



Chief Advancement Officer (CAO)

Reports to: President
FLSA: Exempt
Location: Memphis, TN
Post Date: May 2026

ABOUT SEEDING SUCCESS

Seeding Success is an organization dedicated to improving outcomes for children and families by transforming systems, fostering collaboration, and using data to drive action. Through cross-sector partnerships, community engagement, and continuous improvement strategies, Seeding Success works to ensure every child in Shelby County has the opportunity to thrive from cradle to career.

ABOUT YOU

You are driven by impact, deeply committed to advancing economic mobility across Memphis and Shelby County, and ready to take on a career-defining opportunity to build and lead an advancement function designed to accelerate economic mobility across our vibrant community.

At heart, you are a connector and storyteller. You lead with humility, curiosity, conviction, and accountability, building trusted relationships across diverse stakeholders. Energized by convening others, grounded in innovation, and motivated by measurable results, you build strong relationships with funders, civic leaders, business, and senior leaders to shape initiatives, understand emerging opportunities, and align resources around shared goals.

You are a strategic partner who works across teams to secure funding aligned with organizational priorities and vision for economic mobility. You translate complex systems-level work into compelling, investment-worthy narratives and believe lasting institutional alignment must be rooted in authentic community voice.

ABOUT THE POSITION

As Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) at Seeding Success (S2), you will lead and execute a comprehensive resource development strategy that fuels the organization's mission to improve economic mobility and powers cradle-to-career systems change in Memphis and Shelby County. As a senior leadership team member, the CAO is an externally facing executive leader responsible for building and managing a diversified revenue portfolio across major gifts and donor engagement, institutional philanthropy, government and public funding pathways, earned income (fee-for-service) opportunities, and external affairs. This role is both visionary and highly execution oriented. Responsibilities include setting strategy, setting advancement-related

communication initiatives, activating networks, and driving disciplined pipeline movement and revenue operations. This leader will strengthen Seeding Success's position as a trusted backbone organization and strategic convener while building sustainable revenue streams that support long-term impact.

Key Priorities

- Diversify and grow S2 revenue across philanthropy, government/public funding, and earned income, aligned to organizational strategy and capacity.
- Build and manage a high-performing advancement operating system (strategy, pipeline discipline, tools/CRM, reporting cadence, and cross-functional coordination).
- Directly manage a major gifts portfolio and close complex, multi-stakeholder commitments (including public sector relationships and procurements where appropriate).
- Strengthen advancement communications and marketing in partnership with the Communications team so S2 consistently communicates value, evidence, and impact to funders and customers.
- Position Seeding Success as a leading voice in systems change, economic mobility, and collective impact locally and nationally.

Responsibilities

Strategy and Leadership (30%)

- Implement and manage a multi-year advancement strategy that aligns revenue to S2 priorities and the organization's evolution into a backbone systems operator.
- Serve as a senior ambassador and connector for S2, building trust-based relationships across philanthropy, business, civic leadership, and government to enhance organizational reach, advocacy, and sustainability.
- Partner with the CEO and senior leadership team to align program priorities, policy strategy, data/learning assets, and convening work to fundable narratives and investable opportunities.
- Design and lead an annual advancement plan with quarterly priorities, revenue mix targets, and a clear operating cadence.
- Represent the organization at community events, partner meetings, and public engagements.

Major Gifts and Philanthropy (20%)

- Directly manage a portfolio of major gift prospects and donors (individuals and family philanthropy), leading cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Develop and execute a board engagement and activation approach that supports introductions, cultivation, and solicitation, with clear roles, scripts, and follow-through expectations.
- Cultivate and strengthen institutional fundraising across foundations and corporate partners, including proposal strategy, relationship management, and renewals.

Government Relationships and Public Funding Pathways (10%)

- Build and leverage relationships with government and public sector decision-makers (state, county, and city) to advance S2 priorities and open pathways to public funding and contracts.
- Partner closely with the Public Policy team to align policy priorities, public narratives, and funding strategy; translate public priorities into fundable scopes and partnership models.
- Identify and pursue public funding opportunities, including grants, contracts, and procurements where S2 can serve as a system operator, delivery manager (portfolio PMO), or infrastructure provider (data, learning, evaluation, fiscal, and accountability systems).

Earned Income (Fee-for-Service) and Commercial Partnerships (20%)

- Support the earned income revenue stream: develop a disciplined fee-for-service strategy that translates S2 capabilities into sellable offers with clear scopes, pricing bands, and decision rules.
- Co-design with CFO and President the packaging of offers (e.g., system operator/backbone roles, portfolio delivery management, and infrastructure builds or resets) into a small number of coherent, market-facing engagements.
- Utilize a deal qualification and approval process to protect organizational sustainability (scope clarity, pricing floors, staffing capacity, and contract terms).
- Support development of a pipeline of earned income opportunities (school systems, agencies, collaboratives, employers, health systems, and other cross-sector customers), leading negotiation and closing.

Advancement Communications and Marketing (10%)

- Co-lead an advancement communications plan with the Communications team to ensure donor and customer-facing messaging is consistent, compelling, and evidence-based.
- Own advancement messaging inputs: case for support, pitch decks, proposal templates, impact narratives, and stewardship communications; partner with Communications for design and distribution.
- Ensure thought leadership and narrative assets (data stories, policy wins, partner outcomes) are translated into funder-ready and customer-ready materials that support major gifts, institutional fundraising, government, and earned income.
- Maintain an annual communications calendar for advancement (appeals, reports, stewardship touchpoints, and key public moments) and coordinate internal inputs on deadlines.

Operations, Systems, and Management (10%)

- Own S2's fundraising pipeline discipline, including the live prospect tracker and any CRM in use, ensuring each priority prospect has a clear next step, owner, due date, and support plan.
- Implement a weekly internal advancement meeting and a monthly executive dashboard that reports pipeline health, progress against priorities, and risks/constraints.
- Partner with Finance and Operations to ensure accurate revenue forecasting, grant/contract compliance coordination, and timely reporting to funders and customers.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.

- 10+ years of progressive fundraising/advancement leadership, including direct major gifts experience and managing complex stakeholder relationships.
- Demonstrated track record of building and closing multi-year commitments across diverse revenue types (philanthropy and, ideally, government or contract-like revenue).
- Strong strategic and operational leadership; and ability to build systems, manage pipelines, and execute with discipline.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to translate strategy, data, and impact into persuasive narratives.
- Strong project management, organizational, and analytical skills.
- High integrity and comfort operating in cross-sector, politically aware environments.

Preferred

- Experience pursuing or managing government grants/contracts/procurements or building relationships with public sector customers.
- Experience launching or managing fee-for-service/earned income offerings in a mission-driven organization.
- Familiarity with cradle-to-career partnerships, collective impact models, or systems change organizations.
- Comfort working with dashboards, performance data, and continuous improvement approaches to support advancement strategy.
- Knowledge of the Memphis and Shelby County philanthropic and civic landscape.

LOCATION, COMPENSATION, and BENEFITS

This is a full-time, exempt position based out of the S2 office in Memphis, TN. Minimal travel is expected for conferences and possible statewide travel. A relocation package is available for qualified candidates.

The salary for the Chief Advancement Officer starts at \$160,000 and is commensurate with experience.

Employee benefits include health, vision, and dental.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit a resume and cover letter outlining relevant experience in major gifts, institutional fundraising, and revenue diversification to careers@seeding-success.org with Chief Advancement Officer in the subject line.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with **priority given to those received by June 15th**. Anticipated hire date is late summer.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

The process below reflects the typical process but may be adjusted slightly based on need and timing.

- Phone screen



- Hiring manager interview
- Compensated performance task
- Panel interview
- Final Interview
- Reference checks

Seeding Success is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage candidates of all backgrounds to apply and seek to bring in a talented and engaged workforce from a range of backgrounds. We recognize that you may not have an exact match with every qualification for this role, and that's okay - we encourage you to apply. We value unique experiences and perspectives, and we welcome your application. Please visit S2's [Employment Opportunities](#).