

Ella Sharp Museum Job Description Director of Curatorial Affairs

Reports to: Executive Director

Supervises: Curator of Education, Collections Associate
contract employees, volunteers, department interns

Classification: Full time, Exempt

Department: Curatorial Affairs

Location: 3225 Fourth St. Jackson, MI

About Ella Sharp Museum

Founded in 1965, Ella Sharp Museum offers programs, exhibitions, and experiences that preserve community history, advance art appreciation and understanding, connect children with science, and, through Cell Block 7 Museum, explore Jackson's prison history.

Our 10 acre campus includes the Hadwin Center with exhibit galleries, program spaces, offices, and a museum store, as well as the Merriman Sharp farmhouse, one room schoolhouse, log cabin, barn, other historic structures, and the Hurst Planetarium. Ella Sharp Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is one of only 38 accredited institutions in the state of Michigan.

About the Position

The Director of Curatorial Affairs reports to the Executive Director and leads the development, planning, and execution of the museum's exhibition and collections work. This position oversees exhibition operations, supports the care and interpretation of the museum's collections and historic structures, and supervises curatorial staff, interns, volunteers, and contract support. The Director of Curatorial Affairs works closely with other departments to ensure exhibitions, collections care, and interpretation align with the museum's mission and serve the community in meaningful ways.

This job description is not intended to be a complete list of all duties and responsibilities and may include other duties as assigned.

Key Responsibilities

Exhibitions and Interpretation

- Develop and maintain an exhibition schedule that reflects and supports the museum's mission, vision, and values across art, history, and science
- Oversee the development and design of in house exhibitions, including research, writing, content development, design, and production
- Work with the Executive Director and exhibition companies to bring in traveling exhibitions
- Lead the production, installation, and deinstallation of exhibitions in coordination with vendors, contractors, and museum staff
- Maintain galleries and exhibition spaces, including rotating objects on display, keeping signage current, and ensuring exhibits are presented professionally
- Work closely with the Curator of Education on exhibit related interpretation and programming
- Collaborate with the Director of Facilities on spatial layout, presentation, environmental conditions, and exhibit maintenance across galleries, outbuildings, and grounds

Ella Sharp Museum Job Description Director of Curatorial Affairs

- Represent the museum and the Curatorial Affairs department through tours, public programs, media opportunities, and community engagement

Collections Management and Planning

- Chair the Collections Committee
- Develop and maintain the Collections Policy and Collections Plan in collaboration with the Collections Committee and curatorial staff
- Oversee the handling, storage, movement, and documentation of collection objects in accordance with museum best practices
- Administer and oversee incoming and outgoing object loans
- Work with the Director of Facilities to support proper collections care, including preventive conservation and climate considerations
- Administer the collections portion of the museum's Emergency and Disaster Plan in accordance with AAM standards
- Support the interpretation and care of the museum's historic outbuildings and related collections

Administration and Leadership

- Help shape museum strategy and policy as part of the Executive Team
- Develop and manage the curatorial department budget in collaboration with the Executive Director
- Maintain department files and records, including contracts, condition reports, movement records, shipping logistics, and exhibition documentation
- Build and maintain strong relationships with donors, artists, community partners, collectors, professional colleagues, and other stakeholders
- Assist the Director of Development and Communications with exhibit related fundraising and grant support
- Supervise contract employees, interns, and volunteers working on exhibitions and collections projects
- Perform other duties as assigned

Desired Qualifications

- Master's degree in museum studies or a related field
- Minimum of five years of experience in a museum setting
- Experience in exhibition development, production, and scheduling
- Knowledge of standard museum procedures and best practices, especially in object handling, interpretation, and collections care
- Knowledge of exhibition design practices and current museum trends
- Ability to work collaboratively across departments to support exhibition production and installation
- Strong written, verbal, organizational, and project management skills
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office, including Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook
- Experience with PastPerfect or similar collections management software preferred
- Knowledge of Adobe design software preferred

Ella Sharp Museum Job Description Director of Curatorial Affairs

- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with staff, volunteers, visitors, donors, collectors, professional colleagues, and community members
- Ability to work flexible hours, including mornings, evenings, and weekends as needed

Desired Qualifications:

- Master's Degree in Museum studies or related field, a minimum of 5+ years work experience in a museum setting.
- Experience in exhibition production and ability to plan exhibition production schedule.
- Work with other departments to fulfill exhibition production and installation/strike.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, Power Point, and Outlook) and knowledge of Adobe Design Software preferred.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Possess knowledge of standard museum procedures and best practices, with an emphasis on object handling and interpretation. Knowledge of museum exhibition design field and current trends.
- Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, visitors, volunteers, donors, collectors, professional colleagues, and other members of the museum community.
- Be able to work flexible hours including mornings, evenings, and weekends as needed.

While performing the duties of this job the employee is regularly required to sit, stand, and walk. The employee is frequently required to reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl. The employee is frequently required to lift up to 50 pounds.