



**LAND TRUST**  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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# Director of Operations and Finance

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County seeks a seasoned Director of Operations and Finance to steward the organization's financial strategy, enhance operational excellence, and strengthen internal systems to support and advance the organization's track record of conservation success into the future.





## About the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Founded in 1978, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) is one of California's most respected regional land conservation organizations. Over nearly five decades, the Land Trust has permanently protected more than 19,000 acres of farmland, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and lands for public access in and around Santa Cruz County. Deeply rooted in the community it serves, the Land Trust supports the region's environment, economy, and quality of life for current and future generations of people and wildlife alike. It understands the critical role land plays in addressing climate change, calibrating its preservation efforts through that lens while also ensuring that land is cherished by the people who connect to it directly.

### Mission

Protect, care for, and connect all people to the vibrant natural and working lands that are essential for our community and nature to thrive together for generations to come.

### Vision

LTSCC sees a future in which the amazing diversity of lands that define and connect us to the Santa Cruz County region—the wild and working forests, the globally unique wildlife habitats, the coastal landscape, and our rich farming and ranching heritage—are cared for and preserved forever.





## Position Overview

This is a pivotal senior leadership role at a thriving organization that continues to expand and improve its organizational practices and conservation impact. The Director of Operations and Finance will serve as the operational and financial backbone of the Land Trust, working to sustain an enduring institution that supports effective mission delivery. They will offer a strategic understanding of the organization's financial health, assuring its continued financial integrity, and ensure highly functional operational and administrative practices that remove barriers and promote cohesion. The Director will join a workplace that weaves joy into the fabric of the organizational culture. As a vital, in-person presence for the team, they will continue to strengthen the connections staff have to each other, the mission, and the land they serve.

The Director reports directly to the Executive Director, serves as a member of the Leadership Team, and directly supervises the Operations, Administrative, and Finance staff. The Director will serve as a creative partner for board and staff leadership on the operational and financial implications of strategy decisions. They will strengthen operational systems and policies, lead financial planning, budgeting, and reporting, safeguard the organization's compliance, nonprofit status, and accreditation, and oversee human resources.

This role calls for a leader who maintains a big-picture perspective but manifests a genuine commitment to the operational and administrative functions that support mission delivery. The ideal candidate will pair the organizational acuity to build strong systems with the interpersonal warmth and humility to support a connected, thriving team.



# Responsibilities



## Financial Management

- Serve as the senior financial leader, ensuring financial integrity of the organization through the strategic oversight of annual audits, budgeting, financial controls, forecasting, and cash flow management across multiple accounts and investments.
- Serve as staff liaison to the board's Audit and Finance Committees, translating financial data into clear, accessible information that supports strong decision making.
- Oversee grant administration and compliance, with attention to federal and public funding requirements.
- Build and operate sound financial management systems, controls, and processes.
- Lead long-range financial planning and bring creative, entrepreneurial thinking to long-term funding stability, including revenue generation strategies, endowment development, and investment management.
- Safeguard the organization's nonprofit status, bringing a compliance and risk-management perspective to organizational decisions.



## Operations and Administration

- Develop and maintain organizational policies, systems, and tools that drive continual improvement, and ensure compliance with applicable laws, accreditation standards, and nonprofit best practices.
- Oversee the day-to-day operational and administrative functions of the organization, ensuring systems are efficient, reliable, and aligned with organizational values.
- Identify, assess, and proactively mitigate risk across the organization, from insurance and worker safety to organizational capacity to take on new and evolving initiatives.
- Manage IT, facilities, and administrative infrastructure to ensure the organization operates with effective, modern systems.
- Oversee contract administration and manage contractors, consultants, and vendors as needed to support program delivery, organizational operations, and special projects.





## Human Resources

- Oversee human resources functions, including recruitment, hiring, onboarding, compensation, benefits administration, and offboarding.
- Support the annual performance review process, set clear standards for staff accountability and performance management, and guide the development of individual and team work plans.
- Identify and promote professional development opportunities, staff recognition, and team-building efforts that strengthen the organization from within.
- Guide, update, and administer a customized compensation system and personnel policies and oversee benefits administration in compliance with California employment law and accreditation standards.
- Partner with HR consultants, contractors, and employment attorneys as needed to navigate employment needs.



## Staff Leadership and Culture

- Champion the Land Trust as a great place to work, where all staff feel respected, engaged, heard, and motivated by the organization's mission.
- Serve as a thought partner to the Executive Director, a sense check on the Leadership Team, and a trusted resource to the Board of Trustees.
- Directly supervise Operations, Human Resources, Administration, and Finance staff, providing mentorship, accountability, and support for professional growth.
- Support staff engagement and retention as core measures of organizational health, implementing practices that keep talented staff invested for the long term and fostering a positive, collaborative culture.
- Design and steward processes and systems that promote clear communication, effective collaboration, and information-sharing across all departments.
- Serve as an approachable resource for all staff on workplace concerns, conflict resolution, and employee well-being.





# Desired Experience and Competencies

The ideal candidate is strategic, brings financial and operational depth, and has high emotional intelligence to serve as a unifying force within a high-trust, highly functional, mission-driven organization.



### Financial Management

- Deep financial acumen, with hands-on experience in nonprofit budgeting, forecasting, cash flow management, financial reporting, and fiscal controls, as well as a strong sense for the financial implications of strategic decisions.
- Experience partnering effectively with executive leadership, board treasurers or finance committees, and external accountants and auditors.
- Ability to translate complex financial information into clear, accessible presentations to executive leadership, board, and non-finance audiences.
- Expertise in grant budgeting, compliance, and financial reporting.
- Understanding or willingness to learn the financial dimensions of land transactions and conservation acquisitions, real estate, capital projects, or conservation finance.

### Human Resources

- Experience overseeing the full employment cycle, including recruitment, hiring, onboarding, compensation, benefits, performance management, and offboarding.
- Working knowledge of California employment law and experience maintaining compliant personnel policies and practices.
- Experience designing or administering compensation structures and benefits programs.
- Proven ability to provide high-level support to management staff across an organization, helping address supervisorial and performance issues.
- Skill in building fair, transparent performance management and accountability systems that support professional growth.
- Judgment to know when to engage outside expertise, and experience partnering with HR consultants and employment attorneys.

### Operations and Administration

- Demonstrated strategic and analytical thinking with senior leadership experience in operations, administration, or organizational management, ideally in a nonprofit setting.
- Track record of building, improving, and maintaining organizational systems and processes to create an enduring institution.
- Sound judgment in assessing and managing risk, and experience in creating frameworks that build programmatic teams' capacity to determine and manage resource needs.
- Knowledge of nonprofit compliance, governance, and best practices; familiarity with Land Trust Accreditation is a plus.
- Experience selecting, contracting, and managing vendors, consultants, and contractors.

### Staff Leadership and Culture

- A personal attitude of joy and enthusiasm toward the work, the staff, and the mission, and a demonstrated commitment to fostering healthy, inclusive, values-driven workplace cultures where staff feel respected, heard, and motivated.
- Experience serving as a trusted thought partner to executive leadership and boards.
- Experience supervising, mentoring, and developing staff, and building high-functioning teams.
- A collegial, credible leadership style that earns trust through face-to-face connections, genuine relationships, clear communication, and consistent follow-through.
- Excellent facilitation and cross-departmental collaboration skills, with experience designing communication and information-sharing systems that connect teams.





## Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range will be \$160,000–\$190,000, commensurate with experience. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County offers a comprehensive benefits package including health, dental, vision, 403(b) retirement plan, and paid leave.

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## Location

The position is based in Santa Cruz, CA, and requires regular in-person presence at the Land Trust offices. Occasional evening and weekend availability is expected.

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## Start Date

Fall or Winter 2026

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## To Apply

Please visit [potrerogroup.com/itscc](https://potrerogroup.com/itscc) and select “Apply Here.” Applications should include a resume and a cover letter describing how your qualifications, skills, and experiences match the position criteria and what you will bring to this role.

Priority consideration will be given to applications received by **September 4, 2026**. The position is open until filled.





## Additional Information

For more information on the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, visit [landtrustsantacruz.org](https://landtrustsantacruz.org).

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

**Jena Kuznik**

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and search lead at

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## Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

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The Land Trust aspires to be an organization that is representative of the communities we serve. We are looking for people with a passion for nature, land protection, and teamwork. We encourage everyone to apply for our available positions even if they don't meet all the hiring criteria listed in the job description.

We engage the entire county in our efforts to get bikers, hikers, birders, farmers, ranchers, and everyone who cares about the local environment and our uniquely beautiful vistas to become active steward of the land.





Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. We support innovative leaders and organizations making a difference in the world with strategic planning, facilitation, organizational development, and board and executive search services. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices in all of our work.

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