

EXECUTIVE SEARCH



DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



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Client: English-Speaking Union of the United States
Role: Director of Development
Location: New York, NY
Reports To: President/Executive Director
Website: esuus.org



SITUATION OVERVIEW:

ZRG Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the English-Speaking Union of the United States (ESU-US) in their search for a **Director of Development**.

ABOUT ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION:

Scholars and civic leaders have long noted that societies flourish not only through economic strength or technological progress, but through shared language, cultural exchange, and the ability to listen across difference. Civility—understood not as politeness, but as respect, curiosity, and engagement—is foundational to a healthy democracy and a productive global society.

ESU's mission speaks directly to these challenges. It reflects a long-standing belief in the power of language, cultural exchange, and civil discourse to foster understanding and goodwill across difference. This commitment is reflected in ESU's Mission Statement: *To utilize English as a catalyst to foster global understanding and goodwill by providing educational opportunities and cultural exchange for students, educators, and recent immigrants...by promoting creative and confident civil discourse, we enable participants to rise to their potential as individuals, thrive as global citizens, and join worldwide in pursuing conditions for peace.*

Founded in 1920, the English-Speaking Union of the United States is a national membership organization with more than 4,000 members organized in 65 Branches across the country. ESU members and volunteers are the pillars of their educational and cultural programs as they work in their local communities to carry the ESU mission forward. The English-Speaking Union of the United States shares



fellowship with more than 50 independent ESUs around the world, including the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth in London.

People experience the ESU-US mission differently, but its impact is unmistakable. Through its language education, cultural exchange, and immersive learning experiences—and its network of over sixty active branches—they create pathways to connection and possibility:

- **Public speaking and debate programs** engage over 1,000 students in reasoned discourse, while the **Evelyn Wrench Speaker Series** brings global perspectives directly to ESU-US communities.
- **Travel and Learning Abroad (TLab)** sends American educators and lifelong learners to esteemed institutions like Oxford and Edinburgh to renew their passion and expand global awareness. In one recent cycle, thirty-nine educators participated.
- The **Secondary School Exchange** places American students for a semester abroad in prestigious British schools, where they develop leadership, resilience, and global fluency.
- The **National Shakespeare Competition** helps more than 4,100 high school students annually master language, build confidence, and earn recognition—from hometown stages to Lincoln Center.
- The **Luard Morse Scholarship** enables students from top Historically Black Colleges and Universities to study at distinguished British universities.
- The **Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC)** advances the professional and social integration of new Americans through a comprehensive program of career support, workforce preparation, and cultural orientation. In the program's tenth-anniversary evaluation, 100% of participants reported improved English and 93% felt more at home in the U.S.
- **English in Action** pairs newcomers with volunteers for one-to-one conversation practice, helping participants build language skills and confidence while gaining insights into U.S. life.

At a time when public discourse feels increasingly polarized, civility strained, and human connection filtered through digital exchange, institutions dedicated to thoughtful communication and mutual understanding are not luxuries—they are necessities. The English-Speaking Union of the United States exists for this moment, and for the generations who will inherit what they build now.

POSITION:

The **Director of Development (DoD)** will serve as ESU-US's chief fundraising strategist and be responsible for designing and executing a comprehensive revenue strategy that advances ESU's mission. Partnering closely with the Executive Director and Board, the DoD will grow and diversify annual and institutional support; elevate major and planned gifts; strengthen branch-level fundraising capacity; and steward a culture of philanthropy across the organization. The Director must be comfortable working alongside board members and volunteers, earning their

trust and motivating their fundraising participation without having any authority over them, and able to provide scalable tools and coaching to volunteer-led local chapters.

FROM THE PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I am writing to invite you to consider a leadership role as our Director of Development. The English-Speaking Union of the United States has enriched lives for over a century through educational and cultural programs, including our Center for New Immigrants and youth Debate and Public Speaking leagues. ESU has had recent success in completing the first phase of a multi-year organizational sustainability initiative that has strengthened operations, modernized systems, and positioned the organization for growth. We seek a dynamic, visionary fundraising executive to help us expand our national reach.

This position represents a great opportunity for you to shape the future of our philanthropic efforts. You will serve as the strategic architect of our fundraising programs, utilizing your proven ability to cultivate major gifts and grow revenue. Key competencies for this role include:

- **Strategic Leadership:** Ability to guide our team, partner with our board of directors, and oversee organizational growth.
- **Donor Relations:** Success in building strong, lasting relationships with donors, sponsors, and community advocates.
- **Communication Skills:** Superb verbal and written skills to clearly convey our mission.

As our Director of Development, you will use these skills to create strategies that ensure our financial stability and impact. This role will allow you to showcase your leadership, while making a tangible difference in the lives of students, educators, and newcomers to the United States.

We would be thrilled to discuss how your career goals align with our mission.

— Karen Karpowich, President/Executive Director

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The **Director of Development** will

- develop and lead a multi-year, data-informed development plan aligned to ESU-US's strategic priorities and branch network growth;
- set clear revenue goals, monitor progress, and adapt strategy and execution to meet or exceed targets;
- serve as a visible ambassador for ESU's mission and programs;
- build and manage a high-value portfolio of individual donors and prospects and lead moves management from qualification through stewardship;

- partner with the President/Executive Director and Board to plan and execute high-impact cultivation and solicitation of prospective donors;
- partner with campaign consultants to advance ESU-US's Capacity-Building Campaign, ensuring alignment with organizational priorities.
- translate consultant recommendations into actionable fundraising plans, prospect pipelines, and donor engagement strategies;
- mobilize Board, major donor prospects, and campaign committee members to engage in and support the campaign;
- create and execute campaign communications, events, and recognition opportunities that elevate donor engagement and visibility;
- track progress, report results, and ensure donor stewardship and recognition throughout the campaign;
- oversee a focused pipeline for grants and sponsorships, develop compelling cases for support, and ensure timely, high-quality proposals and reports.
- align corporate engagement with program impact and brand visibility (e.g., sponsorships, employee engagement, volunteerism);
- staff the Board Development Committee and drive Board giving and participation goals;
- provide fundraising reports to the Board, Task Force, and other special groups on a regular basis;
- provide coaching, tools, and scalable templates to strengthen branch fundraising;
- coordinate national appeals and campaigns that branches can localize to grow membership and philanthropy;
- ensure a best-in-class stewardship program with personalized acknowledgment, impact reporting, and engagement opportunities;
- set strategy and revenue goals for signature cultivation and fundraising events, prioritizing measurable ROI;
- ensure disciplined use of the CRM (e.g., segmentation, and analytics that inform strategy.); and
- work with the Comptroller to manage development budgets and forecasts, engaging outside vendors and consultants as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The English-Speaking Union of the United States seeks a **Director of Development** with

- a commitment to the mission of ESU – to expand minds, strengthen friendships, and unlock opportunities through the use of the English language;
- a history of success with major gifts and institutional giving for organizations with at least \$1.5M in annual revenue;

- experience supporting federated or branch/chapter models and coaching small or volunteer-led development efforts;
- demonstrated success designing and meeting multi-channel revenue plans;
- an understanding of planned giving principles;
- experience supporting or leading fundraising campaigns;
- an ability to be an excellent storyteller with strong written and verbal communication skills;
- an ability to translate program impact into compelling donor value propositions;
- experience partnering with Boards and volunteer leaders to drive results;
- an ability to leverage data-driven decision-making and portfolio discipline;
- familiarity with programs serving immigrants/new Americans, educators, and youth arts/education;
- knowledge of fundraising CRMs (Neon), wealth screening tools, modern prospecting tools, and Microsoft 365; and
- knowledge of database management, gift tracking and prospect management.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least seven years of progressive fundraising leadership is required for this position.

The English-Speaking Union of the United States will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to ESU-US, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

The **Director of Development** will report to the President/Executive Director, Karen Karpowich.

SALARY & BENEFITS:

The salary range for this position is \$110,000 to \$120,000. The English-Speaking Union of the United States offers a comprehensive package of benefits including medical, dental, and vision insurance, a 403(b) retirement plan with employer contributions, and generous paid time off.

LOCATION:

This is an in-person role based at the English Speaking Union of the United States' offices in Midtown Manhattan.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the English-Speaking Union 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: [Director of Development, English-Speaking Union of the United States](#).

To nominate a candidate or inquire about the position, please contact [Carmel Napolitano](#).

ABOUT ZRG PARTNERS:

ZRG is a global talent advisory firm that is changing the way companies find, hire, and manage talent through its data-driven approach to executive and professional search. The company's digital Zi platform combines talent intelligence, candidate insights, and process improvement to dramatically deliver executive searches quicker and with proven better results.

ABOUT ZRG ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP:

ZRG Aspen Leadership Group (ALG) supports exceptional careers in the nonprofit sector, recruiting presidents, executive directors, and chief advancement officers and helping them recruit, train, and inspire high-performing teams. The company's search services and leadership consulting focus on building teams that enable an organization to engage all its potential donors and volunteers and to drive unprecedented fundraising results.



Carmel Napolitano
Principal

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Carmel Napolitano is a Principal at ZRG Aspen Leadership Group, focused on executive search and talent advisory for nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. With a network that spans local to global reach, she has completed leadership searches across advocacy, arts and culture, economic development, education, environmental, global health, and human services sectors.

Carmel built her foundation in higher education and nonprofit fundraising at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University. Since entering executive search in 2003, she has led senior-level leadership searches across advocacy, arts and culture, economic development, education, environmental, global health, and human services organizations, placing transformative leaders at mission-driven institutions nationwide and internationally.

Carmel partners with boards and senior leaders to place CEO, President, and Executive Director talent who can navigate complexity and deliver lasting impact. Her search completion rate is above average, and the leaders she places remain in their roles for an average of six years or more. She brings deep expertise in higher education, advocacy, international NGOs, donor advised funds, and arts and culture organizations. Actively engaged in the sector, Carmel has

served on the boards of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater New York, Women in Development New York, Angelica Patient Assistance Program, and Dance to Unite, and currently serves on the national advisory board of Women of Color in Philanthropy.

Carmel is based in ZRG's New York City office. She holds degrees from Villanova University and the University of Pennsylvania.