



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

# POSITION

# ANNOUNCEMENT



Central Valley Empowerment Alliance, a Community Ownership for Community Power Fund grantee  
Image credit: Madeline Vea

# THE OPPORTUNITY

Common Counsel Foundation (CCF) is looking for our next Executive Director, seeking a candidate who will help us define a new era of leadership and partnership in social justice philanthropy.

Founded in 1988, CCF works across the United States in relationship with frontline grassroots organizations, progressive donors, and social justice movements. We are seeking a dynamic, bold leader who can inspire and challenge us and the sector, who can build diverse partnerships and deep relationships, and, most importantly, who intimately understands the power of unlocking resources in support of community-led change.

We have undergone a period of dynamic change which has enabled us to expand the scale and strategic impact of our work. We need a leader who can help us expertly navigate and chart a values-aligned course through the current complex political and philanthropic environment, someone who brings new ideas and possibilities to

our work and is equally at home being a champion, strategist, and institution builder. We are looking for someone who is an organizer at heart who can build, strengthen, and grow with vision, solidarity, integrity, and purpose.

CCF's next Executive Director will also play a critical role in securing long-term financial sustainability through organizing and democratizing the flow of resources with sector partners. This role calls for someone who can hold complexity with clarity, communicate openly with vision, and center care and collective wellbeing. This moment requires clear strategic direction and grounded, transparent leadership.

# ABOUT OUR WORK

First and foremost, we are a social justice organization and a movement grantmaker.

Our work as a grantmaking public foundation supporting and strengthening catalytic organizations, growing alliances and networks in philanthropy, and organizing the strategic realignment of resources and relationships is all in service to the partnerships we have built with grassroots and frontline communities and movements for a more equitable, just, and whole world.

The next Executive Director will inherit meaningful strengths across Common Counsel Foundation's program areas, including long-standing movement relationships, innovative integrated capital work, and a strong

commitment to grassroots power building. The role will include helping clarify CCF's organizational identity, what we center, how we show up in movement spaces, and how our programmatic commitments align with internal capacity and long-term strategy.

As CCF continues to evolve, there is an opportunity for the Executive Director to strengthen alignment across teams and ensure that strategic choices are grounded in the needs and realities of our partners and communities.

Common Counsel Foundation partners with visionary leaders, communities, and movements working on the most critical issues of our time.

CCF operates within a broader community that includes the over 225 nonprofit organizations, grassroots and frontline communities, and movements funded annually by CCF; 25 foundation partners leveraging their resources through funding collaboratives; and over 100 individuals and families entrusting their philanthropy

to CCF. In 2024, we distributed over \$49 million in grants to some of the most essential and visionary grassroots organizations and movements in the country with focuses including racial justice, climate justice, Indigenous sovereignty, and housing and tenants rights.

## WITH AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF \$42 MILLION, OUR WORK INCLUDES:



### MULTPARTNER COLLABORATIVES

CCF is home to several initiatives that leverage the resources of multiple funding partners. These include the **Fund for an Inclusive California** that supports power building for housing justice in California communities through grantmaking and strategic coordination; **Community Ownership for Community Power**, which coordinates patient, flexible, and regenerative capital for community ownership projects of land and housing that build community power; **Grassroots Exchange Fund**, which fosters networking and collaboration between small social change organizations across the country while building capacity through training and technical assistance; and **Still We Rise**, which offers flexible and responsive funding to frontline organizations that protect and mobilize vulnerable people in the struggle for democracy, resilience, and power.

### FISCAL SPONSORSHIP AND MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Fiscal sponsorship, movement infrastructure, and grantmaking support allow newly formed, emerging, and established organizations to deepen and expand their movement building work. Current partners in this work include: the **Movement for Black Lives (M4BL)**, a space for Black organizations across the country to debate, develop shared assessments and co-create a movement wide strategy for Black liberation; **Native Voices Rising**, one of philanthropy's most notable and innovative Native-led funding collaboratives, which supports organizing, advocacy and civic engagement in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities; and **Manzanita Capital Collective**, which facilitates non-extractive investments in Black, Indigenous, and POC-led land projects.

### STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPIC ADVISING

Our advising offerings include:

#### Donor Advised Funds

We manage the granting process, offering donors the giving power of an independent foundation without the administrative effort and expense.

#### Foundation Services

Our flexible and tailored services enable donors to create a specialized plan for their philanthropy that best reflects the mission of your fund, foundation, or trustees.

#### Philanthropic Advising

We bring our knowledge of and relationship in grassroots organizing across a range of social justice issues to help individuals, families and mainstream foundations hone and/or strengthen their philanthropic interests and craft strategic grantmaking programs to fit their specific giving mission.

L to R photo credits: Brooke Anderson, Eye for Ebony, Joel Mott

WE INVITE YOU TO LEARN MORE BY VISITING OUR [WEBSITE](#).

# THE TEAM

Our staff are a deeply engaged, dynamic team of professionals that operate with a sense of agency, passion, and purpose and who are invested in the long-term evolution of Common Counsel Foundation.

Our team brings a diverse set of skills and backgrounds built from community organizing, movement-building, advocacy, and organizational development which inform our philanthropic strategies and programmatic design.

The 14-member core staff team leads and implements CCF's programmatic work, finances, operations, and grants administration. The Strategic Philanthropic Advising Team partners with donor advised fund holders

and leads the family advising practice. The Housing Justice Initiative manages CCF's pooled funds and the launch of our integrated capital fund. And the Executive Director along with four senior staff members form the Leadership Team, who work together to set the direction for institutional strategy, and grow shared leadership. Our culture aspires to be collaborative and learning-centered.



Community Ownership for Community Power Fund Convening, June 2024

The Executive Director reports to a Board of Directors composed of leaders from social justice movements, progressive philanthropy, and finance and investment.

The Board works in partnership with the Executive Director to ensure that the CCF remains grounded in actualizing our vision of building community power through organizational change, growth, and transition. CCF is headquartered in downtown Oakland, with an office space for meetings, gatherings, and collaboration. While some staff are located around the U.S., a majority of the core staff reside in California's Bay Area. We offer flexible remote options for locally-based staff with some choosing to come into the office a few times a week while others come occasionally or for team meetings.

# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will hold the following key responsibilities:

- **Advance CCF's mission and movement alignment**, serving as a key leader, advocate, and organizer for social justice philanthropy that centers community power and relationships and shifts resources towards movements.
- **Model transparent, accountable, and values-aligned leadership** across the organization and with partners.
- **Lead organizational strategy and long-term movement alignment**, including the development of a clear strategic plan and organizational direction; identify priorities for the organization's next chapter; and determine what work should be strengthened, adapted, or sunsetted in alignment with strategy, capacity, and resources.
- **Build and sustain an inclusive, collaborative, trust-centered organizational culture** by centering transparent communication, care, and collective wellbeing. Foster an organization that draws in, retains, and inspires a diverse, professional, and experienced staff. Ensure strong supervision and team structures and create professional development opportunities. Guide the team thoughtfully through transitions, ensuring staff feel valued, informed, and supported.
- **Strengthen organizational governance by partnering closely with the Board.** Supervise and support senior leaders (CFO, Director of Housing Justice, Director of Strategic Philanthropy, Director of Philanthropic Advising) to ensure coordination, communication flow, and strong cross-functional alignment across teams.
- **Lead fundraising and financial strategy with staff and Board by stewarding values-aligned donor and funder relationships**, organizing new aligned funding and investment opportunities, and ensuring long-term organizational sustainability. Guide financial planning with the CFO to support strategic clarity, sustainability, and transparent decision-making.
- **Deepen external presence, leading clear internal/external communications** as a spokesperson, and deepening relationships across philanthropic and movement ecosystems. Ensure CCF's voice reflects the organization's evolving strategic focus and commitment to community power and movement accountability.
- **Develop and expand relationships and networks** with CCF's funding partners, movement leaders, and colleagues in the philanthropic sector to leverage sectoral influence towards values-aligned change.
- **Listen deeply to our movement partners and allies** and lead from a space of solidarity and collective good. Ensure that movement partnerships inform organizational strategy, resource allocation, and programmatic direction in meaningful and consistent ways.



EBASE,  
a Fund for an Inclusive California grantee



Lowlander Center,  
a Grassroots Exchange Fund grantee



Faith in the Valley,  
a Fund for an Inclusive California grantee

# CANDIDATE PROFILE

Common Counsel Foundation's next leader will bring at least 10 years of experience as a successful senior leader in an organization of similar scope and complexity. The ideal candidate will also possess a background in U.S.-based social justice organizing and philanthropy. They will be a compelling spokesperson who inspires confidence, creativity, and action with a vision that is grounded in the realities of the communities we serve and the world we are working to achieve. We are searching for a leader who embodies many of the qualifications below but encourage applications from candidates who may not possess all of the following:

## **VISION & INNOVATION**

Demonstrated ability to envision and implement bold, transformative ideas, moving from theory to practice. Comfortable holding ambiguity and complexity, capable of shaping muddy places and spaces into clear pathways and partnerships.

## **POLITICAL ALIGNMENT**

Committed to social justice and building community power. Able to articulate and orient work with a nuanced intersectional understanding of power, privilege, and oppression. Sees organizing as a foundational strategy to transform power dynamics within mainstream philanthropy. Brings an existing network of relationships with social justice movements. Has first-hand experience as a philanthropic disruptor and/or organizer of a community-led change process.

## **PHILANTHROPY & ALIGNED FUNDRAISING EXPERTISE**

Has philanthropic experience that includes a solid understanding of current national funding trends (particularly related to CCF's core work of donor organizing, pooled funds, fiscal sponsorship, etc.); specific priorities for different regions and communities; and systems, challenges, and opportunities of the philanthropic sector including managing and delivering capital. Demonstrated success in relationship-based fundraising that builds institutional resilience, flexibility, and community power. Demonstrated record of sound financial planning, oversight, and accountability. Brings an existing network of connections and relationships in philanthropy.

## **RELATIONSHIP BUILDER**

Recognizes relationships as the cornerstone of their work. Skilled at building and maintaining quality relationships across communities and constituencies with diverse stakeholders and allies. Gifted in facilitation, comfortable with conflict, and effective in resolving tension points. Understands accountability as a core dimension of all relationships.

## **EQUITY ADVOCATE**

Brings a sophisticated intersectional analysis to social justice philanthropy and movement building across identities and experiences (geography, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, language, disability, immigration). Recognizes the layers of oppression experienced by many in our community—especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color—and works to build understanding and collective action. Sees diversity and justice as interconnected.

## **COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE**

Exhibits a style of leadership that is collaborative, transparent, and empathetic. Is fully committed to building a leaderful organization with distributed power. Creates an environment of listening and learning; respects the voices and expertise of colleagues, community members, and movement partners. Brings self-awareness, self-reflection, and humility to their role and ability to demonstrate collegial leadership, knows when to use positional leadership to strengthen organization-wide effectiveness.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Experience with organizational development and managing change. Strong orientation towards systems thinking and organizational learning. Brings direct experience in systems building, growing staff leadership, fostering team culture that embodies our values and vision.

## **GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY**

Practical understanding of risk management, legal compliance, and financial accountability, including the wisdom of knowing when to consult legal counsel. Experience working with financially complex organizations. Grantmaking experience is a plus (i.e. not required).

# LOCATION AND TRAVEL

With headquarters in Oakland, CA, previous Common Counsel Foundation Executive Directors have been based in the Bay Area. While the organization has a strong preference for a Bay Area-based Executive Director (and can arrange a relocation funding package if appropriate), with a national funding scope, we recognize that the right candidate may be located

outside of California for this next organizational iteration.

CCF's executive leader is expected to travel both locally and nationally. Out of area travel by plane and spending time away from home is required for approximately 30% of the year.

# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Common Counsel Foundation's next Executive Director will be compensated in the range of \$225,000-\$295,000, commensurate with experience, as well as a compelling benefits package. It may also include a relocation package if required. Grounded in the organization's commitment to equity, the salary of CCF's highest paid employee is currently no more than three times the lowest paid employee.

CCF recognizes that the success of the organization lies in retaining an engaged staff and so we strive to offer a holistic compensation and benefit package that includes competitive pay, quality health benefits, generous paid time off including paid sabbaticals, flexible work schedules, professional development opportunities, and non-elective contributions to a retirement savings plan.

# COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Common Counsel Foundation provides equal employment opportunities to all employees, volunteers, and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

All positions at CCF involve frequent use of a computer and telephone. Reasonable accommodations can be

made to enable individuals with differing abilities to perform the essential functions of their position.

CCF is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals. As part of this commitment, we will ensure that persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations. If reasonable accommodation is needed to participate in the application or interviewing process, please contact [hr@commoncounsel.org](mailto:hr@commoncounsel.org) upon submitting your application.



ACT LA - United to House LA Campaign, a Fund for an Inclusive California grantee

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND CANDIDATE REFERRALS

We invite you to share this position announcement widely. If you have questions about the application, email us at [hr@commoncounsel.org](mailto:hr@commoncounsel.org). Do not submit applications to this email address, please follow the steps below. Phone inquiries are discouraged.

**The deadline for applications is February 15, 2026, at 5pm PT.**

Apply by visiting [commoncounsel.org/careers](https://commoncounsel.org/careers), where you will find a link to submit your application materials. Applications include the items listed below:

1. A thoughtful and compelling cover letter that addresses why you are interested in working with CCF and what relevant qualifications and experience you bring to this role
2. A resume
3. A list of three references that includes names, affiliations, and relationships to you, with email addresses and phone numbers. (References will not be contacted until the final stage of the search, and candidates will be given an opportunity to notify their references in advance.)

Selected applicants will be contacted for interviews with CCF's Hiring Team in February 2026.



Black Femme Fund, a Grassroots Exchange Fund grantee