

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

Manager of Special Events and Development Communications, New York

Location: New York, New York

Reports to: Associate Director of Development

Founded in 1894, the American Academy in Rome is a leading American overseas center for independent study and advanced research in the arts and humanities. Each year, the Academy awards the Rome Prize to approximately 30 artists and scholars who join a dynamic, transdisciplinary residential community on the Academy's eleven-acre campus on the Janiculum Hill—enriched further by invited Residents and Visiting Artists and Scholars, reaching a community of approximately 100 at any given time. Fellows and Residents have gone on to earn 79 Pulitzer Prizes, 63 MacArthur Fellowships, 5 Nobel Prizes, and 5 Pritzker Prizes, among many other distinctions.

The Opportunity

The Manager of Special Events and Development Communications, New York is responsible for planning and executing a portfolio of fundraising and cultivation events that deepen engagement among trustees, benefactors, major donors, prospects, and other supporters. Based in New York, this position serves as the primary coordinator of donor-facing events and development communications originating from the organization's New York office.

The Manager will lead the planning and execution of the Academy's signature New York black-tie gala, alumni events, donor salons, trustee gatherings, and other cultivation and stewardship activities designed to strengthen relationships with donors, prospects and friends, and expand support for the organization. In coordination with the Communications team to ensure institutional alignment, the position will also oversee development communications from the New York office, ensuring that donors, prospects and alumni receive compelling and timely messaging that reflects the Academy's mission, impact, and fundraising priorities.

Working closely with the Vice President of Development and Associate Director of Development, senior leadership, trustees, volunteers, and external vendors, the Manager

will help create meaningful experiences that inspire philanthropic investment and build a vibrant community of supporters.

Success in this role will be defined by successful event execution, growth in donor engagement, increased participation by trustees and prospects, strong stewardship practices, and the delivery of strategic communications that advance fundraising objectives.

Key Responsibilities

Working closely with the VP for Development and the Associate Director of Development, the position will help lead:

Special Events Strategy and Management

- Develop and implement a comprehensive annual calendar of fundraising, cultivation, stewardship, and recognition events.
- Serve as the lead planner and project manager for all New York-based (and other U.S.-based) donor and trustee events.
- Create event strategies that support fundraising goals, major gift cultivation, donor retention, and institutional visibility.
- Establish event objectives, budgets, timelines, and performance measures.
- Evaluate event outcomes and provide recommendations to strengthen future engagement opportunities.

New York Black-Tie Gala

- Lead all aspects of planning and execution for the Academy's annual New York gala.
- Develop event concepts, themes, budgets, timelines, and sponsorship opportunities.
- Coordinate venue selection, catering, production, décor, entertainment, guest experience, and event logistics.
- Work closely with trustee co-chairs, event leadership committees, and senior staff to maximize attendance, sponsorships, and philanthropic support.
- Oversee invitation strategy, guest management, seating plans, and high-level donor hospitality.

- Manage event communications, recognition materials, and post-event follow-up and stewardship activities.

Society of Fellows and Donor Engagement Events

- Working with trustees emeriti volunteers, organize the annual Trustees Emeriti Luncheon.
- Develop other exclusive donor experiences that deepen relationships and encourage increased philanthropic participation.
- Coordinate educational programs, receptions, private briefings, and special events featuring journalists, public officials, historians, authors, and other distinguished guests at museums, galleries, private homes, private clubs, and other locations.
- Ensure that events provide meaningful opportunities for donor cultivation and stewardship.

Trustee, Benefactor, and Prospect Programming

- Manage all New York-based programming for trustees, benefactors, major donors, and prospective supporters.
- Develop cultivation opportunities that connect donors with Academy leadership, programming, and strategic initiatives.
- Coordinate trustee receptions, dinners, salon events, and other activities designed to strengthen engagement and philanthropy.
- Support trustees and volunteer leaders in hosting, attending, and participating in donor events.
- Prepare event briefings and cultivation materials for executives, trustees, and volunteer leadership.

Development Communications

- In coordination with the Communications team, develop and implement a strategic U.S./NYC-focused communications plan for donors, trustees, and prospects.
- Create and manage U.S.-based event invitations, stewardship reports, impact updates, and cultivation materials.
- Collaborate with communications and marketing colleagues to ensure consistent institutional messaging and branding.
- Draft speeches, talking points, donor correspondence, event remarks, and acknowledgement materials for senior leadership and trustees as requested.

- Ensure that development communications reflect donor interests, organizational priorities, and fundraising objectives.

Donor Stewardship and Relationship Management

- Partner with Development leadership to provide exceptional stewardship experiences for donors and event attendees.
- Coordinate personalized recognition and follow-up communications following events and campaigns.
- Maintain regular engagement with key supporters and help identify opportunities for deeper involvement.
- Work closely with major gift staff to align events and communications with donor cultivation strategies.

Budget Management and Event Operations

- Develop and manage event budgets and vendor contracts, coordinating with Finance as needed.
- Negotiate with venues, caterers, production teams, and other service providers.
- Ensure effective use of organizational resources while maintaining high standards of quality and hospitality.
- Monitor expenditures and provide financial reporting related to events and communications activities.
- Maintain event records, attendance data, and performance metrics.

Collaboration and Institutional Leadership

- Partner with advancement colleagues to integrate events and communications into broader fundraising strategies.
- Collaborate with trustees, executive leadership, program staff, and external stakeholders to maximize donor engagement opportunities.
- Support special projects and strategic initiatives as assigned.

Qualifications

Required

- Bachelor's degree required.
- Minimum of 5–7 years of experience in special events, development, fundraising, communications, or related nonprofit leadership roles.
- Demonstrated success in planning complex, high-profile fundraising and donor cultivation events.
- Experience working with major donors, trustees, volunteers, and senior executives.
- Strong writing and editing skills with experience producing donor-focused communications.
- Experience managing event budgets, contracts, and vendor relationships.
- Knowledge of fundraising principles, donor stewardship, and major gift cultivation.
- Experience with CRM and event management platforms.
- Exceptional project management and organizational skills with the ability to oversee multiple initiatives simultaneously.
- Strong interpersonal, communication, and diplomatic skills, along with a sense of humor.
- Flexibility to participate in calls in off-hours to accommodate colleagues in Rome, and work some evenings and weekends as required by events and donor activities.
- Enthusiasm for the Academy's legacy and mission.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will be an exceptional relationship-builder who combines creativity, attention to detail, and flawless execution. They will possess the confidence to work effectively with trustees, philanthropists, public figures, and senior leaders while maintaining a warm, donor-centered approach. They will be highly organized, collaborative, resourceful, and committed to creating memorable experiences that inspire lasting philanthropic support.

Compensation & Location

Compensation: \$80,000-\$90,000

Salary is based on a range of factors that include relevant experience, knowledge, skills, other job-related qualifications.

Based in our Chelsea offices, New York. Our hybrid work model allows employees to optionally work from home on Mondays and Fridays.

To Apply

Candidates should submit a one-page letter outlining their interest in the Academy and the contributions they expect to make to its mission, along with a current CV. Applications should be submitted to devcareers@aarome.org with the subject line “SPECIAL EVENTS” and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

The American Academy in Rome is an Equal Opportunity Employer. AAR believes that a diverse community makes for a stronger institution, and actively encourages applications from candidates of all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. We are committed to a hiring process that is equitable, inclusive, and free from bias, and to building a leadership community that reflects the breadth of the artistic and scholarly traditions we support. reflects the breadth of the artistic and scholarly traditions we support.