Executive Director

*This is a general description, and the duties and qualifications may vary depending on the museum’s specific needs. It’s always a good idea to tailor the position description to fit your museum's unique requirements.*

Position: Executive Director, CEO, President & CEO

Reports To: Chair, Board of Directors

Potential Staff Reporting to this Position: Deputy Director, Executive Assistant, Business Manager, Collections Manager, Curator, Director of Development/Development Manager, Director of Education, Human Resources Manager, Marketing Manager

Job Description

The executive director is responsible for the museum's overall leadership and strategic guidance to achieve its mission. This includes fundraising, enhancing stakeholder relationships, managing executive staff, the museum’s fiscal health, and overall operations.

Responsibilities:

1. Strategic Leadership: Developing and implementing strategic plans that meet the museum's mission and vision. These plans help define the institution's overall direction and goals, ensuring they align with its mission and values.
2. Financial Management: Overseeing the organization's financial status, including developing long and short-range financial plans, monitoring the budget, and ensuring sound financial controls are in place.
3. Fundraising & Development: Developing and executing a comprehensive fundraising plan, including individual giving, corporate sponsorship, and grant writing.
4. Team Leadership: Managing a small to mid-sized staff, promoting a high-performance culture and continuous improvement that values learning and a commitment to quality.
5. Community Engagement: Acting as the face of the museum in the community, working closely with other local organizations, stakeholders, and the media to ensure its place in the community is recognized and appreciated.
6. Risk Management: Overseeing adherence to legal compliance, ethical standards, financial sustainability/stability, and property maintenance. In general, protecting the museum and ensuring a positive reputation.

Qualifications:

* Proven experience in a leadership role in a similar organization.
* Strong financial management and fundraising skills.
* Excellent communication and public speaking skills.
* Passion for art, culture, and education.
* A college degree in management or another field is desirable.

(Note: Some museums include a statement under the qualifications section encouraging all to apply to incentivize a more diverse set of candidates. Here is an example from the Adventure Science Center in Nashville, TN, “While we’ve listed our ideal qualifications, we value individual competence, experience, and enthusiasm for our mission. We encourage all who think they are a good match for the role to apply.”)

# Skills

Consider the following set of essential skills that museum executive directors need. Even without direct experience in a similar position, someone with these skills could accomplish the tasks by leveraging the following:

1. Leadership: Inspiring and motivating a team, setting clear goals, and making informed decisions.
2. Critical Thinking: Managing budgets, analyzing financial data, and optimizing resources for sustainable growth. Fundraising and developing strategic initiatives to generate funding and support organizational growth.
3. Interpersonal Skills: Relationship building, a deep understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, histories, and artistic expressions, the ability to positively represent an organization, and effective engagement with the media and public.
4. Collaboration & Communication: Working collaboratively, listening to others, understanding complex documents and reports, and communicating needs and directions clearly.
5. Adaptability & Innovation: Working in ambiguous or changing situations and with diverse individuals or groups.
6. Change Management: Adapting and altering plans and/or processes to operate effectively in a potentially volatile environment.
7. Organizational Awareness: Understanding and using the workings, structures, climate, and culture to achieve results.
8. Problem-Solving: Persevering and proactively dealing with situations and issues, seizing opportunities that arise. Identifying underlying issues inherent in problems and proposing positive solutions. Analyzing systems and structures and proposing alternatives to improve processes.
9. Time Management: Developing and implementing strategic plans to guide growth and development.

*Adapted from the Alberta Museum Association’s* [*Competencies for Museum Leadership*](https://www.museums.ab.ca/media/20383/competencies_for_museum_leadership__full_.pdf)