



**groundwork**

CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION PROFILE

Traverse City, Michigan | June 2024

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# ABOUT GROUNDWORK

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Groundwork is a nonprofit organization that creates sustainable solutions in local food, climate change, and livable towns.

**VISION** Our vision is a thriving and equitable Michigan where people and nature are in balance, communities are resilient in the face of climate change and other pressures, and our economy is regenerative. We envision a future where our food systems are diverse and healthy, our energy is clean and locally controlled, our transportation is accessible and sustainable, and our communities are inclusive. We see a region where every person has a voice in shaping their future, and where we work collaboratively across sectors and communities to build a resilient and just society for generations to come.

**MISSION** We partner to create enduring and equitable local solutions that preserve the environment, strengthen the economy, and create healthy, thriving communities that people cherish, protect, and nurture.



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# THE OPPORTUNITY

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The next Executive Director of Groundwork will lead an organization that has established a 30-year legacy of innovation and success in conceiving and piloting sustainable solutions and moving them forward. Our new leader will have the opportunity to guide a team of 20 talented, engaged, and passionate individuals who are determined to help create a better world. Operating in three program areas, Groundwork brings an equity-centered systems-change approach to growing the local food economy, promoting an equitable transition to clean energy, and advocating for walkable, livable towns and sustainable transportation. The candidate has the opportunity to implement the right mix of 21st-century vision, practical day-to-day management, and strong community instincts to shape a world in which sustainable solutions are guiding our culture's most important decisions locally and statewide.

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# POSITION SUMMARY

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Groundwork Center for Resilient communities is seeking a visionary and dynamic Executive Director to lead the organization into its next phase of growth and impact. The Executive Director will serve as the primary spokesperson for Groundwork and will provide strategic leadership to advance the organization's mission and programs. This individual will oversee all aspects of the organization, while working closely with the Board of Directors, staff, and community partners to ensure the success and sustainability of Groundwork. The ideal candidate will be ready to play an integral role in the organization's fundraising and will have experience in securing funding from foundations, businesses, and individual donors.

**The Executive Director will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:**

- Act as the lead public spokesperson for the organization while building and maintaining relationships with supporters, donors, partner organizations, and the general public
- Provide strategic leadership on program and organizational vision, guiding the development and implementation of programs and projects that align with Groundwork's mission and values
- Oversee and support staff, finances, and week-to-week systems of the organization, ensuring efficient organizational systems and processes
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors by providing regular updates on organizational activities, financial status, and strategic priorities
- Play a key role in fundraising efforts, working to secure financial support from foundations, corporations, and individual donors to sustain and expand Groundwork's impact
- Execute other duties as requested by the Board of Directors to support the overall success of the organization

**General Expectations:**

Groundwork staff members are expected to demonstrate a:

- Strong commitment to Groundwork's mission and programs
- Passion for building livable communities, propelling clean energy, and expanding the local food economy
- Growing understanding of, and enthusiasm for, resilience principles
- And, a self-directed working approach and ability to take initiative

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# POSITION SUMMARY CONT.

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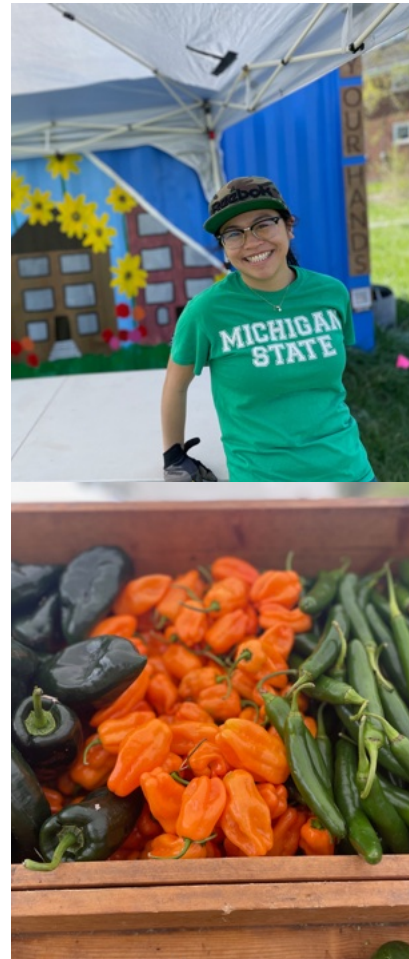
## Qualifications:

- Strong supervisory and leadership skills with experience managing a diverse team and fostering a culture of collaboration and trust
- Proven track record of successful fundraising for nonprofit organizations
- Ability to build and maintain effective communication and working relationships with partners, community leaders, donors, and supporters
- Strategic thinker with the ability to guide the development of organizational vision, programs, and priorities
- Passionate advocate for the organization’s mission, with the ability to inspire others to action
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in all aspects of organizational leadership and decision-making

## About Groundwork:

At Groundwork, the candidate will lead a team of driven individuals who work hard to provide funding for the organization so that it can fulfill its goals of advancing policy solutions and projects that are pragmatic, practical, caring, and visionary. We strive to create a positive, collaborative, healthy, and inspired working environment that gives staff members support and opportunities for growth.

We are optimistic about Michigan’s future and believe in a thriving local farm and food economy; stronger, more walkable, bike-able, and transit-friendly towns and villages; cleaner sources of energy, and climate solutions that support a more equitable future for all. The researchers, writers, advocates, system change-makers and coalition-builders that make up the Groundwork staff are passionately committed to realizing this vision.



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# THE WORK

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While our program mix is broad, all of Groundwork's initiatives are wound around the idea that equitable and sustainable system-wide solutions are needed for our people and planet to enjoy a resilient and thriving future.

For our largest program area, Food & Farming, equitable and sustainable system-wide change means pushing forward with ideas that expand the local food economy in our home region and in communities around the state. For two decades, our teams have worked to increase the production of locally grown produce and proteins while simultaneously working to expand markets for that food. We have been instrumental in increasing the amount of locally grown food purchased by schools, food pantries and meal sites, and sold through grocery stores, restaurants and farm shares. The benefits of a systems change approach in local food include more stable farm family incomes, farmland that stays in farming, gentler farming practices by smaller farms, and food dollars that stay in the community ... and of course, healthier and more delicious meals for all of us.

The work of our Climate & Environment team is focused on speeding the buildout of renewable energy infrastructure while also stopping the dangerous effects and threats of the fossil fuel economy. In the past we helped stop a plan to build several coal plants in Michigan, and we were an early leader and remain engaged in shutting down the Line 5 oil pipeline in the waters of the Straits of Mackinac. We recently began working with rural communities and rural electric co-ops to resolve roadblocks to expanding installation of renewable energy solutions.

The primary work of our Transportation & Community Design team currently is a multi-year effort to launch a passenger rail line from southeast to northwest Lower Michigan. The team is in the midst of managing a federally required Phase II study that will assess key logistic and market details. In addition, the team engages to influence local and regional decisions about land use and planning.



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# OUR CORE VALUES

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**These five principles guide all of our behaviors, decisions and actions. They are fundamental to who we are as an organization.**

## **COMMUNITY**

We keep the communities we serve at the center of everything we do. We invest in authentic relationships with partners, funders, allies and citizens, building partnerships from the ground up and treating all with honesty, respect, and kindness. We believe in collaborative impact and building community capacity that extends beyond our individual efforts. We want to build diverse coalitions that achieve tangible outcomes.

## **EQUITY**

We challenge ourselves and the systems we exist within to ensure that programs and policies benefit diverse populations and historically excluded people, regardless of their socio-economic status or community standing. We work to include and encourage people of many backgrounds and cultures to participate in policy decision making. We work to achieve equitable policies and to learn how to improve. Equity is a continual journey that we recognize will never be completed, but we keep striving.

## **INNOVATION**

We embrace innovative, flexible and adaptable solutions when they help us to tackle the ever-evolving challenges in building resilient communities. We are not afraid to vocalize grand ideas that others may say are impossible or unfeasible. We challenge ourselves to brainstorm new and creative possibilities and then are nimble implementing new ideas that have no playbook (yet). We then share what we've learned widely so that other communities can benefit.

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# OUR CORE VALUES CONT.

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**These five principles guide all of our behaviors, decisions and actions. They are fundamental to who we are as an organization.**

## **IMPACT**

We don't just say, we do. Working with our partners we make real and measurable progress on some of the biggest challenges impacting our communities, improving the lives of real people. We embrace unexpected or not "pre-ordained" results. We share the results of our work (both successes and failures) to help others build more pathways to community and personal resilience.

## **SHARING**

We tell stories of success and progress. We celebrate the change we are able to make and allow this celebration to drive radical hope in what we'll be able to change tomorrow. We rally, educate and inspire partners, supporters and community members. We create small community models and scale them up on a statewide and national basis, sharing widely and with an open heart.







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# THE CULTURE

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Groundwork cultivates an equity-centered culture that honors both individual contribution and teamwork in equal measure. Our culture and leadership encourages team members to think in terms of broad system-level changes that lead to a more just and sustainable future, while also emphasizing the importance of moment-by-moment personal relationships and the impact of our work on individual lives. Groundwork is not a large organization, but from its earliest days it has tackled big problems with a vision and determined spirit that has built an impressive record of success.

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# THE TEAM

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The team at Groundwork is a spirited bunch of people who share a belief in a plain truth: that the world will be far better off if we can turn to equitable and sustainable solutions to solve our greatest challenges. They put that belief into action with strategic thought, respectful and open collaboration, hard work, and heart.

Our legacy of success and strength of our program areas—Food & Farming, Climate & Environment, and Transportation and Community Design—have attracted team members who bring career-long commitments to, and passions for, their areas of focus. But they are also people who highly value the power of partnership—partnership with other Groundwork



colleagues and partnership with individuals in other organizations with overlapping vision and values. Our team members know well that nothing we have ever achieved was accomplished without strong and stalwart partners whom we value greatly.

One characteristic that defines our team is a willingness to think big despite our relatively small size. Our team piloted a local food in schools program that is now available to every school in Michigan and is considered a gold standard program nationally. Our team has led the initiative to launch a passenger rail from southeast to northwest Lower Michigan—one of only a few nonprofits in the nation leading a major passenger rail initiative. Our team was a central force in igniting the fight to stop the Line 5 oil pipeline. Our team has been at the heart of building one of the most acclaimed local food economies in the nation.

Our team believes in possibilities.



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# ABOUT TRAVERSE CITY

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Traverse City is a regional hub in northwest Lower Michigan that rises on the southern rim of one of the largest freshwater bays on the planet. A hallmark of life here is the easy accessibility of the outdoors. A hilly landscape and a Great Lake that cools the climate in summer and tempers cold in winter makes for year-round activity, including hiking, running, biking, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, fishing, sailing, paddle-boarding, power-boating and more. With a national park—Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore—just 30 minutes away, outdoor access is both irresistible and easy. The landscape has also given rise to a rich agriculture industry of orchards, vineyards, and market farms. The area now supports a wine industry that has earned multiple international medals. An innovative and acclaimed restaurant scene has also risen here. The region’s diverse beauty has attracted musicians and artists to live and visit here, building a vibrant cultural scene, which includes the internationally renowned Interlochen Center for the Arts. The same natural beauty and vibrance that attracts artists, chefs, farmers and outdoors enthusiasts has also fostered an innovative and entrepreneurial business community. All of this explains why Traverse City continues to appear on a steady stream of lists with titles like, “Best Places to Live.”

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**Job Title:** Executive Director

**Salary Range:** \$145,000–\$165,000

**Location:** Traverse City, Michigan

**Reports to:** Board of Directors

**Link to application:** [Groundwork Executive Director Application](#)

**Deadline to Apply:** 11:59 p.m. on June 28, 2024

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This is a full-time position with flexible hours, generous vacation and health benefits, retirement contribution matching, and a competitive salary range. The salary range for this position is \$145,000–\$165,000. This position is based in Traverse City, Michigan, and allows for remote work from home.

Please apply using the Groundwork Employment Application, and please be aware that the application will require you to upload both a cover letter and résumé. Applications will be accepted until **11:59 p.m. on June 28, 2024**.

*Groundwork is committed to creating a diverse workplace and seeks a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds. People of color, persons with disabilities, veterans and LGBTQ+ candidates are encouraged to apply. Groundwork is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its employment. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.*

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