

Recruitment Profile

for the position of

Chief Development Officer



Rainbow Railroad USA

***Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., or Chicago
(preferred)***

April 2024

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION | EXECUTIVE SEARCH | BOARD ADVISORY

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: Chief Development Officer (CDO)

Organization: Rainbow Railroad USA (<https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/>)

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Location: Rainbow Railroad is based in Toronto, Canada. Rainbow Railroad USA is headquartered in New York City. This is a remote position to be located in the U.S. (Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., or Chicago preferred.)

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Rainbow Railroad stands at the forefront of the global movement to advance and protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex) people wherever they are in the world. With a focus on helping those most vulnerable find safety from persecution and violence, Rainbow Railroad is internationally recognized for its work in providing support and resettlement assistance to individuals in some of the most virulently anti-LGBTQI+ locations in the world.

Across the globe, 67 countries have laws that expressly criminalize homosexuality and many more have other laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. In 11 countries, same-sex intimacy can be punishable by death. In too many countries, LGBTQI+ people are routinely arrested, denied basic human rights, and are being brutally attacked, tortured, or even murdered.

Rainbow Railroad was founded in 2006 to provide an additional solution to address the global refugee crisis, to which LGBTQI+ people are uniquely vulnerable. Rainbow Railroad’s mission is to help persecuted LGBTQI+ individuals get to safety as they seek a safe haven from state- enabled harassment and violence. Rainbow Railroad provides support to LGBTQI+ individuals seeking safety with airfare and financial support that facilitates departure, travel, arrival, and referral for resettlement. Beyond direct financial assistance, Rainbow Railroad provides information, resources, and advice for asylum claimants.

In partnership with a global network of LGBTQI+ organizations and human rights defenders, Rainbow Railroad coordinates directly with individuals experiencing violence to get them out of harm’s way. Around the world, Rainbow Railroad is recognized for its efforts to support and protect the thousands of LGBTQI+ people living in countries which criminalize their existence.

With headquarters in Toronto and a U.S. office in New York City, Rainbow Railroad employs a dedicated and mission-driven staff of around 55 full- and part-time employees in Canada and the US and supports a large network of volunteers around the world. Rainbow Railroad has experienced exponential growth over the last several years. The organization is largely funded through private donations and has a current revenue goal of \$15 million (CAD). This budget comprises roughly 28% Individual & Major Gifts, 28% Foundation/Institution Giving, 22% Corporate Sponsorships, and 22% Community Giving (including third party and local events).

(For more information, please visit <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/>)



RAINBOW RAILROAD STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

The Fight for LGBTQI+ Liberation: Rainbow Railroad’s Roadmap for 2023-2026

Our Vision: A World Where LGBTQI+ People Are Free of Persecution and Live a Life of Their Choosing

Until full liberation is possible, we must continue to help LGBTQI+ persons at-risk now.

Where We Are Now

Right now, there are more forcibly displaced people in the world than at any other time in recorded history. Queer and trans refugees are uniquely vulnerable due to systemic homophobia and transphobia.

In more than 60 countries around the world, same-sex intimacy is criminalized, and LGBTQI+ people face severe forms of violence and persecution because of who they are or who they love. Since our founding in 2006, we’ve helped over 13,000 at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals get to safety.



In 2026, we will celebrate 20 years of vital and revolutionary work to queer the system and get more LGBTQI+ people to safety. Our **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** tackles this challenge head-on. Through this plan, we share our commitment to getting more at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals to safety and centering our work on the people we help. Between 2023-2026, we will tackle 3 key priorities:

- **Get More to Safety Now.** Rainbow Railroad’s primary goal is to assist LGBTQI+ individuals to move to safer locations as quickly as possible, and the individuals seeking our assistance must be centered in all aspects of our work.
- **Queer the System.** We will be leaders by advocating for the inclusion and protection of forcibly displaced LGBTQI+ persons at every level of the global asylum system.
- **Strengthen our Foundation.** As we move forward, we remain focused on strengthening our organization, evaluating, and refining our systems, and becoming more efficient and effective with the funds entrusted to us by our supporters.

REPORTING

Reports to CEO [Kimahli Powell \(he/him\)](#). Leads, motivates, and supports a team of ten fundraising professionals with five direct reports: Director of Individual Giving, Director of Institutional Giving, Director of Corporate Sponsorships, Director of Donor Relations, and Director of Community Giving. The Chief Development Officer is also a member of Rainbow Railroad’s Executive Leadership Team.

POSITION

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is a newly created position at Rainbow Railroad, reflecting the extraordinary growth the organization has experienced in recent years, as well as the strategic importance of sustaining and expanding fundraising capacity and results. The new CDO will be responsible for overseeing fundraising programs and leading the Development Team to meet or exceed revenue goals. In collaboration with the CEO, the CDO will design and implement strategic development plans across all revenue categories and donor audiences. This person will serve as a key strategic partner to the CEO. They will also work directly with the Board of Directors and with Rainbow Railroad’s leadership team to integrate fundraising with Programs, Strategy, Communications, Engagement, and Finance teams.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

[NOTE: It is understood that no single candidate will have equal expertise in all these areas of responsibility. Successful candidates will possess a compelling combination of many of them and the self-awareness and wisdom to leverage existing and/or new resources for support in the area(s) where they lack personal mastery.]

➤ **Organizational Leadership & Development**

- Assess organizational needs and create development plans, including overall strategy, individual and team revenue goals, and performance metrics for all teams;
- Identify and leverage opportunities for improvement in current event fundraising programs, including individual giving campaigns, institutional support, special events, and donor cultivation;
- Implement donor-centric processes and best practices to increase efficiency, donor engagement, and revenue generation;
- Provide leadership to developing and improving fundraising knowledge and expertise across the organization, including staff, leadership team, Board of Directors, and volunteers;
- Work with individual Board members and other leadership volunteers to develop personal fundraising goals and support them in meeting their giving targets.

➤ **Revenue Growth & Diversification**

- Create donor engagement and cultivation opportunities to introduce potential funders to Rainbow Railroad;
- Develop stewardship tools and strategies to ensure donors receive frequent, personalized attention;
- Leverage research tools to ensure solicitations are aligned with donors' capacity and interests;
- As the organization's lead U.S. fundraiser, expand and improve efforts in:

Major Gifts

- Manage and support the Director of Individual Giving and Individual Giving team in attracting and retaining individual donors capable of giving \$25K+ annually;
- Lead efforts to create a pipeline of major donor prospects – including from annual fund donors and special event participants – and to create donor stewardship and gift cultivation strategies for them;
- Increase size and demographics of donor population with an eye toward building the next generation of major donors and leadership gifts;
- In partnership with the CEO, develop and maintain relationships with ultra-high-net-worth donors in the U.S.

Corporate & Foundation Relations

- Manage and support the Director of Institutional Giving and Director of Corporate Sponsorship in deepening current relationships and building upon Rainbow Railroad's capacity to attract new corporate and foundation funders in the U.S. market;
- Create and implement strategies to scale the organization's corporate giving programs, including employee engagement and volunteer opportunities.
- Support the Institutional Giving team in expanding prospect research to identify new foundation and other institutional supporters.

Annual Giving

- Create and implement strategies to increase the volume of recurring gifts – monthly donors, multi-year pledges, year-round giving, etc. – and ensure stable, recurring streams of revenue;
- Support the Director of Community Giving in building and expanding annual giving programs, including Rainbow Railroad's existing LGBTQ+ Pride month and end-of-year campaigns;
- Leverage annual campaign data for lead generation and donor cultivation.

Events

- Develop strategy and objectives, revenue goals, and project plans for all special events, including follow-up cultivation;
- Support event Chairs and Committees in the development and execution of events;
- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward event sponsorships and event-related partnerships.

➤ **Staff Management and Team Development**

- Manage and support the Development team with an emphasis on mentoring and professional development;
- Establish overall performance objectives and set expectations, performance metrics, and quality outcomes for direct reports, in alignment with organizational mission and goals;
- Revise team structure and job descriptions as needed and within budget parameters;
- Ensure an environment of trust, respect, openness, and collaboration.

➤ **Internal & External Relationship Management**

- Work with CEO, and other internal champions to evolve a culture of philanthropy and ensure a coordinated approach to stewarding and cultivating donor relationships;
- Partner and collaborate with Communications, Engagement/Impact, and Program teams to assure coordination of branding and messaging for fundraising communications and related collateral;
- Foster cross-departmental collaboration to collect data, analyze outputs, and effectively report organizational impact to donors and prospects;
- Effectively and appropriately represent Rainbow Railroad with clients, community partners, funding organizations, at special events, and to the media.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate for this CDO role is an inspiring and proven strategic leader, a talented manager of people and teams, and a creative, results-oriented fundraiser. They will have a proven track record of creating fundraising programs that deliver results and that will inspire staff, Leadership Teams, Board members, and volunteers to fully engage in development efforts. Successful candidates will bring a bold vision of what is possible and a natural ability to motivate donors and supporters to invest in that vision. They will possess natural talent for building collaborative relationships inside and outside an organization. The most qualified candidates will bring passion and authenticity to connecting with others about Rainbow Railroad's work and impact, and will value diversity of thought, background, identity, perspective, and lived experience.

REQUIRED SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- A minimum of 10 to 12 years of successful, donor-facing development experience, inclusive of major gifts, corporate and foundation relations, special events, memberships and annual giving, and/or planned giving;
- Previous experience in a leadership position – ideally VP, Senior Director, Chief Development Officer or similar – with responsibility for fundraising programs, teams, operations, and results
- Track record of creativity and innovation in meeting or exceeding fundraising goals and objectives;
- Depth of understanding of fundraising tools, strategies, best practices, and current trends/dynamics across revenue categories;
- Collaborative management style and ability to reduce silos and ensure cross-functional cooperation;
- Talent for building, managing, supporting, and retaining teams to achieve their highest potential;
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking and presentations;
- Lived and/or professional LGBTQ+ experience, along with a deep understanding of the unique issues and challenges facing members of the LGBTQ+ community;
- Strong DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) lens, with experience to lead by example in centering race and gender equity in all facets of an organization;

- Financial acumen and ability to build/manage budgets and make strategic financial decisions;
- Ability and willingness to travel up to 25% of the time.

DESIRED SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Previous experience in a startup or high-growth environment is very beneficial;
- Experience working effectively and collaboratively with a volunteer Board of Directors;
- Knowledge and/or training with planned giving strategies and instruments;
- Specific knowledge and content expertise in LGBTQ+ equality, global LGBTQ+ rights, and/or refugee, forced resettlement, asylum movements;
- Existing connections to LGBTQ+ individual and institutional donors in the U.S.;
- Global/international perspective and frame;
- While not required, a college degree in a related field or professional certification in fundraising may contribute to success in this position.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Demonstrated passion for Rainbow Railroad’s mission of protecting the lives of LGBTQI+ people across the globe;
- Commitment to centering the needs of the most marginalized LGBTQI+ people and to operating within a broader social justice framework;
- Strong interpersonal skills and a high level of self-awareness and professional maturity;
- Charismatic and dynamic personal style, ability to make authentic connections and inspire action;
- Comfortable and agile in a dynamic, fast paced, start-up style environment;
- Ability to pay keen attention to detail without losing sight of larger objectives;
- Nimbleness and flexibility to pivot, shift gears, and/or re-prioritize seamlessly without losing patience or focus;
- High level of comfort holding peers accountable to individual, departmental, and organizational goals;
- Cultural competency and humility, including intersectional lens and understanding of marginalized individuals, communities, and populations;
- Fair, honest, inclusive, management style and ability to lead team members from a broad range of professional backgrounds and personal identities;
- Bridge builder, collaborator, and reliable partner – internally and externally.



COMPENSATION

Rainbow Railroad is offering a compensation package that includes salary in the range of \$150,000 to \$200,000 (USD), commensurate with experience and development history, and a comprehensive benefits plan.

TO APPLY

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of Rainbow Railroad. Kevin Chase Executive Search Group works only with equal opportunity employers. No applicant will be discriminated against because of racial or ethnic identity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, or disability. Individuals of LGBTQI+, BIPOC, and/or immigrant or refugee experience are strongly encouraged to apply.

To apply, please submit a complete resume with full employment history and a cover detailing your interest in the position and the professional and/or lived experience you believe make you a uniquely qualified candidate for this role to search@kevinchasesearch.com.

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All inquiries, applications, or referrals will be held in strict confidence.