



Executive Director, Midwest Region
American Friends of the Hebrew University
Chicago, Illinois

THE SEARCH

American Friends of the Hebrew University (AFHU) seeks a creative, aspirational, and collaborative advancement professional to serve as the executive director for the Midwest Region (executive director). In this role, the executive director will lead and direct the fundraising efforts for the region, oversee the Midwest team, and engage and partner with a dedicated board of lay leaders to further elevate philanthropic success. Building upon the momentum of the recent conclusion of a \$1 billion [global campaign](#) and the appointment of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's new president, [Prof. Tamir Sheafer](#), AFHU is poised for continued growth and excellence with ambitious long-term philanthropic objectives and the development of the university's next global comprehensive campaign.

Founded in 1925 to raise awareness and support for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Hebrew University), AFHU is a national nonprofit headquartered in New York City. Through the philanthropic leadership of American friends throughout the US, AFHU helps the university recruit and retain outstanding faculty, build teaching and research facilities, provide scholarships and fellowships, and advance basic and applied research in many vital fields.

Reporting to the chief development officer of AFHU, Alison Freed, the executive director is responsible for the fundraising strategy, leadership, and development of AFHU's Midwest Region. Headquartered in Chicago, IL, the executive director will build donor pools and elevate presence and impact across the Midwest, expanding AFHU's footprint in key cities including St. Louis, Madison, Cincinnati, Detroit, Cleveland, and Columbus. The executive director will build and empower a strong fundraising team, leading a staff of two, including the hiring of an associate executive director. As part of AFHU's overall annual fundraising goal of \$70 million, the executive director will be responsible for an annual regional fundraising goal of \$5 million for fiscal year 2026 and will drive strategy to grow total fundraising in future years. This is an exceptional opportunity and moment in time for a proven fundraiser to lead the development and execution of sophisticated fundraising strategies for the Midwest, expand the regional philanthropic program, and collaborate closely with lay leadership, national colleagues, and the university community to contribute to the continued growth and impact of AFHU and Hebrew University.

The ideal candidate will be an entrepreneurial, resourceful, and adaptable fundraiser with the drive and humility to lead autonomously in the Midwest Region while working closely with AFHU national leadership, peers, and partners. The executive director will have at least seven years of successful fundraising experience, preferably within a Jewish communal, higher education, or nonprofit setting. The executive director must possess demonstrated strength and success in the solicitation and stewardship of major gifts, and leading the discovery and cultivation of major gift donors, leveraging data and systems to inform strategy. The executive director must possess a keen understanding of fundraising best practices and demonstrate the credibility, maturity, and sophistication necessary to engage with senior leaders, high-level volunteers, and diverse groups of internal and external constituents. Critical to the executive director's success will be a deep alignment with and ability to articulate and reflect the mission and values of AFHU and Hebrew University. Knowledge of Israel, its history, current events, and an ability to represent an international university are essential. A bachelor's degree is required.

American Friends of the Hebrew University has retained the services of Jack Gorman of Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm, to conduct the search. As indicated at the end of this document, inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm.

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

American Friends of the Hebrew University is a US-based nonprofit organization that supports and advances the mission, work, and development of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. AFHU acts as a bridge between American donors, institutions and the university, facilitating philanthropy, partnerships, and programs. AFHU's national and regional programs, events, and missions to Israel promote a greater appreciation of Hebrew University's breadth and scope of achievements and its pivotal role in educating leaders for the State of Israel.

AFHU has a staff of 44 professionals with regional locations in New York City, Chicago, Rockville, Ft. Lauderdale, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Philadelphia. With an endowment of over \$750 million, AFHU raised a record \$89M this past fiscal year. AFHU's contribution to the university is over half of what is raised from around the world from other friends groups.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, widely known as the university that built the nation of Israel, was founded on Mount Scopus in 1918 by visionaries including Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Chaim Weizmann, and Martin Buber. Since its founding, Hebrew University's mission has been to develop cutting-edge research, to educate leaders, and to nurture future generations of outstanding scientists and scholars in all fields of learning. Today, Hebrew University is a globally recognized academic and research powerhouse, embodying excellence across the spectrum of academic disciplines: from the humanities, social sciences, and law, to natural sciences, agriculture, engineering, and medicine.

While located in Israel, the work of the university transforms the global landscape. The students, faculty, and alumni of Hebrew University have won nine Nobel Prizes in chemistry, physics, and economics, developed treatments for diseases, and ignited innovation that has led to more than 11,500 patents.

Hebrew University enrolls more than 23,000 students and is home to 1,400+ researchers across six campuses and seven faculties. Faculty and alumni have received more than 550 awards for excellence. Hebrew University's 4,200+ research projects represent one-third of Israel's civilian research, with more than 3,500 inventions and 1,160 licensed technologies, launching 260 spin-off companies.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIDWEST REGION

Reporting to the chief development officer, the executive director will lead the fundraising strategy for the Midwest Region and oversee the daily operations of the regional office. The executive director will further grow and develop a comprehensive philanthropy program, implementing strategies to significantly expand the donor pool and establish a greater presence across the region in key states and cities, including St. Louis, Madison, Cincinnati, Detroit, Cleveland, and Columbus. Working closely with the Midwest Regional board of directors, the executive director will leverage the time, talents, and networks of engaged lay leadership to elevate and advance the impact of the Midwest program. The executive director will serve as a key colleague in the national office, collaborating with peers and strategically engaging senior leadership and university colleagues to achieve new levels of regional and national fundraising success.

MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead, develop, and execute a fundraising strategy for the Midwest that aligns with the goals of the national office and university priorities; oversee the day-to-day operations of the Midwest Regional office.
- Partner with the Midwest Regional board to develop strategic campaign plans, and implement and evaluate new and traditional major gift campaigns.
- Develop and implement strategy to significantly expand the major gifts donor pipeline, with a focus on the next generation of donors with major gift potential, in addition to a relatively untapped alumni base.
- Oversee, inspire, and empower a staff of two through active communication, transparency, and delegation. Define and delineate the roles and responsibilities of each team member to best suit and advance the region's goals. Place staff members' work within the context of the strategic priorities and mission for the Midwest Region, national office, and university.
- Personally cultivate, solicit, steward, and grow a portfolio of high-level major gift (\$25,000+) prospects and donors across the region.

- Plan and execute cultivation events and generate new and exciting outreach programs.
- Cultivate strong working relationships and collaborate with national staff to ensure maximum fundraising effectiveness and use of best practices to meet regional and national goals. The national office offers numerous services, including prospective donor research, portfolio management, creation of donor solicitation materials, management of donor reporting, and database tools.
- Identify and cultivate lay leaders for future leadership roles for the region, the national organization, and the university; work strategically with lay leaders to build bridges and leverage their networks to develop stronger relationships with other lay leaders, prospects, and donors.
- Represent AFHU and the Hebrew University externally, serving as an enthusiastic and well-informed spokesperson, fostering partnerships across the region to strengthen the university's network and visibility. Continuously learn about university programs, research, and developments, and share them with selected donors and prospects.
- Staff fundraising visits by university faculty and leaders in the region, and help develop a range of educational forums, events, visits, written communications, and one-on-one meetings, ensuring the university is relevant and engaging for all donors and prospects.
- Ability to travel throughout the region as needed, and beyond the region on occasion.
- Travel to Israel when deemed appropriate by AFHU.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess at least seven years of successful fundraising experience, preferably in a Jewish communal, higher education, or nonprofit environment.

In addition, the successful candidate will demonstrate many, if not all, of the following skills and competencies:

- Experience developing or elevating fundraising programs, resulting in an increase in philanthropic revenue for an organization.
- Knowledge of best practices in all key areas of fundraising, including donor qualification and discovery, and strategic planning.
- A proven track record of success in personally cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major gifts from individual donors and family foundations; a high level of comfort and effectiveness working with high-net-worth individuals and organizational leaders.
- Strong leadership and decision-making skills; the instinct and ability to develop strategies for fundraising success that are consistent with the overall strategic plan and fundraising priorities for AFHU and the university.

- Demonstrated ability to inspire, develop, and lead a high-performing, collaborative fundraising team—fostering accountability, trust, and a shared commitment to exceeding goals.
- The credibility, maturity, and sound judgment required to effectively engage and leverage AFHU leadership, lay leaders, and other key constituents in the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of key prospects and donors.
- A diplomatic and collaborative demeanor; the desire and ability to gain trust and build strong collaborative relationships with all members across a complex national and international organizational culture.
- Demonstrated experience utilizing data and metrics to inform strategy and as a foundation for development programs; impeccable attention to detail and superb follow-through.
- Superior written and oral communication skills with the ability to succinctly communicate a vision to senior leaders and present the Hebrew University story to other key audiences and constituents, generating inspiration and enthusiasm.
- Familiarity with the Jewish philanthropic community in the region and Israel-based philanthropy is preferred.
- Excellent computer skills; proficiency in Microsoft Suite, Raiser's Edge, and other relevant programs, databases, and reporting systems.
- Must be willing and able to travel extensively throughout the region in support of fundraising, donor relations, campaign activity, and institutional representation.
- Bachelor's degree is required; advanced degree is preferred.

LOCATION AND COMPENSATION

This is a permanent, full-time position in Chicago, Illinois, with a salary range of \$175,000 to \$195,000. The wage/salary of the finalist selected for this role will be set based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to qualifications, experience, education, licenses, specialty, and training.

AFHU offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive benefits package, including but not limited to medical and dental insurance, flexible spending accounts, a 403B retirement savings plan, a TransitChek program, and an employee assistance program, as well as a generous time off and holiday policy.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website below. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/american-friends-hebrew-university/executive-director-midwest-region>

Jack Gorman, Partner
Grace Zakim, Managing Associate
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American Friends of the Hebrew University is an equal-opportunity employer.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by American Friends of the Hebrew University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by American Friends of the Hebrew University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.