



**Peninsula Open Space Trust
Director of Institutional Engagement
Position Description**

Painter Executive Search is supporting Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in its search for a Director of Institutional Engagement to gain support of agency and foundation partners for conservation projects and initiatives and to help shape future funding opportunities.

Since its founding in 1977, POST (headquartered in Palo Alto, CA) has been helping create a network of protected lands where people and nature connect and thrive. POST has permanently protected more than 80,000 acres of open space, farms and parkland in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties in California, with support from a deeply committed set of partners and funders. POST brings together many partners to ensure that open spaces are permanently protected, benefiting the community, the environment, and the economy. POST plays a central, catalytic role in complex land transactions and funding processes.

The Director of Institutional Engagement acts as a knowledge base and manager of critical funding relationships that support POST's strategic priorities and regional conservation work. The role provides real-time analysis of funding opportunities, delivers compelling proposals and by engaging with elected officials, policy makers and other partners supports the evolution of new funding sources.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Director of Institutional Engagement (Director) provides leadership, direction, and coordination to develop funds, secure gifts, and build long-term partnerships with institutional funders – government agencies and large private foundations. The Director manages activities across multiple teams and with external partners to engage institutional funders in program delivery and leads grant solicitation and management processes in order to raise an average of \$5 million per year for POST's programs. The Director oversees POST's involvement in legislation and policy making, including developing new sources of state and local funding for land conservation.

Reporting to the Vice President of Development, the Director works proactively with leadership across the organization to deeply understand land and stewardship projects and program goals. Through the exploration and understanding of institutional funding parameters and priorities and fluency in regional conservation efforts and strategies, the Director of Institutional Engagement identifies and pursues pertinent funding opportunities shaping the relationship strategies and approaches to the grant proposals.

Together with a departmental team that includes a full-time Institutional Engagement Coordinator who works in tandem with the Director, an experienced contract grant writer and two political consulting firms based in Sacramento, the Director is responsible for managing and influencing the creation and flow of regional and state conservation funding and stewarding all the relationships related to those funding sources. Knowledge and understanding of the state budget process and existing conservation funding programs is important to success in the role. Additionally, the Director is the primary contact in

key foundation funding relationships. The ability to listen and evolve strong collaborative relationships with a wide range of leaders internally and externally is critical skillset.

Together with POST's financial leadership, the Director manages institutional revenue expectations and tracks the probability and timing of funding. The Director is the lens through which the organization prioritizes time and attention to specific institutional funding and policy opportunities. Working with external consultants, the Director tracks and evaluates the impact of new legislation on POST's work and shapes opportunities to advance conservation practices and new funding programs.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Institutional Donor Engagement and Fundraising

- Develop multi-year funding strategies and annual goals, in collaboration with the Vice President of Development, that align with POST's mission, fundraising approach, and core program area objectives.
- Lead development and implementation of outreach, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies for institutional donors with the capacity to make six-figure+ grants, with a focus on California state natural resource agencies.
- Work with the Vice President of Development, the Vice President of Conservation, and the President to broaden and strengthen POST's relationships with institutional funders.
- Maintain a comprehensive understanding of POST's projects and goals to identify opportunities and strategies for funding or supportive policy changes, and to communicate effectively with funders, policy makers, partners, and other stakeholders.
- Work closely with the Land Team to identify potential projects for institutional donor engagement, develop and implement strategies for securing funds, and coordinate with project partners.
- Collaborate with external partners to develop and implement funding strategies for joint projects.
- Advance POST's DEI initiatives; contribute internally and in collaboration with funders to address historical injustices in conservation and the region.
- Ascertain the risk and potential reward of grant opportunities to evaluate the likelihood of success against the investment of resources required; determine which opportunities to pursue.
- Manage proposal development processes; ensure proposals present competitive projects and foster long-term partnerships; manage senior staff review.
- Monitor and communicate program and project results and fulfillment of grant commitments; oversee production of grant reports.
- Manage cross-departmental and partner coordination to ensure high-quality communications with funders.
- Keep abreast of policies and events that may impact funder priorities; monitor trends in grantmaking from foundation and government entities.

Legislative Engagement and Fund Creation

- Direct POST's engagement in legislative activities, including strategic planning, priority setting, and coordination with the President and senior staff.
- Advance policy goals and maintain expertise in major issue areas through external representation, thought leadership, and networking.
- Advise the President on high-profile bills, investments in political campaigns, and other legislative matters; implement resulting decisions.

- Manage POST’s consultants in Sacramento to track and act on relevant state legislative actions, develop new statewide sources of funding, and align funding program implementation with POST’s goals.
- Manage relationships with agency leadership and staff with grant-making responsibilities.
- Cultivate relationships with legislators and their staffs at the local, state, and federal levels of government, and represent POST in legislative proceedings.
- Communicate the organization’s position on legislative and policy matters internally and externally. Review public comment letters prior to submission by POST.
- With support from outside consultants, provide strategic advice and coordination to the President and others in the development and passage of ballot measures.
- Support ballot measure development and campaign strategies; draft content for communication materials; collaborate with internal and external partners and stakeholders to build community buy-in, and position ballot measures for passage by the voters.
- Serve as a resource on public policy and funding procedures, regulations, and best practices, including knowledge of IRS and CA FPPC regulations.

Management and Administration

- Manage the Institutional Engagement Coordinator. Provide direction on goals and priorities, oversight of project implementation, coaching and professional development opportunities.
- With the Institutional Engagement Coordinator and Finance team, ensure accurate routing and accounting of grants in POST’s financial, land, and donor databases, and timely, professional communications with funders.
- Develop and manage POST’s External Affairs budget.
- Prepare materials for and make presentations to Board and volunteer committees on the status of fundraising, strategic initiatives, planning, and engagement opportunities.
- Manage the use of consultants for program delivery and work-flow efficiency.
- Define monthly and annual deliverables for grant writer and political consultants; strategize on outcome delivery and oversee progress.
- Build a collaborative, effective, and self-reliant department.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Experience

A successful Director of Institutional Engagement candidate will likely have:

- Demonstrated leadership ability, capable of holding big picture goals while managing the details required to develop and execute effective funding and policy strategies.
- Exceptional relationship building skills, a track record of successful partner engagement, excellent project management skills, and outstanding interpersonal communications skills.
- Excellent written communication skills; ability to write clear, articulate, and persuasive proposals and reports including experience developing government grants, particularly with California state agencies.
- Experience developing relationships with elected officials at the local, state, and/or federal government levels; knowledge of budget appropriations desirable.
- Policy expertise across an array of natural and working lands conservation areas; ability to analyze policy documents to assess future impacts to POST’s projects and broader land conservation goals.
- Demonstrated political savvy, ability to negotiate persuasively and diplomatically.

- Demonstrated independent judgment, problem-solving skills, and ability to manage multiple priorities in a highly dynamic environment.
- College degree preferred. A combination of professional and personal experience that demonstrates an equivalent level of knowledge, acumen, maturity, and writing skills will be considered in lieu of a degree.

Attributes

- Deep personal commitment to land conservation and to POST's mission and vision.
- Proactive; capable of managing diverse tasks in a timely and effective manner.
- A strong listener; willing and able to find common ground.
- Emotionally mature, someone who is confident and truly enjoys working with people.
- Committed to continuous learning, reflection, and growth around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Both a self-starter and highly collaborative; inspires confidence and trust.
- Tenacious, able to respond creatively to challenges; one who can see how to move things forward.
- Exercises high ethical standards; works with integrity and accountability.

POST is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from people of under-represented groups who will contribute to the diversity of its staff and the vibrancy of its work. POST supports diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work, so that everyone in the region can feel a greater sense of ownership over the future of the landscape and enjoy meaningful connections to nature now and for generations to come.

For additional details or to submit your experience for review, please contact;

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