



Position Title: Executive Director

Location: Hartford, Connecticut (hybrid statewide role; in-state travel required)

Reports To: Board of Directors

Status: Full-Time, Exempt

Organizational Profile

Mission

The mission of Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is to preserve Connecticut farmland for current and future generations of farmers.

Who We Are

Connecticut Farmland Trust is the only statewide nonprofit dedicated exclusively to protecting the state's working farmland. To date, CFT has permanently protected more than 7,700 acres, helping to sustain local food production, safeguard soil and water resources, maintain open space, and support Connecticut's agricultural economy. CFT is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

We acknowledge that the benefits of land conservation have not been equitably shared. CFT is committed to evolving our work to serve all farmers, especially historically underserved farmers and farmers of color, and to reshape conservation tools to improve equitable access to land.

Our Work

- Farmland and soil preservation, with a focus on farms under 30 acres, which are most obtainable for new and beginning farmers
- Agricultural conservation easements
- Buy-protect-sell (BPS) projects to expand land access
- Implementing tools such as Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) to ensure affordability for future farm buyers

- Climate-smart farmland protection and soil health education
- Advocacy and coalition leadership through groups like Working Lands Alliance
- Partnerships across land trusts, municipalities, and state and federal agencies

Our Values

Honesty & Accountability • Responsiveness • Justice & Equity • Innovation & Risk-Taking • Building Partnerships & Community

Position Summary

Connecticut Farmland Trust seeks a strategic, relationship-centered, and equity-driven Executive Director (ED) to lead the organization through its next chapter. The ED will implement CFT's 5-Year Strategic Plan; expand farmland preservation and equitable access; strengthen climate-resilient conservation practices; and foster a healthy, inclusive, high-performing organizational culture.

This is a hands-on leadership role overseeing strategy, fundraising, operations, partnerships, and staff development—all within a mission-driven, nimble nonprofit deeply connected to Connecticut's agricultural community.

Core Responsibilities

Strategic and Program Leadership

- Implement the strategic plan across farmland protection, farmland access, climate resilience, and organizational health
- Oversee acquisition, easement, and stewardship work
- Support partner programs
- Promote climate-smart agriculture and soil-health practices

Fundraising, Outreach, and Partnerships

- Serve as CFT's chief fundraiser (major gifts, grants, earned revenue)
- Expand donor networks and cultivate a new generation of supporters
- Build relationships with farmers, communities, donors, agencies, and partners

Operations, Finance, and Governance

- Oversee budgeting, cash flow, risk management, and compliance

- Optimize internal systems and project coordination using a continuous-improvement approach.
- Partner with the Board on governance, planning, and fiduciary oversight

People & Culture

- Supervise and develop staff
- Build an inclusive, equitable, high-performing culture
- Lead transparent and equitable organizational processes
- Advance staff and board succession planning

Required Knowledge, Skills & Experience

Industry Knowledge & Experience

- Experience in land conservation, agricultural easements, farmland protection, real estate, land-use planning, agriculture, or related fields
- Understanding of CT or New England agricultural systems is strongly preferred

Strategic Leadership & Vision

- Experience leading an organization, department, or major initiative
- Demonstrated ability to execute long-term plans with measurable outcomes

Relationship-Building

- Ability to cultivate meaningful partnerships across sectors
- Experience building relationships with farm owners, farmers, donors and communities

Communication

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Public speaking and advocacy experience
- Ability to translate complex conservation tools into clear, understandable concepts.

Leadership

- Proven ability to supervise, inspire, and develop staff
- Track record of building healthy, equitable, and collaborative teams

- Ability to work in strong partnership with an engaged and active board of directors
- Competency in budgeting, financial oversight, systems, processes, and project coordination
- Experience improving workflows or organizational systems

Qualifications

- Progressive leadership experience in conservation, agricultural, land use, or nonprofit context
- Fundraising success (major gifts, foundation grants, government funding)
- Experience with conservation transactions or related real estate tools
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion
- Familiarity with and interest in CT agriculture and New England agriculture preferred
- Valid driver's license and ability to travel statewide

Compensation and Benefits

Salary Range: \$100,000 – \$110,000 depending on experience and qualifications.

- Comprehensive health insurance
- Paid short-term and long-term disability insurance
- 5% employer retirement match after 6 months
- Paid vacation: a week off between Christmas and New Year, plus 15 days (years 1–3), 20 days (year 4 and 5) and 1 additional day for each year after year 5 up to a total of 5 weeks
- Paid holidays: 11 Federal Holidays and 2 additional floating holidays
- Paid sick and personal leave: 8 sick days in year 1 and 10 days a year thereafter; and 3 personal days
- Work travel reimbursement
- Paid sabbatical
- Paid professional development opportunities
- Flexible, and collaborative workplace

To Apply

Connecticut Farmland Trust is partnering with Fio Partners to support and manage the Executive Director search process. Please submit a cover letter and resume combined in a single PDF document to Search@fiopartners.com.

Timeline

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Candidates who apply by March 1, 2026, will receive priority consideration. Position open until filled.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Connecticut Farmland Trust is an equal opportunity employer. We prohibit discrimination against all employees and applicants for employment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, age, national origin, citizenship, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected characteristic. We believe diverse perspectives strengthen our team and welcome applicants from all backgrounds to join us.