



Executive Director Position

Common Ground High School, Urban Farm & Environmental Education Center is looking for its next Executive Director: A dynamic, proven organizational leader who shares our roots-deep commitment to environmental and food justice, active, authentic learning, and inclusive, equitable community.

About Common Ground



From humble beginnings 20 years ago, Common Ground has grown into a nationally recognized center for environmental learning and leadership in New Haven, Connecticut, dedicated to growing a more just and sustainable community and world. Common Ground is uniquely positioned to do this work. Rooted in the City of New Haven, our 20-acre site includes an urban farm and abuts the 1,500-acre West Rock State Park, sharing hiking trails, wildlife, and diverse natural habitats with the surrounding forests.

Common Ground weaves together three core programs to achieve its mission:

1. Common Ground's **Public Charter High School** is the nation's longest-running environmental charter high school, growing a new, inclusive generation of active learners and powerful leaders.
2. The **Environmental Education Center** receives more than 12,000 community members each year who participate in festivals, field trips, after-school programs, and other educational opportunities on site. It runs a Schoolyards Program, helping New Haven public schools develop and maintain gardens and bird habitats as educational laboratories.
3. Our **Urban Farm** is a key resource for the high school and community programs, as well as for the New Haven community. It includes production and education gardens, honeybees, and livestock. The food we grow is served in our school cafeteria, sold at our farmstand and through a mobile market serving low income community members, distributed through a CSA for our high school students, and used in our programs for children and families.

Common Ground has a budget of approximately \$5.5 million and employs approximately 50 full-time and 20 part-time staff. Common Ground has a commitment to examining the intersection of social, environmental, and food justice issues; how systems of oppression, including white privilege, impact the organization's work; how resistance to those systems can position students to lead the change towards a more equitable and sustainable society. For more information on Common Ground, see www.commongroundct.org.



Executive Director Responsibilities

The Executive Director (ED) is the Chief Executive Officer of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc., the parent agency to all Common Ground programs and activities. The ED reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission, strategic priorities, and financial objectives. The ED of Common Ground directly supervises 6 Program Directors as well as the Site Manager.

Vision and Strategic Leadership

- Ensure the mission and vision are articulated and shared by a wide range of stakeholders
- Maintain and deepen Common Ground's strong organizational culture and values
- Collaborate closely with the Board and staff to continually hone and execute a vision and plan of action for increased impact, long-term growth, and sustainability
- Ensure the development, funding, and execution of the Strategic Plan

Organizational and Financial Management

- Manage and lead Common Ground as an effective and efficient organization
- Inspire and motivate a highly skilled, diverse, and committed group of staff and students
- Ensure inclusive, transparent, and regular communication both internally and externally
- Manage the annual, quarterly, and monthly institutional budgeting processes
- Monitor financial reporting including, but not limited to cash flow, depreciation schedules and budget forecasting
- Maintain official records and documents and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations
- Assess and manage, in collaboration with the Site Manager, the needs of the campus infrastructure, buildings and grounds

Fundraising and External Communication

- Cultivate and steward individual and institutional donors
- Drive, in collaboration with the Development Team, the overall fundraising plan, developing and executing strategies that ensure a sustainable and diverse funding stream
- Deepen and widen existing community partnerships and cultivate new relationships to enhance the organization's community profile
- Advocate at the local and state level for legislation, policies, and other government actions that support the work of Common Ground



About New Haven

Our city of 130,000 residents is home to six major universities and a vibrant arts and music scene. Award-winning restaurants, world-class museums and international cultural attractions are all minutes from Common Ground by car, city bus, or bicycle. Parks make up 17% of City land, and opportunities for outdoor recreation, from hiking to biking and canoeing abound.



Snapshot of a day at Common Ground

11 AM on a fall day

- The farm team is harvesting CSA shares to be distributed to CGHS families.
- A field trip of 2nd graders is circling up to learn how pizza ingredients start with sun and soil.
- A CGHS class is at the wetland, classifying the biodiversity of living things they find.
- Our SchoolYards team is at a New Haven School, leading children and teachers in a native habitat planting.
- The Mobile Market is at a housing development for low income seniors, bringing local produce to their doorstep.
- High school students are venturing off campus to meet with community social justice leaders, test soil quality, and take college courses.
- Our Green Jobs Corps manager is finalizing placement opportunities for CGHS students to do real, meaningful work in the community.
- The school chefs are chopping produce from the farm in preparation for school lunch time

Culture and Staff Relations

- Inspire, lead, and promote a culture and climate that attracts, retains, and motivates a diverse staff of passionate, highly qualified people
- Directly supervise, mentor, and coach senior staff
- Promote staff diversity, inclusion, and equity by strengthening hiring and training processes
- Collaborate with Program Directors as a knowledgeable part of a problem-solving team to identify and address human resource needs
- Encourage staff development and education and assist program staff in relating their specialized work to the whole organization

Collaboration with the Board of Directors

- Partner with the Board leadership to continually strengthen governance practices and build a diverse Board
- Develop and present recommendations for annual business plans and budgets
- Provide regular updates on operations and financial status
- Work closely with the Board to ensure compliance with bylaws, policies, and directives, as well as pertinent local, state, and federal laws

Required Professional and Personal Qualifications

- Education: Bachelor's Degree, Masters in Business Administration preferred
- Demonstrated commitment to environmental justice, anti-racism, and the dismantling of systems of oppression
- Confidence navigating relationships within and between diverse communities
- Demonstrated ongoing commitment to personal and professional learning and development
- Knowledge of laws and legislation that are pertinent to the operation of Common Ground, including non-profit organizations, charter schools, and human resource management
- Significant experience managing an organization with a budget over \$2M
- Knowledge and/or experience in environmental education, public education and/or agriculture is a plus
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills

We asked **staff, students, parents, alumni, program participants, and community partners** what qualities they would like to see in our next Executive Director. These are some of the qualities they shared:

- Someone who embraces the culture of Common Ground
- A person who reaches out, engages, talks to everyone



- Personable, approachable communicator
- Listener & relationship-builder
- Someone who won't always be just in their office
- Supportive, warm, inclusive
- Experience with communities of color and diverse backgrounds
- Passionate about equality
- Someone who wants to push CG to be our best
- A person who cares about getting to know who our kids are: the population they are serving
- "Leader" -- as in hiking -- never walk up front alone, keep

the group together, manage crisis well, rest when needed, challenge to 'get going' when needed

- Someone that can make a big difference in the years to come and make positive changes
- I hope our next ED has a love for the outdoors and an understanding of its power
- Creative, can think outside the box, self-motivated, open minded
- Someone who wants to be here to make this place home and join us for a long and meaningful journey

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full time position that reports to the Board of Directors.

Competitive salary and benefits package including vacation, sick, and holiday time, medical, dental, and life insurance, and retirement plan.

Homemade lunch from the farm is provided free to all employees!

Equal Opportunity Employer

Common Ground is committed to the recruitment and retention of staff that is reflective of the communities we work with. **We strongly encourage applicants from people of color, immigrants, women, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, and other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.**



It has been the policy and will continue to be the strong commitment of the Common Ground and all contractors and subcontractors who do business with Common Ground to provide equal opportunities in employment to all qualified persons solely on the basis of job-related skills, ability and merit. Common Ground will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, mental disorder (present or past history thereof) age, physical disability (but not limited to blindness), marital status, intellectual disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and criminal record. Such action includes, but is not limited to, employment, promotion, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, professional development, attendance at conferences or other opportunities for advancement. Common Ground, its contractors and subcontractors will continue to make good faith efforts to comply with all federal and state laws and policies which speak to equal employment opportunity.

The principles of Affirmative Action are addressed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments of the United States Constitution, Civil Rights Act of 1866, 1870, 1871, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VI and VII of the 1964 United States Civil Rights Act, Presidential Executive Order 11246, amended by 11375, (Non-discrimination under federal contracts)< Act 1, Section 1 and 20 of the Connecticut Constitution, Governor Grasso's Executive Order Number 11, Governor O'Neill's Executive Order 9, the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Law (Sec. 46a-60-69) of the Connecticut General Statutes, Connecticut Code of Fair Practices (46a-70-81), Deprivation of Civil Rights (46a-58(a)(d)), Public Accommodations Law (46a-63-64), Discrimination against Criminal Offenders (46a-80), definition of Blind (46a-51(1)), definition of Physically Disabled (46a-51(15)), definition of Intellectual Disability (46a-51(13)), cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (46a-77), Sexual Harassment (46a-60(a)-8), Connecticut Credit Discrimination Law (360436 through 439), Title I of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972.

This Affirmative Action Policy Statement re-affirms Common Ground's commitment to equity in the workplace and the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity.

How to Apply

Essential pre-application inquiries may be directed to EDsearch@commongroundct.org. No phone calls please.

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to EDsearch@commongroundct.org. In your cover letter, please describe why you are passionate about joining the Common Ground community and how your qualifications and experience fit with the goals and responsibilities of this position.

Posting Date: December 18, 2018

Full consideration will be given to applications received by February 18, 2019

