

June 2026

VINEYARD CONSERVATION SOCIETY JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: VCS Director of Development

ABOUT VINEYARD CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Originally formed in 1965 by a small group concerned with the preservation of the natural habitats of the island of Martha's Vineyard, today VCS takes a broad view of conservation. In addition to traditional land protection, addressing the Island's current and future environmental challenges increasingly requires an informed and mobilized public. Through public education, local political advocacy, and legal defense work, we promote community action in pursuit of a healthy environment and sustainable future.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR OUR WORK

There is a widespread sense of urgency for this work, but the challenges are complex. Martha's Vineyard's extraordinary natural resources attract so many admirers that the population swells more than tenfold during the summer months, leading to singularly difficult threats to the island's natural resources and to affordable year-round living. VCS has long recognized that the island must manage a delicate balance of human and environmental needs, and the organization takes a thoughtful approach to conservation, paired with a patience and passion for navigating the interpersonal complexities within a diverse island community.

While the VCS mission includes a wide range of environmental work, there are currently specific focus areas: open space protection; curbing growth and development; habitat health; climate change; and single use plastic reduction.

THE OPPORTUNITY

VCS seeks an experienced and entrepreneurial **director of development** to design, lead, and grow a dynamic fundraising program that reflects the distinctive character of Martha's Vineyard, providing strategic leadership and direction in financial development to advance the VCS mission through major gifts, annual giving, grants, bequests, special events and capital campaigns.

This is an ideal role for a mission-driven leader who thrives in a small, high-impact organization; understands the nuances of an island community with seasonal rhythms; and is energized by relationship-building, experimentation, and strategic storytelling that sets VCS apart in a deep field of local charitable organizations.

The director of development will report to the executive director, and will help engage a participatory board of directors, create a culture of active involvement in fundraising efforts and will serve as one of the key ambassadors to donors, local partners, and Island residents.

This is an in-person role, working from our offices at the Wakeman Center, with the potential for some flexibility and a limited number of remote hours. Many activities, including regular staff and working group meetings, require in person attendance. Some meetings and events will be on weekends and/or outside normal work hours.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Fundraising Strategy & Leadership

- Build and implement a comprehensive development plan that includes annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, foundation relations, and special campaigns.
- Understand and be responsive to Martha's Vineyard's seasonal patterns—maximizing VCS' summer visibility while sustaining engagement with donors and the community throughout the off-season.
- Design creative, data-informed fundraising experiments and pilot new approaches to broaden VCS's donor base and deepen loyalty.

Donor Engagement & Stewardship

- Identify, cultivate, and steward a portfolio of major donors, both seasonal and year-round, ensuring personalized and meaningful engagement.
- Develop compelling donor communications that highlight VCS's impact, conservation leadership, and connection to Island life.
- Plan and execute events—large and small—that resonate authentically with the Vineyard community and attract new supporters.
- Collaborate with staff on outreach, communications, to reinforce VCS's brand and message.

Organizational Development

- Work closely with the executive director and board to cultivate a culture of philanthropy, building their fundraising capabilities and engagement.
- Develop systems, processes, and metrics that help VCS assess what works, learn from experimentation, and scale successful approaches.

- Oversee development operations, including CRM management, gift processing, and reporting.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- 10+ years of fundraising experience, with a strong preference for background in major gifts and relationship-based fundraising and demonstrated success in one-to-one solicitations and relationship building, specifically in six-figure+ gifts.
- A proven track record of designing and executing successful fundraising strategies, managing donor portfolios and cultivating relationships, particularly for small or entrepreneurial organizations.
- Experience supporting the executive director and board leadership in closing gifts and the ability to do the same independently as needed.
- Creative, iterative approach to testing new engagement ideas and learning from results.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and cultural fluency with both year-round and seasonal communities. Comfort engaging donors in person, over Zoom and at events.
- Strong written and verbal storytelling abilities.
- Excellent organizational and time-management skills; able to balance donor meetings, follow up, and strategy development.
- Familiarity with the Vineyard or similar seasonal communities strongly preferred.
- Ability to work flexible hours—including occasional evenings and summer events.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Aptitude for and enjoyment of community engagement. Knowledge of the dynamics of the Vineyard is ideal or an excitement for developing that knowledge and for being an active community participant.
- Ability to develop and oversee projects and programs from inception to completion, including working on multiple projects concurrently, both independently and as a member of small teams in a dynamic and creative environment; meeting deadlines and responding quickly to changing opportunities.
- Aptitude for working with a board of directors, staff, committees, and volunteers, as well as forging collaborations with colleague organizations to work in effective partnerships. A general enthusiasm for a team approach and for creative, collaborative problem solving.

- Warm, authentic relationship-builder who listens deeply and inspires trust.
- Strategic thinker who can zoom between big picture and hands-on execution.
- Passion for protecting the land, water, wildlife and community character of Martha's Vineyard, and an unswerving commitment to making Martha's Vineyard and VCS an equitable and diverse community where every resident is valued and can enjoy the unique Island environment.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

VCS offers competitive total compensation. Housing is not provided, but VCS will help provide information and local knowledge to assist with a transition to the Island if necessary. The annual salary will be closely tied to experience, but is anticipated to range from \$85,000-\$100,000.

Benefits include medical and dental insurance, employer contribution to a 403B plan, and time off.

TO APPLY

All candidates should submit a cover letter and detailed resume to jobs@vineyardconservation.org.

Vineyard Conservation Society is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Research shows that underrepresented groups apply to jobs only if they meet 100% of the qualifications. VCS encourages you to break that statistic and apply. No one ever meets 100% of the qualifications. We look forward to your application.