Molly Sender

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Professional Summary: Fundraising and development leader with 10+ years of experience in strategic planning, philanthropy, and program operations within performing arts & higher education sectors. Proven success building donor relationships, increasing high-level giving, and partnering with institutional leadership to achieve success. Strong communicator and collaborative strategic thinker with experience managing teams, events, and cross-functional initiatives.

Creative Competencies: Event Management & Production | Project Management | Fundraising & Development | Grant Administration | Board Relations | Equity-Focused Program Development | Strategic Planning | Alumni Engagement

Work Experience

Partnerships & Development Manager / San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, San Francisco, CA — 2024-present

- Oversees a portfolio of 100+ funders, including corporations, foundations, government grants, and individual donors, generating $1 million annually
- Prospects, researches, and networks with donors for the Chorus and the Chan National Queer Arts Center
- Collaborates with artistic and executive teams to align fundraising with mission-driven programming
- Manages production, coordination, and event management of annual gala, raising $1 Million+ annually
- Partners with city and state agencies on public funding proposals and reporting

Special Project Officer, Philanthropy / San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco, CA — 2022–2024

- Directed large-scale donor events, international patron tours, and special civic initiatives in partnership with municipal and cultural leaders
- Oversaw planning and execution of international tour, including vendor negotiations and event organization
- Guided creative direction and execution for experiential and engagement-focused events.
- Coordinated cross-functional teams to ensure alignment with artistic goals.

Director, Ravinia Steans Music Institute / Ravinia Festival, Highland Park, IL — 2017–2022

- Designed and led four summer arts education programs, managing budget allocation and grant processes
- Managed $1.8 million budget and $35 million endowment, strategically directing capital and operational funds
- Cultivated strategic partnerships with local, national, and international cultural organizations
- Implemented admission guidelines with a focus on equity and diversity
- Managed donor engagement events, individual donor solicitations, and educational outreach programs
- Collaborated with the Communications team to enhance outreach, preparing compelling reports & materials
- Produced concerts and programs, including national tours and international auditions
- Implemented admissions and hiring policies that advanced equity and inclusion
- Negotiated and executed seasonal contracts with artist managers, faculty, and performing artists
- Secured performance and travel visas for international artists, interfaced with government representatives

Operations Manager / Ravinia Festival, Highland Park, IL — 2016–2017

- Managed seasonal staff operations, scheduling, travel, and artist services for over 100 events
- Produced print and digital communications for internal and public use

Project Manager / KSM Consulting, Indianapolis, IN — 2014–2016

- Managed multi-stakeholder projects across government and nonprofit sectors.
- Used Design Thinking methods to develop human-centered service solutions.
- Advised civic clients on technology, engagement, and data strategy.

Education

Bachelor of Musical Arts | DePauw University

Certificates & Training:

Grantwriting for Artists & Creatives | Writer's Grotto, San Francisco, CA
Design Thinking Certification | Harvard University Division of Continuing Education, Cambridge, MA

Community Involvement

Board Member | Jewish Women's Intn'l (2023 - 2025)
Podcast Guest | Outside In Music Podcast (2021)
Election Coordinator | Chicago Board of Elections (2020)
Fellow & Chief of Staff / The Orr Fellowship (2012-2014)
The Orr Fellowship is a post-grad program that places graduates at top tech startups in Indianapolis, combining work experience with professional development, community engagement, and mentorship.