



CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

[THE CARVER](#)

NORWALK, CONNECTICUT



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Carver in the search for a Chief Development Officer.

The Carver seeks a Chief Development Officer with the ability and drive needed to reimagine the future of fundraising and secure innovative financing to amplify the impact of the Carver. The Chief Development Officer will play a critical role in shaping and executing a bold, multi-year strategic development plan designed to diversify and significantly increase philanthropic revenue for the Carver, a rapidly growing nonprofit with a unique business model. This newly created and pivotal leadership role represents a major organizational investment in the Carver's long-term vision for growth, innovation, and sustainability. The successful candidate will thrive in the Carver's dynamic and entrepreneurial environment and build a high-performing development team that embodies creativity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to excellence. The Carver is poised for tremendous growth — and seeks candidates with the vision and skills necessary to take the Carver to the next level of fundraising. The Chief Development Officer will play a central role in shaping the future of an organization renowned for its transformative impact on young people's lives. Working closely with the Chief Executive Officer, executive team, and board of directors, the Chief Development Officer will set clear objectives and key results, ensuring alignment with the organization's mission and long-term goals. The Chief Development Officer will bring an entrepreneurial mindset to the identification of emerging trends and innovative fundraising models, moving beyond traditional nonprofit fundraising to drive sustainable growth and will advocate for the Carver's mission, fostering a culture of philanthropy across the institution. Overseeing a comprehensive development program, the Chief Development Officer will manage major gifts, annual giving, corporate and foundation relations, planned giving, government grants, and capital campaigns, while personally cultivating and stewarding a portfolio of principal and transformational donors. The Chief Development Officer will cultivate strategic partnerships with corporations, foundations, and high-net-worth individuals to maximize philanthropic investment in the Carver.

The Carver's afterschool and summer programming is among the most effective in the nation. The Carver equips all learners for global competitiveness by leading strategic partnerships with schools and communities that advance excellence and growth opportunities. The Carver operates more than 65 before-school, after-school, summer, and community programs in all K-12 public schools in Norwalk, Side by Side Charter School, the Classical Studies Magnet Academy in Bridgeport, four public elementary schools in Bridgeport, Naugatuck High School, Stamford High School, and the Carver Community Center. The Carver partners with school districts, serving as problem solvers — customizing programs for each school across science, technology, engineering, arts, math, and wellness.

The Carver's programming aligns with in-school curricula, occurs within the students' respective schools, and is led by each school's daytime certified teachers. The Carver students advance to the next grade on time and prepared. Since 2005, 100% of the Carver seniors have graduated on time, and almost all have become first-generation college students. Programming includes K-12 workforce development, college tours, and college scholarships.

The Carver prioritizes its role as a collaborative partner and adept problem-solver for school districts. By fostering strong, symbiotic relationships with educational institutions, The Carver dedicates itself to addressing schools' specific needs and challenges. This partnership-driven approach allows The Carver to tailor its solutions to enhance educational outcomes and provide meaningful support, ensuring that the primary focus remains on improving the school communities it serves.

By embedding itself within the ecosystem of the school districts, the Carver underscores its commitment to collective success, opting to raise awareness and garner support through demonstrable impact rather than through self-centric branding efforts.

The Carver's programs are infused with project-based learning in STEAM subjects, which sometimes involves international projects. The Carver also brings social-emotional learning, a multi-tiered system of support, and wellness programming to everything it does. Enthusiastic parent and community engagement informs all programs. Skills training through a "learning through play" model provides young people with tools and opportunities to imagine, create, share, and learn while encouraging them to engage and collaborate. With its strategic partners, the Carver conducts research to understand and measure student performance and growth, and it continuously develops new evidence-based programming.

The Carver's impact is undeniable — its alumni are ambitious critical thinkers making their mark in law, government, medicine, finance, entertainment, professional sports, technology, education, entrepreneurship, and creative arts. The Carver has a strong reputation for fiscal management and has an annual operating budget of over \$11 million which, through innovative fundraising leadership, could reach \$20 million. A capital campaign to renovate the Carver's community center has raised approximately \$5 million to date with approximately \$6 million remaining. The Carver is recognized as a *Top Work Places* by Hearst Connecticut Media Group, and has a four star rating from Charity Navigator.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Development Officer will report to the Chief Executive Officer, Novelette Peterkin and serve as an executive team member. The Chief Development Officer will build a high-performing team, currently comprised of four staff, to drive sustainable revenue growth.

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Founded in 1938 as a community center named after the visionary George Washington Carver, the Carver is at an exciting crossroads in its history. While the organization has a legacy of empowering youth through innovative programs, this moment is defined by unprecedented potential and growth. The Carver's pioneering journey began expanding into Norwalk schools in 2008, and today, we proudly operate in every Norwalk school, as well as schools in three other Connecticut towns.

Our proven business model has earned the confidence of federal, state, and local governments, private foundations, and an array of philanthropic leaders, including prominent billionaires. The Carver's program methodologies are designed for scalability, enabling rapid expansion into new school districts eager to adopt our impactful approach. This trajectory sets the stage for the creation of this new and critical leadership position: Chief Development Officer.

As a key thought leader and senior member of the Carver's executive team, the Chief Development Officer will play a strategic role in shaping and implementing local, regional, and national strategies to elevate fundraising impact. Beyond driving results, the Chief Development Officer will lead, inspire, and cultivate a best-in-class Development team while fostering a culture of excellence and collaboration.

This is more than a leadership position — it's an opportunity to contribute to a workplace culture that values and nurtures every member's potential. At the Carver, we are committed to work-life balance, professional growth, and celebrating diversity. The Carver is a place where passion meets purpose, where leaders thrive, and where legacies are made.

As Carver's long-serving Chief Executive Officer, I have championed our mission for 20 years, with senior staff averaging seven+ years of tenure. The Carver is deeply committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles, exemplified by its leadership, where the Chief Executive Officer, senior staff, and board of directors have consistently been comprised of a majority of persons of color. One among many shining examples of the Carver's impact is alumna and current board member Diaghilev Lubin-Farnell, who now serves as a Connecticut Assistant Attorney General.

This is a unique chance to join an organization on the cusp of transformational growth and leave a meaningful legacy in the lives of countless young people. If you are a visionary leader ready to join a groundbreaking organization poised for transformational growth, we invite you to bring your passion, expertise, and entrepreneurial spirit to the Carver.

—Novelette Peterkin, Chief Executive Officer

THE CARVER'S VALUES

Equity. Equal is not equitable. The Carver provides the resources that help its students thrive. The Carver is a community that believes all children and youth are defined by their own strengths, abilities, and inherent value. It believes all children and youth are entitled to respect, dignity, equality, safety, and security. The Carver works to expand opportunities wherever children live and learn, with respect for every child's needs and identities — including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ability, age, native language, and faith. The Carver recognizes that access to opportunity is not equal; its initiatives work to bridge gaps across many of the interwoven systemic inequities that exist in society — especially for historically marginalized communities. It also recognizes that this is an ongoing process that will require intentional thought, education, and action.

Integrity. The Carver is trustworthy. It is reliable, authentic, and loyal. It does what it says it will do. It welcomes accountability and conducts its business with honesty and transparency.

Community. The Carver is committed to a positive environment in which everyone may experience a sense of belonging and worth. It honors relationships and takes responsibility for fostering trust, respect, and goodwill. It shares stories about heritage, calling, and vulnerabilities.

Diversity & Inclusion. The Carver honors the intrinsic dignity, autonomy, and worth of each person. It treats others the way it would want to be treated. It is considerate of each other's feelings, values, and points of view. It actively seeks and leverages the unique contributions of people across all dimensions of difference.

Excellence. The Carver is committed to pursuing the highest possible standards at every level of the organization. It strives to become the benchmark through innovation and initiative. It is committed to always putting forth its personal and professional best.

Commitment. All of the Carver's partners recognize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Despite societal and economic challenges, the Carver remains firm in its commitment to creating a community in which all members can participate fully. To be true to its founders, its students, and alumni, and to its namesake, George Washington Carver, requires nothing less.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership & Vision

The Chief Development Officer will

- develop and implement strategies to mitigate risks associated with potential public education funding changes while identifying new opportunities for growth;
- prioritize private philanthropic support, focusing on entrepreneurial approaches to securing funding resilience in a potentially shifting public funding environment and building enduring relationships with high-net-worth individuals, corporations, and foundations;
- develop and execute an ambitious, multi-year strategic development plan to diversify and significantly increase philanthropic revenue and establish annual and multi-year revenue targets;
- collaborate with leadership and the board of directors in executing and developing future strategic plans, creating objectives and key results in support of the Carver's vision and mission;
- identify emerging trends and opportunities and bring an entrepreneurial mindset to explore innovative financing models beyond traditional nonprofit fundraising; and
- serve as a thought leader, advocating for the Carver's mission and cultivating a culture of philanthropy throughout the organization.

Revenue Generation & Donor Relations

The Chief Development Officer will

- oversee a comprehensive development program encompassing major gifts, annual fund, corporate and foundation relations, planned giving, and capital campaigns;
- personally cultivate, solicit, and steward a portfolio of principal and transformational gift prospects and donors; and
- foster strategic partnerships and creative collaborations with corporations, foundations, and high-net-worth individuals to maximize philanthropic investments.

Team Leadership & Management

The Chief Development Officer will

- serve as the staff liaison for the development committee of the board of directors;
- recruit, mentor, and lead a talented development team with expertise across key fundraising areas;
- empower and inspire a metrics-driven, entrepreneurial team culture focused on innovation and results; and

- implement best practices in moves management, data analytics, and technology to optimize development operations.

LEADERSHIP

Novelette Peterkin Chief Executive Officer

Since assuming the Chief Executive Officer role at the Carver in 2004, Novelette Peterkin has embarked on a transformative journey, reshaping the Carver's community impact from a vibrant Norwalk community center into a city-wide network of educational and support programs.

These programs encompass community, before and after-school initiatives, as well as enriching summer programs, all designed to provide equitable and comprehensive assistance to students in all the Norwalk Public Schools, Side by Side Charter School, and the Carver Community Center, the Classical Studies Magnet Academy in Bridgeport, Stamford High School, and Naugatuck High School, thereby amplifying the organization's reach and impact across diverse communities.

In addition to her role at the Carver, Novelette dedicates her time and expertise to the Maritime Aquarium, where she serves on the Board of Directors. She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School's esteemed Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program for CEOs. Novelette holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Mercy College, followed by an MBA from the University of New Haven, solidifying her finance and strategic management foundation. Novelette has received numerous honors for her contributions to the community, including the Women of Distinction Award from the Darien YWCA and the United Way's Elizabeth Roberts Changing the Odds for Children Award. Novelette is also an active member of the National Black MBA Association. Before her tenure at the Carver, Novelette commenced her professional journey as a private wealth manager in New York City. Before joining the Carver, she was the Assistant Director of Residential Services at the Andrus Children's Center in New York.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Carver seeks a Chief Development Officer with

- a commitment to the mission of the Carver — to equip all learners for global competitiveness by leading strategic partnerships with schools and communities that advance excellence and growth opportunities;
- strategic foresight, creative problem-solving, a forward-thinking approach, and experience scaling non-profit models on a national level;
- a demonstrated ability to cultivate private philanthropy as a primary funding source, including major gifts, corporate partnerships, and individual donors;
- a history of directly soliciting and securing gifts with significant institutional impact while achieving ambitious revenue goals;
- experience identifying and capitalizing on new revenue opportunities;
- experience managing and expanding a corporate and government grants program;
- experience utilizing AI and data-driven tools for donor analytics, campaign strategy, and impact measurement;
- knowledge of innovative funding models, such as Pay for Success, and other entrepreneurial approaches to philanthropy;

- experience navigating and preparing for external challenges, and an ability to ensure the Carver’s sustainability regardless of funding disruptions;
- strong analytical capabilities and proficiency leveraging data to inform strategy and decision-making;
- experience recruiting, mentoring, and leading high performing fundraising teams focused on metrics and results;
- a commitment to excellence, attention to detail, highly refined organizational skills, and a history of setting priorities and meeting deadlines;
- the exceptional communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills needed to engage diverse stakeholders;
- an entrepreneurial approach, energy, creativity, and drive;
- a belief in the value that diversity, equity, and inclusion bring to the workplace; and
- experience and knowledge of Microsoft Office and database management systems (preferably Raiser’s Edge).

A bachelor’s degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least eight years of progressive development leadership experience, preferably within a large, complex nonprofit organization, is preferred. The Carver will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to the Carver, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY, BENEFITS, AND CULTURE

The salary range for this position is \$140,000 to \$150,000 annually. The Carver provides a comprehensive package of benefits including medical and dental insurance, and both short-term and long-term disability.

The Carver’s executive leadership and Board of Directors reaffirm its values of vision, equity, integrity, community, diversity and inclusion, excellence, and commitment — maintaining them, and steering the culture in the desired direction. Due to the Carver’s consistent expansion, it has a startup culture even though the organization was founded in 1938. The Carver’s leaders influence the atmosphere of the workplace, and the morale that its teams carry. The Carver’s well-defined personnel practices reverberate throughout the organization. For example, it regards transparency as one of its key tenets. The Carver maintains robust donor privacy policies and it is always upfront and honest with its donors. It also practices these principles internally. The Carver’s culture includes practicing transparency; communicating with its staff members about goals and progress; giving staff high visibility into where the organization is currently, and where it’s headed; welcoming honest feedback; and taking the next steps and acting on the feedback received. The Carver’s culture is intentionally defined, actively practiced, and nurtured by leadership. The Carver clearly communicates its values and lives its culture in its actions.

LOCATION

This position is in Norwalk, Connecticut. This is an office-based position with some flexibility for a hybrid schedule.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

To apply for this position, visit: [Chief Development Officer, The Carver](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Steven Wallace, stevenwallace@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.