

Bennington Museum
Art • History • Innovation

Date: July 2019

Renowned regional museum of art and history seeks an Executive Director
Job Description: **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Bennington Museum – Executive Director 07/16/2019

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Organization

Presenting the finest collection of art and historical artifacts from Vermont, eastern New York, and northwestern Massachusetts, Bennington Museum's mission is to engage and transform visitors and the community by connecting them to the region's diverse arts, rich history, and culture of innovation. Set on 10 acres of property, the 23,500-square-foot museum is complemented by the Hadwen Woods and George Aiken Wildflower Trail. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums since 1983, Bennington Museum offers nationally recognized and critically acclaimed exhibitions, galleries, and events. The permanent collection, with more than 45,000 objects, includes the famous Bennington Flag, the renowned 1863 Jane Stickle Quilt, and a 1924 Martin Wasp Touring Car. In addition to its defining collection of nineteenth-century Bennington stoneware, the museum has the largest public collection of paintings by American folk artist Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses. Bennington Museum's Research Library is the region's most comprehensive genealogical and biographical resource on New England families dating back to the 1700s. It also details the history of Vermont and the surrounding areas. Open to students, researchers, and the public, the library's vast archive features more than 8,000 published books, with particular emphasis on documents not found online, including vital records, newspapers, and other primary sources.

Bennington Museum also offers various school programs that complement and support classroom instruction. Through close examination of primary sources and engaging hands-on experiences, the museum's educational programs support teachers' goals by sparking curiosity, promoting critical and creative thinking, and encouraging communication among peers. Additionally, the museum features the Grandma Moses Schoolhouse, which includes an interactive family center.

Focused on the future, the museum's vision statement highlights five key areas: engagement, innovation, community, quality, and fiscal sustainability. In 2018 Bennington Museum embarked on a strategic and master planning initiative that will transform the museum through a comprehensive capital campaign. Bennington Museum has a staff of eight full-time and five part-time employees. It is governed by a 16-member board of trustees led by Chair Consie West. Bennington Museum has endowment funds totaling \$3.1 million. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, total reported revenue was more than \$1 million, with \$536,240 from contributions and grants and \$287,226 from program service revenue. Total reported expenses were \$1.1 million.

Community

Bennington is part of a cultural region straddling the Massachusetts-Vermont-New York border, with Bennington County (Vermont) sitting directly atop Berkshire County (Massachusetts) to the south and Rensselaer and Washington Counties (New York) to the east. Bennington Museum belongs to a partnership of local cultural institutions known as ArtCounty, which includes the Clark Art Institute, Mass MoCA, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Williams College Museum of Art.

Bennington is the sixth largest municipality in the state, with a population of 15,000 people. It is rich in history, arts, culture, and extraordinary natural beauty. Chartered in 1749 with Vermont's first town grant, Bennington encompasses three areas—Old Bennington, North Bennington, and Downtown Bennington. The Battle of Bennington, which took place in 1777 during the Revolutionary War, is honored with the Bennington Battle Monument, Vermont's most popular historic site. Poet Robert Frost is buried in the Bennington Center Cemetery, adjacent to the Bennington Museum grounds.

This classic New England town has a long history of manufacturing and craftsmanship, specifically wood processing, pottery, iron, and textiles. As the manufacturing boom tapered off, other economic drivers surfaced. Today, health care, education, agricultural-related businesses, and tourism all play a vital role in Bennington's economy. Southwestern Vermont Medical Center is the town's largest employer and the seventh largest in Vermont.

Because Bennington is situated on the western edge of the Green Mountains in Southwest Vermont, nature takes center stage. There is excellent hiking, including a section of the Taconic Range and the Appalachian Trail. Bennington presents a unique mix of small-town charm with sophisticated attractions. With a cost of living 4 percent below the national average, Bennington offers highly desirable amenities while remaining affordable. The historic downtown offers theater, fine dining, galleries, and retail stores. There are community workspaces and concerts offered year-round by the Bennington County Choral Society, Sage City Symphony, Green Mountain Youth Orchestra, Vermont Arts Exchange, Taconic Music's summer festival, and Manchester Music Festival. Bennington is also home to the progressive Bennington College and a branch of the Community College of Vermont. Of late, Bennington has consistently been named among the most vibrant art communities in the country. Sources: bennington.com; visitvermont.com; usnews.com; forbes.com; artcountry.org; bennington.edu

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) will be a broad-thinking, goal- and people-oriented executive who values community engagement and leads with a clear sense of purpose and direction. As the face of the organization, the ED will further elevate the museum as a cultural and educational resource and tourist destination across Bennington and the tri-state area. Reporting to the board of trustees, the ED will have day-to-day oversight of all museum operations, with an active presence. This individual will ensure widely held museum best practices are followed in the care and stewardship of collections and in all matters related to board governance and financial management, as appropriate for an accredited museum. The ED will be an engaged member of the local community and work to maximize community partnerships with the museum. This individual will work in partnership with the board to cultivate relationships and financial resources while educating, engaging, and energizing the board in its role as fundraisers, policymakers, and community ambassadors. This individual will build a culture of teamwork, open communication, innovation, and commitment to the history, culture, diversity, and traditions of Bennington, Vermont, and the surrounding region.

Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership and Administration

Develop and foster an internal culture that maintains the highest standards for visitor experience and for fiscal, operational, and organizational stability.

Oversee all day-to-day operations and programming by directing administrative personnel and developing strategies, procedures, and goals that will grow program areas and benefit the museum and community as a whole.

Build a collaborative, positive-thinking team that understands accountabilities and achieves goals.

Ensure the preparation and monitoring of monthly reporting of the annual budget, expense policies, and cash management; manage cash flow; and regularly present appropriate balance sheets, income statements, and other financial oversight tools for board review.

Lead program and marketing efforts to diversify membership and attendance.

Initiate and maintain effective communication with and between board members, staff, and volunteers.

Participate in local, regional, and national industry meetings and organizations to share and implement current best practices and industry standards with staff.

Ensure the necessary organizational structure, policies, systems controls, and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

Revenue Enhancement and Community Engagement

Serve as the chief fundraiser for the institution, working collaboratively with the board and staff to achieve operational and strategic revenue goals.

Lead staff and board in development activities, maintain strong relationships with the funding community, and develop effective donor stewardship and cultivation methods with the board and staff.

Develop, steward, and maintain appropriate strategic partnerships throughout the community to enhance the museum's reputation, brand, relevancy, and standing locally and regionally in support of its mission, vision, and strategic goals.

Governance and Strategic Visioning

Provide support to best utilize the board's talents and resources and work closely with board members to develop a strategy that effectively mobilizes and utilizes volunteers in support of the museum's vision and its programs.

Oversee and drive strategic planning and implementation, including the management of the organization's human, capital, and financial resources.

Partner with the board in prospect identification, cultivation, recruitment, and orientation of new board members.

Assist board committees in developing and implementing goals and objectives for the museum.

Collections Stewardship, Exhibition, and Program Planning

Maintain the sound and responsible management of the collection, library, and archives, including legal, social, and ethical obligations to provide proper care.

Support the development, management, and care of the permanent collection in collaboration with the curatorial staff and collections committee.

Seek opportunities to develop and strengthen exhibitions and programs through partnerships with other arts and culture organizations, collectors, and educational institutions.

Establish a diverse exhibitions program that supports the museum's vision and operational goals.

Traits and Characteristics

The ED will be a dynamic and resourceful leader who values teamwork and collaboration with others. An active member of the community, this individual will be people-oriented and will appreciate others' skills, experience, and input in formulating plans and achieving successful outcomes. The ED will bring a balance of professional expertise, credibility, interpersonal skills, and commitment to internal and external stakeholder satisfaction, along with a strong capacity for self-management and the highest levels of personal accountability and integrity. Versatile and tenacious, this individual will be an intellectually curious, innovative, and harmonious professional with a proven track record of success.

Other key competencies include:

Leadership – The adeptness to organize and motivate others to accomplish goals while creating a sense of order, direction, and active participation among a variety of stakeholders.

Self-Management and Personal Accountability – The capacity to prioritize and complete tasks necessary to meet or exceed the agreed upon expectations of the role and to assume accountability for personal actions.

Planning and Organizing – The aptitude to set and prioritize relevant, realistic, and attainable goals and objectives, to anticipate effects, outcomes, and risks, and to manage resources according to set priorities.

Interpersonal Skills – The ability to build rapport, demonstrate a sincere interest in others, and effectively communicate and relate well to people.

Diplomacy and Tact – The commitment to demonstrate respect for others, treat others fairly regardless of personal biases or beliefs, and maintain positive relationships.

Resiliency – The agility to quickly recover from adversity or setbacks and move past obstacles without delay.

Qualifications

A master's degree (or equivalent education in art, history, or American studies) is required. Seven to 10 years of related experience within a museum, arts, educational or historical organization, with at least five years at a senior leadership level with supervision responsibilities, is necessary. Candidates must possess a passion for community outreach and resource development as well as knowledge of museum management, best practices, and standards.

Compensation and Benefits

Bennington Museum provides competitive compensation for an organization of its size and a standard benefits package, including health insurance, paid time off, paid holidays, and the quality of life offered by the beautiful Shires of Vermont.

Applications and Inquiries

Please submit a letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred) to:



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Bennington Museum is an equal opportunity employer and celebrates diversity in all forms.