



**President
Discovery Green Conservancy
Houston, Texas**

Sorrell is pleased to partner with Discovery Green Conservancy (DGC) in its search for a new President. This iconic 12-acre Park is a “beautiful oasis in the heart of downtown Houston,” nationally recognized, and a model for other Houston parks. Notably *not a city park*, Discovery Green is a privately-managed *public park* that was made possible through an unprecedented collaboration between private philanthropy and the City of Houston. Their shared vision began in 2004 when they saw DGC’s urban space as a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create an urban park that would redefine the landscape of downtown.”

Since opening in 2008, DGC has welcomed over 20 million visitors and brought renowned ingenuity, working with hundreds of programming partners to present artistic, musical, educational, family-friendly, and health-focused events. DGC is known for its *Signature Experiences* that attract visitors and fellow Houstonians who freely access its lawns, performance stages, gardens, playground, lake, public art, and restaurants. The Park’s creativity impacts livability, safety and health for Park visitors and its surrounding neighbors.

Founded as central to the advancement of parks across the city, DGC has emerged as a lead player in urban revitalization, sustainability, and civic engagement that inspires people to think about parks and open spaces in new ways. DGC offers strong connections between its diverse people and institutions as a thriving center of arts, culture, creative activity, and environmental stewardship. DGC’s downtown presence strengthens cross-sector connections and partnerships between Arts, Business, and Government. Nurturing its surrounding neighbors, DGC cultivates strong relationships with the Mayor’s Office and elected officials, including Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Houston Downtown Park Corporation, Houston First Corporation, law enforcement, and other civic, philanthropic, elected and business leaders.

This is a time of transition and promise for DGC. Leading Discovery Green Conservancy into the next era of growth and success, the new President will be an inspirational leader with a vision for the Park’s next 10 years. He/She/They is charged with elevating visibility, growing relationships and resources, enhancing visitor welcome and experiences, and furthering the transformational mission. A successful DGC President will be a visible, connected, frontline leader in the Houston community. He/She/They will have the unique combination of knowledge, leadership, connections, and capacity to create, maintain, and support DGC’s environmental stewardship of its public spaces. The new President will lead the Board, Staff, Volunteers, and City Partners to further DGC’s financial sustainability and highest aspirations that were envisioned by its Founders.



In 2023 Discovery Green celebrates 15 years and its standing as a “crown jewel” that capitalizes on its creativity, robust community engagement, grass-roots community support, and innovation. For more information, see <https://www.discoverygreen.com>.

RELATIONSHIPS

The President reports to a committed Board of Directors that currently has 18 members. Direct reports include the Finance and Administrative Director, Advancement Director, Operations Director, and Programming Director. There are 24 current staff members.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The President will:

1. **Lead, galvanize and inspire.** The President will lead in aligning the shared vision and mission with the development of strategic growth plans that excite and enlist the staff and Board, partners, volunteers, donors, and supporters. Building on existing strengths, the President will be a catalyst for achieving current and new goals and aspirations. The President will be a grower of relationships, talent, and resources, a communicator, and a thought leader. The President will partner effectively with the Board, leveraging its capacities, and will advance relationships and engagement across Houston.
2. **Achieve growth, expansion, and evolution.** The President will have a record of growing and diversifying resources through philanthropic support, sponsorships, grants, and earned revenue. Through strategic engagement with funders, donors, and the broader community, the President will increase commitment and support for the Park.
3. **Build relationships and profile.** The President will be a compelling external representative who relishes building and deepening relationships with diverse stakeholders. The President will have experience increasing brand awareness and relevance and be an outstanding communicator in all kinds of settings. The President will cultivate effective relationships with leaders in government and throughout the civic, philanthropic, and corporate communities.
4. **Be a great manager of people and the business.** The President will be a leader of people and teams, organizations, and change. The President will be an active listener and builder of shared purpose and a positive culture of collaboration, constructive dialogue, learning, innovation, and fun. The President will have business acumen and ensure that DGC has effective systems and processes. The President will align the Board, staff and partners around priorities and plans that incorporate proven and fresh approaches, technology, resourcing, and measurement.
5. **Create an exciting future for Discovery Green Conservancy.** The President will envision and bring to life the next level of programming, attractions, and visitor experiences. Through strategic acumen, thoughtful innovation, partnership and implementation, the President will lead DGC to embrace a vibrant, sustainable future and continue to thrive as a world-class asset for Houston.



SPECIFIC DUTIES:

Board of Directors

- Support the Board of Directors (BOD), which currently meets six times per year.
- Ensure the Conservancy's work supports its mission and goals.
- Keep the BOD updated concerning financial, legal, and other important issues, including support for the BOD's Finance & Audit Committee.
- Recommend to the BOD an annual budget and operating plan in May of each year.
- Oversee maintenance of official records and documents; ensure compliance with all laws.
- Lead the 2-year planned succession of retiring Directors on behalf of the BOD.

Staff

- Be a motivational leader for a hard-working, diverse staff.
- Assist and guide the Finance and Administrative Director, Advancement Director, Operations Director, and Programming Director in organizing and managing their areas or responsibility.
- Approve all expenditures and monitor costs and income versus the annual budget.
- Ensure staff compliance with Internal Controls.
- Prepare job descriptions, recruit and onboard new personnel and implement regular employee reviews.
- Lead the ongoing development and implementation of Discovery Green University.

Fundraising

- Provide strong leadership and actively participate in fundraising to grow the organization.
- Work with the Advancement Director to create strategies for overall marketing, event sponsorships, charitable contributions, and grants for operating support.
- Ensure fulfillment of philanthropic goals through major gifts, membership, foundation grants, corporate giving, planned giving, special events, and philanthropic programs.
- Facilitate strong connections and collaboration between DGC's fundraising/marketing and programming functions to ensure alignment with overall strategic objectives and resource leverage.

Programming

- Partner closely with the Program Director to ensure innovative programming that will increase access of new communities to the Park and will expand the impact of visits to the Park.
- Assist the Program Director in developing and refining programmatic objectives, which advance key priorities of DGC's three annual programming seasons.
- Provide executive oversight of the development and implementation of projects and initiatives that support programmatic objectives.
- Integrate the lessons learned in programs and the needs of partner organizations into priorities and planning, particularly those related to fund development.

Site Management

- Work with the Operations director to monitor site conditions to minimize injuries and claims.
- Manage the Conservancy's numerous relationships with its insurance providers.
- Review the Conservancy's numerous Operations and Programming agreements to minimize risk and costs, maximize revenue and ensure compliance with the Operating Agreement.
- Monitor the need for adjustments to the Park Rules; proceed per the Operating Agreement.



- Oversee capital improvements' plans and projects including design phase, fundraising phase, implementation, and funding.

Strategic Partners

Houston Downtown Park Corporation (local government organization created by the City; owns the Park and serves in effect as its landlord)

- Assist its BOD with its meetings, which occur 1 -2 times per year.
- Assist with its annual audit.
- Report on the Conservancy's annual budget, operating plan, and audit.
- Seek approval for modifications to Conservancy operations per the Operating Agreement.
- Oversee filing and maintenance of organizational records; ensure compliance with all laws.

Houston First/City of Houston

- Maintain excellent relations with Houston First, which donated half the property used to create the Park and provides \$1,050,000 annually; monitor these funds to ensure they are being properly utilized.
- Ensure the Conservancy complies with its operating agreement requirements.
- Maintain and strengthen the Conservancy's engagement with minority- and women-owned enterprises.

Central Houston and Downtown Redevelopment Authority/TIRZ

- Maintain active engagement with Central Houston and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority/TIRZ (Tax Increment Zone #3) to ensure strong relationships and information flow among organizations integral to downtown development and healthy growth. (Board service on the Downtown TIRZ has been very beneficial to DGC's current President to stay abreast of downtown activities.)

Restaurants, Vendors, and other Tenants

- Monitor restaurant performance to ensure compliance with their operating standard and their license and concession agreement.
- Oversee other earned income contracts as they are implemented, including other vendors or tenants.
- Monitor the operators' payments of rent and reimbursements of Conservancy costs.

Communities of Focus

- Maintain the Conservancy's engagement with its Communities of Focus that evidences its commitment to empower and engage artists, organizations, business and community leaders who identify as, or whose works' primary focus is of, Black, Native/Indigenous, People of Color, women, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+ persons, and older adults.

Outreach

- Be the primary ambassador for both the Conservancy and Discovery Green.
- Actively represent DGC with volunteers, board members, committees, partner organizations, and funders.
- Inspire and motivate partners to champion the mission and priorities of DGC in collaborative projects and in related activities.



- Be a visible spokesperson during ongoing media coverage.
- Lead communications with immediate neighbors, the downtown community & other groups.

PERSONAL ASSETS AND EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate has relevant experience in leadership, management, and growth. A background that includes experience with public/private partnerships, fundraising, programming, organizational leadership, team management and resource growth is ideal. Experience with greenspace and Houston connections are valued. Passion for the mission of Discovery Green Conservancy is essential.

The President will have personal characteristics that include:

- An inspiring, engaging, and welcoming persona.
- High energy, big-picture strategy, and hands-on engagement.
- High emotional intelligence, listening, and relationship-building skills.
- Political acumen that includes knowledge of formal and informal political, social, and organizational structures and relationships.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Confidence and humility as a leader.
- Adaptability, creativity, and resourcefulness.
- Ability to unite, galvanize, lead, delegate, and prioritize.
- Communication, negotiation, media, and presentation skills.
- Team building, coalition building, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills.
- Ability to build consensus, and to make the tough calls.
- Direct and open communication style, intentionally nurturing mutual trust and respect.
- Commitment to mentoring and valuing staff, and to advancing their professional development.
- A sense of humor and desire to foster a fun atmosphere.

The ideal candidate will bring:

- A college degree and a minimum of fifteen years professional experience and five years in the nonprofit sector.
- Experience working with a nonprofit board of directors.
- Experience managing a diverse staff and instituting a culture of continuous improvement and customer service.
- Experience leading a marketing and fundraising effort to grow an organization.
- Minimum of five years' experience overseeing an annual budget of at least \$1,500,000.
- Ability to review accounting reports and work with auditors.
- Ability to review legal agreements with involvement and counsel by outside attorneys.
- Excellent written communication and presentations skills including proficiency with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- Public/private partnership experience.
- Fundraising, significant resource growth and donor cultivation experience that includes ability to "close deals" with major donor prospects.
- Experience developing and delivering programs and initiatives that benefit the Park.
- Experience developing greenspace, or work in similar contexts.



- Desire experience managing a facility that is actively used by the public.
- Desire experience leading a small, entrepreneurial staff that currently has only minimal administrative support.
- Desire experience with the City of Houston.
- Desire experience with landlord-tenant relations.
- Desire experience with high profile, national/worldwide sporting events i.e., Final 4, Super Bowl, World Cup.
- Flexibility in hours with some evening and weekend work.
- A capacity to assume a challenging, multi-functional, and collaborative role that requires participating directly in the execution of all facets of the organization.

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation, including a comprehensive benefits package will be offered based on experience. Relocation assistance will be offered if necessary.

FOR POTENTIAL CONSIDERATION OR TO SUGGEST A PROSPECT

Applicant review is currently underway and will continue until the candidate has been selected. To nominate or be considered for this position, please contact Laura Sorrell at laura@sorrellco.com and 713.854.5351, or Priscilla Plumb at priscilla@sorrellco.com and 281.224.0881. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

Interested candidates should apply by sending a cover letter describing their qualifications that match the position criteria and what they will bring to the role, along with a resume.

ABOUT SORRELL

Sorrell is a highly relational provider of executive recruiting. Our mission is to serve as partners with our clients to accelerate their efforts to attract, hire and retain talent that impacts the future of the organization. For more information, see <https://www.sorrellco.com>.