



SENIOR DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in its search for a Senior Director of Special Events.

The Senior Director of Special Events is central to the BSO's mission of fostering a vibrant community of supporters through well-planned and executed events that drive its fundraising efforts. The Senior Director of Special Events will play a critical role in the BSO's Development efforts as a dynamic leader responsible for establishing clear goals and strategic plans for all development events, ensuring alignment with the organization's broader fundraising objectives. As the in-house expert on event planning, the Senior Director of Special Events will oversee the logistics and execution of events across multiple locations, including Boston and Tanglewood, while leading cross-departmental meetings to ensure a cohesive approach. The Senior Director of Special Events will inspire and manage a team of event professionals, fostering an environment of growth, engagement, and a commitment to excellence. The Senior Director of Special Events will collaborate closely with the Boston Symphony Orchestra Association of Volunteers Director and staff to coordinate volunteer efforts; develop and maintain comprehensive event timelines; and serve as the primary liaison with key stakeholders. Additionally, the Senior Director of Special Events will partner with the Marketing Office to produce high-quality promotional materials; ensure accurate tracking of event participants; and manage the events program budget. With a focus on continuous improvement, the Senior Director of Special Events will uphold the highest standards of quality, efficiency, and innovation in all event-related activities, while maintaining a strategic three- to five-year events plan while documenting procedures to ensure consistency across all events.

THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The BSO engages millions of people each year in the remarkable diversity and wonder of orchestral music and maintains homes at its iconic venues, Boston's Symphony Hall and Tanglewood in Western Massachusetts. From the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular on the Charles River Esplanade to community concerts throughout Greater Boston, an annual BSO Youth and Family series at Symphony Hall, humanities programs at the Tanglewood Learning Institute, and tour performances in concert halls around the world, the BSO remains committed to innovation, creativity, cultural relevance, education, civic engagement, and making orchestral music accessible to audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of familiarity.

Celebrated for its diverse programs, passionate performances, and tradition of innovation, the Boston Symphony Orchestra—under the artistic direction of Andris Nelsons since 2014—has been at the forefront of artistry for more than 140 years. At home, abroad, and through recordings, television, and radio broadcasts, a deep and inclusive commissioning legacy, and a history of cultivating emerging artists, the BSO reinforces its status as one of the world's most accomplished and versatile ensembles, attracting world-renowned guest artists, composers, and conductors.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Senior Director of Special Events will report to the Chief Development Officer, Lauren Budding. The Senior Director will supervise three staff as well as oversee the work of the Gala Committees.

With over two decades of leadership experience in the nonprofit sector, Lauren Budding has been instrumental in guiding organizations through significant growth and strategic change. She joined the BSO from Elpis Associates, where, as Principal and Founder, she distinguished herself with her innovative approach to strategic planning, fundraising, and external engagement. At Elpis Associates, Lauren focused on organizational change, philanthropy, and building support for civic causes across multiple sectors, including arts and culture, higher education, and community development.

Lauren's tenure as Chief External Engagement Officer at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston is particularly notable. During her time there, she oversaw a transformative period, managing fundraising, board relations, and major strategic initiatives, including a \$180 million fundraising campaign—the largest in the museum's history.

Lauren holds a bachelor's degree in history and economics from Smith College and a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School. Her deep commitment to community service is evident in her extensive volunteer work with various nonprofit boards and her involvement in political fundraising.

FROM THE CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Since its founding in 1881, the BSO has centered innovation in its practices. One of the great orchestras of the world, devoted to advancing the classical music artform, it was also the first to integrate popular entertainments into its program offerings, with the creation of the Pops. Long a home for many of the most progressive musicians of our times, it has helped launch countless artists' careers and commissioned an unparalleled body of music. With the establishment of Tanglewood, its iconic summer home, it has embedded musical training, mentorship, and humanistic explorations into its programming with artists representing the full breadth of genres. It is, quite simply, an organization which has pointed the way forward since its very first days.

Today, the BSO is rededicating itself to that foundational notion that excellence in its work can and will continue to inspire, comfort, and challenge audiences in meaningful ways. The BSO is on the precipice of change, and the development department will be essential to fueling and supporting this transformation. As a key leader in the department, the Senior Director of Special Events will oversee signature fundraising events, including two high-profile Galas, a series of stewardship and cultivation events in each season, as well as leading the creation of bespoke opportunities that highlight the artistic breadth and depth of the BSO programming for the BSO board, donors, and prospects. Special events will be at the center of the development strategy and this important position will collaborate closely with other leaders in the department.

I am joining the BSO as Chief Development Officer as of September 1, 2024, after having a long-standing relationship with the Symphony as a consultant and a patron. I am most excited about the potential for how the BSO can better serve the communities of Boston and the Berkshires through impactful, accessible, and high-quality programming; better serve the artform through imaginative generative work; and better serve musicians locally, nationally, and globally, by amplifying their voices. As we lead up to the BSO's 150th anniversary in 2031, the institution must meet this moment. The transformative ideas and investments that will support this arc of ambition will require transformational fundraising and the highest quality events to engage our constituencies. I look forward to welcoming a seasoned, strategic, and entrepreneurial partner leading the Events team in this next chapter.

The Senior Director of Special Events will join an organization that has an extraordinarily loyal, committed, and generous donor base. At the same time, given the ambitions of this next chapter, there is an imperative to build and re-orient the fundraising programs across the BSO to engage a new, broader generation of prospects and donors; special events will be on the forefront of helping to attract and engage new donors and prospects. We welcome candidates who are excited about the challenges, as well as the opportunity to build an industry-leading, contemporary culture of special events and philanthropy.

—Lauren Budding, Chief Development Officer

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Over the past three years, the BSO has been actively engaged in deepening its equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) focus and the culmination of this engagement will be articulated in an external-facing statement in tandem with the incorporation of these principals into the BSO's strategic planning process. The BSO's commitment to EDI is evolving from an organic process of creating spaces for diverse artistic expression, to a deliberate approach that seeks to dismantle the barriers to accessing world-class music, and to normalizing artistic expressions within broad historical, economic, social, and cultural contexts.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Director of Special Events will

- establish clear goals and strategic plans for all development events, ensuring alignment with the BSO's broader fundraising objectives;
- serve as the in-house expert for event planning, overseeing the logistics and execution of all Development events across various locations, including Boston and Tanglewood;
- lead cross-departmental meetings, bringing together stakeholders across the BSO and beyond to ensure a cohesive and unified approach to event planning and execution;
- inspire and manage a team of event professionals, fostering an environment that encourages professional growth, high engagement, and a strong commitment to the BSO;
- implement training and professional development programs, set clear performance expectations, and provide regular feedback to ensure excellence in execution;
- work closely with the Boston Symphony Orchestra Association of Volunteers Director and staff to effectively mobilize and coordinate volunteer efforts for major events such as Opening Nights;
- develop and maintain comprehensive timelines and planning logistics for all events, assessing and prioritizing projects in consultation with Program Directors;
- act as the Development department's primary liaison with donors, trustees, life trustees, and advisors emeriti;
- uphold standards of quality, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness in all event-related activities, continually seeking opportunities for improvement and innovation;
- partner with the Marketing Office and external vendors to develop and produce high-quality event invitations and promotional materials;
- ensure accurate tracking and recording of all event participants in Raiser's Edge in collaboration with the Development Services department;
- develop and maintain a comprehensive events plan with a three- to five-year strategic timeline;
- establish and document procedures and systems for effective event tracking and management;
- create and update a BSO Events Guidelines document for consistency and quality across all events;

- manage and oversee the events program budget, aligning it with financial goals and objectives; and
- build and maintain a high-performing, highly engaged team of event professionals that consistently deliver excellence in execution and demonstrate strong commitment.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The BSO seeks a Senior Director of Special Events with

- a commitment to the BSO's mission of maintaining an organization dedicated to top-tier musical artistry, performance, and educational excellence;
- a strong background in fundraising, arts institutions, and nonprofit events;
- an ability to work effectively with high-level stakeholders, including trustees, decision-makers, and top-level volunteers;
- experience managing, developing, and motivating direct reports and teams;
- exceptional strategic planning and organizational skills, with a keen attention to detail;
- an ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously;
- an ability to perform under pressure and meet tight deadlines; and
- effectiveness as a strong team player with excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills.

The BSO prefers candidates with a bachelor's degree or equivalent, plus at least five years of event planning and management experience, though applicants from diverse backgrounds are welcome. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to the BSO, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$125,000 to \$150,000 annually, with a comprehensive benefits package including health, dental, life, and disability insurance, along with paid vacation, sick days, and holidays.

LOCATION

This position is based in Boston, MA with substantial time in Tanglewood required during the summer. Housing in the Berkshires is provided by the BSO.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the BSO and the responsibilities and competencies presented in the position prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Senior Director of Special Events, Boston Symphony Orchestra](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Clare McCully: claremccully@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.