



Senior Director, Strategic Programs & Partnerships
PetSmart Charities
Phoenix, Arizona

THE SEARCH

PetSmart Charities (Charities), the leading funder of animal welfare in North America, seeks a seasoned, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as its inaugural Senior Director of Strategic Programs & Partnerships (Senior Director). The Senior Director is an executive-level role responsible for leading a team overseeing approximately \$46 million in strategic, transformational grantmaking annually. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader to build upon PetSmart Charities' ambitious mission to make the world a better place for pets and those who love them.

PetSmart Charities was created in 1994 by PetSmart's founders, who chose to partner with local animal shelters to bring adoptable pets into local stores rather than selling cats and dogs for profit. Today, PetSmart Charities' in-store adoption programs continue to thrive, with over 11 million pets adopted from its stores since its founding, through more than 2,500 shelters and rescues. Charities has since significantly expanded its portfolio of impact beyond adoptions to address the systemic challenges of pet hunger, access to affordable veterinary care, and disaster response across the United States and Canada. With generous support from PetSmart customers' donations and individual and corporate gifts, PetSmart Charities has made more than \$600 million in grants throughout its history.

Reporting to the President of PetSmart Charities, the Senior Director will lead the strategic development and execution of programmatic and grant initiatives to advance PetSmart Charities' mission, so that life "at both ends of the leash" improves. The successful Senior Director will cultivate strategic partnerships, including with PetSmart; strengthen and expand the PetSmart Charities brand beyond animal welfare to include human services; develop, support, and retain a programmatic team overseeing a large, diverse, and geographically expansive portfolio; serve as a strategic thought partner to the President; and engage the 13-member PetSmart Charities board of directors. The Senior Director will have two direct reports: the Director of Pet Placement Initiatives and the Director of Community Grants & Initiatives, and their respective teams, totaling about 15 staff. This is not a fundraising or development role.

PetSmart Charities seeks a seasoned leader with considerable program leadership experience in the corporate or private philanthropy and/or nonprofit sectors, with a particular preference for individuals with dual nonprofit and corporate backgrounds. The Senior Director will be strategic and analytical, with the ability to synthesize data for decision-making and compelling storytelling across diverse audiences. They will bring proven success in launching and managing multi-constituent programs, as well as the ability to manage relationships where corporate and nonprofit interests intersect. Financial acumen,

experience managing multi-million-dollar budgets, and strong process management skills are required, as is a track record of leading with humility and empathy to inspire teams through trust, inclusion, and shared success. While previous experience in animal welfare is not required, the Senior Director will align closely with Charities' vision: a world where communities unite in support of pets together with their families.

ABOUT PETSMAART CHARITIES

Programs & Impact

Every year, PetSmart Charities partners with nearly 2,000 animal welfare organizations that advocate and care for the well-being of pets and their families. Charities' work focuses on two key areas: "connecting pets and people" and "supporting pets and people." PetSmart Charities "connects pets and people" through its expansive [in-store adoption program](#) across the U.S. and Canada. Today, more than 1,600 stores feature Everyday Adoption Centers, where local animal welfare organizations can host adoptions in a safe, clean space with access to potential pet adopters. Every 38 seconds, an adoption takes place in a PetSmart store. In 2025, over 400,000 pets were adopted from shelters through PetSmart stores.

PetSmart Charities "supports pets and people" through the following streams of grant funding:

Access to Veterinary Care: Nearly 50 million pets do not receive adequate veterinary care to maintain long, healthy lives. PetSmart Charities seeks to close that gap by funding grants to help changemakers in low-income, marginalized communities address the immediate problem while also creating long-term, sustainable solutions. In 2023, PetSmart Charities committed \$100 million over five years to help make veterinary care more affordable through low-cost clinics, ongoing research, and the exploration of innovative solutions. As of the end of 2025, \$61 million has been spent towards that commitment.

Pet Hunger: According to Feeding America, one in six people in the U.S. experiences food insecurity, and if they are not getting enough to maintain a healthy diet, neither are their pets. PetSmart Charities is helping improve access to free or affordable pet food by partnering with human service agencies that are open to serving pets, including Feeding America, Meals on Wheels America, and Humane Canada.

Disaster Response: When natural disasters strike, pets are also displaced and injured. As important members of the family, pets, too, have urgent needs for shelter, medical care, nutritious food, and social support. PetSmart Charities delivers disaster response grants to animal welfare organizations and partners with the American Red Cross and local first responder organizations.

Organizational Details

PetSmart Charities is supported by a full-time staff of 45, led by a leadership team including the President, Senior Director of Integrated Marketing & Communications, Director of Finance & Administration and Controller, Director of Strategy, and Director of Veterinary Affairs. The Senior Director of Strategic

Programs & Partnerships will join this team. About 15 staff will report to them, including the Director of Pet Placement Initiatives and the Director of Community Grants & Initiatives.

PetSmart Charities is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but remains closely tied to PetSmart through funding, branding and communications, governance, and benefits. PetSmart Charities is comprised of two nonprofit entities: one based in the U.S., where about 90 percent of its operations are conducted, and one based in Canada. The U.S. programs are governed by a 13-member board of directors, of which three are PetSmart executives. PetSmart Charities of Canada was founded in 1999; it has a separate board of directors but is mainly operated from the U.S. team. Four Charities staff are based in Canada.

With a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, an A+ from Charity Watch, and a Gold Seal of Transparency from Candid's Guidestar, PetSmart Charities ranks in the top one percent of all charities. Each year, millions of PetSmart shoppers donate to Charities using the PIN pads at checkout registers inside PetSmart stores and online. More than 80 percent of Charities' funding comes from PetSmart PIN pad donations, a program that consistently ranks among the top five point-of-sale fundraising programs in the U.S.

To learn more about PetSmart Charities and its impact, please visit <https://petsmartcharities.org/>.

ROLE OF THE SENIOR DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past several years, PetSmart Charities has shifted from a more transactional, traditional philanthropic model to one focused on high-impact investments that aim to drive systems change through a broader ecosystem strategy. This Senior Director role is an investment in taking PetSmart Charities to the next level of impact, innovation, and internal alignment.

This Senior Director will oversee a diverse portfolio, including in-store adoptions and pet placement, pet hunger and disaster response programs, and improving access to veterinary care, which will be advanced in close partnership with Charities' Director of Veterinary Affairs. The Senior Director will drive innovation and measurable impact through data-informed strategy, cross-functional collaboration, and external engagement. To optimize the impact of Charities' initiatives, the Senior Director will also play a critical role in understanding PetSmart's strategic priorities, fostering influence through effective relationship-building and a deep understanding of the retail environment. Roughly 70 percent of the Senior Director's role will be internally facing and roughly 30 percent externally facing.

Additionally, the successful Senior Director will embody PetSmart's Values in Action by ensuring teams are delivering consistent, high-quality customer and partner experiences; leading purposeful transformation through empowered leadership and data-driven strategy; translating strategies into action and guiding teams through growth and change; championing cross-functional collaboration through alignment and emotional intelligence; putting pets at the heart of every decision; and acting with integrity in every decision.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

In partnership with colleagues across PetSmart Charities and PetSmart, the Senior Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Serve as a strategic partner to the President as PetSmart Charities pursues its ambitious goals.

The Senior Director will help drive Charities' success in meeting its strategic goals and will work with the President to ensure alignment. The Senior Director will design and implement funding strategies aligned with organizational goals that reflect relevant best practices in foundation grantmaking and social impact. The successful Senior Director will be knowledgeable about systemic socioeconomic challenges facing individuals and families, and by extension their pets, and will leverage Charities' programs to address them. Additionally, they will partner with internal teams to ensure marketing, communications, systems, compliance, and analytics support program excellence and impact. The Senior Director will proactively identify emerging trends and opportunities in animal welfare, human services, and philanthropy, and will apply innovative thinking to shape future program strategies and pilot new initiatives.

Advance the work of PetSmart Charities by cultivating key partnerships, including with PetSmart.

PetSmart Charities and PetSmart are long-standing partners with a shared commitment to pets and the people who love them, but with different approaches. To be successful, the Senior Director must navigate both nonprofit and for-profit cultures and build upon Charities' trust and credibility in both. PetSmart Charities' work would not be possible without PetSmart's partnership: Charities' success requires support from PetSmart's in-store employees, particularly through its in-store adoption programs and PIN pad fundraising. The Senior Director will be a key driver of that collaboration to thoughtfully increase engagement from store employees. PetSmart also benefits from its partnership with Charities: donors, as well as pet parents who adopt their pets in-store, are more likely to become loyal PetSmart customers.

The Senior Director will also build and manage high-impact relationships with additional corporate and nonprofit partners to further strengthen ties, align shared goals, and drive joint initiatives. They will foster relationships with grantees to ensure alignment with Charities' goals and to understand how Charities can best support their work.

Strengthen and expand PetSmart Charities' impact and brand.

Through internal and external messaging, the Senior Director will build upon Charities' brand to expand its reach and influence. As the largest animal welfare program in North America, PetSmart Charities holds significant influence in the animal welfare space. The Senior Director will build on that reputation and serve as an external champion of Charities' work by representing PetSmart Charities at national philanthropic forums, thought-leadership platforms, and sector convenings. The Senior Director will also be an adept internal communicator. They will develop compelling presentations tailored to diverse audiences, including corporate partners, nonprofits, board members, and internal teams. Moreover, the Senior Director will build upon the work happening in stores. They will drive awareness and engagement

around Charities' impact in supporting pets, their people, and local communities, with the goal of increasing adoptions, generating revenue, and advancing the mission.

Develop, support, and retain an expert programmatic team overseeing a complex portfolio.

The Senior Director will oversee an approximately \$46 million grantmaking portfolio and support the Directors and their teams who carry out this work. Specifically, the Senior Director will lead and inspire the team, set clear expectations, provide ongoing guidance, and cultivate a collaborative, accountable, and inclusive team culture. The Senior Director will work closely with the Directors to further develop their leadership and management skills and create opportunities for increased collaboration among the Directors and their programs.

Additionally, the Senior Director will champion a culture of learning and continuous improvement by embedding outcome measurement, evaluation, and feedback loops into all programmatic efforts. As PetSmart Charities' work evolves, the Senior Director will ensure that staff receive the training and development needed to support changing program needs. The Senior Director will drive the evolution of Charities' work and be attuned to change management needs, ensure effective program delivery processes, track program impact data, and generate insights that drive ongoing improvements.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no individual will possess every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications, professional experiences, and personal attributes:

- Deep experience in corporate philanthropy, foundation strategy, nonprofit program design, strategic consulting, or a similar area. Exposure to retail environments and an understanding of retail operations strongly preferred.
- A systems view of issues and opportunities; expertise in planning strategically and offering innovative solutions to challenging problems.
- A strong focus on goals and results, including a track record of meeting or exceeding goals with a strong sense of responsibility and accountability for outcomes.
- Proven financial acumen, with experience managing large budgets.
- Research and analytical skills, including the ability to distill large amounts of information and to focus quickly on the essence of an issue.
- Experience in developing, articulating, and building buy-in internally and externally towards a clear vision or goal. Expertise in motivating, inspiring, and moving others to action.
- Experience building positive relationships with diverse constituencies and maintaining a service orientation and a diplomatic and low-ego approach to working with others.
- Track record of building authentic, mutually beneficial relationships with racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities.

- Effective written and verbal communication skills, proficiency in presenting, and the ability to adapt communication styles for different audiences, including executive, operational, and community-level constituents.
- Excellent project management and implementation skills; success in working efficiently, maintaining attention to detail, and planning, multitasking, adapting, and balancing requests from many constituencies.
- Record of success as a people-centered leader who recognizes and relies on staff expertise; believes good ideas can come from anywhere; and motivates, engages, and inspires individuals and teams. Expertise in recruiting and retaining top talent.
- A self-starter with an action-oriented style, curiosity, a positive attitude, and a sense of humor.
- Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Salary: \$200,000-\$220,000, plus a potential annual bonus of up to 20 percent.

Location: This role is in-person and based at PetSmart Charities headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona. The Senior Director will spend about 30 percent of their time traveling across the United States and Canada.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations, inquiries, and applications, including resumes with cover letters responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above, should be submitted to the search team via the hyperlink below. Screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until the search process is completed. If you require reasonable accommodation to complete an application, interview, or otherwise participate in the candidate selection process, we welcome you to submit an inquiry to the team.

Tatiana Oberkoetter, Janette Martinez, Cati Mitchell-Crossley, and Harley Bartles
Isaacson, Miller

PetSmart Charities Senior Director of Strategic Programs & Partnerships

PetSmart provides an equal opportunity for all associates and job applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, veteran status or other legally protected characteristics.

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