

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS

Reports to: Board of Directors

Status: Permanent, full-time (40 hours/week), exempt

Primary Work Location: Sustainable Connections Office, 1701 Ellis St., Bellingham, WA

On-site Requirement: Minimum 75% on-site presence; some community-based and occasional weekend work required. Hybrid flexibility as needed.

ABOUT US

Sustainable Connections is a nationally-recognized nonprofit working to advance a regenerative local economy in Northwest Washington – one where businesses, communities, and ecosystems thrive together. Each year we collaborate with dozens of partner organizations and more than 500 local businesses to strengthen food systems, catalyze climate solutions, support resilient local enterprises, and expand access to housing among five main program areas: Think Local First, Toward Zero Waste, Food & Farming, Energy & Green Building, and Housing & Smart Growth. Founded in 2002, Sustainable Connections oversees a budget of approximately \$3 million and employs a staff of 20.

Our work is grounded in regenerative principles: developing the capacity of people and places, designing from whole systems, fostering distributed leadership, and aligning action around a clear vision, our belief that communities flourish when local economies actively care for the land, the people, and each other.

We strongly encourage applications from people of color, people from working-class backgrounds, women, LGBTQIA+ people, and other members of marginalized communities. If you feel called to this work and believe you have the skills and lived experience to contribute—even if you do not meet every listed qualification—we want to hear from you.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director is the chief steward of Sustainable Connections' mission, identity, and long-term regenerative impact while cultivating the conditions for staff, partners, and the wider community to flourish.

Guided by regenerative business principles, the Executive Director develops the capacity, creativity, and leadership of staff, strengthens cross-sector partnerships, deepens community relationships, and fosters a culture of learning, belonging, and co-creation. The ED works closely with the Board of Directors to shape strategic direction, ensure financial and operational health, and drive long-term organizational sustainability.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Regenerative Organizational Leadership & Culture

- Steward and articulate the organization's core identity and ensure programs, partnerships, and strategies are aligned with this shared purpose.
- Lead Sustainable Connections using a regenerative, developmental approach—focusing on building the capability of staff and teams.
- Cultivate a workplace culture grounded in curiosity, learning, distributed leadership, equity, and belonging.
- Develop the leadership capacity of the Staff Leadership Team and the Manager & Director Team.
- Ensure organizational systems enhance long-term self-renewing capacity, adaptability, and innovation.
- Encourage whole-systems thinking and cross-program collaboration.

Program & Operational Oversight

- Provide strategic oversight of all programs using regenerative and systemic frameworks.
- Maintain effective processes for tracking outcomes and communicating progress.
- Ensure financial, administrative, HR, and operational systems are robust and aligned with strategic goals.
- Recommend timelines and resources required to achieve organizational goals.

Governance & Board Partnership

- Partner with the Board to co-create strategic direction grounded in the organization's identity and regenerative economic principles.
- Support an effective, engaged, and diverse Board.
- Serve as an ex-officio committee member and conduit between Board and staff.
- Identify emerging trends and bring forward thoughtful analysis.

Fundraising, Partnerships & External Relations

- Cultivate long-term, values-aligned relationships with donors, funders, and partners.
- Expand and diversify revenue streams for organizational resilience.
- Oversee strategic fundraising plans and messaging.
- Serve as a public ambassador for Sustainable Connections and regenerative economic work.
- Foster collaborative partnerships across sectors.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Non-profit leadership experience.
- At least five years of senior management experience, with demonstrated excellence in organizational management with the ability to coach staff, manage and develop high-performance teams, set and achieve strategic objectives, and manage a budget of a similar or greater scale.
- Demonstrated ability to cultivate relationships to engage a wide range of stakeholders, with the ability to see and work with whole systems and long-term community well-being.
- Demonstrated experience guiding organizations through change and strategic evolution, with the ability to point to specific examples of having developed and operationalized strategies that have taken an organization to the next stage of growth.
- Demonstrated experience championing and advancing DEI initiatives.
- Excellent communication skills, with demonstrated ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people.
- Past success in working with a Board of Directors.
- Humility, curiosity, courage, equity commitment, and passion for place-based transformation.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Commitment to regenerative, systemic, or developmental leadership.
- Demonstrated ability to cultivate leadership capacity and employ models of distributed leadership.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising and cultivating philanthropic opportunities.
- Knowledge of and relationships with leaders in Washington State and/or Pacific Northwest.
- Knowledge of and passion for the current Sustainable Connections program areas.
- Entrepreneurial mindset.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

- Annual salary range: \$125,000–\$140,000 depending on experience.
- 41 days paid time off annually (inclusive of holidays, sick, PTO).
- \$650/month individual benefit in lieu of health insurance.
- Flexible work schedule.
- Professional development budget.
- Up to 3% SIMPLE IRA employer match.
- Mileage reimbursement and additional leave benefits.
- Supportive, inclusive, mission-driven work environment.



www.SustainableConnections.org

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TO APPLY

Submit a cover letter and resume as a single PDF to danielleh@sustainableconnections.org. Co-applicants may be considered and shall include a proposed arrangement, roles, salary and benefits share, etc. References upon request. Applications due by February 28, 2026. Position will remain open until filled.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Sustainable Connections is an equal opportunity employer committed to ensuring no discrimination based on protected characteristics. Applicants needing accommodation may contact Danielle Halstead at 360-647-7093 x 104.