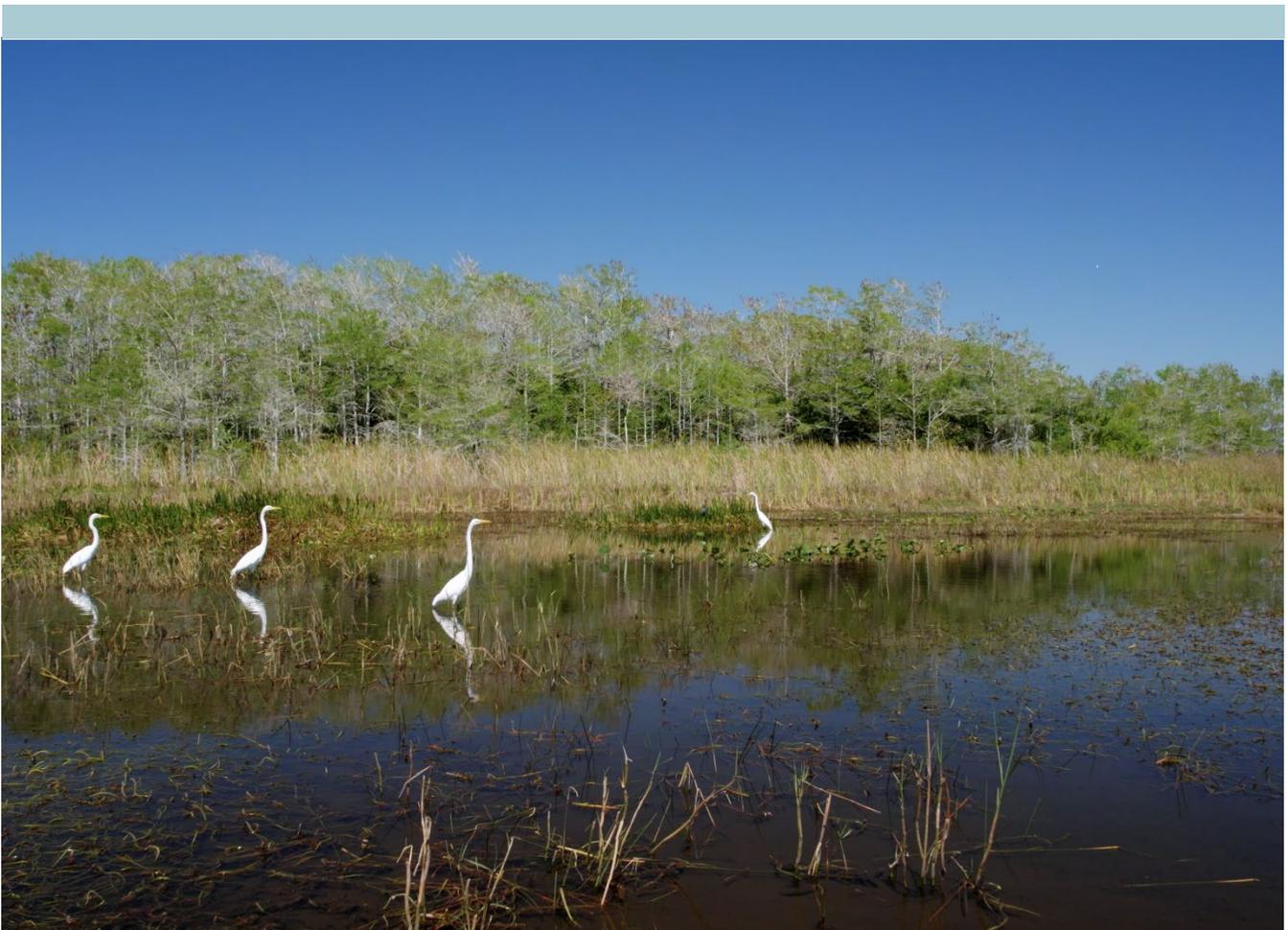




Vice President of Development

Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



Executive Summary

The Everglades Foundation seeks an accomplished, strategic, and entrepreneurial advancement leader to serve as its next Vice President of Development. This executive will build upon a period of exceptional fundraising momentum—having exceeded annual fundraising goals for each of the past five years and surpassing the original \$75 million endowment campaign goal in December 2024—to lead the organization into its next phase of philanthropic growth and impact.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and serving as a key member of the executive leadership team, the Vice President of Development will provide vision, strategy, and execution across all fundraising functions. The successful candidate will lead a high-performing, geographically distributed development organization and will be accountable for annual fundraising results of no less than \$15 million, in addition to consistently securing annual endowment contributions and delivering results on special initiatives, including but not limited to a Science and Policy center initiative, capital projects, and innovative ventures such as AI initiatives and a film project (e.g., an IMAX feature).

A central priority of this role is to build and grow the Foundation's endowment through the fundraising of named funds, endowed positions, departments, and new programmatic priorities, while helping to shape and lead the next comprehensive endowment campaign. The Vice President of Development will bring the experience, vision, and discipline required to position the Foundation for an endowment of \$100–\$200 million, ensuring long-term financial sustainability and mission impact.

Central to this role is the ability to tightly align philanthropic strategy with the Foundation's strategic pillars—science, education, and advocacy—ensuring that fundraising priorities directly enable programmatic success and long-term mission outcomes. This leader will bring the mindset and capabilities of a modern chief advancement executive—combining relationship-driven fundraising excellence with sophisticated use of Salesforce, analytics, dashboards, and performance metrics to inform strategy, uncover new opportunities, and drive decision-making.

The Vice President of Development will work in close partnership with the Foundation's Board of Directors and Chairman's Advisory Council (CAC), serving as a trusted advisor and facilitator of meaningful engagement. This includes supporting and enhancing board members' own philanthropic commitments, enabling strategic introductions, and partnering with Board and CAC leadership to unlock new relationships and fundraising opportunities—particularly in support of endowment growth and transformational giving. The Vice President will be a compelling ambassador for The Everglades Foundation's mission and a key driver of its philanthropic success.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Vice President of Development

The Vice President of Development serves as the Foundation's chief architect and leader of all philanthropic strategy and execution in support of its Strategic Plan. This role provides comprehensive oversight of **Major Gifts, Annual Giving, Legacy and Planned Giving, Corporate and Foundation Relations, Prospect Research and Management, Campaigns, and Donor Stewardship**, as well as a **regionally deployed fundraising program across Florida**.

Key responsibilities include:

- Setting and executing a multi-year development strategy that delivers **at least \$15 million in annual fundraising**, while advancing long-term endowment growth and special project funding priorities.
- Leading the strategy for **endowment fundraising**, including named endowed funds, positions, departments, and programmatic priorities, and preparing the organization for a future comprehensive endowment campaign with a long-term target of \$100–\$200 million.
- Providing strategic leadership and oversight for a **regionally based fundraising program**, with staff and donor engagement focused in **Miami, Florida Keys, Naples, Southwest Florida, and the Palm Beach/Jupiter region on the Southeast coast of Florida**.
- Ensuring alignment, coordination, and consistent performance across regional teams while leveraging local relationships, networks, and market opportunities to maximize philanthropic results.
- **Maintain an active personal portfolio of high-level donors and foundations**, including major and principal gift prospects, and personally cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding these relationships. **The Vice President is expected to personally carry and actively manage a portfolio of the Foundation's most significant individual and institutional prospects.**
- Overseeing **two flagship annual fundraising events** that collectively generate approximately **\$6 million in philanthropic support each year**, including a **Palm Beach event attracting approximately 650 guests** and a **Naples event attracting approximately 350 guests**, and providing strategic leadership for their fundraising success, donor engagement, and execution.
- Ensuring that fundraising priorities are **directly aligned with and responsive to the Foundation's strategic pillars**, translating scientific research, education initiatives, advocacy, and policy goals into compelling philanthropic opportunities.
- Leading and mentoring a talented development team of approximately 7 - 10 professionals, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, innovation, and results across both centralized and regional functions.
- Personally, securing seven- and eight-figure gifts in partnership with the CEO, board members, and senior leadership.
- Partnering closely with the CEO, **Board of Directors, and Chairman's Advisory Council** to engage volunteer leadership in fundraising, donor cultivation, strategic introductions, and peer-to-peer outreach.
- Championing the effective use of **Salesforce as the enterprise fundraising platform**, ensuring data integrity, team-wide adoption, and the use of dashboards and analytics to track performance, forecast revenue, and identify new opportunities.
- Supporting board members in fulfilling their philanthropic leadership roles, including their own giving, ambassadorship, and participation in opening doors to new prospects and partnerships, particularly for endowment and legacy gifts.

- Serving as a visible and credible representative of The Everglades Foundation to donors, partners, and stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels.
- Ensuring the consistent funding of the Foundation's endowment each year to safeguard long-term mission sustainability.
- Leveraging data, prospect research, and market intelligence to expand the donor pipeline, enter new markets, and continuously refine fundraising strategies.
- Collaborating with Finance to ensure best practices in gift acceptance, documentation, pledges, acknowledgements, and financial reporting.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

This is a rare opportunity to lead development for a highly respected environmental organization at a moment of extraordinary strength, clarity of purpose, and ambition.

The Vice President of Development will:

- Build on a proven track record of success, leading a program that has **exceeded fundraising goals year over year** and is positioned for continued growth.
- Play a defining role in **shaping the Foundation's next endowment chapter**, including the design and execution of a future endowment campaign to support named positions, departments, and new strategic initiatives.
- Help position the Foundation to achieve an endowment that provides enduring support for science, education, advocacy, and policy impact.
- Shape the next chapter of the Foundation's philanthropic vision by ensuring that fundraising strategy is fully integrated with the FOCUS 2030 Strategic plan: **scientific excellence, education impact, advocacy outcomes, and policy leadership**.
- Advance sustained **annual endowment fundraising** while also delivering transformational support for special initiatives.
- Lead and further strengthen a **statewide, regionally embedded fundraising model**, capitalizing on deep community relationships across South Florida.
- Further institutionalize a **data-driven fundraising culture**, using Salesforce, metrics, dashboards, and predictive analytics to enhance performance, accountability, and opportunity identification.
- Serve as a strategic partner to the Board of Directors, strengthening board engagement in philanthropy, relationship-building, and donor strategy.
- Maintain a visible personal presence with the Foundation's most significant donors and institutional partners.
- Recruit, develop, and inspire a best-in-class advancement team aligned around shared goals, clear metrics, and a passion for mission impact.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate will bring a blend of strategic leadership, fundraising excellence, and operational sophistication consistent with top-tier advancement executives.

Experience and Expertise

- Minimum of **10 years of progressive leadership experience** in development, advancement, or fundraising, with responsibility for comprehensive and geographically distributed programs.
- Demonstrated success leading organizations with **annual fundraising results of \$15 million or more**, including sustained endowment fundraising.
- Proven experience **building endowments**, including securing named endowed funds, positions, or programs, and helping to design or lead comprehensive endowment campaigns.
- Demonstrated success **managing and personally fundraising from a portfolio of high-net-worth individuals and foundations**.
- Proven record of personally securing **seven- and eight-figure gifts** from individuals, foundations, and corporate partners.
- Experience overseeing or collaborating with **regional or market-based fundraising teams**.
- Experience funding complex initiatives, including capital projects, legal or advocacy efforts, and special-purpose campaigns.
- Proficiency with **Salesforce or comparable CRM systems**, including the use of dashboards, analytics, communication journeys and metrics to drive strategy, forecasting, and performance management.
- Strong understanding of prospect research, portfolio management, and pipeline development.

Leadership and Management

- Track record of building, leading, and retaining high-performing development teams.
- Collaborative leadership style with the ability to inspire, influence, and hold teams accountable across multiple locations.
- Extensive experience partnering with boards and senior volunteer leaders to advance philanthropic outcomes, particularly in support of transformational and endowment giving.
- Strategic thinker with operational discipline and the ability to execute in a fast-paced, results-oriented environment.

Personal Attributes

- Exceptional interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.
- High integrity, sound judgment, and the confidence to lead with both diplomacy and decisiveness.
- Entrepreneurial mindset with comfort taking calculated risks and pursuing ambitious goals.
- Strong alignment with and passion for The Everglades Foundation's mission and impact.

Education

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- CFRE or equivalent certification preferred.

The Vice President of Development may be based in South Florida, with a strong presence at the Foundation's headquarters in Palmetto Bay, Florida. Regional and national travel is required.



About The Everglades Foundation

Overview

For more than 30 years, The Everglades Foundation's commitment to restore and protect America's Everglades has been driven by science. Founded in 1993 by two outdoor enthusiasts — Paul Tudor Jones II and the late George Barley— The Everglades Foundation works energetically and with a sense of urgency to bring people together and provide a powerful voice for Everglades restoration at the state and national levels.

The Everglades is a vast watershed that has historically extended from Lake Okeechobee 100 miles south to Florida Bay (a third of the southern Florida peninsula). The Greater Everglades Watershed refers to the interconnected ecosystems of water, land and climate spanning nearly 18,000 square miles. This is a large, diverse and complex region including 16 counties, from Orlando in the north to the Florida Keys.

The watershed includes Biscayne National Park, Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve and a variety of other federally protected lands. This system supports mangrove forests, nursery and nesting habitats for many species of birds, fish and invertebrates, and sustains seagrasses and aquatic life. This ecosystem also provides the drinking water supply for nearly nine million Floridians and countless tourists

Today, The Everglades Foundation stands as a well-respected authoritative source for scientific research on the Everglades. Our renowned Ph.D. scientists are passionate about conducting and communicating peer-reviewed research to inform and guide Everglades restoration efforts. By coupling sound science with policy expertise, the Foundation is positioned as one of the most credible and influential players in the fight to restore and protect one of the world's most unique wetlands.

The Everglades Foundation:

- Awards grants to the best local and national non-profit organizations to focus professional staff and members on Everglades restoration.
- Partners with diverse stakeholders to form coalitions, set priorities, share information and devise strategies to unite and strengthen the voices for Everglades restoration.
- Monitors local, state and federal government policies and actions that affect Everglades restoration efforts.
- Articulates the threats to the Everglades and offers the best possible solutions.
- Advocates on behalf of the Everglades with policy-makers in Tallahassee and Washington, DC who affect the future of the ecosystem and who provide the resources to implement Everglades restoration projects and programs.
- Supports litigation when government or private entities act to harm the Everglades, or when there is a failure to enforce the laws passed to restore and protect this ecosystem.

Mission

The Everglades Foundation works to restore and protect America's Everglades through science, advocacy, and education.

Vision

An Everglades with abundant freshwater for consumption, enjoyment, ecological health and economic growth for generations to come.

The Everglades Foundation – Three Pillars of Dedicated Efforts

The Everglades Foundation makes strides towards restoration through Science, Education, and Advocacy.

The Foundation has eight Ph.D.'s on staff, conducting world-class research in water quality, economics, hydrology and hydrologic modeling, wetland ecology and engineering. Their research drives the policy and advocacy efforts of the foundation, and supports the groundbreaking Everglades Literacy education program while inspiring innovation to solve the challenges surrounding freshwater bodies and excess nutrient pollution. With spectacular views of Biscayne National Park and Biscayne Bay, The Everglades Foundation is located in Palmetto Bay, just south of Miami, and within short driving distance to Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys.

Science

At The Everglades Foundation, science drives restoration. It underpins everything we do. Science guides our advocacy, communications, and provides the framework for our education program. Science crosses multiple

intersections, and it doesn't stop at the Everglades. The Everglades Foundation's work bridges environmental restoration with our communities through multi-faceted resilience planning efforts. These efforts include protecting water supply, reducing flood risk, and improving water quality and well-being by providing more nature-based solutions. With our economic expertise, we can translate our science into economic outputs including benefit cost analyses, resource valuations, and an improved understanding of the value of clean water and a restored America's Everglades. These economic metrics advance Everglades advocacy with decision-makers.

Under the leadership of Chief Science Officer Dr. Steve Davis, The Everglades Foundation's science team includes Ph.D. experts including a Chief Economist, Biogeochemist, Hydrologist, Water Resources Engineer, Ecosystem and Resilience Scientist, and a Senior Restoration Scientist.

"Science dictates our priorities, whether from an advocacy perspective, a communications perspective, and even through our education program. Our science team is reflective of the needs for Everglades restoration, and the fundamental needs are in areas of hydrology, water quality, ecology, and looking ahead to resilience. Our team is built to enable us to conduct the modeling that is needed to ensure that restoration plans are delivering the benefits we expect from Everglades restoration, and the resilience plans that we are involved with today will continue to protect this ecosystem in the future." – *Steve Davis, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer*



Education

The Everglades Foundation in 2014 launched the Everglades Literacy Program, the only free, comprehensive PreK-12 Everglades curriculum in the world. The program allows students of all ages to learn and understand the complexities of this rich topic through interdisciplinary techniques. Recognizing the influence of personal actions — how we all affect and are consequently affected by the Everglades — is necessary to explore future mitigation strategies.

The Everglades curriculum provides the skills and tools necessary to act to protect this threatened ecosystem, which provides the daily water supply for nearly nine million Floridians, contributes billions of dollars to Florida's economy, and provides recreational and educational opportunities for millions of visitors from all over the world.

Everglades Literacy is an understanding of the Everglades and its influence on you — and your influence on the Everglades. An Everglades-literate person:

- Understands the program's fundamental concepts about the Everglades.
- Can communicate these concepts and ideas about the Everglades in a meaningful way.
- Can make informed and responsible decisions regarding the Everglades and its resources.

To date, the Everglades Literacy Program has trained more than 8,500 teachers and educated 280,000 students across 32 counties.



Advocacy & Engagement

Serving as an influential powerhouse in the environmental advocacy space, The Everglades Foundation has a history of influencing environmental policy by providing bipartisan solutions backed by sound scientific research.

Rooted in science and driven by its results-oriented corporate culture, The Everglades Foundation takes a high-level advocacy approach when advocating for the restoration of America's beloved wetland. By engaging with like-minded environmental, conservation and business-minded organizations, the Foundation seeks to influence the executive and legislative branches of both the state and federal government to the benefit of America's Everglades.

Leadership

Carlos M. de la Cruz, Jr. Chairman of the Board



Carlos de la Cruz, born in Philadelphia, but raised in Madrid, Spain, has years of experience in M&A, start-ups, and operations in the beverage and automobile industries in Florida and Latin America. For almost ten years, he was President of Eagle Brands, Inc., the exclusive Anheuser-Busch wholesaler for Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. He also became president of Miami Honda, Central Hyundai, Sunshine Ford, and Maroone Chevrolet. Mr. De la Cruz is a founding member of the Americas Gateway Chapter for Young Presidents Organization. He has served as Chairman of the Board of Ransom Everglades School and Our Kids of Miami-Dade and Monroe, the community-based care provider for foster children with over 4,500 children in care. He obtained his B.S. in Accounting from Boston College and his M.B.A. from the University of Miami. Mr. de la Cruz is fluent in Spanish and French and has been a resident of Miami since 1975.

Eric Eikenberg Chief Executive Officer



Eric Eikenberg is a seasoned political strategist and policy expert who has served since 2012 as Chief Executive Officer of The Everglades Foundation, one of America's most prestigious environmental non-profits, with a singular focus on restoring and protecting America's Everglades.

Eikenberg leads a team of renowned scientists, experienced educators, policy experts, and professionals in communications, human resources, finance, and fundraising. By coupling this breadth of expertise with a passion for restoration, The Everglades Foundation is the leading organization in the effort to restore and protect America's Everglades – the world's largest ecosystem restoration project.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Eikenberg served as chief of staff to former Florida Governor Charlie Crist and former U.S. Representative E. Clay Shaw, Jr., who authored the landmark Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

A prolific columnist widely quoted by media outlets including National Public Radio, CNN, The Associated Press, Politico, and The Miami Herald, Eikenberg in 2024 was named among "The Achievers" by Miami Today and featured in its annual "Book of Leaders." In 2023, he was honored for the second time as one of the "Florida Power 100" by City & State Florida. Since 2022, Eikenberg has been recognized annually by Florida Trend as one of "Florida's 500," a selection of the state's most influential business leaders. He also has been named one of the "Most Influential People in Florida Politics" by Influence Magazine, and received South Florida Business & Wealth magazine's APOGEE Award. He was chosen to serve on a panel of 50 Influential Floridians in 2019 by The Miami Herald, El Nuevo Herald, and The Bradenton Herald, and in 2022, received the Guy Harvey Conservation Icon Award from the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation.

A graduate of The American University, Eric, his wife, and four children reside in Palmetto Bay, Florida.

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For current membership, please visit <https://www.evergladesfoundation.org/boardmembers>.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting The Everglades Foundation in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **April 13, 2026**.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Mercedes Chacón Vance and Sarah Seavey

EvergladesVPDevelopment@wittkieffer.com

The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer that affords equal protection against discrimination to job applicants and employees. The Foundation seeks to ensure that qualified applicants will have an equal opportunity with respect to all employment practices regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, pregnancy, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, status as a victim of domestic or dating violence, source of income, veteran status, or any other Procedure for Candidacy.