org

Applications are due Monday, September 22, 2025. Initial review begins September 23rd. Position will be open until filled.

We welcome requests for accommodations during the application or interview process. Applications submitted through automated job boards will not be reviewed. Incomplete applications or those not following submission instructions will not be considered.

Freshwater Society is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, LGBTQIA+, disabled, veterans, or who bring other diverse perspectives to our work. We value an inclusive workplace where everyone belongs and can contribute to protecting and preserving water for all.

