



Chief Development Officer  
Folger Shakespeare Library  
Washington, DC

## THE SEARCH

The Folger Shakespeare Library (the Folger) seeks a seasoned, highly motivated, and mission-driven philanthropic leader to serve as the organization's Chief Development Officer (CDO). This is an opportunity to partner with new Director [Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper](#) early in her tenure and support an organization with a rich history, distinguished reputation, and transformational ambitions. The Folger boasts the world's largest collection of printed works of William Shakespeare, rare materials from the early modern period, and physical and electronic resources related to the understanding and interpretation of Shakespeare and his time. It offers advanced scholarly programs, national outreach to middle and high-school students and educators, Shakespeare-inspired performances and programming, and workshops and activities for families, all of the highest quality. The Folger finds its strength and distinction in cultivating so many paths to engage with Shakespeare and the humanities. Each year, millions visit in person and virtually.

The CDO will join the Folger at an auspicious time. In 2024, the organization welcomed Dr. Karim-Cooper as its inspiring new leader and concluded a \$80.5 million comprehensive capital project marked by more than 10 years of planning and four years of construction. The reimagined Folger has 12,000 square feet of new public space, two new exhibition halls, a learning lab, and collaborative research spaces, as well as accessible entrances, a café, and a new gift shop. This renovation represents an expansion of the Folger's scope and ambition: to continue to serve and support the scholars and researchers who travel to the Folger to access its rich collections, and simultaneously to increase the Folger's level of engagement with the general public, the diverse communities of Washington, DC and the surrounding region, and visitors from across the nation and around the globe.

The CDO will partner closely with Dr. Karim-Cooper as a key advisor and serve as the lead fundraising officer of the Folger. With a goal of raising \$4 million to \$5 million in annual support, the CDO will provide fully integrated leadership and direction in increasing individual and institutional philanthropic resources, high impact partnerships, awareness, and powerful connections with both the Folger's existing constituents and its emerging audiences. The CDO will work closely with the Director and the full senior leadership team to create a fundraising strategy in alignment with the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the organization. As a highly visible and ambitious external leader, the CDO will identify, cultivate, and solicit major gift prospects while providing internal organizational leadership and effective management

for the development team. As a member of the Folger's senior leadership team, the CDO will collaborate with and contribute to the operational and financial stewardship of the organization and the production of high impact programming across its pillars of content creation.

The Folger Shakespeare Library has retained Jack Gorman of the national executive search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

The origins of the Folger Shakespeare Library date to 1885, when Henry Clay Folger bought a facsimile copy of the 1623 First Folio of William Shakespeare's plays as a gift for his wife, Emily Jordan Folger. The spark of their interest in Shakespeare was kindled. Four years later they acquired their first rare book, a copy of the 1685 Fourth Folio. In the following decades, the collection grew, such that when the library was opened in 1932, the collection amounted to 200,000 items. The Folgers opted for Washington, DC, the nation's capital, as the home for their extraordinary collection as a gift to the American people. Emily Folger wrote of Henry Folger's belief that Shakespeare "is one of our best sources, one of the wells from which we Americans draw our national thought, our faith and our hope." This belief in the deep connection between Shakespeare and America is the reason the Folger Shakespeare Library is located in the nation's capital. In 1938, the Folger acquired the collection of Sir Robert Leicester Harmsworth, comprising more than 8,000 rare books printed in England between 1475 and 1640. These collections were supplemented by another 20,000 editions dated between 1701 and 1800. Still growing today, the Folger's collection constitutes the ultimate resource for exploring and researching the early modern age.

The activities of the present-day Folger constitute four broad and overlapping pillars:

### *Exhibitions & Collections*

The Folger is a member of the Independent Research Libraries Association and boasts remarkable collections, second only to the British Library in its holdings of books printed in England between 1475 and 1640. Among its numerous highlights are 82 copies of 235 existing First Folios of 1623, which represent the largest collection of First Folios anywhere. The Folger also holds 58 copies of the Second Folio, 23 copies of the Third Folio, and 38 copies of the Fourth Folio. Additionally, the Folger holds nearly 200 early modern quartos of Shakespeare plays and the only copy of the first edition of *Titus Andronicus* (1594). Shakespeare and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English books constitute the heart of the Library's holdings, accompanied and extended by 60,000 handwritten (mostly English) manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century; rare English and Continental Renaissance books including a 1477 edition of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*; and 90,000 prints, drawings, photographs, paintings, and other works of art. The Folger collections also include a wealth of performance history, including playbills, films, recordings, and stage costumes.

## Research

Research and discovery are fundamental to the Folger; the collections are intended to be actively used. Founded in 1970, the Folger Institute serves as an international center for Shakespeare scholarship and the study of the early modern period. The Institute gathers interdisciplinary communities of scholars and artists for collections-based research, innovative scholarly programs and exhibitions, and Critical Race Conversations and is one of the largest direct funders of early modern scholarly work. It provides researchers access to the world's greatest collection of Shakespeare and related materials and delivers peerless support to scholars of all ranks who pursue important questions about the early modern period. Roughly 25 percent of the fellows supported by the Institute are scholars of Shakespeare; the balance ranges across related fields of interest in early modern humanities. The Folger Institute's Consortium – a collaborative endeavor of the Folger and more than 40 universities in the US and abroad – takes a leading role in advancing research and teaching in the humanities. The renowned scholarly publication *Shakespeare Quarterly* publishes cutting edge research on Shakespeare and his time, and the bestselling Folger Editions of Shakespeare's plays provide access to students of all ages.

## Performance

Through professional theater, poetry, lectures, music, podcasts, and other events, the Folger provides millions of people each year with opportunities to experience the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. The Folger Theatre annually performs a season of Shakespeare-inspired productions, featuring Shakespeare's plays as well as contemporary plays inspired by his work. The 2025-2026 season includes *Julius X*, *As You Like It*, *How Shakespeare Saved My Life*, and a series of public readings of world-premiere plays and commissions accompanied by conversations with scholars, artists, and critics.

Folger Consort is the Folger's resident early music ensemble. Founded in 1977, the Consort performs medieval, Renaissance, and baroque music in its concert series. Since 1970, the Folger has also hosted contemporary poets for readings and moderated conversations. Upcoming events include the annual Emily Dickinson Birthday Tribute, the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize reading with Anna Lena Phillips Bell, and acclaimed children's author Kate DiCamillo delivering The Eudora Welty Lecture.

## Learning and Education Programs

Beginning with educational outreach in the 1970s, the Folger has grown to be a leader in K-12 performance-based education. In partnership with local schools, the Folger is working to revolutionize the way that Shakespeare is taught in classrooms. The Folger Method is a way of teaching complex texts that enables all students to own and enjoy the process of close reading, interrogating texts, discovering language with peers, and contributing to the ongoing human conversation about words and ideas. More than two million teachers and students benefit each year from in-person workshops, lesson plans, webinars, online field trips, and detailed teaching guides.

## LEADERSHIP

### **Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper, Director**

Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper was appointed as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in October 2024. She is the eighth director of the nearly century-old institution, which is home to the largest collection of Shakespeare's works in the world.

Dr. Karim-Cooper is widely recognized as a Shakespeare and public scholar. She previously served as Head of Research and then Director of Education and Research at Shakespeare's Globe in London from 2004-2024, and she was appointed Professor of Shakespeare Studies at King's College London from 2020-2024. She served as President of the Shakespeare Association of America from 2021-2022 after serving 5 years on their Board of Trustees. She has published widely on Shakespeare, his theaters, and the culture of early modern England. Her most recent book, *The Great White Bard: How to Love Shakespeare While Talking About Race* (Viking 2023) was recognized as a top book of 2023 by Time Magazine, NPR, and The New Yorker.

She is a field leader in the theaters of Shakespeare's time and was a project leader in the construction of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, the indoor Jacobean theater at Shakespeare's Globe. She is also a leader in the examination of the plays through the lens of race. In 2018 she founded and curated the Globe's Shakespeare and Race Festival. In the UK she founded the first ever Early Modern Scholars of Colour Network.

### **Amherst College + Board of Governors**

Amherst College manages the Folger's endowment and Amherst students are eligible for scholarly fellowships to draw on the Folger's collections. The Folger is proud of the continuing connection to Amherst and sees opportunities to deepen the programmatic relationship in the future. The Folger Shakespeare Library is overseen by an independent 23-member [Board of Governors](#), which includes two Amherst trustees. The Board is chaired by [D. Jarrett Arp](#). The Director of the Folger is accountable to both its Board of Governors and to [Amherst College President Michael Elliott](#).

## ORGANIZATIONAL + FUNDRAISING OVERVIEW

The work of the Folger is enabled by more than 150 full- and part-time staff, with deep passion for, commitment to, and expertise in their respective fields. The annual operating budget is \$28 million, with approximately \$1 million allocated to acquisitions, approximately \$4.5 million to collections and preservation, more than \$2 million to support scholarship through the Institute, nearly \$600,000 to exhibitions, more than \$3 million to performance, and more than \$500,000 to education. These constitute the major budgetary commitments. Annually, the Folger raises roughly \$3 million in philanthropic and other external support. As of June 2024, the endowment stood at \$464 million.

## CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) will serve as the lead fundraising officer of the Folger Shakespeare Library, charged with developing \$4 million to \$5 million in annual support for the organization. They will provide fully integrated leadership and direction in increasing philanthropic resources, high impact partnerships, awareness, and powerful connections with both the Folger's existing constituents and its emerging audiences. The CDO will work closely with the Director of the Folger, and the full senior leadership team, to create a fundraising strategy in alignment with the mission, vision and strategic goals of the organization. This leader will also serve as the key architect and strategist for a future centennial campaign, centered around the Folger's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in April 2032. The CDO will identify, cultivate, and solicit major gift prospects, as well as provide fundraising leadership and effective management for the team. This leader will collaborate with and contribute to the Director's senior team, who together are responsible for the operational and financial stewardship of the organization and the production of high impact programming across its pillars of content creation.

The CDO will lead the development staff across the following functional areas: major, principal, and institutional giving; annual giving and memberships; and development operations. The CDO will optimize the organizational design/functional alignment of the development team in consultation with the Director of the Folger and Director of Talent and Culture.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

### Strategic Leadership

- Set annual fundraising goals for the Folger in consultation with the Director, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), senior leadership, and the Development team to identify and refine giving priorities, and to translate those priorities into opportunities for philanthropy and compelling proposals.
- Construct a development strategy and execute plans that will markedly increase individual (including annual, major, principal, blended, and legacy gifts), foundation, corporate, membership, and other philanthropic support, including conceptualizing and leading a future centennial campaign.
- Steward a corporate membership and sponsorship strategy to support the funding and planning ambitions of the Folger's key areas of programming, with special regard to Exhibitions.
- Personally manage a portfolio of current and prospective donors at the appropriate level of giving capacity, including both individual and institutional sources, moving them through the stages of cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, traveling as needed to support Folger priorities.
- Support the Director to develop a portfolio of donors with capacity for transformational giving, guiding and stewarding the Director's understanding and knowledge of each individual/corporation, enabling a personalized approach to cultivation.

- Prepare regular reports regarding Folger fundraising activities and progress against targets to the Director, senior leadership team, Board of Governors, and, as appropriate, for broader distribution within the organization.
- Work closely with the CFO to set the development target with a view of the wider institutional budget; support the CFO with their implementation of the budgeting process and work closely with them in revenue, event and membership strategy.
- Bring a high-level understanding and knowledge of modern data management practices and techniques, including database information systems and data modeling to support the team to streamline development processes and sophisticated data analysis in collaboration with Marketing and Communications.
- Engage in high-level strategic thinking to shape innovative fundraising plans to achieve mission-focused goals and move individuals and institutions across the spectrum of prospect development, culminating in solicitations appropriate to organizational priorities and donor opportunities.

#### **Board and Donor Engagement**

- Partner with the Director and Board Chair to identify new board members with high-level giving capacity.
- Work closely with the Board of Governors stewarding their role in contributing to the Folger, cultivating them and leveraging their respective networks to expand the Folger's donor base.
- Research, approach and cultivate donors, delivering high-quality, individualized, and meaningful stewardship, working closely with the Director and developing personal relationships with donors as needed.
- Lead and oversee the Development team in creating and promoting effective cultivation and solicitation opportunities that involve the Director of the Folger, members of the senior leadership team, volunteers, and the Board of Governors.
- Commit to ongoing discovery of new major and principal gifts prospects and serve as the Folger's primary knowledge source for funding opportunities and philanthropic outlets. Attend philanthropy association gatherings and meetings, bringing the latest methodologies and strategies to the Folger.
- Lead the analysis of existing and entry-level donors who may have greater capacity, developing a strategy to move donors into higher categories of giving.
- Demonstrate expertise in nonprofit fundraising with a deep understanding of the Folger and the Director's vision, as well as the landscape and nuances of Washington, DC philanthropy. Speak credibly and persuasively about the Folger's mission and its vision for the future.

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### Team and Organizational Oversight

- Recruit, diversify, coach, inspire, empower, and motivate a strong development team that represents the community that the Folger serves, including hiring, managing, mentoring, training, and evaluating an experienced and highly driven and competent team.
- Work with the Development team and colleagues in Marketing and Communications, to further develop a membership strategy and increase membership and participation in the Annual Fund, aligning annual giving efforts with other activities to assist in identifying and cultivating prospects for leadership and major gifts.
- Oversee institutional giving, working closely with colleagues from across the institution on both sustainable and project specific funding opportunities that align with the mission and the Director's vision.
- Provide regular reports to the Folger Director and internal clients regarding membership and fundraising performance and planning; provide overview development assessments to the Board of Governors quarterly.
- Ensure the Folger's administrative practices in development are of the highest and most efficient standards, enabling the Folger to provide its donor community with regular and timely contact, acknowledgments, and invitations for further engagement.
- Working with the Director of Marketing and Communications and Head of IT, to oversee growth, maintenance, and enhancement of the Development team's technological proficiency and tools, maximizing utilization of technologies to streamline operational processes; spearhead creative technology initiatives that touch new audiences of potential donors. Bring a curiosity and thirst for learning about the latest tools for donor cultivation and management.
- Create a supportive, collaborative, and productive work environment based on respect, teamwork, and the equity, diversity, and inclusion values of the Folger.
- Establish strong relationships with senior directors, working most closely on daily operations with the Director, CFO, and Director of Marketing and Communications.
- Set performance standards and provide timely, constructive feedback while supporting opportunities for professional development.
- Support team ingenuity with appropriate human resources, structures, systems, and technological platforms that are in alignment with current and future trends in philanthropy.
- Embrace other team and organizational effectiveness responsibilities as needed.

## TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Chief Development Officer will be a proven leader, manager, mentor, and collaborative colleague who is comfortable leading major initiatives and supporting the leadership of others and who has a history of effectively leading organizational growth through contributed income. They will be an innovator in philanthropy, who possesses credibility and passion for the arts and the humanities. The ideal candidate will have participated in a meaningful way in a major capital campaign, have proven results as a frontline solicitor of major gifts, demonstrate experience in stewarding corporate membership and sponsorship strategies, and have collaborated on major campaigns that connect philanthropic partners with the mission-led programmatic and institutional vision of an organization like the Folger. They must be a student of modern philanthropy best practices and able to effectively leverage a fundraising model through the strategic, forward-thinking integration of corresponding functions.

Other key competencies include:

**Customer/Donor Focus** – The capacity to anticipate, meet, and frequently exceed the expectations of donors and corporate partners while deeply considering internal stakeholder perspectives.

**Personal Accountability and Self-Awareness** – The capability to self-evaluate and answer for personal actions, decisions, and results while demonstrating an awareness of their impact upon others.

**Diplomacy and Interpersonal** – The ability to effectively manage difficult or sensitive issues and to communicate, build rapport, and relate well to all people.

**Time and Priority Management and Organizational Skills** – A sophisticated capability to prioritize and complete tasks to deliver desired outcomes within allotted time frames. An organized individual with strong demonstrated use of systems, processes, and sound data capturing.

**Leadership and Teamwork** – The ability to articulate a vision and communicate a sense of purpose and direction for internal and external stakeholders, build trust by demonstrating respect and integrity, and create an environment where team members are appreciated and supported.

**Financial Acumen** – Experience of financial oversight and a deep understanding of institutional budgets.

## QUALIFICATIONS

A bachelor's degree is required and an advanced degree that will be credible to donors and other constituents is preferred. The successful candidate will have a minimum of ten years of experience in progressively responsible development leadership positions, which includes work in all functional areas (individual giving, institutional giving, annual giving, planned giving, stewardship, board relations), some experience of participation in capital campaigns (planning, implementation, management, and successful conclusion), and experience working with corporate membership and sponsorship preferably within a major cultural institution, nonprofit organization, educational institution, or other environment of similar

complexity. They will have superior writing and eloquent public speaking skills. As a senior leader, they will have a demonstrated ability to provide management oversight, leadership, and direction with at least five years of significant supervisory experience, including experience creating and managing a budget. A strong record of recruiting and developing exceptional people and fostering a transparent work environment where collegiality is a key to success.

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The Folger offers competitive compensation, with an anticipated annual salary range between \$200,000 to \$225,000; a benefit package that includes annual vacation, sick, and personal time; 12 paid holidays; employer-paid individual health, dental, and vision insurance; 403(b) with contribution match; life insurance; short- and long-term disability; flexible spending; pretax transit; educational assistance; grant-in-aid for dependents; credit union membership; care.com membership; employee assistance program, and more.

## LOCATION

The Folger Shakespeare Library is in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC. It is one block away from the US Capitol, next to the Library of Congress (Thomas Jefferson and John Adams buildings), and diagonally adjacent to the Supreme Court.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller [website](#).

Jack Gorman, Partner  
Grace Zakim, Managing Associate  
Sandeep Kaur, Senior Search Coordinator

*The Folger Shakespeare Library currently defines diversity in compliance with the DC equal opportunity definitions of protected classes: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, sexual preference or orientation, gender identification, genetic information, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, student status, political affiliation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, district, or local EO laws and regulations. Areas not covered by the DC guidelines are particularly important to pay attention to, including class, economic status, and education levels.*

*To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the Folger are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. This policy of equal opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, retention, termination, layoff, recall, furlough, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.*