

Job Description: Executive Director (Staff)

About the Organization

Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center (KTM&HC) is a beautiful four-acre historic site and history museum located on Ridgefield, Connecticut's scenic Main Street. It features five historically significant buildings, including a colonial tavern built around 1713 that is known nationally for the British cannonball lodged in its walls during the 1777 Battle of Ridgefield (Connecticut's only inland battle during the American Revolution).

Widely recognized for its thoughtful interpretation of local, site-specific history from the eighteenth through early-twentieth centuries, KTM&HC engages audiences in critical thinking by connecting to larger themes in U.S. history as well as contemporary issues.

Anchoring the southern edge of Ridgefield's Cultural District and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, KTM&HC benefits from strong community relationships and acts as an economic driver for the region, with about 10,000 visitors annually. Its school programs serve more than 2,000 students annually (and growing), and community events such as "Ghosts of Ridgefield," "Music at the Museum," "#HandsOnHistory" and the town's annual July 4th gathering attract robust local and regional audiences.

This is an exciting and critical time for the organization with several major anniversaries on the horizon: the 60th anniversary of the museum's incorporation and America250 this year, followed by the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Ridgefield in 2027. These upcoming milestones present unique and compelling opportunities to further deepen engagement with the community and ensure the financial stability of the museum.

Leveraging these anniversaries will be essential to achieving long-term sustainability, especially given the current challenging climate for museums, history, and education. To this end, increasing fundraising capacity is a priority to ensure lasting financial stability and mission fulfillment.

Mission: KTM&HC preserves and interprets our site's historic buildings, robust collections, and diverse stories, creating a space for ongoing learning and open dialogue about how the events of the past connect to the present and shape our future.

Vision: We strive to be a trusted and dynamic center of learning, committed to building the narrative about our site's – and the nation's – history. We aim to promote engagement, curiosity, and critical thinking about the varied experiences that have shaped, and continue to shape, our communities.

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) is responsible for the overall leadership of the organization, shaping and executing KTM&HC's strategic vision in consultation with the Board of Directors. The ED ensures that the organization's financial, operational, administrative, and strategic infrastructure provides a solid foundation for KTM&HC to continue delivering on its important mission. This position reports to KTM&HC's Board of Directors.

The ideal candidate is a visionary and engaging leader with a deep passion for museums and history, possessing a strong background in nonprofit administration and a proven record in fundraising and development.

The ED must be collaborative and capable of building relationships built on trust and respect with staff, donors, community leaders, and the Board. This person will demonstrate proven success in managing and inspiring cross-functional teams, driving a culture of continuous improvement, and maintaining a positive, collaborative, and transparent organizational culture.

The ED will work with the Board and a seasoned professional staff to refine and execute an existing five-year strategic plan. Leading development efforts, fundraising, grant writing, and capital campaigns, the ED will ensure the museum's fiscal health through sound budgeting, oversight, and reporting, demonstrating financial fluency and deep knowledge of fiduciary obligations.

The ED will serve as a thought leader and advocate for history relevance on both a local and national level, expanding KTM&HC's visibility and reach. This leader will represent KTM&HC in the broader community, cultivating partnerships with peer organizations, civic groups, and the tourism sector.

Key Priorities

- **Financial Stability and Growth:** Stabilize finances and significantly increase earned and contributed revenue. Help close budget gaps by identifying ways to reduce expenses.
- **Organizational Alignment and Trust:** Build and sustain strong trust, respect, and transparency with staff and the Board of Directors.
- **External Relations and Engagement:** Cultivate and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, including community leaders, strategic partners, funders, and major donors.
- **Strategic Planning:** Work with the Board and staff leadership to ensure implementation of existing five-year strategic plan and refine and update as needed.

Other Responsibilities and Expectations

Working closely with the Board of Directors and staff, the ED is responsible for:

Leadership

- **Vision and Mentorship:** Maintain, support, and inspire a high-performing team, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and excellence. Serve as an inspiring, accessible, and supportive leader, promoting an inclusive organizational culture that attracts, retains, and motivates an exceptionally talented team.
- **Board Relations:** Maintain a collaborative and productive relationship with the Board. Assist the Board in its operations, administration, planning, information dissemination, and implementation of all goals and policies.
- **Community Partnerships:** Develop and maintain strong relationships with community organizations, schools, and other cultural institutions.
- **Professional Development:** Participate in educational activities and museum associations to keep abreast of the latest developments in small museum and historic house management.
- **Culture** – Foster an inclusive and accessible environment that welcomes diverse perspectives and backgrounds, and makes staff, volunteers, visitors, and collaborators feel valued, respected, and empowered.

Strategic Planning and Financial Management

- **Defining Organizational Goals:** With the Board president and Executive Committee, create long-term, short-term, and annual goals, ensuring objectives are measurable and that progress is actively tracked to ensure accountability and strategic alignment.
- **Budget Development and Administration:** Work with the Treasurer and Finance Committee to develop and implement an annual budget (capital and operating) to ensure financial sustainability. Oversee the organization's financial structure, ensuring adequate and sound funding for the purpose, mission, and goals of the museum.

Fundraising

- **Leadership and Oversight:** Lead all fundraising efforts, including gala, annual appeals, grants, major gift and capital campaigns, and corporate sponsorships. With the Board and staff leadership, identify and implement compelling special events and programs that broaden

awareness of the museum to new and existing audiences, and which provide platforms for new sources of revenue and fundraising.

- **Donor Relations:** Work with the Development Director and Board to cultivate relationships with existing and new donors, foundations, and corporate partners.
- **Leverage Milestones:** Capitalize on opportunities surrounding America 250, Battle of Ridgefield 250, and KTM&HC's 60th anniversary to maximize awareness and financial support for the museum and its programs.
- **Revenue Streams:** Encourage and enable staff leadership to grow key revenue streams including facility rentals, memberships, admission fees, etc.

Operations and Administration

- **Staff Management** – Ensure staff is aligned with the museum's mission and strategic goals, and that they have the resources and clear direction needed to be successful. Encourage and support recruitment, training and empowerment of skilled volunteers who can augment staff resources on key initiatives.
- **Communications** – Serve as primary point of contact for the museum with community leaders, Board members and key donors. Build awareness for the museum by serving as an expert to media and researchers on historical events or trends related to the Keeler property. Ensure the development and implementation of marketing strategies that increase public awareness and engagement.
- **Preservation and Maintenance** – Work with the curatorial staff and Board committees to prioritize and ensure upkeep of the museum's grounds and historic properties.

Experience, Attributes, and Qualifications

The ideal candidate brings a combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities for successful performance. Typical qualifications include:

- Three to five years of senior leadership or executive experience in a nonprofit cultural or educational organization (or similar institution), including Board relations, nonprofit governance best practices, and committee engagement.
- Successful experience overseeing and managing the administrative, financial, and operational responsibilities of a museum, nonprofit, or similar organization

- Extensive fundraising experience, including success with major donors, grants, and sponsorships.
- A warm, diplomatic, and collaborative leadership style, with a history of fostering a positive, collaborative, and inclusive work environment. Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a team and with a diverse group of individuals.
- The ability to influence key stakeholders, negotiate outcomes, maintain composure under stressful situations, and engage in self-evaluation for professional growth.
- Ability to approach issues and problems with flexibility and unique approaches, openness to different perspectives, and a solutions-oriented mindset.
- Excellent organization and time management skills, including the ability to manage multiple simultaneous projects and conflicting constraints.
- Deep passion for history and a strong commitment to the museum's mission.
- Advanced degree in history, museum studies, business administration, or related fields.

Terms of Employment & Compensation

Work Location: In person at Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center, 152 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut

Job Type: Full-time, Monday to Friday. Weekends and evenings as needed

Annual Salary: \$75,000 - \$90,000

How to Apply

To apply for the Executive Director position, please submit:

- A **cover letter** expressing interest in the position and giving brief examples of past related experience.
- A **résumé** with a summary of accomplishments.
- The names and contact information for **three professional references**

Please submit applications here: jobs@keelertavernmuseum.org