



Director, Heritage Preservation

Position Description

Minnesota Historical Society
Director, Heritage Preservation
Saint Paul, MN
www.mnhs.org

“The Minnesota Historical Society preserves Minnesota's past, shares our state's stories and connects people with history in meaningful ways, for today and for tomorrow.”

About The Minnesota Historical Society

From a clifftop lighthouse overlooking Lake Superior to sacred rock carvings over 7,000 years old, from the largest remaining prehistoric structure in the Upper Midwest to a modern museum with interactive exhibits for the whole family, the Minnesota Historical Society welcomes over 1 million people to its 26 historic sites and museums every year.

The Minnesota Historical Society was founded by the territorial legislature in 1849, almost a decade before Minnesota statehood. No other U.S. territory or state created a historical society so rapidly, helping make the Minnesota Historical Society not only the largest state history organization in the nation, but the oldest cultural institution in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Historical Society preserves and protects the objects, documents, places, and buildings that make Minnesota home. Today, MNHS boasts a collection of nearly 550,000 books, 37,000 maps, 250,000 photographs, 225,000 historical artifacts, 950,000 archaeological items, and 6,000 works of art. In addition, the MNHS Press publishes books on the history and culture of Minnesota and the Upper Midwest with the goal of advancing research, supporting education, and sharing diverse perspectives on Minnesota history.

There is no other cultural institution like it in the world. The Minnesota Historical Society, according to Dr. Ford Bell, the President of American Alliance of Museums, “has achieved the highest recognition in the world for the quality of its care of collections, its public service, its financial management, its outreach to the community.”

Programs. Collections. Preservation. Archeology. Publishing. Education. The Minnesota Historical Society is all this and more.

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Position Summary

MNHS is seeking an experienced and innovative Director, Heritage Preservation skilled at overseeing preservation and outreach programs, collaborative and thoughtful as a, and creative in their stewardship of history and culture.

Reporting to the Deputy Director, Preservation and Outreach, the Director, Heritage Preservation is responsible for supporting local history services, grants administration, and archaeology staff, at MNHS. The Heritage Preservation department encompasses State History Services, which supports the creation and development of sustainable, history-based partnerships throughout the state; and the Grants Office, which provides financial support for projects focused on preserving Minnesota's history and culture. The Archaeology department works on MNHS sites as well as on sites across the state through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Essential Functions

1. Provide the vision and leadership for the development and implementation of the Minnesota Historical Society's Heritage Preservation units, programs, and initiatives.

- a. Create and implement long- and short-range financial, programmatic, and operational plans.
- b. Evaluate department resources, objectives and results; make changes where necessary to meet MNHS priorities both operationally and culturally.
- c. Work collaboratively and think creatively to solve department challenges and seize opportunities.
- d. Oversee the Local History Services (LHS) unit, providing support and guidance in building capacity within local history organizations throughout the state.
- e. Oversee the Grants Office work unit, providing support and guidance in administering state grants-in-aid programs to support history and historic preservation projects statewide.
- f. Oversee the Archaeology unit, providing support and guidance in administering, directing, and undertaking professional scientific work in the field of archaeology and anthropology.
- g. Foster creativity and innovation in the development of programs and long-range plans.

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Essential Functions, Continued

h. As a member of the Management Team, works collaboratively to shape the institutional program vision, develop and monitor organizational and departmental priorities, and effectively manage institutional resources.

i. Participate in professional community associations, professional trade associations, and represent MNHS and/or the department at openings, annual meetings, and other programs, delivering remarks when appropriate.

j. Work with elected officials as necessary, and promptly report all contact to the MNHS legislative team.

2. Provide leadership for the development and integration of Heritage Preservation programs and services across the Minnesota Historical Society network, serving local, regional, and national constituents.

a. Work with Heritage Preservation leadership team to oversee the implementation of the established program goals and objectives of the division within the communities being served.

b. Establish strong relationships with community partners and program representatives.

c. Support the research and resource development for programs and community outreach.

d. Monitor and make adjustments to unit goals and objectives to align with the MNHS mission and strategic priorities.

3. Provide management oversight to MNHS Heritage Preservation leadership team.

a. Work with unit managers to ensure the effective development and implementation of programs to meet goals and budget requirements.

b. Work with unit managers to develop annual/biennial budgets.

c. Provide consistent and productive supervision to each unit manager, which includes regular performance feedback, coaching, work direction, and professional development.

d. Support unit managers in their work with local communities and organizations, so that communities act as advocates of MNHS's resources and users of its programs.

4. Represent MNHS as a member of professional organizations and as a spokesperson, and contribute to the advancement of the fields of preservation, education, and public history.

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Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor of Arts degree in history, historic preservation, urban and regional planning, law or a related field with specialized courses in historic preservation, plus eight years program management experience or equivalent OR an advanced degree plus six years program management experience or equivalent.
- Experience and ability in personnel management and supervision.
- Management experience, and leadership qualities in formulating objectives, setting priorities, and planning.
- Flexibility and versatility in judgment, analysis, and organizational ability to develop, coordinate, and manage a wide variety of projects and procedures.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills to negotiate, mediate and collaborate with a wide variety of people with a diverse range of knowledge and skills and diverse backgrounds, education and interests.
- Demonstrated ability to work on a team and lead others toward a common goal.
- Demonstrated ability to think imaginatively and problem solve.
- Demonstrated positive customer service skills.
- Ability to work together with a broad range of constituencies including visitors, schools, donors, trustees, researchers, historic site and museum professionals, local tribal communities, state and local government officials, and the general public.
- Thorough knowledge of and the ability to manage the process of long- and short-range program and financial planning.
- Experience in managing large, multiple, complex projects through periods of growth, reduction, and change.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing, and to speak effectively to both large and small groups; able to respectfully translate professional jargon to.
- Experience creating networks and connections among a widely dispersed staff and within local communities.
- Working knowledge of federal historic preservation programs.
- General knowledge and experience in the field of grants administration.
- General knowledge of archaeological practices and principals.
- General knowledge and experience with the administration of nonprofit organizations.
- Willingness to travel and work evenings and weekends, as needed.

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Desired Qualifications

- Advanced degree in history, historic preservation, urban and regional planning, law, or related field with specialized coursework in historic preservation, land use development, or environmental protection.
- Demonstrated experience consulting with local Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and the Indian Affairs Intertribal Council (MIAC).
- Meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in one of the following disciplines: historical architecture, history or architectural history.
- Extensive knowledge of state and federal laws and regulations relating to historic preservation and the larger environmental review process within which these laws function.
- Extensive experience in developing and administering complex programs involving grants and tax credits.
- Knowledge of Minnesota history and/or prehistory.

Scope and Opportunity

This is a unique leadership role that will require a character with an innovative, collaborative mindset and strategic imagination. The ideal candidate will use the support of the committed Local History Service and Legacy Grants teams, the vision of leadership and their broad range of expertise in history and preservation, to implement operational objectives that align with MNHS's mission. In this role the candidate will head up a department that works to support many diverse communities, and people in the state who are working to further the history of Minnesota. This person will have intimate access to Minnesota's libraries, collections, museums, exhibits, and historic sites. For the right candidate, this role can expand with their own leadership skills and vision.

This represents an opportunity to join a storied cultural institution with a 170 year-old mission that is considered by many to be the gold standard of historical societies and history museums in the world. If you believe in the power of history to transform lives, then there truly is no other place like the Minnesota Historical Society.

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Compensation

Compensation for the Director, Heritage Preservation includes a competitive base salary commensurate with experience and an excellent package of employee benefits.

To Apply

MNHS has retained the services of ThinkingAhead Executive Search. Interested applicants should send a resume and statement of interest to Jonathan McIntosh, Partner: jmcintosh@thinkingahead.com and Heather Campbell, Recruiter: hcampbell@thinkingahead.com.

Our Commitment to Inclusion and Diversity

At MNHS, we don't just accept difference — we celebrate it, we support it, and we thrive on diversity for the benefit of our employees, our products and services, and our community. The Minnesota Historical Society believes that an inclusive culture among our team members is critical to our success as a historical society and museum, and we seek to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool. The Minnesota Historical Society is proud to be an equal opportunity workplace and employer.

Contact Information

Jonathan McIntosh

Partner

ThinkingAhead Executive Search

T: 615-391-2650

E: jmcintosh@thinkingahead.com

Heather Campbell

Recruiter

ThinkingAhead Executive Search

T: 615-316-7089

E: hcampbell@thinkingahead.com