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filoli

Search Conducted By

POTRERO GROUP



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Call for Committee and Board Members

Filoli seeks volunteer leaders to join us in taking a meaningful step toward Board service, helping amplify our mission and vision by providing strategic oversight and ensuring that diverse communities experience a deep connection to the beauty of this historic place.



Who We Are

Filoli cultivates connections to nature and community.

Filoli is a vibrant landscape of the Bay Area, situated on the unceded ancestral lands of the Ramaytush Ohlone in Woodside, California. The estate boasts 654 acres of beauty nestled along the slopes of California's coastal range. Originally built as a private residence in 1917, Filoli was opened to the public in 1977 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Mission

To connect our rich history with a vibrant future through beauty, nature, and shared stories.

Vision

A time when all people honor nature, value unique experiences, and appreciate beauty in everyday life.

Core Values

Filoli's values are rooted in **INTEGRITY**; we are accountable for our work, actions, and impact on our visitors, community, and environment.

- **INCLUSIVE** Remove barriers to participation, enjoyment, and belonging and seek unique viewpoints that broaden our perspective.
- **WELCOMING** Serve as gracious hosts and provide exceptional, engaging experiences in every interaction.
- **INNOVATIVE** Inspire our audiences by leading boldly, courageously, and creatively, adapting to changing needs and expectations.
- **COLLABORATIVE** Connect people, community, and place through respectful dialogue, interactive participation, and meaningful action.
- **STEWARDS** Embody an enduring commitment to preserve Filoli's rich history and implement sustainable practices for the future.



Land Acknowledgement

Filoli sits on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Lamchin, an independent tribe of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, the original inhabitants and stewards of the San Francisco Peninsula. Lamchin families from the village of Supichom had an intimate relationship with this land.

The impacts of colonization are ongoing and adversely affect the Indigenous peoples of the Bay Area. As we use the land to gather, live, learn, and work, we are beneficiaries of those past injustices. Filoli is a sanctuary for healing for all people; honoring this truth is a vital first step to transcend barriers of heritage and difference.

Read Filoli's **full Land Acknowledgement** and commitment to action.

Filoli is a place of convening, community, and welcoming.



A place that brings people together by inviting people from all walks of life to gather and celebrate amidst its breathtaking beauty. We are proud to host 760,000 passionate visitors who appreciate nature, history, and tradition.



A place where values are centered on people with a focus on the needs of our guests and the incredibly talented team that delivers Filoli's mission and vision. Filoli was one of the first cultural organizations in the country to pay a living minimum wage.



A historic home; our 54,000-square-foot Georgian Revival mansion is a testament to the enduring beauty and historical significance of American country estates of the early 20th century.



A public garden surrounded by 16 acres of formal garden that blooms all year round. Our horticulturists draw on historic photos and oral histories to inspire seasonal plantings.



A nature preserve rich in biodiversity, it has 654 acres of natural land, five distinct ecosystems, and a one-mile Estate Trail.



An educational organization that inspires learning, connecting the past with the future through shared stories. With a focus on underserved communities, Filoli's youth programs are supported through partnerships and contributions.



A cultural hub that represents a California experience by highlighting the Bay Area's ecological diversity and weaving together the historical narratives of Indigenous peoples, Spanish missionaries, and Mexican ranchers during the Gold Rush. It celebrates the region's rich culture through performances, food, and storytelling.

Filoli is a Place Where Nature, People, and History Thrive

- 200 staff
- $30+ million budget
- 760,000 annual visits to Filoli
- 85,000+ children visited Filoli with their families and schools
- 20,260 free visits through community access programs
- 30,560 member households
- 72 free field trips hosted

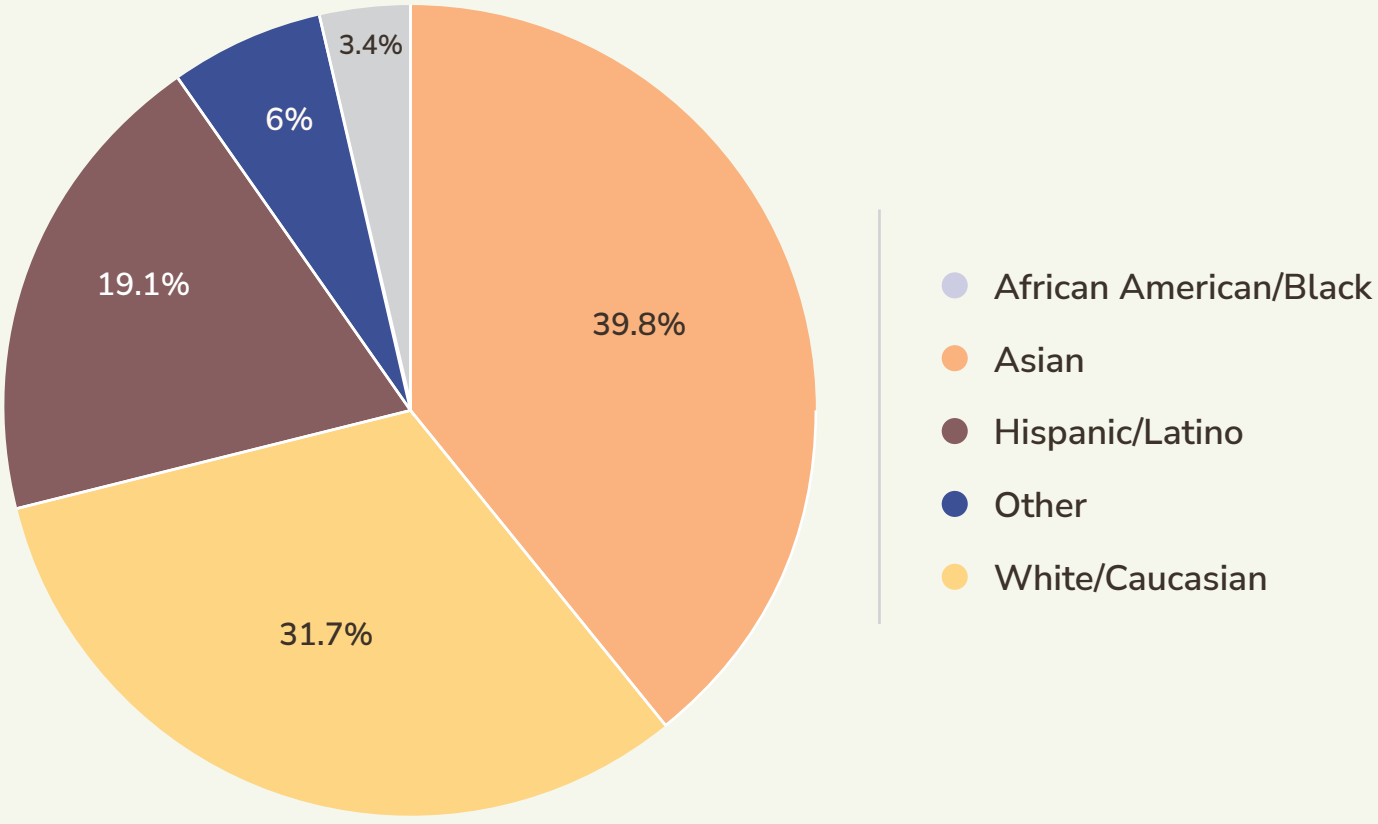



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Equity Centered Engagement

Filoli is committed to fostering an environment where all people feel valued, included, and empowered to engage fully with our history, nature, and cultural experiences. We actively work to remove barriers, amplify historically excluded voices, and create meaningful connections through equitable practices. Rooted in accountability and continuous learning, our programs, partnerships, and policies reflect our dedication to fairness, openness, and a sense of belonging for all.

We live by William Bourn's original credo: Fi Lo Li
Fight for a just cause. Love your fellow man. Live a good life.

Commitments to Our Team:

- Cultivate a culture of belonging where every individual feels valued, heard, and empowered.
- Embed equity into policies, governance, and culture to drive lasting, systemic change.
- Reshape internal systems to ensure equity guides decision making, leadership, and resource distribution.
- Build equitable talent pathways that foster long-term inclusion, leadership development, and shared success.
- Maintain accountability through transparent policies, continuous assessment, and intentional repair efforts.

Commitments to Our Community:

- Shift from engagement to co-creation, ensuring communities have real agency in shaping our work.
- Create a Filoli where everyone can see themselves reflected, included, and valued.

Inspiration from a Garden

Click **here** to watch a message about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging from Filoli's Board of Directors. Shared by Filoli Board Member Joyce Hammel.

Our Board and Committee Members represent, embrace, and serve as leaders in advancing Filoli's Strategic Vision.


photo credit: Key Lime Photography

United by a shared commitment to Filoli's mission, Board and Committee Members play a crucial role in advancing our vision. Since the launch of our five-year strategic plan in 2024, Filoli has achieved significant milestones against each of our strategic goals. We have grown attendance to more than 760,000 visitors in 2025. We have begun execution of our comprehensive site plan that will include a new entrance experience, a new parking area, and 10 miles of new hiking trails. We have brought new experiences to our visitors, including Thomas Dambo's Trolls, Jayson Fan's Creating Home, and performances by the San Francisco Opera and In a Landscape. We have fully implemented a living wage and best-in-class benefits and professional development opportunities for our entire staff. We have emerged as a recognized leader among our peers, and co-hosted the 2026 American Public Gardens Association annual conference. As a Board or Committee Member, you will be part of exciting progress during a transformative period of Filoli's history.

Strategic Goals (2024–2028)

- Strengthen our connections by growing the number of people who feel welcomed, valued, and inspired by Filoli and by deepening the quality of our relationships with our community.
- Steward our natural and built environment through sustainable practices, strategic site development, and land conservation.
- Curate and expand unique experiences, stories, and programs for and with our guests.
- Establish Filoli as a national workplace of choice and a people-centered culture of integrity and equity.
- Embrace our industry leadership role and shape best practices through ongoing innovation and advocacy.
- Support and advocate for philanthropy at Filoli by making giving a priority, including championing the success of Filoli's Cultivating the Future Campaign, a $25M initiative to transform Filoli and strengthen its impact on the community, and actively promoting giving and engagement within personal and professional networks.



How Our Governance Pathway Works

Filoli is excited to welcome applications for an open committee search, building on the success of our board search over the last couple of years. Filoli is a deeply relational organization, where decisions are made based on cooperation, communication, and consensus. In most cases, the strongest path to board service is coming onto the board with relationships in place. Committee service is often a first step, giving members the chance to build real relationships and a genuine, working knowledge of our governance, business, goals, culture, and people before considering the fuller responsibility of board service.

Committee service is a minimum of a one-year commitment and an expected and celebrated pathway to the board; experience has taught us that strong and engaged committee members typically make strong and engaged board members. We invite you to be part of this process as we work to pave the way for best practices in nonprofit board governance and in building strong, sustainable leadership.

Stage 1 — Committee Membership

- Serve on one of Filoli's standing committees, beginning in Winter 2027.
- Build relationships with board members, staff leadership, and fellow Committee Members.
- Attend events, programs, and activities at Filoli to deepen your connection to the organization and gain firsthand experience and knowledge of how we work.
- Depending on interest and need, be willing to switch committees to support Filoli through your diverse skill sets and passions. We evaluate and realign Committee membership annually.

Stage 2 — Future Board Consideration

- Annually in the spring or summer, we invite select individuals to apply to join the board. We look first to the community of Committee Members we have come to know.
- Board selection reflects demonstrated engagement, mission alignment, and contributions to Filoli.

What We Are Looking For

Filoli seeks passionate and visionary leaders to join our committees. Our goal is to expand community representation, maintain balanced leadership, and uphold a standard of excellence. The qualities below reflect what we look for across all members of our governance team. Whether you bring years of board experience or are ready to take your first step into nonprofit governance, we welcome candidates with the skills, perspective, and passion to advance Filoli's mission.

Desired Qualities

- **Strategic Vision and Governance**

  We seek individuals with the ability to provide strategic organizational oversight, including the ability to analyze complex issues and make informed recommendations, and a deep understanding of and respect for governance principles.

- **Leadership**

  Prospective members should exhibit strong leadership potential and a commitment to fostering future leaders within our organization.

- **Fundraising**

  We seek individuals who can actively support and enhance Filoli's fundraising efforts, particularly as we enter into a new capital campaign. This includes personal giving, leveraging personal and professional networks, identifying new funding opportunities, and championing our mission to secure financial support. Ideal candidates are passionate about philanthropy and eager to help sustain and grow Filoli's resources.

- **Equity Centered Engagement**

  We are committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where all voices are valued. We are particularly interested in candidates who can bring diverse perspectives and lived experiences to our Board and Committees, including representation of the LGBTQ+ community, historically underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, and all gender identities.



photo credit: Key Lime Photography

- **Strategic Connection**

  We seek individuals with a clear and compelling connection to one of the goals outlined in our current strategic plan (see page 5).

- **Community Engagement**

  Filoli is deeply rooted in our local community and the San Francisco Bay Area. Prospective Committee Members should share our passion for the region and demonstrate a commitment to actively engaging with the life of Filoli.

- **Storytelling**

  We look to utilize storytelling to effectively communicate and connect with governance, staff, peers, communities, and networks.



Committee Membership

Committee Members offer valuable expertise and perspectives that help guide strategic discussions and decision making. By participating in meaningful work and gaining experience alongside board leaders serving on those committees, Committee Members can become familiar with Filoli's mission, operations, and governance structure. Filoli is dedicated to supporting and empowering Committee Members by providing mentorship and leadership development opportunities. Candidates are assigned to the Committee that best matches their expertise, interests, and Filoli's governance needs.

Experience We're Seeking

- Audit
- Finance
- Collections
- Property
- Environment
- Development
- Fundraising
- People & Culture
- Human Resources

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide domain expertise and strategic guidance on committee-specific topics, in service of Filoli's strategic vision.
- Maintain a working understanding of Filoli's finances, operations, and organizational priorities.
- Attend and actively participate in scheduled committee meetings, coming prepared to discuss materials in advance.
- Promote Filoli within your personal and professional networks, raising awareness of its mission and work.
- Play an active role in fundraising and relationship-building to support the organization's financial integrity.
- Participate in occasional board socials and community events.

Commitment:

- Minimum one year of committee service. We evaluate and realign committee membership annually.
- Orientation is required for new and returning Committee Members.
- Meeting participation varies by committee. Typically, each committee meets quarterly, with each meeting lasting about one to two hours. At least two of these meetings are onsite.
- Depending on interest and need, be willing to switch committees to support Filoli through your diverse skill sets and passions.
- The expected annual time commitment between meetings is an average of two to three hours per month for email communications, preparation, and in some cases, attending events.
- We ask that you communicate openly and transparently to coordinate time commitments and participation.

Contributions

We encourage Committee Members to make a financial contribution to Filoli at the level at which they are comfortable. Connections to additional support through foundations, companies, or other related revenue sources are welcomed.

Our Leadership

Executive Team



SYDNEY SI NING LEUNG
Board Chair



PULIN SANGHVI
Board Vice Chair



MELISSA LOPEZ
Board Treasurer



LESLIE WITT
Board Secretary



DAVID WESSEL
Past Board Chair

Click here to learn more about Filoli's current Board of Directors.

Leadership Staff



KARA NEWPORT
President & CEO



CHRIS O'CALLAGHAN
Chief People Officer



ALEX FERNANDEZ
Chief Operations Officer

Click here to learn more about our leadership team.



DAVEY BARRETT
Chief Experience Officer



ROOPA GOTTIMUKKALA
Chief Financial & Administrative Officer



PETER NELL
Board Liaison

Meet Filoli

As part of our selection process, we encourage interested applicants to join us for one or more of the following events. These gatherings offer a chance to connect, learn more about Filoli, and experience our vibrant community.

Attend an Informational Webinar

- Tuesday, October 6th, 12-1pm (PST)
- Thursday, October 22nd, 3-4pm (PST)

Visit **potrerogroup.com/filoli** *to register. If you have any questions about the webinars, please contact Peter Nell at* **pnell@filoli.org**.

Other Ways to Engage with Filoli Become a Member

Winter, spring, summer, and fall, Filoli members see it all! Become a member and support the preservation and conservation of this historic estate. Not only will you enjoy exclusive member benefits, but you'll also make memories to cherish for a lifetime. **Click here for more information on Membership**.

Join us for Holidays at Filoli in 2026!

Get in the celebratory spirit while supporting Filoli! Filoli hosts a variety of festive events throughout the year to engage people of all ages and from all backgrounds. Holidays at Filoli are a great way to support our mission to connect Filoli's rich history with a vibrant future through beauty, nature, and shared stories. **Learn more and get your tickets here**.

Consider a Donation

Gifts to Filoli support our mission, from the care of the historic house, magnificent garden, and vast nature preserve to public programs and events that invite Bay Area residents and visitors to celebrate beauty, nature, and shared stories in a unique setting. **Check out all the ways you can give, including a gift of stock!**

Make Filoli Your Gathering Place of Choice!

Planning a gathering with friends, family, or colleagues? Choose Filoli for your next event! From beautiful event spaces to unique experiences like flower arranging, wreath-making parties, holiday fire pits, and more, Filoli offers something special for every occasion. **Explore all our offerings and make your next gathering unforgettable!**



To Apply

We welcome diverse perspectives, regardless of any prior connection to Filoli. While based in California, we encourage applications from national candidates who have strong ties to our work and are available for in-person meetings and events.

Join us in learning, discovering, and growing together—we look forward to welcoming you to our governance team.

Apply by **November 9, 2026** for priority consideration at potrerogroup.com/filoli.

For more about Filoli, visit filoli.org.

For questions about this opportunity, contact
Daniel Student,
Managing Director, at
dstudent@potrerogroup.com.

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Timeline

Our timeline is designed to open the door to personal relationships with as many people who want to invest in Filoli as possible, while also providing rigor to ensure that the volunteer leaders who best fit the organization's current and future needs are identified and selected.

Candidates can expect the following timeline for the selection process:

October 2026:

- We encourage interested applicants to attend an informational webinar to learn more about the opportunity and process. Please visit potrerogroup.com/filoli to register.
- Applicants receive confirmation of their application submission from Potrero Group, Filoli's search partner.

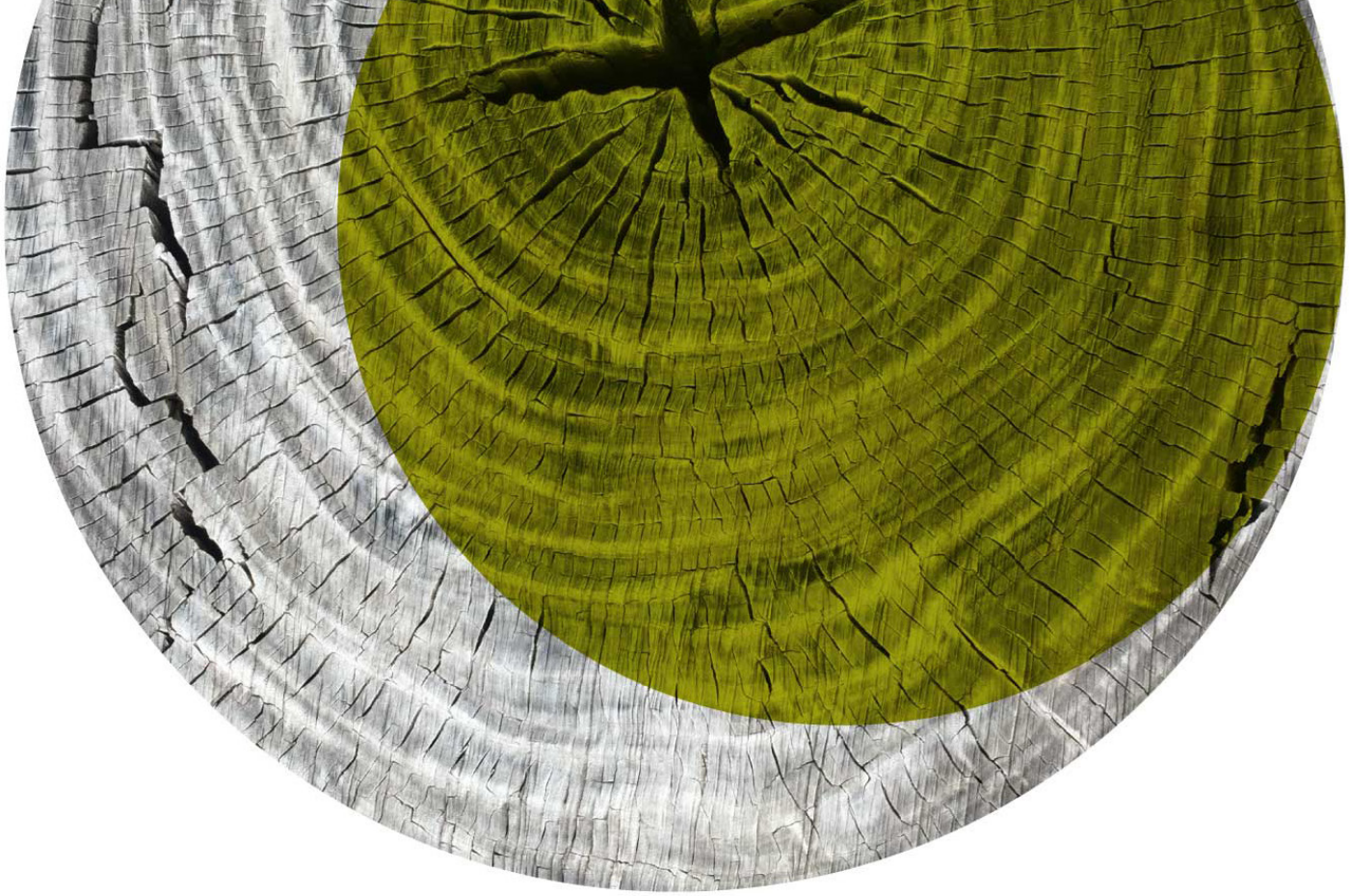
December 2026: Selected candidates will be notified regarding interviews with Potrero Group before taking a pause for the holidays. If you aren't chosen for these interviews, we do hope you celebrate the holidays with us and continue to further your engagement with and connection to us in 2027.

Early January 2027: Interviews will be held via video conference with Potrero Group.

Late January and early February 2027: Select candidates will connect with each other and with board and staff leadership in person at Filoli.

Late February 2027: Final decisions will be made.

March 2027: Selected Committee Members will begin onboarding.



POTRERO GROUP

Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of Filoli. Supporting a world-class public garden is in perfect alignment with Potrero Group's commitment to helping mission-driven organizations maximize their impact.

To learn more and explore further leadership opportunities, visit

PotreroGroup.com