Director of Special Events
National Museum of American History

The Star-Spangled Banner, Abraham Lincoln’s pocket watch, Ben Franklin’s suit, the First Ladies’ dresses, the Ruby Slippers—these are just a few of the more than 1.8 million objects collected and cared-for by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History (NMAH). As the only museum dedicated to telling the entire story of America’s history, the museum uses its collections, its staff and its programs to help visitors explore what it means to be American. For more information about the museum visit http://www.americanhistory.si.edu

NMAH invites you to be part of an exciting physical and programmatic transformation happening at the Museum. NMAH’s Office of External Affairs has an opening for an experienced and dynamic Director of Special Events to lead the Museum’s efforts to develop, plan, market and execute a wide variety of special events both for internal and external stakeholders and produce a stream of unrestricted revenue for the Museum. These events include receptions and dinners for corporate and individual clients as well as internal events such as exhibition openings, donation ceremonies, staff receptions and donor cultivation events. This position reports to the Associate Director for External Affairs and serves as a department head within the External Affairs division.

Major Duties

- Supervising and developing performance standards for an office of two, full-time professionals and a regular rotation of student interns; managing outside event planners on occasion
- Responsible for ensuring the office achieves its annual revenue goal—currently approx. $600K net per year
- Ensures Museum is well-marketed to potential clients
- Serves as the lead for several high-profile internal events including Board dinners and meetings, (3x per yr.), the Philanthropy Initiative symposium, exhibition/floor openings, Food History Gala, Great Americans Medal presentation and interview, donation ceremonies and others.
- Serves as chief protocol officer for Museum
- Maintains department budget and records of past and current events. Develops and manages budgets for major internal events and identifies, solicits and negotiates contracts with outside vendors for events.
- Develops Museum policies when necessary and ensures all SI and Museum policies are followed; reviews all event materials including invitations and briefing materials, for accuracy and compliance with Smithsonian protocol.
- Oversees composition of copy for invitations, printed programs and other related materials, tailored to each event while remaining within Smithsonian/Museum guidelines.
- Develops invitation lists, issues invitations, and manages responses. Provides guest lists and briefing materials to Smithsonian officials. Advances Museum Director at most events.
- Conducts walk-throughs to market Museum spaces as well as with clients, caterers and other vendors as required.
- Serves as liaison between Smithsonian Enterprises (Smithsonian Theaters and Restaurant Associates) for all evening programming.
- Maintains museum calendar and ensures all senior leadership and unit directors are informed of events taking place in the Museum. Attends the majority of events to greet donors, officials, clients and supervise/troubleshoot as required.

Qualifications

- Minimum of a Bachelor’s degree plus 5-7 years of increasingly responsible positions in managing special events or a Master’s degree and 4-5 years of experience.
- Experience in supervision of staff.
- Experience planning events in a museum or other cultural institution is preferred.
- Knowledge of protocol and use of discretion to ensure Smithsonian and donor expectations are met.
- Frequently work must be performed under conditions of pressure with short deadlines where accuracy is imperative. Incumbent must be flexible in changing work patterns, undertaking new assignments, and quickly dealing with changing situations.
- Familiarity with Smithsonian procedures and guidelines in fundraising, communications and marketing, and special events is preferred.
- The ability to work collegially with staff across the museum at all levels and in all departments.
- The incumbent’s work requires walking, long periods of standing, and the carrying of items such as linens, papers and books. Work is performed in an office and Museum environment.
- Must be able to work long hours including early mornings, late nights and weekends.

The Smithsonian Institution is a unique complex of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research centers. The Smithsonian is a national and world treasure and is dedicated to its founding mission, “the increase and diffusion of knowledge.” Its exhibitions, programs, collections, and outreach touch the lives of millions of Americans every year, as well as many who visit us from abroad.

The Smithsonian Institution offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive package of benefits. This is not a federal position but has similar requirements and benefits. The salary commensurate with the IS-13/14 level ($99,172 –$117,191) and an excellent benefits package. Interested candidates should submit their resumes and a cover letter to ostaffing@si.edu by May 24, 2019.

*The Smithsonian Institution is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.*