

Tucson, Arizona

Executive Director

Candidate packet

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

About us

The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection is an alliance of over 30 conservation and community organizations that formed in February 1998.

Our mission
We advocate for the protection and connection of the Sonoran Desert in Southern Arizona and defend against short-sighted development.

Our vision
We envision a community in the Sonoran Desert where ecosystems are healthy, valued, and protected, with benefits for current and future generations.

Where we work
Our geographic focus is eastern Pima County, Arizona, where most economic development and growth is taking place in Southern Arizona. However, our work can extend into Pinal, Santa Cruz, or Cochise County.

Collaboration
We work with, through, or as part of our Coalition's members, individual volunteers and supporters, local jurisdictions, and state and federal agencies, learning institutions and research centers, experts on topics that complement our work, such as light pollution or watershed management, and regional collectives, such as the Desert Fence Busters and Santa Cruz River Refuge coalition.



Our Executive Director

The Executive Director provides strategic leadership and day-to-day management, ensuring CSDP advances its mission, remains financially sustainable, and operates effectively. As the leader of a small, collaborative team, the Executive Director is both a strategic leader and a working manager, setting organizational direction while remaining actively engaged in programs, advocacy, fundraising, communications, and operations.

The Executive Director serves as the public face of CSDP, building strong relationships with the Board of Directors, staff, coalition members, elected officials, government agencies, land managers, developers, communities, supporters, major donors, and more. Success in this role requires exceptional leadership, sound judgment, strong communication skills, and the ability to navigate complex conservation, land-use, and local government issues while bringing diverse interests together around a shared vision.

CSDP's current annual budget is just under $500,000, with anticipated growth in the years ahead. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the leadership and supervision of CSDP's staff, currently a team of four.



Core tasks and areas of responsibility

Organizational leadership

- Manage staff and contractors, including hiring, onboarding, performance management, and professional development.
- Maintain and update internal and external policies and procedures, including CSDP's Employee Handbook.
- Oversee CSDP's coalition structure and members, including relationships, agreements and contracts, communications, and other elements necessary to maintain a healthy coalition.
- Communicate effectively with the Board.
- Support the Board with organizing meetings, and prepare Board meeting materials.
- Acknowledge and dismantle inequities within CSDP policies, systems, programs, and strategies, while reflecting on lessons learned.
- Foster an organizational culture that embodies CSDP's core values: collaborative, inclusive, responsible, committed, knowledge-based, results-focused, and inspired.

Financial management

- Develop and manage CSDP's annual budget.
- Develop and oversee delivery on CSDP's fundraising strategy, to include related events and communications.
- Develop and lead CSDP's foundation and major donor relations.
- Monitor and manage CSDP's organizational finances, including monthly financial statements.
- Oversee banking, accounting, tax compliance, insurance, payroll, benefits, contracts, and regulatory compliance processes and tasks.





Policy, planning, and programs

- Manage CSDP's Strategic Plan, including regular review and updates.
- Oversee effective implementation and ongoing evaluation of CSDP's programs.
- Oversee advocacy efforts consistent with CSDP's priorities.
- Stay informed on relevant and emerging issues.
- Develop a voice for influencing conservation policy and represent CSDP in strategic public forums.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships and community partnerships with relevant and diverse stakeholders.
- Oversee CSDP's communications and strategy, including specific publications, branding, public relations, and media engagement.



Preferred experience and skills

No candidate is expected to bring every skill, experience, or qualification exactly as listed. If this role excites you and you believe you could make a meaningful contribution to CSDP, we encourage you to apply. We value transferable skills, lived experience, and a willingness to learn alongside demonstrated expertise.

We also strongly encourage women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, members of ethnic minorities, foreign-born residents, and veterans to apply.

We are seeking experience and skills that align with the following:

- 10 years of experience in policy, planning, and, advocacy;
- 5+ years in a management position, with direct experience hiring, supervising, and evaluating staff;
- Demonstrated experience working for or with a nonprofit, with knowledge of governance, compliance, and best management practices;
- 2+ years of direct experience with nonprofit fundraising;
- Strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills, with proven success developing and maintaining relationships with diverse stakeholders, including staff, Board members, advisors, donors, partners, volunteers, community members, and senior decision-makers;
- Working knowledge of local land use policy, environmental regulations, or regional planning processes in Southern Arizona or a similar context;
- Experience with community organizing and with public speaking in a variety of settings;
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal;
- Practice in applying inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility concepts to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and the communities we serve;
- A strong desire to innovate and explore new strategies;
- Leads with respect and acceptance of difference;
- Competence in MS Office, Adobe, Google Workspace, and other computer software;
- Fluency in Spanish.



Hours, compensation, and benefits

Salary Range: $75,000-$90,000

This is a full-time, 40 hours/week, FMLA-exempt position. A comprehensive benefits package is offered, including health and dental insurance, paid holidays, paid time off starting at 4 weeks per year, sick and family leave, a generous home office stipend, mileage reimbursement, opportunities for hybrid and remote work, and opportunities for a flexible schedule.

Working conditions

- The successful candidate must physically reside in Tucson, AZ metro area (which could include Marana, Oro Valley, Vail, etc.) or be willing to relocate if offered the position.
- The position offers a hybrid mix of remote work-from-home and working from the CSDP office. Our office is in the Historic Y Building — shared with other local nonprofits and local businesses — within walking distance of 4th Avenue and the University of Arizona campus. Some field work and outdoor events are expected.
- Irregular work hours, including early morning, evening and weekend events, are expected, and balanced by the ability to self-manage a flexible schedule.
- Physical requirements: must be able to access a second-floor office by stairs.
- Covid-19 vaccination (including boosters) is highly encouraged for all staff.

Our core values

We believe that the conservation of the Sonoran Desert and its biological diversity is best advanced by the inclusion and contributions of people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and cultures.

We value diversity and do not permit any discrimination against applicants, employees, or volunteers based on race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, neurodiversity, ethnicity, marital status, familial status, economic circumstances, and/or veteran status.

CSDP's core values center around lasting and community-led conservation work:

- **Collaborative.** We acknowledge, support, and celebrate strengths and differences, reject the idea of one "right" way, and challenge each other with respect.
- **Inclusive.** We act on our belief that the conservation of biological diversity is best advanced by diverse voices, experiences, and cultures.
- **Responsible.** We take responsibility for the impact of our words and actions, learn from our mistakes, and share what we learn openly.
- **Committed.** We embrace difficult work and conversations that drive meaningful change.
- **Knowledge-based.** We ground our decisions in shared knowledge and the best available science.
- **Results-focused.** We use resources wisely, including in our daily work, and think long-term and at a landscape scale.
- **Inspired!** We bring humor, fun and joy into our work, inspired by the wonders of our desert landscape.



The Sonoran Desert

The Sonoran Desert spans Southern Arizona, southeastern California, and parts of northwestern Mexico, including Sonora and Baja California.

It is the most biodiverse desert in the world, with over 2,000 plant species and a wide variety of mammals, birds, and reptiles.

The desert's unique climate includes two rainy seasons and extreme temperature ranges, supporting unique biomes such as coniferous forests, deciduous forests, grasslands, and riparian habitats.



To apply

Send your resume/CV and a one-page cover letter to **hiring@sonorandesert.org** with the subject line "CSDP Executive Director Application."

Attach the resume/CV and cover letter as one PDF document. Please include three (3) professional references with your application, including at least one (1) supervisory reference.

If you need any accommodations for the application process, please contact us at the address above.

Timeline

The position is open until filled.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The interview process will involve up to three rounds of interviews.

Our hiring and onboarding timeline can be flexible for the right candidate.