

## Development Director: Job Description

### OUR STORY

The [Mississippi Free Press](#) (MFP) is a nationally recognized leader in the emerging and fast-growing field of nonprofit journalism. We believe that local and regional civic news, especially investigative and systemic reporting, is essential to a functioning democracy, and can help communities solve systemic inequities and outcomes of history.

Since our founding in March 2020, MFP has been nothing short of ambitious in our mission and our journalism. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom dedicated to helping improve lives across Mississippi through impactful, data-based investigative and accountability journalism, and reporting of causes and solutions for systemic inequities across our 82 counties with deep and engaging storytelling. We do not editorialize, although we publish a variety of [“Voices” of Mississippians](#) and those who care about us. We have had [immense impact](#) since March 2020 including [winning 70 national and regional honors](#) for three years of work, as of July 13, 2023.

Our team that [looks like Mississippi](#) is focused on preserving and increasing democracy in Mississippi with award-winning and systems-focused reporting on government accountability, infrastructure, education equity, health, the environment and much more. Our journalists—currently all of them grew up in Mississippi—collaborate to deliver original reporting supported by data and stories of real Mississippians not typically covered, including usually-missing context and accountability. This focused approach enables our newsroom to go deep, conducting extensive research and rigorously fact-checking information and exposing dis- and misinformation, resulting in high-impact, enterprising journalism that understands Mississippi and Mississippians.

In addition to reporting, our [Youth Media Project](#) (which returned this summer; watch for their work at [jxnpulse.com](#) soon), internships and [fellowships](#), community dialogue and solution circles, and education programs further our commitment to promoting the practices of fact-based journalism, accurate narratives about Mississippians and media literacy. Due to primarily reader support to date, our team has grown from three people in early 2020 to 16 as of May 2023, and is projected to scale to at least 30 team members over the next three years. We are housed in the former Jackson Free Press newsroom in downtown Jackson, Miss., since [purchasing its journalism assets in 2022](#).

### OUR MOVEMENT

Nonprofit digital media is the growth part of the journalism industry with myriad revenue streams instead of relying largely on advertising as the old model did. We attract extremely passionate people committed to public service and protecting our democracy to our team. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the critical role our sector plays, as traditional print newspapers reduce staff or close their doors completely due to falling advertising revenues. With 200-plus organizations around the country, nonprofit journalism is actually thriving: while newsroom jobs at traditional newspapers have dropped dramatically over the past five years, employment at nonprofit news organizations is rising. We are a vital part of a movement across the country to build a national movement committed to ensuring communities have the information they need to sustain our democracy, as well as creating good local jobs.

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

Named the [Startup of the Year in nonprofit media](#) in 2021 due to our rapid growth in just one year and our innovative “leading-edge” model for other newsrooms, MFP has plans to accelerate that trajectory while remaining an unusually inclusive, diverse and equitable newsroom with minimal turnover, where team members feel like they belong while doing top-level, award-winning work looks like both our masthead and our state. Our publisher and co-founder and revenue team member Kimberly Griffin was then named the [Emerging Leader in Nonprofit Media](#) the next year.

This is why our [Board of Directors](#) created the **Development Director** position to walk into a nonprofit organization with national recognition, mentors, active board and networks in place. This new leader will be dedicated to identifying and developing new revenue streams, thereby ensuring the organization’s sustainability and growth well into the future and across 82 counties. This person will be intimately involved in developing new audiences and new products, and will have the opportunity to build successful models that may be replicated across the country through our regional and national partnerships, just as our innovation systemic reporting model is attracting media interest across the nation. Although based in Mississippi, the successful candidate is positioned to become a key player in the national nonprofit journalism movement.

Put simply: We are looking for a passionate, entrepreneurial, visionary leader to help double our annual budget by 2025. The Development Director will develop the business strategy and leverage new revenue-side grants to scale our revenue team with up to three new positions. As a member of our senior leadership team, the Development Director will work closely with the CEO and the Publisher/Chief Marketing and Audience Officer while overseeing, tracking and inspiring every aspect of revenue generation.

Equally as important, the Development Director will also serve as a highly valued thought partner to both the CEO and the Board. With philanthropic support as the highest priority, this position will carry a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects and provide critical support and guidance to all other members of the revenue team. MFP has been successful in rapidly growing our budget through individual memberships and major gifts after launching with a \$50,000 donation in early 2020. The Development Director’s mission will be to expand our base

of traditional funding sources by creating new and innovative relationships and revenue streams through leadership in marketing and strategic partnerships. Put simply, we are building a new kind of inclusive philanthropy network to support our journalism model and need the right leader to help us fully realize our vision.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The core focus areas of this position are:

1. Build, lead and manage the new revenue team.
2. Manage daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual efforts, creating strategies and goals to help the MFP rapidly reach a three-year long-term sustainability stage.
3. Grow MFP's traditional funding base (including through individual giving, major gifts, annual giving, events, campaigns, planned giving, foundation grants, sponsorships, membership).
4. Develop additional creative funding streams including earned revenue.
5. Build audience and conversion efforts.
6. Expand MFP's capacity in the areas of marketing, strategic partnerships and new product development.

The Development Director has a broad range of responsibilities under these focus areas, requiring a strong mix of skills, experience, project and time management, and character. These include:

- Working with the CEO and Board to develop and implement a multi-year revenue strategy that includes sustainability and growth of our major donors, foundation operational support and membership programs.
- Manage revenue team and fundraising goals and continually align goals and outcomes with projected budgets on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis, as well as monitor and analyze revenue teams' touches, progress and challenges daily.
- Taking the lead in hiring new members of the revenue team as needed, which will grow from two to five members over the next two years, while providing strong leadership and effective management for the team.
- Advancing the field of nonprofit journalism and growing MFP's reach through collaboration with local organizations as well as state and national entities.
- Balancing a multitude of, and sometimes conflicting, viewpoints while always keeping journalistic integrity and the best interests of the organization at the forefront.
- Embracing traditional media and other philanthropic fundraising methods while also leveraging best practices and innovative strategies from the corporate world and startup sector.

- Rethinking events and traditional fundraising approaches (for example, MFP has had prior success with small, highly targeted gatherings of influencers in nontraditional settings).
- Connecting MFP with younger and more diverse audiences and donors and building awareness as to the critical need for good journalism now and into the future.
- Constantly scanning the journalism landscape for new ideas and use of tools to emulate in delivering our content in broadcasting or on the internet.
- Thinking creatively about MFP's assets and capabilities to pilot new and innovative ways to translate those into revenue as well as trading/in-kind for other resources.
- Partnering with other organizations (including other nonprofit entities) to develop joint funding and sponsorship opportunities.
- Instilling a culture of philanthropy that spans across our organization and board, assisting every team member to support our revenue goals however they can.
- Setting appropriate short and long-term revenue targets and taking responsibility for achieving those goals.
- Managing a substantive personal portfolio of major donors and prospects.
- Work with the business manager to manage and update our data management efforts through our tech stack; providing reports and updates to the CEO, Board of Directors, and staff as needed.
- Coaching, mentoring and developing team members to their highest potential.
- Setting clear success metrics and holding others accountable to achieving their goals.
- Staying current on related events and practices at the local, state and national levels.

## ATTRIBUTES & WORK STYLE

- **Ambitious:** likes to build things, meet and exceed targets, and "win."
- **Mission-Driven:** holds a firm belief in the First Amendment and the critical role of accurate information in our society.
- **Strategic:** is a true thought partner to the CEO, CMO and Board; enjoys formulating aggressive goals and designing innovative and creative, yet practical methods for achieving them, adjusting strategy as needed to ensure that budget is supported.
- **Entrepreneurial:** able to be bold and to take calculated risks, says "yes" to new opportunities.
- **Visionary:** always learning, focused on the future and devising a path to get there.
- **Numbers-obsessed:** lives and breathes budget-plus-revenue goal status and tracking; continually communicates realities to revenue team, CEO and Board in a motivational way.

- **Super-organized:** high-level skills with time and project management for own work and to direct and manage the revenue team.
- **Self-reflective:** continually identifies own strengths and weaknesses and actively works to find solutions.
- **Transparent:** collaborates to empower others; shares information and uses an open and inclusive decision-making style.
- **Confidence:** comfortable and effective working with senior executives and major philanthropists; not afraid of having difficult conversations inside or outside the staff.
- **Storyteller:** able to communicate the impact of our work beyond single articles and issues. Reads all our work and stays abreast of editorial impact.
- **Analytical:** uses well-researched numbers and other data points to support strategies and business plans; able to carefully study issues, identify trends and formulate new ideas.
- **Direct:** employs and enjoys a communication style that is sensible, concise and focused on outcomes.
- **Tenacious:** demonstrates exceptional follow-up and follow-through in all work for the organization.
- **Collaborative:** fosters a respectful, transparent and collaborative work environment.
- **Proactive:** demonstrates strong personal initiative and the ability to drive projects through to completion.
- **Positive:** charismatic, warm and welcoming; a true “people-person.”
- **Adaptive:** able to manage multiple (and sometimes conflicting) priorities, projects and deliverables; enjoys working both independently and in teams.
- **Reflective:** is a skilled listener who is effective at giving and receiving feedback and critique.
- **Tactful:** patient and diplomatic; highly skilled at identifying and activating connections and relationships in support of newsource.
- **Communicative:** possesses strong written and oral communication skills. An effective public speaker and representative of the organization.
- **Flexible:** able to work evenings and weekends as required.
- **Numbers-focused:** because they are the main thing that helps grow and sustain our work.

## EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- 5+ years of professional experience in revenue-generating positions—this experience could come from the fields of business development, sales, nonprofit fundraising, startups, marketing or new product development/management.
- Direct experience building and managing teams to achieve revenue targets monthly, quarterly and annually.
- Demonstrated results in designing, pitching, and closing major business development opportunities or philanthropic gifts.

- Solid understanding of the sales cycle and/or fundraising strategies, systems, and processes.
- Bachelor's degree preferred; exceptional professional experience will be considered in lieu.
- Experienced in constructing, articulating and implementing strategic growth plans.
- Prior direct responsibility for cultivating, soliciting and stewarding prospects.
- Experience developing and supporting budgets over \$1 million.

## **SALARY & BENEFITS**

- The salary range for the Development Director begins at \$60,000 and will be based on prior experience and skillset.
- MFP currently pays 100% of the employee's medical, vision and dental benefits through our group plan; family members can be covered through employee contributions.
- The Development Director will be based in the MFP's office in downtown Jackson and will have the option of working remotely from home on some days.
- This position will receive a total of 24 days of PTO and nine holidays for 33 total paid days off a year, which increases after three years of employment. That includes seven non-religious holidays and two floater days for staff members to use for either religious or non-religious days off due to their personal preferences and needs.

*The Mississippi Journalism and Education Group does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information or veteran status in any area of its operations.*

TO APPLY OR ASK QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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