



6145 Shoup Rd.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80908, USA

The La Foret Board of Directors seeks an Executive Director beginning Summer of 2025. The primary responsibility of the Executive Director will be to clarify and then nurture La Foret's Mission, Vision, and Values, animating them and keeping them central to all aspects of life at La Foret.

Included in this packet are: instructions for application/nomination, La Foret's current "Mission, Vision, and Values," and its statement regarding its Commitment to Justice, a job description, and a FAQ.

All friends of La Foret are encouraged to nominate individuals with the appropriate gifts and skills for consideration. Individuals may also apply directly.

A completed application consists of:

Resume

Three (3) references

Three (3) total essays, with each essay (1000-word maximum, double-spaced) responding to each of the following prompts:

- Describe your spiritual journey and identity
- Describe your leadership/management experience and how it relates to an organization like La Foret, and your vision for leadership at La Foret
- Choose one (1) or more of La Foret's values and describe how you would use it/them in implementing the vision described above.

La Foret recognizes that there is much work to be done in the Church, the world, and La Foret to honor, respect, and celebrate diversity and all its gifts. As such, the La Foret Board of Directors affirms and supports diverse applicants for the position of Executive Director. People of any race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability status, or relationship with Holden are encouraged to apply.

Questions, nominations, and applications may be sent to [mblackwood@laforet.org](mailto:mblackwood@laforet.org).

## **Current Mission, Vision and Values**

**Vision:** To be a magnet center for progressive thought, learning and action in the western United States.

**Values:** To offer sacred, safe space and experiences for all; providing sanctuary for life's meaningful moments.

**Mission:** In a world which needs compassion, tolerance and love, the La Foret Conference and Retreat Center is a welcoming and safe haven committed to inspiring healthy and confident future generations and stewarding the Alice B. Taylor gift and its environs.

## **Position Description**

For over 80 years, La Foret has operated as a UCC Affiliated camping and retreat center in the beauty of the Black Forest in Colorado. A former private residence gifted to the United Church of Christ in the 1940's, La Foret has provided sacred space for people of all ages to experience the transcendence and beauty offered through the intersection of the natural world and human communities. La Foret is rooted in the United Church of Christ expression of the Christian faith and strives to be a place of ecumenical and interfaith collaboration. By offering year-round hospitality to all who come to La Foret, this sanctuary seeks to serve the wider church and God's beloved world.

La Foret is emerging from a intense period with the construction and completion of Lapp Lodge (2024), recovery from the COVID pandemic (2020-2022), launch of The Refuge, a new programming division of La Foret, as well as ongoing maintenance and repair of current buildings with the hope to expand its offerings for education, recreation, and spiritual renewal for people of all ages. Looking forward, the Board and the Executive Director will be engaged in strategic visioning, marketing campaign, and donor development to support La Foret into the future.

The La Foret Board of Directors hires, oversees, and supports the Executive Director, who is expected to maintain a consistent presence at La Foret and provide visionary leadership for the staff and guests of La Foret during this time of complex ecological, ecumenical, and societal change. The position requires relationships with staff, guests, donors, the Church, conferences, and partner organizations, including the state and federal regulatory agencies, local Indigenous tribes, local non profits and other retreat organizations.

The Board seeks an Executive Director who, first and foremost, is deeply committed to articulating and embodying the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of La Foret. Leadership in this setting requires great personal resilience; passion and connection to La Foret and commitment to the teachings of Jesus; an ability to strategically envision La Foret's place in the complex, changing world; ongoing focus on ecological regeneration and sustainability; solid business acumen; commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; ability to foster meaningful relationships with the USFS, local Indigenous tribes and other partner organizations; oversight of renewal and/or construction of buildings and physical infrastructure; understanding the role of the Board and changes in the volunteer and employment landscape of our constituency. The Board is open to receiving proposals for executive leadership that mirror historic models and/or innovative approaches to lead La Foret.

## **Overview**

The Executive Director is responsible to the Board of Directors to help develop a Mission, vision and values that will ensure La Foret continues to be a generative, life-giving, conference and retreat center long into the future. The ED will then be responsible for championing the newly developed Mission Vision, and Values as the vital center of life and work at La Foret.

The position responsibilities includes:

Leadership of a unique sacred retreat center located in the Black Forest on the outskirts of a growing urban area of Colorado Springs.

Being guardian of a highly relational ethos that has existed for over 60 years, defined by genuine hospitality, inclusive community, faith exploration, and connection to the natural world.

Managing multiple strategic relationships that include the institutional church, schools, regional businesses, corporations, other nonprofits, and the state of Colorado.

## **Essential Functions**

Articulate and live out the Mission, Vision, and Values with all who come to La Foret.

Collaborate with the Board to identify and implement strategic goals to strengthen La Foret's future.

Leadership of a collaborative staff that work together to carry out the mission of La Foret.

Provide support and supervision to the Director of Operation who is responsible for leading all operations and managing a team of approximately 30 full-time and seasonal staff consisting of guest services, a kitchen and dining team, marketing, housekeeping, gift shop, and a building and grounds team that together delivers food, lodging and sanctuary to guests.

Provide support and supervision to the Director of Transformational Programs who develops and oversees the design, execution, and evaluation of programs through the Refuge that includes camps and opportunities for all ages, including Summer Camping Programs.

Oversee capital campaign and fundraising, and develop other financial resources with Board approval and support.

Through staffing, programming, outreach, and training, ensure that La Foret upholds a commitment to racial equity, social justice, accessibility, and inclusion of people from a wide diversity of communities, including racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, gender, sexuality, and ability identities.

## **Staffing and Human Resource Management**

Hire and supervise Director positions and oversee recruitment, hiring and training of year-round staff and seasonal volunteers.

Nurture a sense of community and hospitality for all La Foret guests and employees, inside and outside of La

Foret. Engage practices supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion on multiple levels.

Create a work culture of cooperation, supportive delegation, and empowerment.

Maintain Employee Handbook and ensure all La Foret Policies and Procedures are communicated and followed by staff.

Perform Staff Evaluations for Director of Operations and Director of Programs.

### **Financial Oversight**

Develop an annual budget and present it to the Board of Directors for acceptance.

Oversee and be accountable for finances, including income, expenditures, external contracts, and all other financial matters.

Support ongoing fundraising, grant-writing, and any potential capital campaigns.

### **Public Relations**

Serve as the spokesperson for the ministry of La Foret, nationally and locally, to cultivate and maintain relationships with existing and potential guests, faculty, donors, community partners and congregations.

Oversee the writing, printing, and distribution of all of La Foret's promotional and informational materials.

### **Qualifications, Experience, and Skills**

Strong executive experience with nonprofit organization leadership and management (involving a wide span of organizational control), financial oversight, hospitality management, customer relationships, development, and Board governance.

Demonstrated commitment to and experience with organizational practices supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly related to racial justice.

Demonstrated experience with leadership development and ability to work collaboratively with a diverse team.

Adaptive communication skills, including interviewing, coaching, and intercultural collaboration. Experience in recruiting, selecting, nurturing, supervising, and evaluating staff.

Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university (required); Masters degree preferred.

The ability and willingness to serve as a leader in emergency situations, including medical and behavioral health emergencies, fire emergencies, wildlife management, and evacuations.

Strong sense of self-care and sustainable work/life balance.

## **Compensation**

The estimated annual salary range in this role is \$80,000-100,000

Actual compensation will be dependent upon various factors, including, but not limited to, the candidate's relevant experience and qualifications.

La Foret also offers the following benefits:

- Life, medical, dental, and vision insurance in accordance with La Foret's general program for employees.
- La Foret matches employee contributions to a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan up to 3%.
- 20 Days of PTO + 2 personal days.