



## **Chief Executive Officer**

Tucson, Arizona

### **ABOUT SONORAN INSTITUTE**

Since 1990, the Sonoran Institute has brought together diverse interests to successfully forge effective and enduring conservation solutions. The Sonoran Institute's mission is, "to connect people and communities with the natural resources that nourish and sustain them." We envision resilient communities living in harmony with the natural world, where flowing rivers and healthy landscapes enable all people and nature to thrive. Our work transcends borders, bringing together diverse communities to promote civil dialogue about complex conservation issues that know no boundaries. All aspects of our work are guided by inclusivity and collaboration to create positive environmental change in the western United States and northwestern Mexico.

As a binational organization, we value diversity because it helps foster partnerships, assists in our outreach, offers new perspectives and ideas, and enhances the effectiveness and impact of our work. The Sonoran Institute defines diversity as the extent of difference within an organization, among staff at various levels, board of directors, funders, and partners. As part of our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we strive to ensure that different identities are present in the organization, among our supporters, and those with whom we work closely.

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing strategic leadership for Sonoran Institute by working with the Board of Directors and the Executive Team to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans and policies. He/She oversees all organizational activities and ensures that these are carried out in a manner consistent with the organization's mission, policies, and programs, as adopted by the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive Officer is the organization's lead spokesperson and most visible representative to direct SI's policy agenda and secure financial support for the organization.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Board of Directors and directly supervises Sonoran Institute's Executive Team of four, which includes: Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, Senior Director of Development, Senior Director of Programs – Mexico, Senior Director of Programs – U.S. This position is based in Tucson, Arizona.



## **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

### ***Organizational Leadership***

- Provides leadership to ensure that the mission and core values of Sonoran Institute are put into practice.
- Collaborates with the Executive Team to develop and implement plans for the operational infrastructure of systems, processes and personnel designed to accommodate the growth objectives of the organization. This requires substantial time in the Tucson, AZ office balanced with regular travel to Colorado and Mexico and other Western destinations.
- Fosters a success-oriented, accountable environment within the Sonoran Institute.
- Maintains constructive relationships with partner and colleague organizations in Mexico and the U.S., elected officials, key constituency groups, and local, state, and federal governmental agencies.

### ***Donor Development***

- As requested by the Senior Director of Development, the CEO participates in major donor prospect meetings and asks.
- Partners with Senior Director of Development in developing strategies for ongoing cultivation of major donors.
- Assists the Development department in raising unrestricted funds to enable the organization to meet fundraising goals.
- Participates in representing the organization with funders, foundations, etc.

### ***Supervision***

- Motivates and leads a high-performance Executive Team.
- Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring and training employees; planning, assigning and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems.

### ***Board Relations***

- Serves as principal liaison with Board of Directors regarding institutional and programmatic development and progress.
- Reports on a regular basis to the Board Chair regarding the state of the organization.

## **POSITION CHARACTERISTICS**

- Decision-Making – This position has significant decision-making authority and consequences of errors can have significant detrimental effects on the organization. The employee must be able to represent the Institute in a positive and straightforward manner and must be able to manage delicate relationships involving staff, Board members, donors, etc. Confidentiality and discretion are key attributes for this position.
- Nature of Supervision Received – The Chief Executive Officer works independently, reporting to the Board of Directors.
- Representation and Public Contact – The Chief Executive Officer is a spokesperson and represents the Sonoran Institute at events, receptions, and meetings.



## **OPPORTUNITY**

From unplanned development to extreme climate events, the West faces a distinct set of challenges. The CEO of Sonoran Institute will lead a well-respected, bi-national organization of talented, passionate staff who are working towards solving some of the most pressing environmental issues in the West.

This is a tremendous opportunity to have significant, positive impact on the intersection of public policy, development and conservation and to lead an organization whose collaborative programs help communities develop the tools, knowledge, and plans they need to be resilient and to build a sustainable future.

## **ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDE:**

- Advanced Degree from an accredited university or college and 10 years or more work experience at a senior-level position within a non-profit organization that included responsibilities for program planning and budgeting, program development and evaluation, consultant management, and personnel management; or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Experience in leading multi-stakeholder, collaborative processes producing tangible outcomes.
- Experience in advocating administrative and legislative policy reforms at the local, state, or federal level.
- Experience in serving as a lead spokesperson for advocacy campaigns and in generating coverage in the print and electronic media for such campaigns.
- Experience in directing strategic planning or other organizational development activities involving both staff and board of a non-profit organization.
- Demonstrated success in raising major gifts from individual, foundation, or corporate donors.
- Proven ability to speak and write knowledgeably about issues of public concern in the United States and Mexico to diverse audiences.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to speak clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations.
- Conversational Spanish a requirement; ability to read and write in Spanish, highly desirable.
- The ability to lead by inspiring and motivating others to perform well.
- Demonstrated management skills that include planning, decision-making, facilitating and process improvement.
- Experience in supervising staff, providing regular performance feedback; and developing subordinates' skills and encouraging growth.
- Ability to make decisions, exhibit sound and accurate judgment, and make timely decisions.
- Leadership experience with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, highly desirable.
- Experience engaging with companies based in Mexico, preferred.
- Current, valid US Passport or other acceptable identification for US-MX crossings and valid driver's license as this position requires regular local and regional travel in the US and Mexico.

## **HOURS AND BENEFITS**

The CEO role is a full-time position. A full benefits package is offered, including employer-paid group life, long-term disability, employee medical and dental, and 401k retirement plans. Social security, workers' compensation, vacations and holidays are included.



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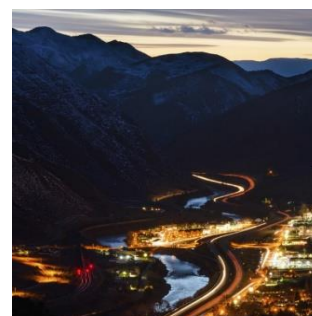
## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Sonoran Institute is committed to a CEO selection process that embraces diversity and inclusion. It is the policy of Sonoran Institute that all applicants and employees are entitled to equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, religion or creed, gender (includes pregnancy or related medical conditions), gender identity, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or other protected characteristics as required by local, state and federal law. In compliance with the provisions of all applicable state and federal civil rights laws, employment decisions will be made to employ the most qualified individuals without regard to the above factors. Sonoran Institute is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination. Sonoran Institute does not, and will not permit any of its employees to engage in discriminatory practices involving individuals that they come in contact with as representatives of this Organization, or their co-workers.

[ADA - CHECKLIST FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES & REQUIREMENTS, VISUAL ACUITY, & WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE POSITION](#)

## **TO APPLY:**

Sonoran Institute has retained the services of ThinkingAhead Executive Search. Please submit your resume and expression of interest to Chris Spagnola, Partner, at [cspagnola@thinkingahead.com](mailto:cspagnola@thinkingahead.com), and Jessica Martinez, Senior Recruiter, at [jmartinez@thinkingahead.com](mailto:jmartinez@thinkingahead.com).



## **ABOUT TUCSON:**

*Tucson's remarkable weather, national parks and forests, and desert provide an idyllic environment for a multitude of outdoor activities. There are over 350 days of sunshine, no natural disasters, and mountain ranges in all directions making it 10 to 15 degrees cooler than Phoenix in the summer. Tucson has an impressive food scene—it was the first city to earn the designation of World City of Gastronomy by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The city is also home to many resorts and spas, and possesses a rich history with turn-of-the-century architecture, beautiful historic neighborhoods, and museums/galleries featuring work by world-renowned artists. There is also a college-town atmosphere as it is home to the University of Arizona, which has its own share of museums and a science center. The neighborhoods in Tucson are diverse and ever-changing. Tucson and the surrounding communities observe low light pollution rules, meaning evenings are crystal clear and you can see the stars clearly from your own back yard. The city with a small-town feel allows for a low stress, laid-back lifestyle.*



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