



Position Guide

***Ruth and Hartley Barker Director
Wisconsin Historical Society***

Madison, Wisconsin





POSITION: Ruth and Hartley Barker Director

REPORTS TO: Board of Curators

LOCATION: Madison, WI

Background/Introduction

The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), Wisconsin's functional memory and premier storyteller, is one of the nation's largest, most active, and most diversified historical societies with world-class collections. It was founded in 1846, two years before Wisconsin became a state, and is the oldest publicly funded historical society in the United States. Over its more than 170 years, the Society has been a trusted source of historical information.

The WHS's mission is to connect people to the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories. By providing a powerful connection to the past, the Society encourages everyone to learn from earlier generations. The WHS shares its staff, collections, and services in ways that captivate and respect its diverse audiences.

The Society's vision is to enrich and transform lives through unparalleled access to history. The WHS wants Wisconsinites to find themselves as part of the state's story. By immersing the public in the lives of Wisconsin people past and present, the Society hopes to invite people to participate in conversations that connect the past to the most vital issues of the present and future.

The WHS's values are centered on the belief that increasing the public's knowledge of history has profound societal, cultural, and economic benefit.

The Society is seeking applications for a new Director to lead this dynamic organization. The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society is the chief executive officer for the organization and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the 36-member governing Board of Curators. The Director has full authority and accountability for the judicious management of the Society, including its collections and interpretive programs as well as its financial and human resources. She/he will interact with the Board's Chair and Executive Committee on a regular basis to review progress toward achieving stated goals and objectives and, in general, will keep members of the Board informed.

About the Wisconsin Historical Society



The Society is a state agency, membership organization and public, nonprofit institution. As a state agency, the WHS's state funding and permanent position authority is set by the legislature through the state budget process. Wisconsin Department of Administration divisions regulate the management of key functions including human resources, finance and facilities. The WHS is unique from other state agencies in several ways. First, it is governed by a Board of Curators, which appoints the Society's director. Second, the WHS has statutory authority to contract with private, 501(c)(3) organizations. Third, a significant percentage of the WHS's budget (approximately 41%) is supported by gifts, grants, and earned income.

The WHS has 131 permanent/unclassified/project employees, 221 project/part-time positions, 159 seasonal LTEs and 110 work study students. It also is supported by the work of 250 volunteers – the largest volunteer staff of any state agency.

The FY17 operating budget for the Society is approximately \$26 million with \$15.4 million (59%) coming from the state. Other funding sources include earned revenue (\$6.4 million – 24%), contributions (\$1.5 million – 6%), endowment funds (\$1.4 million – 6%) and federal funds (\$1.3 million – 5%).

The WHS is supported by the private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit Wisconsin Historical Foundation. In addition to raising over \$4 million annually in direct support for the Society's programs and initiatives, the Foundation administers the WHS membership program that presently numbers 11,500, and houses the Society's marketing department.

The Society's programs include:

- A major national research and genealogical library and archives that includes the largest collection in the United States focused on the history of North America; one of the nation's premier collections of published and unpublished materials for researching family lineage and history; as well as one of the world's major archives of research materials related to the entertainment industry owned by the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research. Over 360,000 guests visit the Library-Archives headquarters in Madison and 13 Area Research Centers across the state annually.

- A network of 12 historic sites and museums throughout Wisconsin that attract over 300,000 visitors annually including Old World Wisconsin, featuring over 60 historic structures that help to bring early immigrant experiences and agricultural traditions to life at the nation's largest outdoor living history museum dedicated to rural life; Villa Louis, a beautifully restored mansion on the Mississippi River which



documents adventure and entrepreneurship on Wisconsin's early western frontier; Wade House Stagecoach Inn and the Wesley W. Jung Carriage Museum, which preserve 19th century life at an important transportation crossroads; and Circus World Museum, which contains the largest collection of circus history material in the world.

- A statewide historic preservation program that facilitated over \$250 million in construction and 4,551 jobs in 2016 by approving historic rehabilitation projects for homeowners and historic income-producing properties through the Society's Historic Preservation Tax Credit programs. The office works with individuals, companies, and developers to educate, provide technical assistance, and facilitate the historic rehabilitation of homes and commercial buildings through state and federal income tax credits; educates the public and landowners about Wisconsin's historic and prehistoric past and identifies, documents, and protects the state's archaeological heritage; facilitates the listing of historic properties in the State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places; administers state and federal laws that protect and preserve burial sites, Native American mounds, and other places where human remains are buried; and protects over 700 Wisconsin shipwrecks through a major underwater archaeology program.



- A statewide program of publications, school services and local history that includes over 400 history-related programs annually; historical exhibits, which travel the state and are seen by more than 475,000 people; Wisconsin's participation in National History Day drawing over 10,000 students annually from 150 schools; the Wisconsin Historical Society Press that publishes award-winning books

about Wisconsin history and culture and the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, a quarterly publication that presents stories and images of the people and places of Wisconsin's past; and the Society's field services office that provides statewide advice and support for the work of 395 affiliated local historical societies around Wisconsin.

Key Opportunities/Challenges

The Society is at an exciting point in its history. A dynamic strategic plan has been completed and is being implemented. With two major new facilities underway, the new director will be asked to lead a number of key initiatives for the Society. They include:

- Moving to a new \$46.7 million State Archives Preservation Facility (SAPF) – This 188,000 square foot facility will offer state-of-the art environmental and physical security for Wisconsin's most important historical and cultural resources. Construction of the facility will be complete in late 2017. The new director will need to oversee the move of collections which span over 11 miles of shelving during 2018 in a project that is likely to take a year to complete.
- Constructing a new \$90-110 million historical museum on the Capitol Square in Madison to replace the existing state museum – This project is the Society's top strategic priority. The WHS has conducted extensive research and planning for the new museum over the last ten years and has launched a capital campaign to secure \$50 million in private monies to support the project. The new director will need to help lead this capital campaign and ensure its success.

- Transforming the Society and positioning the organization strategically for the 21st century – The two new buildings will be cornerstones as the Society transforms its operations. The WHS will be able to build stronger partnerships throughout the state and collect more important stories about local people and communities for the state museum. The



Society also plans to take more educational programs around the state to larger audiences, advance a stronger statewide dialogue about the importance of history and engage the public in a vibrant discussion about "What Makes Wisconsin, Wisconsin." The new director will have the opportunity to lead and shape this exciting transformation.

Role of the Director

The Director is the CEO of the Society and is accountable to its Board of Curators. The Director answers to all of the Society's stakeholders who have a wide spectrum of interests and expectations. Success requires clarity of vision clearly articulated in plans that optimize the Society's full resource capacity.

The Society's strategic plan for 2016-2019 anticipates the future. Achievement of the components set forth below depends on the Director's leadership and personal commitment.

1. **Creating a world class Museum.** The Society's current strategic plan calls for replacing the Society's aging museum on Madison's Capital Square with a new museum to provide a modern and relevant institution that will provide an awareness of history and that will resonate throughout the state. This effort is based on the Society's extensive legacy of state and national collections that uniquely tell stories and provide guidance for the future. As previously mentioned, visitor experience, program, development, and operational planning for the new museum is well underway. The realization of this project depends on a successful campaign for public and private support.
2. **Increasing statewide impact.** This initiative reflects a national trend that history should move beyond academic collecting and archiving to embrace public or popular history for the entire State. This new focus is on meaningful offerings that reflect widely diverse presentations and content. The goal is a broadened sense of ownership by the public and a greater recognition of the value of history to everyone.
3. **Securing long-term financial viability.** The Society is only as strong as its financial base. The State Legislature is its largest donor, followed by individual and corporate gifts and earned income. All donors and income sources require ongoing and focused attention to engender greater appreciation of the Society's social and economic contribution and strengthen belief in its future role. Long term financial viability is now a more crucial demand for leadership that ever before in the Society's 170 year history.
4. **Establishing improved standards for 21st Century preservation.** The Society undertakes many State-mandated functions such as maintaining legal archives and managing historic preservation tax credits. Preservation is a growth business, and requires entrepreneurial expertise and the application of modern technology and procedures.
5. **Implementing a new operating model.** State mandates are accelerating in their complexity, and citizens now demand fulfillment of their personal expectations. Changes in administrative structure and improved service delivery are essential to the society's organizational health. This transformation is in midstream in 2017, successfully led by the Society's COO and senior staff.

Qualifications

The future Society Director must have a passion for history and be its champion everywhere. The new director's qualities must enhance the Director's position, burnish the Society's reputation and enhance the Society's legacy to Wisconsin and to the nation.

Candidates for the position of Director should (1) possess personal strength and purpose to aggressively lead a complex organization, yet delegate with trust; (2) respect, honor and inspire donors and staff; (3) maximize government and citizen support and participation; and (4) continue to hold high the Society's national prestige and influence.



Desirable Traits and Characteristics

The table below provides an overview of special attributes important in a future Director. No applicant will satisfy all, and they are not presented as criteria. In addition to the management skills and experiences that are implicit in the CEO designation, these qualities inform the current search process.

<u>Donor Development</u>	<u>Government Relations</u>	<u>State-Wide Role</u>	<u>Staff Expectations</u>	<u>Peer Positioning</u>
Ability to create, cultivate and maintain key donor relationships	Ability to relate effectively with elected and appointed officials	Outward focused as the "face" of the WHS & WHF	Embraces WHS vision, mission, and strategic initiatives	Ability to generate external relations to benefit WHS
Comfort with key role of asking for support in conjunction with WHF	Able to articulate social value of WHS to state and national officeholders	Commitment to "public/popular" history as a top priority	Values diversity in broadest sense; honors respect for all	Leads "public/popular" history development among peers
Entrepreneurial; ability to convey vision and "big picture" with an audience/donor focus	Recognition of emerging importance of "public/popular" history with future WHS base	Believes that everyone's history matters; exudes charisma and expands focus	Delegates authority with confidence; listens and values input	Acceptable academic credential in history or a relevant field; active historian, museum CEO etc.
Can manage donor wishes and requests	Can maintain good academic relationships	A great story teller	Makes it fun to work at WHS/WHF and supports employee & organizational health	Values continued national recognition

Photos:

Cover Page: Headquarters Building 2015, Madison, WI

Pg. 3: Staff on the Steps

Page 4 Top: Wade House with Carriage, Greenbush, WI

Page 4 Bottom: Old World Wisconsin – 1860 Schulz (German) Farm, Eagle, WI

Page 5: Frank Lloyd Wright Exhibit Reception, Madison, WI

Page 7 Top: Black Point Estate, Lake Geneva, WI

Page 7 Bottom: Mi- Museum - Stockade

Location

Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, is a progressive, cosmopolitan city of over 240,000 people, located in south central Wisconsin, 80 miles west of Milwaukee, 145 miles from Chicago and 270 miles from the Twin Cities. Built on an isthmus between lakes Monona and Mendota, with beautiful glacial lakes and over 200 parks, Madison is renowned for its beautiful scenery in all four seasons. Madison is located in Dane County, which has 35 lakes in 1,200 square miles.



Madison is consistently ranked in national surveys as one of the best places to live and one of the healthiest cities in the United States.

Madison is home to many first-rate educational institutions, such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Edgewood College, Madison College, and the Madison Metropolitan School District. UW-Madison ranks in the top 10 in national research spending and is one of only three public universities to produce the most Fortune 500 CEOs.



Parks and lakes provide an abundance of year-round outdoor activities, including hiking, swimming, sailing, fishing and cross-country skiing. Greater Madison is praised in national surveys as one of the best places in the U.S. for biking. The city

has a wide variety of awarding-winning restaurants and offers outstanding healthcare facilities.

State Street is a pedestrian mall lined with eclectic specialty shops, restaurants and outdoor cafes. It links the UW-Madison campus with the Capitol Square. The Dane County Farmers' Market, one of the best in the country, features over 150 local vendors every Saturday from April to November on the Capitol Square.

The arts flourish in Madison, and include the Forward Theater, Madison Opera, and the Madison Symphony Orchestra, as well as many touring productions and performances. The Overture Center for the Arts, a \$205 million performing arts center, brings artists from all over the world to Madison. The \$60 million Kohl Center is used for University of Wisconsin

basketball and hockey games, concerts, and other events. Besides the WHS Museum, the city features the Chazen Museum of Art, the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, the Madison Children’s Museum, the Madison Science Museum and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

Madison is accessible via several major highways, including three interstates (I-39, I-90 and I-94). Dane County Regional Airport, located minutes from downtown Madison, offers more than 95 arrivals and departures daily including nonstop service to Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Newark, New York, Orlando, Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C.

Applications and nominations for the position of Director for the Wisconsin Historical Society are being received by Kittleman & Associates, LLC. To apply, please visit <http://www.kittlemansearch.com/wisconsin-historical-society/>

For more information about the Wisconsin Historical Society, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.

