



Director, Partnerships
Climate Imperative
San Francisco, CA (preferred) or Washington, DC

THE SEARCH

Climate Imperative seeks a strategic, entrepreneurial, and highly relational Director of Partnerships to help expand the organization's reach and impact. The climate crisis demands solutions at a scale the world has never attempted – and that scale of ambition requires a corresponding scale of philanthropic investment. This newly created role is central to Climate Imperative's drive to match philanthropic resources to the ambition of its mission: achieving the greatest possible reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the shortest possible time.

Reporting to the Vice President and serving as a key strategic partner to the President, Board of Directors, and broader leadership team, the Director will build and lead the organization's fundraising strategy, deepen relationships with existing funding partners, and cultivate a carefully targeted network of new high-net-worth philanthropists capable of making transformational investments in climate solutions.

Since its founding in 2020, Climate Imperative has implemented its distinctive model and analytical rigor to achieve high-impact climate solutions around the world. Uniquely operating as a donor collaborative, Climate Imperative works closely with a small group of deeply engaged philanthropic partners to identify and fund strategies capable of delivering outsized climate impact at speed and scale.

This is a rare opportunity for a highly strategic fundraising leader to build systems, processes, and approaches within a fast-moving and intellectually rigorous organization. The Director will develop and drive fundraising strategy; build and actively manage a pipeline of new prospects; partner closely with senior leadership in preparing for and advancing donor engagement opportunities; and help craft compelling narratives and materials that clearly articulate Climate Imperative's unique value proposition within the broader climate ecosystem.

The ideal candidate will bring a proven track record in building relationships with new prospects, including individuals new to philanthropy, ideally in environments centered on complex social impact or climate-related issues. Equally important, the Director must possess exceptional judgment, humility, and emotional intelligence, with the ability to operate effectively in highly nuanced and relationship-driven environments. Climate Imperative's approach to philanthropy is deeply collaborative and mission-centered; the organization seeks a leader who is motivated not simply by individual goals for securing resources, but by helping accelerate new funding and wide-scale impact across the broader climate

ecosystem. The ideal candidate will combine strategic sophistication with operational discipline and a willingness to work hands-on in a lean, entrepreneurial environment.

Climate Imperative's culture is characterized by urgency, collaboration, humility, and a shared commitment to achieving meaningful climate impact. For a development leader energized by building, shaping, and scaling a high-performing fundraising operation in service of one of the defining challenges of our time, this represents an exceptional opportunity.

Climate Imperative has retained Rachel Ellenport of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this posting.

ABOUT CLIMATE IMPERATIVE

Climate change is governed by inexorable, physical facts – about carbon sources, accumulation, impacts, timing, and, most importantly, about solutions that work. These facts must inform strategy: they show that avoiding dangerous climate change is only possible through strong policy to promptly cut carbon in the largest emitting countries. To address these issues, [Climate Imperative](#) was founded in 2020 to provide additional resources to the field of climate policy in this decisive decade and beyond.

Climate Imperative focuses on the near-term policy decisions in major greenhouse gas-emitting countries and regions that offer the greatest emissions reductions alongside important health, environmental, and equity benefits. These policy imperatives include rapid scaling of renewable energy, widespread electrification of buildings and transportation, stopping the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure, reducing pollution from major industrial sources, and economy-wide pathways to reduce emissions from the biggest sources.

Climate Imperative is solutions-oriented and science-driven. The organization supports strong and credible local groups, and works alongside these partners to advance equitable climate solutions. Climate Imperative also occasionally works through regranting partners.

Leadership and Governance

Climate Imperative's [governance structure](#) consists of a dedicated Board of Directors, as well as an Advisory Council of prominent climate policy leaders.

Sonia Aggarwal is the President of Climate Imperative, where she uses her expertise to set climate policy priorities and strategy in the economic sectors and geographies that produce the greatest amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. She provides insights on which technologies, policies, and levels of ambition are needed to cut greenhouse gas pollution at the speed and scale the climate crisis requires, while improving public health and saving consumers money.

Prior to her work at Climate Imperative, Aggarwal served as Special Assistant to the President for Climate Policy, Innovation, and Deployment in the Biden administration. While there, she helped develop the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as the United States' climate targets, including the commitment to cut economy-wide greenhouse gases by 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030. Aggarwal's other professional experience includes helping clean tech startups provide climate solutions, researching which sectors and regions the world's emissions come from, and identifying the best policies to reduce emissions. She holds a bachelor's degree in astronomy and physics from Haverford College and a master's degree in engineering focused on energy from Stanford University.

Bruce Nilles is Vice President of Climate Imperative. For the two years prior to joining the organization, Nilles was Managing Director at Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) where he designed and launched its building electrification work, focused on policies to upgrade U.S. buildings to be cleaner, safer, and more affordable. Before joining RMI, Nilles spent 15 years building and leading the Sierra Club's *Beyond Coal Campaign*, a nationwide effort to replace coal plants with clean energy. Over a seventeen-year period, the campaign helped to stop nearly 90 percent of proposed new coal plants and played a leading role in retiring half of all existing coal plants.

Prior to Sierra Club, Nilles was a staff attorney for Earthjustice, where he built a coalition of medical and environmental justice organizations focused on improving air quality in California's Central Valley and litigated federal court cases that led to stronger clean air regulations. Nilles spent the first four years of his career at the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division, including as Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General. Nilles is the recipient of the 2018 Climate Breakthrough Award and was recognized by Politico in 2015 as "one of the thinkers, doers, and visionaries transforming American politics." He holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

The Director of Partnerships will lead and execute Climate Imperative's fundraising strategy in close partnership with executive leadership and the Board of Directors. This role is accountable for achieving annual fundraising targets and growing Climate Imperative's philanthropic revenue year-over-year. In addition, the Director is responsible for building and managing systems, relationships, and processes that support long-term philanthropic growth, while ensuring day-to-day development operations are effective, coordinated, and data informed.

The ideal candidate has a solid track record in securing philanthropic investments and leading high-stakes donor cultivation and solicitation. This role requires comfort with working closely with senior leaders and Board members, translating programmatic priorities into compelling fundraising strategies, and representing the organization professionally with external funders and partners.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Development Strategy & Leadership

- Lead the development and execution of Climate Imperative’s fundraising strategy in partnership with executive leadership and the Board, including establishing clear, measurable near- and long-term philanthropic growth plans aligned with organizational priorities.
- Set and drive progress toward ambitious annual and multi-year fundraising goals, with a focus on securing transformational philanthropic investments from ultra-high-net-worth individuals, family offices, and aligned philanthropic partners.
- Build, manage, and advance a sophisticated donor pipeline, including prospect identification, cultivation, solicitation, stewardship, and long-term relationship management.
- Develop tailored engagement strategies for top prospective and current funders, grounded in thoughtful research, strategic relationship mapping, and a nuanced understanding of donor motivations and philanthropic priorities.
- Serve as a strategic advisor and partner to the President and Vice President, helping prioritize opportunities, coordinate follow-through, and ensure disciplined advancement of fundraising initiatives.
- Partner closely with leadership to prepare for donor meetings, cultivation opportunities, and external engagements, including development of talking points, briefing materials, strategic recommendations, and follow-up plans.
- Maintain a strong understanding of Climate Imperative’s programs, priorities, and impact to effectively align philanthropic opportunities with organizational strategy and funding needs.
- Help strengthen organizational alignment and accountability around fundraising efforts by fostering consistent communication, coordination, and information-sharing across executive leadership, the Board, and programmatic teams.

Donor Engagement & External Partnerships

- Cultivate and steward trusted relationships with high-net-worth individuals, philanthropic advisors, family office professionals, and other key constituents within the climate philanthropy ecosystem.
- Build productive relationships not only with principals, but also with chiefs of staff, philanthropic consultants, advisors, and other influencers critical to donor engagement and decision-making.

- Partner closely with Climate Lead to identify, assess, and advance new donor opportunities and strategic relationships at the highest levels.
- Represent Climate Imperative thoughtfully and confidently within the broader climate and philanthropic ecosystem, maintaining and strengthening the organization's reputation as a collaborative, mission-driven partner and progressively leading donor conversations independently over time.
- Help shape and communicate Climate Imperative's unique value proposition within the climate landscape, including its distinctive role as a donor collaborative focused on achieving outsized climate impact at speed and scale.
- Ensure existing funders receive exceptional stewardship, strategic engagement, and timely communications that deepen partnership and sustain long-term support.

Organizational Infrastructure & Cross-Functional Collaboration

- Build and institutionalize systems, processes, and operating rhythms that support a high-performing and scalable fundraising function within a fast-growing organization.
- Develop clear frameworks for prospect management, relationship tracking, internal communications, and donor engagement workflows to support strategic decision-making and organizational coordination.
- Partner with internal constituents to strengthen CRM utilization, prospect tracking, and philanthropic operations infrastructure.
- Contribute to the creation and ongoing refinement of high-quality fundraising and external engagement materials that effectively translate Climate Imperative's work into compelling donor-facing narratives.
- Partner with leadership and programmatic staff to articulate clear and differentiated messaging about Climate Imperative's mission, impact, funding model, and role within the broader climate ecosystem.
- Coordinate closely with the Board Engagement team to support Board participation in fundraising strategy, donor cultivation, and external engagement opportunities.
- Support Board members and Board Engagement staff in preparing for donor interactions, events, and strategic relationship-building opportunities.
- Operate as a highly entrepreneurial and hands-on leader capable of balancing strategic planning with direct execution in a lean, fast-paced, and evolving organizational environment.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in fundraising, philanthropic partnerships, or related external-facing leadership roles, including experience managing sophisticated donor relationships and development operations.
- Demonstrated success cultivating, advancing, and helping secure transformational philanthropic gifts, particularly within environments engaging high-net-worth individuals and families.
- Experience partnering closely with senior executives, Board members, and influential constituents to shape fundraising strategy, prepare for and advance donor engagement opportunities, and drive relationship management efforts.
- Proven ability to build and manage a strategic donor portfolio and pipeline, including developing tailored cultivation strategies and maintaining disciplined follow-through across multiple concurrent relationships and opportunities.
- Strong strategic thinking and sound judgment paired with a highly collaborative and entrepreneurial approach.
- Exceptional relationship-building skills, including the ability to establish credibility and trust with sophisticated external audiences as well as influence and partner collaboratively across internal teams.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate complex ideas into compelling narratives and tailor messaging for a variety of audiences and constituents.
- Strong organizational, operational, and project management skills, including experience building or improving systems, processes, and workflows that support effective fundraising and donor engagement.
- Experience using Salesforce or similar CRM systems to support donor management, relationship tracking, and strategic fundraising operations.
- High emotional intelligence, humility, discretion, and professionalism, with the ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and represent the organization with maturity and credibility.
- Demonstrated alignment with Climate Imperative's mission and values, including a commitment to accelerating climate solutions, supporting the broader climate field, and advancing collaborative, impact-oriented philanthropy.
- Familiarity with climate philanthropy, climate-focused organizations, or adjacent issue areas is preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Climate Imperative provides a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. The target salary range is \$206,250 to \$216,250 with adjustments made for those in higher-expense markets. Equity is incredibly important to the organization, and a pay audit for equity is completed annually.

Climate Imperative operates from two office locations in San Francisco, California and Washington, DC. Employees based in those areas work from the office one to three days per week. Climate Imperative supports a hybrid work environment and brings the full team together in person one to two times per year for organization-wide collaboration.

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:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/climate-imperative/director-philanthropic-partnerships>

Rachel Ellenport, Partner
Nicole Poe, Managing Associate
Megan Gorman, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Climate Imperative is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to a transparent recruitment process that fosters belonging. Climate Imperative's goal is to hire and advance people regardless of race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, citizenship status, military service, medical condition, and any other protected characteristic under local, state, or federal law. People from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Climate Imperative. 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 Climate Imperative would supersede any conflicting information in this document.