Executive Director Job Description

Location: 3225 4th St. Jackson, MI 49203
Classification: Full-time/Salaried
Reports to: Board of Trustees

About us: The Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History is a beloved community asset, home to art, history, and culture located in Jackson, Michigan. With a history dating back to 1965, the institution is the culmination of the final wishes of Ella W. Merriman Sharp (1857-1912), who gifted her home and farm to the City of Jackson in her final will and testament. Renovations funded by the Jackson Junior Welfare League converted Ella's lifelong home from a living space into a museum showcasing the lives of the Merriman and Sharp families in addition to life in the Victorian Era. The campus's thriving evolution over time grew to include 11 buildings on six acres. An expansion in the 1980s saw the addition of the Mildred I. Hadwin Center, which houses seven galleries featuring changing art, history, and science exhibits. Ella Sharp Museum is home to Jackson County's largest collection of local historical artifacts containing tens of thousands of objects. The museum holds numerous festivals and events that are treasured by the entire community, hosts private weddings, parties, and meetings, and aims to be a hub of art, history, and culture to our community at large. Ella Sharp Museum is funded through generous community donors, sponsorships, grants, rental income, and endowment funds. The museum has been an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums since 1978, one of the first small museums in the country to receive such distinction.

Our Mission: We honor Ella Sharp's legacy by creating engaging experiences that inspire curiosity, foster learning, and strengthen our connection to the greater community

Our Vision: A community enriched through accessible and transformative experiences in the arts, and history.

Our Values:

Education: The Museum creates meaningful learning centered, challenging, and thought-provoking educational experiences for people of all ages through history and art expositions.
Community Focus: The Museum is welcoming and accessible. It honors the diversity of its community by providing exhibits and programs that represent the range of experiences and perspectives within the community and society.

Stewardship: The Museum upholds the highest standards of ethics, honesty, effectiveness, and accountability. It is efficient in its operations, holding material and financial resources for the benefit of the community.
Innovation: The Museum encourages creativity and freedom to explore, in both its public programs and its internal operations.
Inspiration: The Museum impacts lives by providing an exciting, adaptable, and uplifting place to work and to visit. Mutual respect and support are hallmarks of its environment.

About the role: The Executive Director is the driving force behind the mission and vision of the museum, is the key leader to the staff, and works hand-in-hand with the Board of Trustees to ensure effective operations, financial resource management, and long-term health of the organization. They often work outside of traditional nine-to-five hours Monday-Friday as needed to ensure the museum mission and values are realized.

We are seeking an individual who demonstrates the following qualities and experience:

- A strong passion for the mission and vision of the Ella Sharp Museum.
- The ability to trust, empower, and inspire museum staff.
- Demonstrated success in nonprofit fundraising across multiple revenue streams.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, coupled with a willingness to listen to challenges and feedback.
- Authenticity and integrity in leadership.
- Proven experience and success in the museum and/or non-profit field.
- A commitment to becoming actively involved in building relationships within the Jackson community.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Represent the Ella Sharp Museum confidently and consistently by participating in civil, cultural, educational, and business activities within the organization and community.
- Build relationships beyond the museum's campus and be visible as an accessible point of contact.
- Lead the museum's decisions around exhibitions, educational programing, fundraising, partnerships, and spending.
- Lead staff by setting clear expectations, addressing performance concerns swiftly, and holding team accountable for work that advances the museum's mission.
- Work constructively with the Board of Trustees to provide candid information and carry out agreed priorities while keeping mission, resources, and organizational capacity front and center.
- Oversee operational budget and manage efforts to secure charitable support, grants, and foundation funding.

Selection Criteria

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited educational institution
- Minimum of five years demonstrated effective leadership experience in a similar or related role in a non-profit organization.
- Successful experience in fundraising, relationship building, program development, organizational growth, strategic planning, community outreach and working effectively with a Board of Directors.
- Authentic, relationship-oriented leader with connections, or ability to quickly create connections, throughout the community.
- Experience in effective budget planning, development and execution, working collaboratively with staff and Board of Directors.
- Experience in collaboratively setting organizational and personal leadership goals including strategic plans for growth, financial vitality and sustainability of the Museum.
- Possesses exceptional ethical standards reflecting integrity, transparency, accountability, respect, responsibility, and openness.
- Skilled communicator both within the organization and to external stakeholders in the broad region served by the Museum.
- Ability to attract volunteers, donors, exhibits, collections and expand the Museum's services to individuals in our area.
- Ability to recruit, develop and retain an effective team focused on the mission of the Ella Sharp Museum
- Data-driven, research-based decision maker with a positive focus on the full potential of the Ella Sharp Museum.

Salary Range and Employment Benefits:

Salary dependent on qualifications, including performance bonus based on demonstrated results. Minimum salary will be $85,000. Benefits provided. Flexible work schedules based on Museum needs outside traditional working hours.

All candidates interviewed will have background checks and references reviewed.

Application Procedure:

Additional information about the Ella Sharp Museum is available at www.ellasharpmuseum.org.

Qualified applicants may apply by submitting a current resume, an application letter that addresses the following: "*What draws you to this position, and why is this opportunity meaningful to you? How would you contribute to the museum's growth, impact, and long-term success*." Please include 3 letters of recommendation and at least names of four different individuals to serve as references. One individual should be a current or recent board member that you have worked with during your career; and one individual should be a current or recent employee. Please include name, email and cell phone for each reference. Send all information to esclandt@gmail.com.

Completed applications must be received by 5:00 December 4, 2026. No "hard copies" or fax copies will be accepted. If requested by the candidate, materials will be treated confidentially through the screening process. Candidate names will become public at the time an interview is scheduled.

Questions can be directed to Tony Hollow at (517) 937-0958 or Linda Brian at (517) 812-7327.