Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

Director of Operations & Civic Partnerships
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Search conducted by:

www.helblingsearch.com

This document is proprietary and confidential. No part of this document may be disclosed in any manner to a third party without the prior written consent from Helbling & Associates, Inc.
A nonprofit organization, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC) has worked closely with the City of Pittsburgh for 25 years under an official public interest partnership agreement to restore the city’s parks.

To date, PPC has raised more than $130 million for parks and has completed 22 major improvement projects. Currently active in 22 of the city's 165 park sites, the Parks Conservancy has expanded into community and neighborhood parks throughout Pittsburgh.

In 2019, the citizens of Pittsburgh voted for the establishment of a dedicated parks tax to provide additional funding for the maintenance and improvement of the entire park system based on an equitable investment strategy.

The Parks Conservancy mission is to improve quality of life for the people of Pittsburgh by restoring the park system to excellence in partnership with government and the community. Projects and programs are conducted with respect for the environment, historic design, and the needs of the diverse region. The Conservancy aims for wide appreciation and enjoyment of a sustainable park system whose landscapes, facilities, and programming set world standards of excellence.

As a nonprofit organization whose mission is to restore Pittsburgh’s park system to excellence, we are committed to putting equity at the forefront of our work and further our dedication to creating an equitable and inclusive organization and park system.

Together, we must create a park system and organization that truthfully reflects diversity, highlights neighborhoods and communities’ characteristics, creates opportunity, fosters growth, and supports all people’s well-being.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

At one time a hub for heavy industry, Pittsburgh is a vibrant mid-size city that can feel like a small town due to its tapestry of distinctive neighborhoods. Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy’s main office is located in Pittsburgh’s historic South Side within an easy drive of the city’s academic and healthcare center in Oakland and the business and cultural attractions of Downtown.

Pittsburgh has a history of investment in arts and culture dating from the 19th century when industrialists donated public works and endowments to organizations such as Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Opera, and the Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History. The city is also home to the National Aviary and leading regional education centers such as the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh and the Heinz History Center and Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum. Known as “the City of Bridges,” for its 446 bridges, Pittsburgh is also home to 165 parks sites. Pittsburgh is making a name for itself as a hot spot for entrepreneurship and innovation.
The Role

Strategic Initiatives

- **EQUITY** – Adopt a long-term goal of bringing all parks in all city neighborhoods up to a high level of quality. Implement the PPC’s equitable investment strategy—a data-driven methodology guiding investments in maintenance, programming, rehabilitation, and capital projects across the city.
- **ADVOCACY** – In partnership with the City, create broad, enthusiastic public commitment to bring more resources to parks and improve Pittsburgh park system’s ranking among the top 100 cities.
- **GREEN FIRST** – Build green infrastructure into parks, leveraging recreational improvements.
- **SUSTAINABILITY** – Move toward a sustainable organizational revenue model; and maintain and build organizational capacities to support the strategic direction.

Responsibilities / Essential Job Functions

- Supports the mission, vision, and overall advancement of the PPC and provides strategic leadership on all matters related to creating an excellent and inclusive park system.
- Assists in developing the plan for effective, equitable management of the entire park system, using the knowledge, experience, staff, and City partners already in place, and accounting for all the revenues and costs necessary to do so.
- Develops a management plan which views the system as a single inclusive entity even though it is composed of disparate pieces beyond PPC including, but not limited to the Department of Public Works (DPW), Citiparks, and several other non-profit or governmental partners (Tree Pittsburgh, Landforce, Shade Tree Commission, Park Rangers, Greenways, and City Steps).
- Employs expert credentials to present the plan to the public.
- Finds and suggests creative ways for the PPC and the city workforce to complement each other’s work. Helps to identify divisions of labor among relevant parties and PPC to ensure necessary maintenance and improvements are completed.
- Utilizes expert, up-to-date, holistic understanding of parks management, climate change, resilience, equity, horticulture, arboriculture, landscape architecture, restoration of historic landscapes, security, tenant and vendor relationships, and parks programming, among other topics.
- Participates in regularly scheduled meetings or calls with various City departments and continues to build relationships while handling issues that arise in the ordinary course of business. Utilizes intimate knowledge of how non-profits and city government works and draws on in-depth financial experience to work toward PPC goals.
- Manage a capital budget that could include projects from $150,000 on up (the highest budget for a capital project within a park was $19M). Development and management of the PPC Park-based operations budgets to ensure effective allocations and use of resources.
- Acts as an excellent partner and a congenial second-in-command to PPC leadership.
- Able to act as a change agent and use the role as an opportunity for a major breakthrough in the way parks are managed in today’s world. Works enthusiastically to advocate for and implement innovative plans and ideas.
- Knowledge of the zone gardener system developed in Central Park is desirable. Assists in obtaining funding to implement systems where responsibility and authority reside in the same place.

**Reporting Structure**

- Reports to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Direct Reports include:
  - Director of Horticulture and Forestry
  - Director of Visitor Experience
  - Capital Projects Manager
- Key Relationships:
  - Maintains strong inter-departmental communication and workflow at PPC. Encourage unified cooperation on all PPC programs, initiatives, and operations.
  - Maintains relationships with all pertinent City of Pittsburgh departments and employees, partnering nonprofits, and vendors.
Qualifications

- Bachelor’s degree in a related field preferred.
- Has 8 to 10 years of relevant experience.
- Knowledge of laws, regulations, and best practices as they relate to the operations of a park.
- Strong organizational skills, detail-oriented, and the ability to handle multiple priorities.
- Ability to give direction and leadership toward the achievement of the organization’s philosophy, mission, strategy, and its annual goals and objectives.

Helpful Links

- Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy: [pittsburghparks.org](http://pittsburghparks.org)
- Visit Pittsburgh: [visitpittsburgh.com](http://visitpittsburgh.com)
- City of Pittsburgh: [pittsburghpa.gov/](http://pittsburghpa.gov/)
- City Parks Alliance Equity Case Study: [cityparksalliance.org/pittsburgh-parks-for-all](http://cityparksalliance.org/pittsburgh-parks-for-all)

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.

The Search

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is conducting a national search with the assistance of Helbling & Associates ([www.helblingsearch.com](http://www.helblingsearch.com)), an executive search firm specializing in areas of facilities management, construction, engineering, and real estate development.

Please direct questions to:

Mr. Ryan Pugh, Senior Managing Consultant  
E: RyanP@helblingsearch.com  
O: (724) 935-7500 x111  
C: (724) 991-6051

Marc K. Datz, Regional Manager, Midwest  
E: MarcD@helblingsearch.com  
O: (724) 935-7500 x110  
C: (412) 337-3151

About Our Firm

**Helbling & Associates** is a national executive search firm specializing in facilities management; architecture, engineering, and construction; and real estate development roles.

Founded in 1992, we provide a team approach to executive searches, allowing our clients to benefit from our professionals’ combined 250+ years of recruiting experience. We offer the sophistication and resources of a large search firm, while our specialized boutique operation brings a strong client focus, personalized consulting, and the attention to detail that builds long-term partnerships.