



Pacific Crest Trail  
Association

Search Conducted By

POTRERO  
GROUP



# Director of Philanthropy

The Pacific Crest Trail Association seeks a strategic, innovative, results-driven fundraising expert to lead its philanthropic team.



## Organization Background

The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and promoting the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Stretching 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada, the Pacific Crest Trail follows the highest portions of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges through California, Oregon, and Washington, through some of the most spectacular landscapes of the American West. Each year, hundreds of thru-hikers walk the entire PCT, while hundreds of thousands of hikers, equestrians, and nature lovers from around the world enjoy some section of the trail.

The Pacific Crest Trail Association's mission is to **advocate** for the Pacific Crest Trail as an inspirational outdoor experience, to **connect** people to the PCT, and to **conserve** the trail.

PCTA is a major partner of the U.S. Forest Service in managing the trail, and has a Memorandum of Understanding with a wide range of public agencies, including those responsible for the 26 National Forests, 7 national parks, 5 state parks, and 4 national monuments that the trail crosses. Conservation and trail maintenance form the backbone of the PCTA's hands-on work. Each year, the organization mobilizes crews and volunteers to maintain or reconstruct the trail, clearing fallen trees, repairing storm and fire damage, and maintaining trail signage throughout the trail's length.

PCTA also serves as the primary resource hub, providing comprehensive information about trail conditions and safe backcountry practices, and it issues long-distance permits on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service. The organization publishes the Pacific Crest Trail Communicator magazine, maintains an active website with trail updates, and promotes Leave No Trace principles to ensure responsible trail use. PCTA connects young people to conservation work, developing the next generation of trail stewards.

The Association serves as a vital guardian of the trail's corridor by advocating at local, state, and federal levels. The PCTA meets regularly with members of Congress and works to influence state and federal funding and legislation affecting public lands and the trail experience. It responds to development proposals and works to acquire or protect the approximately 10% of the trail that still crosses private property, often on narrow easements vulnerable to development or resource extraction.

The PCTA's work is powered by a dedicated community of supporters who share a commitment to protecting this iconic trail. Each year, more than 1,500 volunteers contribute their time and energy to trail maintenance and conservation, while private donors give \$2.6M annually to fund these efforts. Philanthropic support comes through individual memberships, mid-level and major donations, corporate and foundation partnerships, and board contributions. The organization also benefits from an additional \$2.5M in yearly government grant funding and the annual distributions of a small endowment.



## Position Overview

The Director of Philanthropy is responsible for the strategy, direction, and execution of all fundraising for the Pacific Crest Trail Association. As a member of the Leadership Team, the Director works closely with the CEO, Board of Directors, and directors across the organization to facilitate a culture of philanthropy and to embed fundraising strategy into daily decision making and operations.

The Director will develop and manage a comprehensive fundraising strategy and identify priorities across the Philanthropy team. They will cultivate relationships throughout the region and beyond, requiring strategic prioritization and tailored messaging. They will help to scale PCTA's major gift program, hone the strategy of its annual fund, and diversify and expand its revenue streams, using data to inform decisions and actions. The Director will mentor and lead the geographically distributed Philanthropy and Membership team, ensuring team members have support and accountability to meet their goals.

The Director must be a collaborative connector who can translate complex program needs into inspiring donor opportunities. They must be an experienced and effective fundraiser and individual contributor who possesses the high emotional intelligence needed to supervise a talented team and the gravitas to build trust and alignment with a dedicated Board of Directors. They must be a creative problem solver, committed to continual process improvement, data-driven decision making, and innovation. They must have a genuine passion for the work and landscapes to which PCTA is dedicated.

# Responsibilities

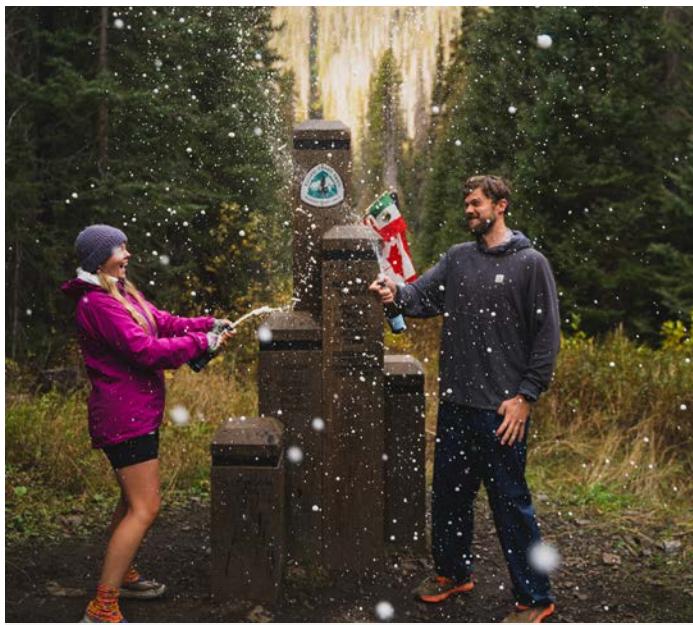


## Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Establish and implement a multi-year fundraising strategy and plan to increase private revenue to meet PCTA's strategic goals, including major donors, annual membership, corporate partnerships, foundation grants, and planned giving
- Work closely with the CEO, CFAO, and Leadership Team to plan for the future of PCTA, collaborate on overall organizational priorities and budget, and support critical real-time leadership decisions
- Set goals and priorities for all philanthropic programs and oversee development of the annual philanthropy revenue budget to meet annual and long-term revenue goals
- Encourage a thriving culture of philanthropy at PCTA, honoring all contributions from our community, including financial and in-kind donations, volunteerism, advocacy, partnership, and talent
- Represent PCTA externally and help raise its profile and visibility to funders, partners, and the community
- Stay current with fundraising and nonprofit trends

## Systems, Data, and Reporting

- Champion a culture of data-driven learning by utilizing Salesforce to analyze behaviors, identify trends, and optimize fundraising tactics
- Utilize data and resources to identify and prioritize potential prospects
- Establish clear KPIs, benchmarks, and performance metrics to guide the team toward budget targets, increased donor engagement, and timely execution of fundraising goals and strategic plan objectives
- Prepare quarterly reports for the board that include performance against KPIs, strategy updates, and transparent data-backed insights
- Partner with the Salesforce administrator to ensure systems capture meaningful donor insights and learnings from every campaign



## Fundraising Management

- Direct all aspects of the Philanthropy Program, including but not limited to securing donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations across the West Coast
- Expand and diversify the donor base and work closely with the CEO to secure funding for new initiatives
- Act as a strategic partner to program areas, ensuring fundraisers deeply understand the trail's needs and can communicate them with passion
- Serve as the primary driver, in partnership with the CEO and board members, on all major fundraising initiatives and campaigns
- Manage a portfolio of donors, including individuals, corporations, and foundations with six-figure and above capacity
- Oversee the creation of tailored donor-facing communications, including digital and paper newsletters, social media, direct mail, and email appeals in collaboration with the Director of Communications and Philanthropy team members
- Partner with the Finance, Accounting and Operations, and program teams to ensure accurate gift tracking and reporting



## Team Leadership

- Hire, manage, mentor, evaluate, and retain an effective fundraising team overseeing major donors, the annual fund, membership, foundation, and corporate programs and ensure team members have the resources and accountability to reach goals
- Ensure timely and successful execution of fundraising goals, strategic plan goals, and other tasks
- Regularly convene the Philanthropy team to review progress, align on strategies, act on opportunities, and address challenges
- Manage task-specific consultants as needed
- Foster a culture focused on PCTA's organizational values and community building

## Board Collaboration

- Serve as the lead staff liaison to the Board Fundraising Committee, supporting board engagement in donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship
- Partner with the CEO and board to ensure they are prepared and supported in fundraising efforts
- Empower the staff and board as effective spokespersons for the organization

A scenic sunset over a mountain range. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow and creating a starburst effect with sunbeams. The foreground is filled with the silhouettes of evergreen trees and a carpet of wildflowers in shades of pink, purple, and yellow. In the background, the mountains are layered with mist, and the sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a vibrant orange at the horizon.

# Desired Experience and Competencies

## Strategic Leader

- Proven ability to design and implement ambitious, multi-channel fundraising strategies that deliver measurable revenue growth
- Senior executive with experience thriving in collaborative leadership environments and contributing to organization-wide strategic decisions
- Skilled at nurturing a culture of philanthropy throughout the organization and its supporters
- Experience coaching board members to become active fundraisers and confident champions for the organization

## Fundraising Expert

- Minimum of six to eight years of direct fundraising experience with a strong track record of closing six-figure gifts across multiple revenue streams, including annual fund, major gifts, corporate, foundation, and planned giving
- Builds authentic, lasting relationships with high-capacity donors and thinks strategically about pipeline development
- Skilled at translating program work into compelling cases for support through cross-functional collaboration
- Equally comfortable crafting strategy and executing tactical fundraising activities
- Proven success overseeing multiple projects through completion, including meeting financial goals, project deadlines, and coordinating the work of key staff and partners
- Budget management experience, including forecasting and tracking expenditures

## Capable Manager

- Minimum of four years of experience leading a professional philanthropy team with demonstrated ability to attract, develop, and retain top-tier fundraising talent
- Skilled at creating accountability structures and delivering outcomes while providing the support teams need to succeed
- Values-driven leadership approach that models inclusion, collaboration, and excellence

## Innovative Thinker

- Detail-oriented organizational skills with proficiency in CRM systems (Salesforce preferred), information management systems, business software, and other tools needed to build an effective fundraising program
- Systems thinking approach that uses data to drive decisions and ensures technology captures actionable insights that enable continuous improvement
- Entrepreneurial approach to prospect development that leverages data and research to build and cultivate a robust pipeline
- Skilled at crafting tailored reports that use clear metrics to interpret performance and opportunities

## Mission-Driven Advocate

- Genuine passion for PCTA's mission and the trail, landscapes, and people it serves
- Charismatic external presence with the ability to open doors, build credibility and support, and position the organization for long-term success
- Exceptional writing and persuasive speaking skills that inspire action and support and the ability to connect authentically and passionately with diverse trail communities



## Compensation

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The anticipated annual salary range is \$100,000–\$140,000, commensurate with experience.

PCTA offers comprehensive benefits, including:

- ✓ Full benefits package, including health, dental, and vision insurance
- ✓ Paid life and long-term disability
- ✓ Paid time off, including 12 holidays
- ✓ 2 weeks vacation, increasing with length of service
- ✓ 12 sick days per year
- ✓ 5 additional days of paid personal time to enjoy time outside
- ✓ Eligible for a 401(k) plan with 3% employer contribution plus a 5% employer match
- ✓ Discounts to many outdoor industry brands

## Location And Requirements

The position will be remote, but must be located near a major metropolitan airport in California, Oregon, or Washington.

Up to 20% travel is expected to attend donor, partner, staff, board, and committee meetings, as well as fundraising events and conferences. Meetings are primarily conducted in Washington, Oregon, and California, though travel to other regions is possible.

## To Apply

Please visit [potrerogroup.com/pcta](http://potrerogroup.com/pcta) and select “Apply Here.” Applications should include a resume and a cover letter describing your qualifications and your personal passion for the mission of the Pacific Crest Trail Association.

Interested candidates should apply by **March 9, 2026**, for priority consideration.

## Start Date

Summer 2026



## Additional Information

More information on the organization can be found at [pcta.org](http://pcta.org).

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

**Jena Kuznik**  
Senior Consultant  
[jkuznik@potrerogroup.com](mailto:jkuznik@potrerogroup.com)



### Equal Opportunity Employer

Pacific Crest Trail Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer that does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy-related conditions, and lactation), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances. Pacific Crest Trail Association's management team is dedicated to this policy with respect to recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities, access to facilities and programs, and general treatment during employment.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of the Pacific Crest Trail Association. 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.

To join our mailing list or for more information visit:

**[PotreroGroup.com](http://PotreroGroup.com)**