



Chief Development Officer • Arboretum San Antonio

Position Guide • October 2025

Search for Chief Development Officer of Arboretum San Antonio

2	OVERVIEW
4	ABOUT ARBORETUM SAN ANTONIO
10	THE OPPORTUNITY
11	POSITION SUMMARY
13	CANDIDATE PROFILE
15	COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

OVERVIEW

Position Chief Development Officer

Reports To Chief Executive Officer

Location San Antonio, Texas



MISSION

Trees branching generations, inspiring a deep love of nature, Arboretum San Antonio welcomes all to connect with our cultural heritage and collectively build an environmentally restorative future.

VISION

Our Trees: A living heritage branching generations.

WHAT WE VALUE

Arboretum San Antonio values nature, heritage, discovery, and community – these drive our decision making.

Nature: We believe in the awe-inspiring power of nature to restore and rejuvenate; we know that trees, among other woody species, are critical to our green infrastructure. We are dedicated to conserving and sustaining the biodiversity of our land, water, and spaces through the stewardship of trees for the benefit of all. We also value the power of plants to help us address issues of climate.

Heritage: Branching generations, trees hold both our history and our future. With deep respect for our roots, we secure a living legacy through trees. We honor the rich culture of San Antonio, the geographic richness of our city's Southside, and the indigenous people who came before us as we steward the original function of the land through planning and programming.

Discovery: We are dedicated to lifelong learning through discovery and engagement with nature, cultivating a conscious appreciation for trees that leads to action through conservation and stewardship.

Community: We reflect the diversity of our community and are an inclusive space to explore, play, and connect. We serve our community by offering a sanctuary for rejuvenation, inspiration, and restoration through equitable access to nature.

HOW WE OPERATE

And how we expect our partners to operate – drive our behaviors.

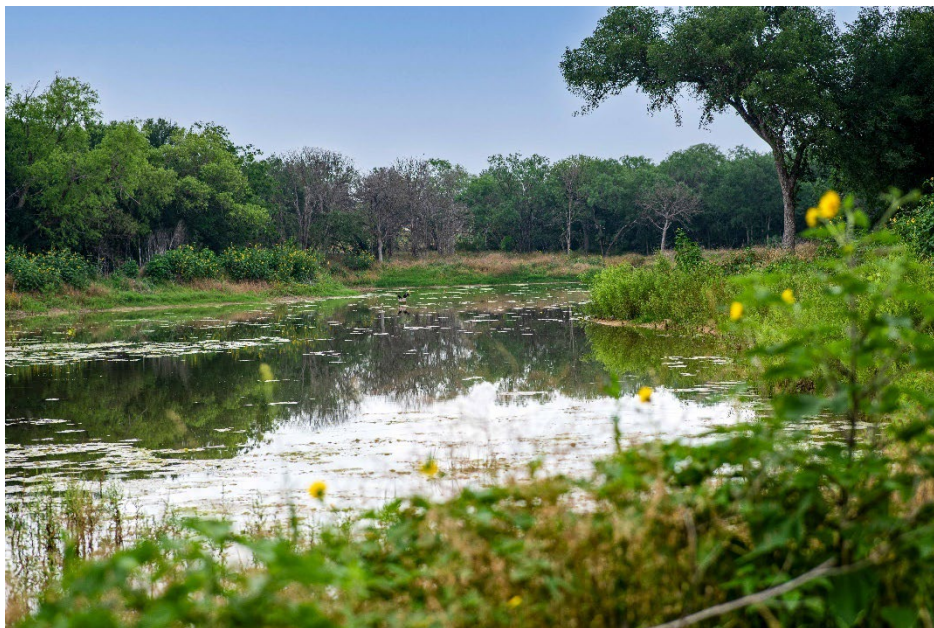
Integrity: We are ethical in our actions – building trust with all who engage with Arboretum San Antonio.

Financial Responsibility: We work toward sustainability – ensuring robust revenue and perpetual funding that allows us to maintain and grow our natural space, expand our tree varieties, provide programs and outreach, and plan with the future in mind.

Collaborative: We are an active and engaged partner with our local community, stakeholders, and experts. We proactively seek input to ensure our mission reflects community values and leverage our partner relationships to realize our vision.

Equity Mindset: We operate with an equity mindset in all aspects of our organization to ensure our mission, programs, outreach, and behaviors are inclusive, respectful, and promote access today and in the future. We cultivate a welcoming culture through a sense of belonging and respect.

Scientific Understanding: We use the best available science and research to inform us as we build a greener, more sustainable community for current and future generations.



Arboretum San Antonio is a new dynamic and growing nonprofit association committed to environmental conservation, community engagement, and inspiring a connection to nature.

In 2021, Arboretum San Antonio's (ASA) Founder, Henry Cisneros, wrote an Op-Ed in the San Antonio Report making the case for an Arboretum on the South Side of San Antonio. As Henry describes it, "An arboretum is a special category of park featuring the trees that grow in a region. Trees are spaced along paths or encircle open meadows in ways that invite admiration, study, and repose". One year later, a highly engaged board of directors was established, and an informed set of subject matter expert advisors was recruited to guide their vision of a world-class Arboretum for San Antonio.

In the fall of 2023, ASA embarked on a meticulous master planning firm selection process. After careful consideration of 18 highly qualified proposals, the Arboretum San Antonio Board of Directors chose Sasaki to lead this effort. ASA has embarked on a one-year master planning process, engaging the community in envisioning and building an arboretum that truly reflects South Texas' rich and diverse heritage and culture. The plan was completed and revealed on May 10, 2025.

KEY FACTS OF THE CURRENT SITE

- 200 acres total
- Former site of Republic Golf Course
- When completed, it will be the second-largest arboretum in Texas.
- Home of the rare Blackland Prairie
- The site includes multiple historic Indigenous (Coahuiltecan tribes) seasonal camping grounds.
- Salado Creek is an important tributary of the San Antonio River and historically fed local acequias.
- The site sits at the crossroads of three local eco-regions, making it well-suited to showcase the trees and ecologies of all three, truly making it an arboretum of South Texas.
- It will connect to the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System (a growing network of 101 miles of accessible, connected trails), adding to San Antonio's connectivity of hike and bike trails.

ARBORETUM SAN ANTONIO'S ASPIRATION

The Arboretum will be established as a revitalizing sanctuary not only for the regional community but also for national and international neighbors who view San Antonio as a destination. As a transformative space on the southeast side of San Antonio, where equitable access to safe, green spaces has historically been unavailable, the Arboretum will bring a balance to this area and mitigate heat and air pollution, especially important attributes as San Antonio's population continues to increase and temperatures continue to rise.

This effort is a long-term investment for the San Antonio region that will take significant visionary investments and time, from seed to growth into the flourishing museum of trees envisioned. ASA is dedicated to conserving and showcasing the diverse plant life of Texas for the enjoyment and education of all. ASA believes deeply in the importance of connecting people with nature and providing opportunities to learn about, appreciate, and conserve the natural world around us. This tree sanctuary is for everyone to enjoy and find peace and inspiration. ASA is committed to environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship. Through education and outreach, ASA aims to cultivate a spirit of curiosity, discovery, and deep appreciation for nature and trees.

The goal is to differentiate Arboretum San Antonio from any other arboretum or green space, both in San Antonio and beyond. ASA's new Master Plan is an innovative, one-of-a-kind design that stands out as a testament to originality and creativity.

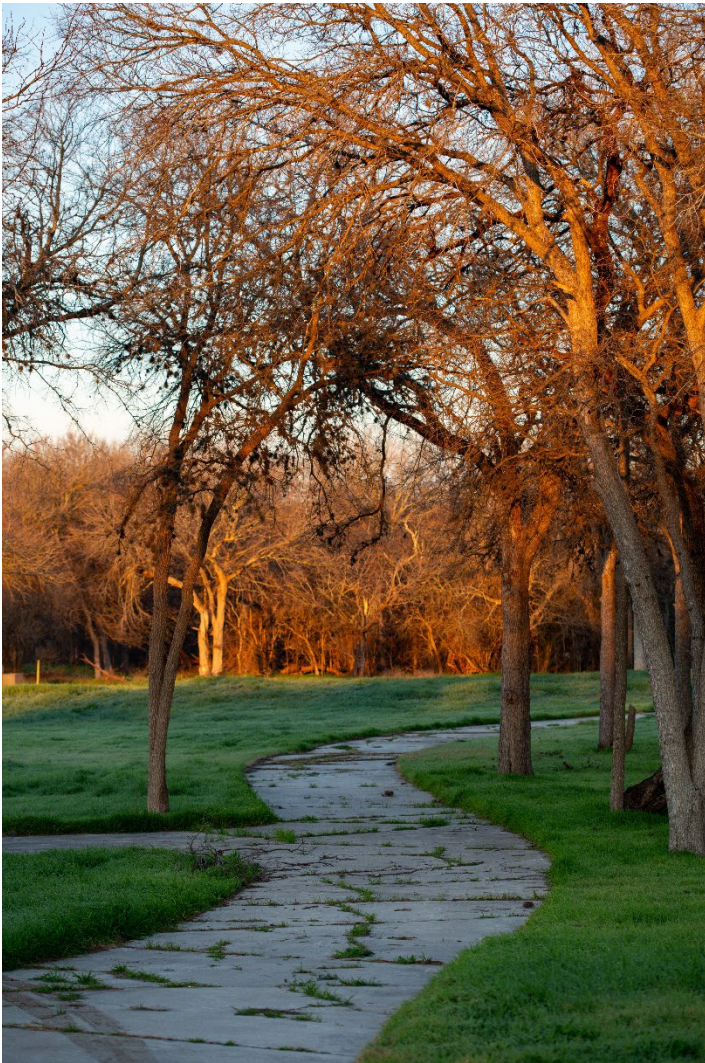
South Texas Heritage

At the heart of San Antonio lies a mosaic of cultures, each with its unique imprint on the city's identity. The San Antonio Arboretum is committed to reflecting this rich cultural tapestry, acknowledging the deep and varied histories that these 200 acres have witnessed. This living space is not just a collection of flora; it's a vibrant narrative of the people, past and present, who have shaped the essence of San Antonio.

In every corner of the Arboretum, visitors will find elements that pay tribute to the diverse communities that have called this land home. ASA's commitment goes beyond showcasing culture. It is about fostering understanding and appreciation. Through educational programs and interactive experiences, we aim to enlighten visitors about the historical significance of the land and the rich tapestry of cultures that have shaped it.

ABOUT ARBORETUM SAN ANTONIO, *CONTINUED*

In honoring the past, the San Antonio Arboretum also looks to the future. By creating a space that respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of the city, we are nurturing a sense of belonging and identity in the next generation. This is a place where the past is honored, the present is celebrated, and the future is shaped with a deep understanding of the cultural richness that makes San Antonio unique.



Regional Sustainability and Research

ASA's vision is to develop an arboretum that serves as a living museum of native and regional plant species and climate adapted plants, a center for botanical research, and a tranquil retreat for the community and visitors. Emphasizing sustainability and biodiversity, the arboretum will reflect the unique flora and cultural tapestry of San Antonio.

In pursuit of developing a comprehensive master plan for the San Antonio Arboretum, ASA recognizes the imperative need to address sustainability and the adaptability of our arboreal collections to the future climatic conditions of South Texas. As we face a future marked by drier and hotter climates, it is crucial that the planning reflects a deep understanding and proactive approach to these environmental shifts.

ASA also recognizes and aims to support potential directions in climate-ready plant materials as the environment changes in suitability for our current native species. They aim to advance environmental and biological research and educate community members about the ecological and health benefits provided by trees.

ASA also aspires to collaborate and actively contribute to advancing knowledge and research in partnership with national arboretums, institutions of higher learning, and esteemed research institutions. ASA seeks to be a leading authority on arboreal species that can thrive in the region, provide informed recommendations on mitigating harmful invasive species, and provide a model of climate-conscious, appropriate landscaping.

Additionally, ASA will be a valuable educational resource for San Antonio and beyond, offering hands-on opportunities to view and study a wide variety of species, both those native to the region and those that may be adaptable to a changing climate; gain greater understanding of the relationships between the trees, animals, and resources that make up the ecosystem; and allow us to learn more about the ecological characteristics that influence healthy growth of our trees in this unique region.

Leading by Example, Horticulturally

Arboretum San Antonio is committed to advancing its role as a leading authority in horticulture and specialized plant cultivation practices that are not only environmentally sustainable but also economically viable. ASA's goal is to provide guidance on landscape plant species and cultivation methods that are best suited for the future climatic conditions of San Antonio, with a focus on native and non-invasive species. Arboretum San Antonio aims to lead the way in demonstrating how horticulture and agriculture can adapt to climate change while providing economic opportunities.

All organic species thrive under ideal conditions, just like the first pecan, elm, and oak trees that flourished and beautified San Antonio centuries ago. Arboretum San Antonio will celebrate this rich botanical heritage and, as a living museum of trees, will inspire a green future for everyone who calls our city home by reflecting on the stories of our deep cultural heritage that can be told through trees. An arboretum, by its very nature, is a living collection of trees. However, in the unique ecological setting of San Antonio, ASA's definition expands to encompass a wider range of flora. This includes not just towering trees but also the "short and shrubby" – the often-overlooked plants that play a crucial role in our local ecosystems. Whether it's a majestic oak or a resilient mesquite shrub, each plant at the Arboretum is a crucial piece of our ecological and cultural puzzle.

Wellness

Arboretum San Antonio will offer tranquil and beautiful settings for exercise, recreation, and relaxation. Current research supports the link between time spent in nature and increased happiness, feelings of well-being, and positive social interactions. Evidence also suggests that walking in natural settings can enhance mental and physical well-being and motivate a sense of purpose and meaning, helping create a more positive overall quality of life.

The Arboretum will also offer an important expansion of San Antonio's [Howard W. Peak Greenway Trail System](#) by connecting to approximately 82 miles of trailways and eventually connecting through Brooks' [Greenline](#) to the [San Antonio Mission Reach](#). Additional local greenway way resources include the [Bexar County Park System](#), [Bexar County CIP](#) and the [Great Springs Project](#).

ABOUT ARBORETUM SAN ANTONIO, *CONTINUED*

Equity Balance

Arboretum San Antonio will strive to ensure equitable access for all members of the community. Locating an expansive natural area in the Southeast quadrant of San Antonio and one dedicated to increasing our tree canopy citywide will provide an appropriate investment balance as well as a green equity balance throughout the city. Arboretum San Antonio will reflect the diversity of the communities we serve in our staff, volunteers, and decision-making bodies involved in the Arboretum's management.

Public Art

Natural beauty from various tree species provides acres of recreational outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy. The expansive 200 acres with a variety of different landscapes will afford spectacular venues for large public art.



The Chief Development Officer of Arboretum San Antonio will have the opportunity to develop, from the ground up, a fundraising department and strategic direction to guide resource development in the organization's start-up phase.

San Antonio's growth is outpacing cities like Dallas, Atlanta, and Houston, and its communities are seeking more cultural and recreational opportunities to match the diverse, rapid expansion across the region. Arboretum San Antonio will be a unique new institution in San Antonio for a variety of reasons, including its location on the southside of the city, a culturally significant area in a rapidly growing region, that also lacks access to open lands that are programmed and affordable. ASA also intends to be a science-driven conservation organization that provides recreation and education throughout the region and beyond. These two important elements separate Arboretum San Antonio from the other significant cultural institutions in the area.

As the organization embarks on a transformative capital campaign to fund Phase One of the Master Plan, it seeks a passionate and experienced Chief Development Officer (CDO) to lead fundraising and donor engagement efforts. The CDO will have the rare opportunity to build, from scratch, a fundraising program to support the organization's ambitious Strategic Plan, Master Plan, and Operations Plan.

Working closely with the CEO, the CDO will be responsible for driving the planning, development and management of all advancement programs for ASA including an initial operating goal of \$3 million, the \$50 million campaign required for Phase 1 of the Master Plan, and strategic initiatives including advancing the Arboretum as a priority in the upcoming San Antonio municipal bond program anticipated in 2026. This individual will direct and guide the stewardship of ASA's current and potential donors, work with a committed Board of Directors, and manage a portfolio of high net-worth donors.

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) will be a visionary and strategic leader responsible for designing, implementing, and managing a comprehensive, donor-centric fundraising program.

This leader will provide overall strategic direction, implementation, performance monitoring, and reporting of ASA's development plans to support annual operations and strategic initiatives. This leader will report to, and interact regularly with, the CEO and will serve as the primary face of the Arboretum's development function to ensure ASA's long-term sustainability and growth. They will set goals that are both inspirational and aspirational, in order to fulfil our mission.

Primary Responsibilities include:

Fundraising Strategy & Capital Campaign

- Lead a multi-year capital campaign to support the Arboretum's master plan development.
- Develop and manage a comprehensive fundraising strategy, including major gifts, annual giving, planned giving, special campaigns, grants, and sponsorships.
- Set and meet ambitious revenue goals in coordination with organizational leadership.

Donor Cultivation & Stewardship

- Build and sustain strong relationships with individual donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors. These include local, as well as outside our local area. Additionally, they will strengthen ties with governmental entities to continue cultivating cooperation between the Arboretum.
- Develop and implement a donor cultivation and stewardship strategy to deepen engagement.
- Create and oversee donor recognition programs and special cultivation opportunities.

Grant Management & Sponsorships

- Work with grant writers to manage grant proposals to federal, state, local, and private funders.
- Cultivate and secure corporate sponsorships for events, programs, and campaigns.

Board & Volunteer Engagement

- Support the Board of Directors and Development Committee in their fundraising efforts through coaching, materials, and strategy.
- Mobilize community volunteers and ambassadors to support fundraising and visibility efforts. Work with our marketing firm to strengthen our message and present a cohesive story.

Events & Community Engagement

- Plan and execute donor-focused events including campaign launches, recognition events, and cultivation activities.
- Represent the Arboretum at public events and within the San Antonio philanthropic community by building relationships with local businesses, civic leaders, and other stakeholders.
- Continue to build and develop relationships with those outside of San Antonio to strengthen the visibility and brand of Arboretum San Antonio throughout Texas and the United States.

Data & Reporting

- Maintain accurate donor and campaign records using donor management systems (current software: Little Green Light).
- Provide regular fundraising reports and analysis to the CEO and Board to help inform decision making.

Leadership & Team Building

- Serve as a key member of the leadership team and help shape organizational direction.
- Over time, grow and lead a high-performing development team.

We seek an accomplished fundraising professional who demonstrates proven expertise in increasing and sustaining a higher level of philanthropy, awareness, and enthusiasm to make a difference in the life of an organization.

This person will be a strategic, critical thinker with a significant fundraising background and leadership experience raising major gifts on behalf of a nonprofit institution as well as management expertise leading Board, staff, and volunteers in a strong philanthropic culture.

The ideal candidate has an entrepreneurial mindset and is a self-starter who actively pursues, cultivates, and enjoys building and maintaining strong donor relationships and internal alliances. We seek a connector and collaborator who makes people comfortable with and is genuine in their engagement. This person must engender trust and empathy with donors in a highly professional, honest, and caring manner. Experience with all aspects of fundraising, including annual funds, grants, special events, and planned giving is desired. Experience raising 5- and 6-figure gifts and successfully completing capital campaigns is essential.

This person must be highly organized and skilled at advanced planning, and resourceful and creative in addressing unforeseen problems that require changes to plans. Strong organizational and project management abilities are required. Leadership traits such as adaptability, resilience, open-mindedness, and emotional intelligence are essential.

We seek an exceptional relationship builder, storyteller and communicator, in written and spoken word, externally and internally, whose interpersonal skills demonstrate an ability to work in harmony at all levels as well as to listen to and respect the viewpoints of others.

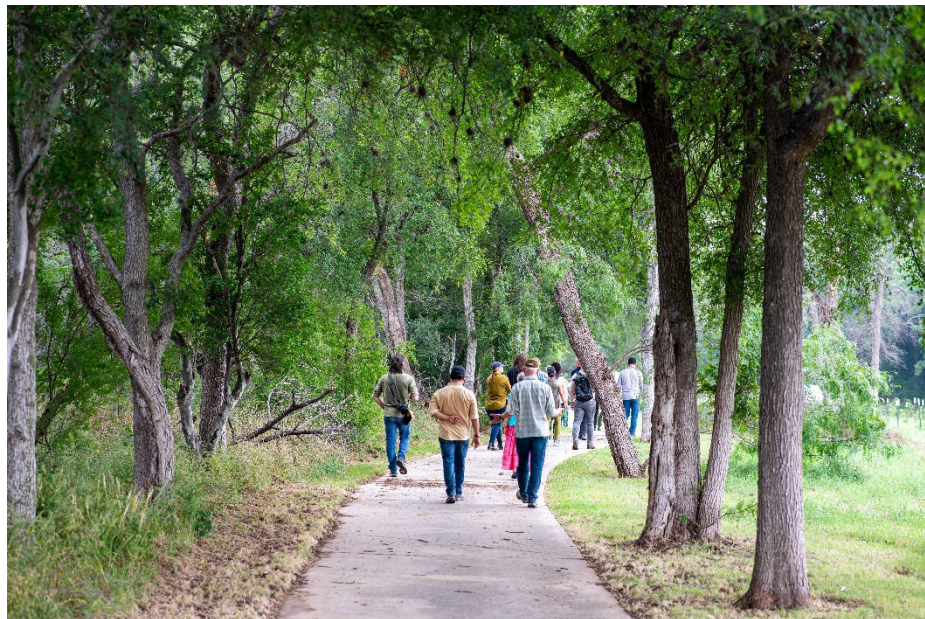
Proven success in obtaining significant resources from both public and private sources to fulfill major projects is a must. Experience working with donors on large capital investments, particularly from institutional, public, and private funders is highly desired. Experience with donor database systems and data-driven decision-making is critical. Knowledge of the national and local philanthropic landscape is highly desirable.

The ability to collaborate with board members in creating appropriate avenues for their participation in fundraising is highly preferred. This would include the development of new strategies and tactics for increasing the number of volunteers involved in philanthropic activities.

Candidates must demonstrate a history of engaging diverse constituencies across all socio-economic levels, cultures, and perspectives, while collaborating internally and externally to achieve equity across the organization.

Knowledge of gardens is not required but the ability and capacity to understand the patron experience of guests and members of cultural institutions will be advantageous. A passion for environmental stewardship, nature, or conservation is essential.

A Bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree or CFRE is preferred. We seek candidates with 5-8 years of progressive fundraising experience, including major gifts and capital campaigns. Bilingual fluency, particularly in Spanish, is highly desirable. An understanding of and an ability to engage effectively with and assimilate quickly into the culture and communities of San Antonio and South Texas are a must.



Arboretum San Antonio offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

The compensation range for this position is \$150,000 - \$175,000 and is commensurate with experience. Relocation assistance is available for the right candidate. Benefits include a stipend to meet insurance needs, retirement plan options, generous paid vacation, holidays and sick leave, and professional development support.

How to apply

For best consideration, please submit a current resume and letter of introduction, to Kittleman & Associates, LLC.

→ [SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO KITTLEMAN ONLINE](#)
[\(CLICK THE APPLY BUTTON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE\)](#)

For more information about Arboretum San Antonio, visit <https://www.arboretumsa.org/>.