

Position Specification

Executive Director

North Salem Open Land Foundation

February 2026 | Confidential



**NORTH SALEM
OPEN LAND FOUNDATION**



Executive Director North Salem Open Land Foundation (NSOLF)

Reporting to: Board of Trustees

Direct Reports: Director of Stewardship (full-time), Director of Communication (part-time), Operations Manager (part-time)

Location: Weil Preserve, 3 Willow Lane, North Salem, NY

North Salem Open Land Foundation www.nsold.org

Just 50 miles from Manhattan—but a world away—North Salem is a place where time slows down. With its sweeping views of rolling hills, classic post-and-rail fences, ancient stone walls, and open meadows dotted with horse paddocks, it's easy to understand why people fall in love with this town.

Since its founding in 1974, North Salem Open Land Foundation (NSOLF) has had remarkable success as a conservation leader in Westchester County. For 52 years, North Salem's dedicated conservationists have been passionate about the town's rural nature and are highly motivated to ensure its natural resources are protected in the face of pressure from development.



From its beginning, NSOLF distinguished itself as a well-run, professional organization with excellent financial management, sound investment capabilities, and forward-thinking strategic planning capabilities in conservation management. North Salem contains 50% of the working farmland in all of Westchester County, including hayfields, apple orchards, horse farms, and farm-to-table operations. Granted accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance in 2016, NSOLF has raised its profile with the local public and throughout the Hudson Valley region for its conservation outreach and practices. Today NSOLF's board remains dedicated to its mission of "preserving the character and natural beauty of the town of North Salem, NY and the area around it by establishing land areas free from exploitation, development, and deterioration and by maintaining the environmental and ecological integrity of the area." Currently, the Foundation holds 29 fee properties and 19 conservation easements, totaling more than 1,500 acres of protected land, almost 10% of the total acreage of the town.



The Position

NSOLF is at an inflection point. With its 52-year history, ~1,500 acres under management and robust programming, the organization is poised for further growth but needs to develop stronger strategic resources to move forward in that quest. The Executive Director (ED) provides strategic, integrated leadership across NSOLF's conservation, stewardship, fundraising, and organizational operations. The ED guides all aspects of land protection and stewardship, including conservation strategy, landowner engagement, and real estate transactions. The ED oversees negotiations, due diligence, legal coordination, and long-term stewardship to ensure accreditation standards are consistently met. In partnership with the Director of Stewardship, the ED advances high-impact land protection opportunities while supporting habitat restoration, compliance, and the long-term care of conserved lands.

The Executive Director serves as NSOLF's chief fundraiser, public ambassador, and organizational leader. The role drives all fundraising initiatives, including major donor cultivation, appeals, membership, campaigns, and events, while overseeing communications and community engagement to build deep community support. The ED ensures sound financial management, strong internal systems, and effective staff leadership, working closely with the Board of Trustees on strategy, governance, and long-range planning. Together, they cultivate an inclusive, mission-driven culture that supports organizational effectiveness and long-term financial sustainability.

Scope and Responsibilities

Fundraising and External Relations

- Develop and lead all fundraising activities, including major and planned giving donor cultivation, business/foundation support, annual appeals, events, donor stewardship initiatives, and membership programs.
- Serve as the organization's public ambassador - building relationships with donors, landowners, community leaders, partners, and media.
- Provide oversight and vision on organizational communications, messaging, and public engagement.
- Cultivate and steward major donors, foundations, and prospective supporters.
- Provide oversight on program planning and public engagement initiatives. Work with staff to expand educational programming and engagement in community events.
- Integrate database systems for efficient and effective donor outreach.



Land Protection & Stewardship Leadership

- Identify, evaluate, and pursue land conservation opportunities, including acquisitions, conservation easements, and strategic partnerships.
- Respond to landowner inquiries and cultivate strong working relationships.
- Negotiate with landowners and coordinate due diligence (surveys, appraisals, environmental assessments).
- Work with legal counsel to develop and finalize terms of land transactions.
- Support stewardship programs, including monitoring, habitat restoration, and compliance with easement terms.
- Maintain accreditation standards for land transactions and stewardship.



Financial Oversight & Organizational Management

- Lead budgeting, financial planning, and long range organizational financial strategy and work with Board to implement those goals.
- Oversee bookkeeping, payroll, banking, and financial reporting in collaboration with administrative/finance staff.
- Ensure compliance with fiscal controls, nonprofit regulations, accreditation standards, insurance requirements, and audit practices.
- Develop and refine internal systems, policies, and processes necessary for effective operations.
- Manage relationships with financial partners (e.g., investment managers, banks, and auditors).

Board Engagement and Strategic Leadership

- Support and collaborate with the Board on strategic planning, governance, and organizational priorities. Communicate regularly with the Board Chair/s.
- Provide timely updates on conservation projects, financial matters, organizational health, and external opportunities or risks as well as to raise potential issues for discussion with the board at board meetings or when circumstances arise.
- Facilitate Board committees and ensure effective communication between Board and staff to advance the organization's priorities.
- ED will attend quarterly Board of Trustee Meetings, Annual Meeting, and membership and donor events and will provide appropriate updates at these events.

Staff Leadership & Organizational Culture

- Lead, supervise, and mentor staff, fostering a collaborative, accountable, and mission driven culture.
- Promote inclusivity, professional growth, and shared ownership of organizational goals.

Key Selection Criteria

- Proven success in building development programs including donor cultivation, individual and major giving, corporate and foundation giving, planned giving, and fundraising campaigns.
- Knowledge of land conservation tools, including easements, land purchases and acquisition, stewardship practices, and due-diligence processes.
- Strategic mindset with the ability to translate mission and vision into operational plans.
- Competence in nonprofit budgeting, financial oversight, and long-term capital planning.
- Comfortable working with a range of stakeholders including town officials, equestrian associations, landowners, donors, volunteers, community groups, and public agencies.
- Experience working collaboratively with nonprofit boards.
- Strong relationship-building skills with the ability to engage partners, funders, and community stakeholders.





- Familiarity with best-practice operations, internal controls, and nonprofit compliance standards.
- Demonstrated ability to lead a small and evolving team and encourage innovation.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Mission-driven, collaborative, diplomatic, and trustworthy.
- Adaptable, organized, and capable of being hands-on and balancing multiple priorities in a dynamic environment.
- Bachelor's or advanced degree or equivalent experience. Applicants with comparable qualifications and work experience are encouraged to apply.

Compensation

The salary range for this role is \$130,000 - \$150,000. Final compensation will be determined based on a candidate's experience, skills, and overall alignment with the role.

Contact Information

North Salem Open Land Foundation has retained DHR Global to conduct this search. If you have any questions, or are interested in applying for the role, please be in touch with any member of the team:

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