

Ella Sharp Museum Job Description Director of Development

Reports To: Executive Director (or Interim Executive Director)

Classification: Full-time, Non-Exempt

Department: Development

Location: 3225 Fourth St. Jackson, MI

Supervises: Department staff, contractors (as assigned), plus interns and volunteers

Works closely with: Board of Directors, Development Committee

Salary range: Administrative Level

About the Ella Sharp Museum

The Ella Sharp Museum, founded in 1965, offers programs, exhibits and experiences preserving community history, advancing art appreciation, and understanding, and connecting children with science. Our campus includes the Hadwin Center with exhibit galleries, program spaces, offices, and a museum store; the Merriman Sharp farmhouse, a one-room schoolhouse, a log cabin, two 19th century barns and other historic structures; and the Hurst Planetarium. Our mission focuses on honoring Ella Sharp's legacy by creating engaging experiences that inspire curiosity, foster learning, and strengthen our connection to the greater community.

About This Position

The Director of Development plays a vital role in supporting the Ella Sharp Museum. The Director of Development leads fundraising and outward facing storytelling for Ella Sharp Museum. This role builds strong relationships with donors, sponsors, members, and community partners while also guiding the museum's communications, marketing, and public presence. You will create clear fundraising plans, grow revenue, and work closely with the Communications Coordinator to ensure our writing is strong, consistent, and tied to impact. This position requires a dynamic, collaborative leader who is passionate about visitor experience, community engagement, and long-term sustainability for the museum. Work hours are primarily 9–5, with evenings and weekends as needed for programs and events.

Key Responsibilities

Grants: Research, Writing, and Reporting

- Identify, research, and track grant opportunities that align with museum priorities, including operating support, programs, exhibits, collections, education, access, and capital needs.

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- Build and maintain a grant calendar with deadlines, requirements, reporting dates, and internal content needs.
- Lead the grant writing process from concept through submission, including drafting narratives, gathering supporting materials.
- Work closely with the Communications Coordinator to strengthen the storytelling, clarity, and consistency of grant narratives, impact statements, and supporting communications.
- Manage post award requirements including reporting, outcomes tracking, and funder communications to ensure strong stewardship and compliance.
- Build a culture of stewardship with timely acknowledgements, meaningful updates, and donor centered experiences.

Fundraising Leadership

- Create and manage an annual development plan that includes goals, timelines, and strategies for contributed revenue.
- Grow major gifts through donor identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, in partnership with the Executive Director and Development Committee.
- Lead annual giving efforts including appeals, donor communications, and giving campaigns.
- Develop and maintain corporate sponsorship packages and relationships for events and museum priorities.
- Support membership fundraising strategy and donor renewal efforts in coordination with visitor services and museum leadership.
- Partner with the Executive Director on long range fundraising strategy, special initiatives, and campaign readiness.

Events and Community Engagement Support

- Support fundraising and donor engagement events by coordinating messaging, invitations, sponsor recognition, and follow up.
- Collaborate with events staff to align sponsorship goals, event marketing plans, and sponsor benefits delivery.
- Represent the museum in the community through meetings, tours, and partner engagement.

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Desired Qualifications:

- High school diploma required; associate or bachelor preferred; 2+ years relevant experience.
- Customer Service Excellence: Strong skills in engaging in and serving visitors with professional demeanor.
- Detail-Oriented: Ability to work independently and in a team with keen attention to detail and professional attitude.
- Capable of prioritizing and managing multiple activities simultaneously.
- Organizational Skills: Strong ability to prioritize and organize projects and assignments.
- Experience writing grants, sponsorship proposals, or donor-facing communications.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills particularly in consumer-facing content.
- Customer-first mindset with a passion for creating memorable community moments.
- Ability to work effectively in a team setting within the department and collaborate across the organization.
- Ability to work with internal and external partners.
- Must pass background check.

This position requires the ability to do one or more of the following throughout the day: stand, walk, sit, bend, reach above and below shoulder level, and lift/carry 50 lbs. The position involves frequent repetitive motion (keyboard entry, credit card machine.). The noise level in the work environment is variable and unpredictable, ranging from quiet to loud with frequent interruptions. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. All job applicants receive equal consideration for employment.