



TREE FUND
Cultivating Innovation

President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Position Description: January 2023

REPORTS TO: Executive and Governance Committee, Board of Trustees.

POSITION TYPE: Full Time, Exempt Employee; typically 40 hours per week.

ORGANIZATION SUMMARY: Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (“TREE Fund”) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 2002 for the benefit of urban and community forests, and the professionals who care for them, on a global basis. TREE Fund was founded by and is closely aligned with the International Society for Arboriculture (ISA) and the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA). TREE Fund is governed by a 15-member national Board of Trustees. Its mission is to support scientific discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry. TREE Fund’s mission-based goals and objectives are met primarily through its fundraising for and administration of competitive grant programs for research, education, and scholarships to advance the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry. In addition, TREE Fund works to build and sustain an endowment that will support long-term research projects in a stable and perpetual fashion; the endowment is professionally managed by Chicago Community Trust (CCT). TREE Fund’s legal home is in Naperville, Illinois, but the organization currently operates virtually, employing four staff professionals located in Illinois and Iowa. The organization is also supported by independent contractors and volunteers. TREE Fund’s principal community engagement and fundraising event is an annual 400+ mile, five-day cycling event called the Tour des Trees, which is staged in a different market around the country each year. See treefund.org for more information about the organization.

ABOUT THIS POSITION: The Board of Trustees is charged in TREE Fund’s foundational Declaration of Trust with hiring a President and Chief Executive Officer (“President/CEO”) and evaluating his or her performance. The Trustees are collectively charged with governance of the organization, while the President/CEO is charged with its management.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: The President/CEO is the principal executive of the corporation and is responsible for guiding TREE Fund in fulfilling its mission and ensuring its financial success, per goals and objectives established by the Board of Trustees. The President/CEO reports to the Board of Trustees with the Executive and Governance Committee serving as the primary liaisons between the President/CEO and the Board at large. The specific duties of the President/CEO include:

Development:

- Directing all fundraising activities, to include both securing unrestricted annual operating funds and restricted endowment funding.
- Identifying, cultivating, and soliciting new and existing funding sources, and managing a strong stewardship program for current donors.
- Working with rider volunteers and corporate partners to secure funding to defray Tour des Trees operational expenses, thereby maximizing the utility of funds raised by Tour riders for TREE Fund's mission.
- Developing, administering, and actively promoting a planned giving program.
- Working with various allied organizations (primarily ISA chapters around the United States) to coordinate other fundraising events that benefit TREE Fund's mission.

Grants and Scholarships:

- Empowering TREE Fund's mission by coordinating staff support of the grant and scholarship processes, from initial letters of inquiry through requests for proposals, the review of applications, selection of award recipients, interim progress reports and payments, final report reviews and payments, and dissemination of findings.
- Coordinating with the Board to determine which grant programs will be offered in a given year, and when in the annual grant cycle they will be open for applications.
- Developing new grant lines upon receipt of endowed funding to underwrite them.

Board Relations:

- Serving as the Board's executive secretary, or designating other employees to do so.
- Assisting the Board Chairman in planning the agenda and materials for Board meetings.
- Ensuring that reports are prepared and distributed to the Board and its committees.
- Providing appropriate staffing to support Board committees.
- Assisting the Governance Committee in recruiting new volunteers as Trustees and Board Committee members.

Fiscal Management:

- Ensuring the overall financial success of the organization.
- Overseeing all fundraising activities to meet annual fund goals.
- Building TREE Fund's endowments to secure its future.
- Preparing annual budgets that are consistent with Board-approved goals and objectives.
- Managing and administering the approved budget.
- Submitting timely financial statements to the Board and the Finance Committee.
- Facilitating the annual financial audit on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Management and Administration:

- Overseeing all organizational programs, services and activities.
- Developing and implementing procedures to carry out the policies of the Board.
- Serving as TREE Fund's prime contracting officer, to include administering competitive bid processes for services where appropriate.
- Ensuring that TREE Fund complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Personnel Management:

- Hiring, training, and supervising the work of all TREE Fund employees and volunteers.
- Conducting periodic performance evaluations for all employees.
- Conducting any staff disciplinary and/or termination actions.
- Determining employee compensation and benefits within a Board-approved annual salary pool presented as part of the annual operating budget.

Community Relations:

- Serving as TREE Fund's primary public spokesperson.
- Assisting the Board in the development of organizational messages.
- Overseeing the preparation and distribution of the TREE Fund's various publications.
- Actively programming, planning, and participating in community engagement events as a core part of the Tour des Trees experience.
- Initiating, fostering, and maintaining communications with key green industry partners, including ISA, TCIA, various other trade and advocacy groups within the urban forestry sector, and corporate leaders and managers in professional arboriculture.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- A full embrace of TREE Fund's mission and a willingness to serve as a public champion for it.
- Strong interpersonal, public speaking and writing skills, including a willingness and ability to travel, build external relationships, initiate and schedule donor visits, make fundraising calls, and personally ask for gifts in a timely fashion.
- Strong leadership and management skills, a strong commitment to encouraging professional diversity in the workplace, and a proven ability to deftly manage the challenges and opportunities associated with working for a geographically decentralized nonprofit Board.
- Bachelor's Degree required, or demonstrated equivalent experience.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Nonprofit executive-level management experience.
- Master's or other advanced degree in a field related to TREE Fund's mission.
- Urban forestry, natural resources, green industry, or arboricultural experience, to include familiarity with key players and organizations in these and related industries.

OFFICE, COMPENSATION AND WORK EXPECTATIONS:

- TREE Fund celebrates personal and professional diversity and considers applicants for all positions. All qualified applicants for employment will be considered without regard to an individual's race, color, sex, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, national origin or ancestry, citizenship, physical or mental disability, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, or any other basis protected by Federal, state or local laws.
- Compensation will be based on applicant experience, within ranges defined by local market norms for comparatively sized 501(c)3 organizations and other team members' compensation; TREE Fund offers subsidized employee healthcare benefits and a 403(b) matching program, among other benefits;
- TREE Fund is currently a virtual organization with employees located in Illinois and Iowa. The new President/CEO will be empowered to evaluate the current situation and make recommendation(s) to the Board after one year of service as to whether TREE Fund should remain a virtual organization under its current model, re-establish a physical location, or employ some hybrid model; any recommendations to change the current model must fully consider all ramifications of any legal and organizational relocations, e.g. impact on current employees, geographical requirements established by CCT for endowment spending, etc.

- The annual Tour des Trees is a physically strenuous cycling event that serves as a key component of TREE Fund's community engagement and fundraising activities. While the President/CEO may be able satisfy his or her job requirements without actively participating in the Tour, it is always viewed very positively by riders and donors who support the Tour when the leader of the organization is on the road each year through this week-long event, either as a rider or as a member of the support and community engagement teams.
- The President/CEO will likely spend ~75% of his or her time working from a remote office location of his or her choosing, and ~25% of his or her time on national and international travel, attending industry conferences and meeting with key partners. Travel will typically be scheduled far enough in advance to not adversely or abruptly impede family or personal time, though emergent travel may on occasion be required. TREE Fund does not provide a personal vehicle for the President/CEO.