LES Ecology Center

The Lower East Side Ecology Center has pioneered community-based models in urban sustainability since 1987. We provide unique e-waste and composting services, environmental stewardship opportunities, and educational programming to all New Yorkers to create an equitable, resilient, and sustainable city.

THE POSITION: Director of Stewardship Programs

The Director of Stewardship Programs leads the vision, strategy, and execution of green space stewardship initiatives of the Ecology Center across the Lower East Side. This is a new role in the organization that is expected to bring our green space stewardship to the next level as significant areas of East River Park re-open to the public. This role oversees programs that engage New Yorkers in caring for parks, planted areas, and street trees through hands-on volunteer activities, sustainable horticultural practices, and environmental education.

The Director sets program priorities, oversees budgets, oversees volunteer management systems, develops and deepens partnerships, manages a growing stewardship team and ensures that the stewardship team delivers high-quality, ecologically sound work that advances the Ecology Center's mission.

We're looking for someone who has a rich background in managing horticultural spaces, is a hands-on manager, and is looking to lead a passionate team in caring for green spaces across the Lower East Side.

Reports to: Executive Director

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Strategy and Leadership

- Set annual goals, work plans, and performance measures for stewardship and tree care programs in collaboration with program managers.
- Establish horticultural priorities and standards that promote ecological health and sustainable land management.
- Oversee program performance and hold staff accountable for meeting goals and maintaining high-quality work.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen and integrate programs in alignment with organizational priorities and community needs.
- Get acquainted and cultivate external stakeholders of the stewardship program such as NYC Parks.

Team and Program Management

- Supervise the Stewardship Manager, Stewardship Coordinator, and gardening team (of up to 6 seasonal staff); eventually assume supervision of the Street Tree Care Program Manager and tree care team.
- Coordinate staffing, scheduling, and shared resources across programs to maximize capacity and avoid duplication.
- Develop horticultural management plan with a focus on East River Park, Pier 42, Covid Memorial Garden and Tompkins Square Park.

- Develop and manage the annual stewardship staffing needs and program budget, monitor expenditures, and ensure programs operate within approved budgets.
- Oversee and streamline volunteer management systems and protocols, including registration, communications, safety, and recordkeeping.
- Oversee operational planning for equipment, supplies, and field logistics, ensuring programs are well resourced and activities are delivered safely and effectively.
- Foster a collaborative team culture with clear expectations, accountability, and opportunities for professional development.

Partnerships and Organizational Collaboration

- Collaborate with the Director of Development on corporate volunteer opportunities, including scheduling, logistics, and communications.
- Build and maintain relationships with community organizations, corporate partners, public agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Identify funding opportunities and support grant applications and proposals, including program narratives, budgets, and reporting.
- Coordinate with the Communications Manager to share program activities and accomplishments for social media, annual report and other purposes.
- Support organization wide events throughout the year.

CORE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrated experience in horticulture, landscape management, ecological restoration, urban greening, parks stewardship, or a related field, including hands-on land management experience. Minimum 10 years experience showing increased responsibility over time.
- Experience balancing field-based work with program management, administration, and operational planning.
- Experience developing work plans, managing budgets, coordinating logistics, and tracking program outcomes.
- Experience supervising staff or leading teams, with the ability to set expectations, provide feedback, and support professional development.
- Strong organizational skills and the ability to establish and maintain effective administrative systems and procedures.
- Experience managing volunteers (corporate and community), community programs, or public-facing environmental initiatives.
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills, including experience working with community partners and public agencies.
- Familiarity with NYC parks, urban horticulture, and street tree care.
- Self-motivated and able to prioritize tasks independently.
- Commitment to environmental stewardship, ecological horticulture, community engagement, and the mission of the Lower East Side Ecology Center.
- Ability to perform physically demanding tasks such as squatting, kneeling, and standing for extended periods, comfortably handle items weighing up to 50 lbs, and work outdoors in various weather conditions
- Flexibility to work on weekends and evenings as needed
- Comfortable with Mac OS, Microsoft Office, and Google Drive apps
- Drivers License

ADDITIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES PREFERRED

- Other spoken languages, especially Spanish, Cantonese, or Mandarin
- Familiarity of the Lower East Side and Lower Manhattan communities
- Experience developing or improving systems for volunteer management, program evaluation, and operational coordination.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

This is a full-time, salaried position. The salary range for the position is $80,000 to $90,000, commensurate with skills and experience. The Ecology Center contributes towards a health care plan and offers a 401K matching plan. New employees are offered 10 paid holidays, 15 days of vacation, 5 personal days and 5 safe/sick days.

This position offers limited flexible work arrangement, with a regular in-person presence expected at our office and stewardship sites throughout the Lower East Side. As a hands-on leadership role overseeing field-based programs, the Director will spend a significant portion of their time working on-site with staff.

HOW TO APPLY:

Qualified candidates should fill out the Director of Stewardship Programs Application Form.

If you need help navigating issues with the form please contact: info@lesecologycenter.org

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis with a final deadline to apply on November 29, 2026 at 11:59pm.

No phone calls, please.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is core to the mission at the Lower East Side Ecology Center. The Ecology Center is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

For more information, visit: www.lesecologycenter.org