

CURATORIAL SUPERVISOR

Assistant Director, Guest Experience OLD WORLD WISCONSIN

Position Summary

Under the general direction of the Director, this position performs important work developing and managing interpretive and educational programming that comprise the core Old World Wisconsin (OWW) guest experience. This is a senior level management position at OWW. The person in this position serves as a member of the OWW leadership team and meets regularly with the OWW Director, Assistant Director, Operations, and Assistant Director, and Guest Services to make key strategic decisions.

The position supervises a year-round team consisting of a Historic Farmer (Historic Agriculture and Transportation Coordinator), Curator (Curator of Collections) and full-time limited term employees (LTE) consisting of a Historic Gardener, a Foodways and Crafts Coordinator, a School and Youth Programs Coordinator and a Historic Clothing Coordinator. All are members of the year-round team responsible for core history experiences at OWW. The Assistant Director also supervises approximately 100 part-time, seasonal LTE frontline interpreters to facilitate learning experiences for the various audiences served by OWW.

The incumbent has primary responsibility for planning, developing, implementing and evaluating engaging and interactive experiences for over 75,000 guests each year. These experiences encompass a mix of informal learning theory and best practices in entertainment to immerse guest in compelling stories that create lasting memories and inspire curiosity about Wisconsin's past. H/she has primary responsibility for training, monitoring, supervising and evaluating the performance of as many as forty frontline staff members per day and works with them to design and implement a daily menu of guest experiences that meet the needs of a variety of audiences - school groups, families, adults and special interest groups. These experiences must address the different ways in which people learn, embracing constructivist educational theory that in learning the focus needs to be on the learner, not on the subject to be learned.

This position works with the OWW Director and others to apply Wisconsin Historical Society collections policies to design immersive and interactive learning environments and supervises the OWW Curator to manage the use of these artifacts and reproductions as part of the guest experience. S/he also works with the Assistant Director, Operations, maintenance staff and others to maintain and preserve historic structures that provide the settings for the guest experience. The incumbent works closely with the Assistant Director and Operations to integrate theatrical programming into the guest experience.

The person occupying this position participates as a member of the Division of Museums and Historic Sites interpretation planning and experience design teams to strengthen interpretation and enhance the guest experience at all WHS historic sites and museums.

GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES

20% A. Hires, supervises, dismisses and administrates all staff working as part of the OWW Guest Experience Team.

- A. 1. Responsible for interviewing and hiring full-time permanent and LTE staff, ensuring that all administrative procedures are complied with and that relevant paperwork is completed. As the need arises incumbent is responsible for discipline of staff up to and including dismissal.
- A. 2. Responsible for scheduling staff, monitoring hours worked, and payroll submissions. The incumbent shall conduct annual staff evaluations of personnel and delegate responsibility among staff so as to maximize efficiencies and make most effective use of staff resources. To this end the incumbent must develop clear lines of communication within the Department and clearly define staff duties and responsibilities.
- A. 3. Responsible for developing Departmental budgets and effectively monitoring budget so as to maintain fiscal responsibility within the parameters established by the budget or any subsequent directive issued by the Director, Division administrator or the Society.

40% B. Supervise, develop, implement and manage daily interpretive programs.

- B. 1. Work with OWW staff, consultants, interns and others to base all historical environments, exhibits and programs on scholarly research. This includes but is not limited to original and secondary written materials, iconographic research, and oral interviews with persons knowledgeable about a particular building, the activities that went on in and around the building, the family history of the occupants, and group documentation.
- B.2. Develop and revise interpretive programs, exhibits and programs plans based on current educational theory, best practices, guest research and the master plan.
- B.3. Design, implement and supervise guest engagement activities associated with each publicly-accessible building, whether staffed or unstaffed, that reflect relevant time period, ethnic group and identified stories.
- B.4. Apply WHS collections policies to designing immersive and interactive learning environments and supervises the site Curator to manage the use of these artifacts and reproductions as part of the guest experience.
- B.5. Design, implement and supervise appropriate food and craft demonstrations and participatory activities for selected buildings with an emphasis on hands-on engagement and time period, ethnicity, socio-economic level, and seasonal considerations.
- B.6. Supervises a part-time LTE position to maintain an inventory of approximately 1,000 period clothing items and ensure proper care and use of reproduction clothing and accessories worn by interpretive staff. Supervises the research, design and fabricating of period clothing/costumes for new programs and exhibits. Supervises the effective and efficient use of available storage and fabrication resources in the ITF and elsewhere provided for historic clothing construction and

maintenance.

- B.7. Provide oversight and analysis to assure the authenticity of period environments and landscapes on the grounds while emphasizing guest safety and accessibility.
- B.8. Supervise the LTE Historic Gardener to maintain gardens that accurately reflect the ethnicity and time period interpreted at each site. Work with this staff member, interpreters and volunteers to maintain the gardens and integrate gardening activities and garden landscapes as a key component of the OWW guest experience.
- B.9. Supervise and the FTE Historic Agriculture and Transportation Coordinator to integrate period farming activities and animal encounters as a key component of the OWW guest experience. Supervise the expansion of horse-drawn transportation as a consistent component of the guest experience and source of revenue.
- B.11. Provide expert advice on the design and creation of non-staffed immersive environments and story-based exhibits in selected locations.
- B.12. Supervise purchase of groceries, crafts supplies, clothing materials, and other operational supplies necessary for interpretive programs according to budget and WHS purchasing policies and procedures .
- B.13. Work with Assistant Director, Food and Beverage Manager and Museum Store Manager to integrate food, beverage and retail opportunities in ways that enhance not distract from the history immersion experience.

10% C. Supervise, develop and implement special events.

- C. 1. Works with the Director and others to propose and develop an annual calendar of on-site special events including celebrations, workshops, performances, and interpretation of historic and seasonal themes.
- C.2. Supervise the solicitation of knowledgeable individuals and groups, such as Civil War re-enactors or folklife performers, for OWW special events. Develop special programs in cooperation with such individuals or groups, providing them with necessary documentation and orienting them to OWW policies and program goals.
- C.3. Monitor performance of all LTE staff, volunteers and contracted performers to ensure adherence to OWW's high standards for friendly and engaging guest service and historically accurate experiences.
- C.4. Develop interpretive plans to justify and guide each special event.
- C.5. Supervise the planning of all special events and supervise the requisition of necessary supplies and services to support special events.
- C.6. Supervise the creation of detailed planners for interpretive events and coordinate involvement of other museum sections through planners, memos, staff meetings, and personal contacts.
- C.7. Partner with WHS marketing staff to promote special events and develop printed orientation materials for each special event.
- C.8. Supervise special event activities on the date(s) of the event or assign this duty to another member of the special event team.
- C.9. Assist Director and foundation staff members in soliciting grants

and sponsorships to fund special events.

10% D. Supervise, develop and revise educational programs.

- D. 1. Develop, revise, and oversee educational programs that incorporate accepted learning theory for school and other educational groups.
- D.2. In consultation with representatives from area schools, develop, revise, and supervise educational programs for scope and sequence of subject matter.
- D.3. Supervise, develop, revise, and supervise educational programs with clearly stated desired learner outcomes and suggested educational methodologies to achieve those outcomes.
- D.4. Develop, revise, and supervise educational programs which incorporate a variety of access points for people with different learning styles, including active participation, passive observation, and abstract analysis.

10% E. Organize Staff training and monitor quality of the guest experience.

- E.1. In consultation with the Director, develop and implement a staff training program for interpreters which emphasizes customer service and engagement skills first and historical content second.
- E.2. Develop and implement specialized training for Lead Interpreters that includes sessions in oversight and leadership skills.
- E.3. Prepare and update staff manuals.
- E.4. Monitor performance of all interpretive staff to ensure adherence to OWW's high standards for friendly and engaging guest service and historically accurate experiences.
- E.5. Prepare written performance standards for Interpreter and Lead Interpreter positions.
- E.7. Ensure that all LTE interpreters are evaluated on performance at least once a year.
- E.8. Embrace best practices in training from all types of visitor attractions and apply when applicable to OWW.

10% F. Contribute to WHS Interpretation Planning/Experience Design projects.

- F.1. Regularly participates as a member of project teams assigned to update and improve interpretation plans, goals and objects at WHS sites and museums.
- F.2. Frequently serves on experience design teams to create engaging ways to connect the public with the stories we tell at Wisconsin state historic sites and museums.
- F.3. Remains current on best practices in informal learning and the visitor attractions industry and applies this knowledge to planning and design projects.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

1. Embraces a guest-centric philosophy and an ability to design and adjust programming based on feedback and evaluation.
2. Works well as part of a team and possesses significant experience in the supervision of others to meet established goals and objectives while working within a team environment.
3. Expert knowledge in designing and implementing living history programming, interactive and role-play experiences and theatrical performance.
4. Knowledgeable of best practices in experience design and operations among all types of attractions where informal learning takes place.
5. Expert knowledge of historic site operations.
6. Excellent research skills.
7. Knowledge of Midwest rural history and the craft, domestic and farm skills associated with regional and ethnic life in the past.
8. Ability to lead, supervise and coordinate the work of a large team of FTE, LTE and volunteers required to staff a complex special event.
9. Effective skills in oral, written, and interpersonal communications.
10. Thorough knowledge of accepted curriculum development and learning theory and the ability to apply these concepts to programming for school-aged children.
11. Thorough knowledge of material culture and its connections to cultural history, and the ability to build these elements into an interpretive program.
12. Understanding of collections management practices in a living history museum setting and ability to supervise staff to care for artifacts according to professional standards and WHS policies.
13. Effective computer skills, including word processing and spread-sheet programs, to facilitate personal productivity and the preparation of professional-looking documents.
14. Ability to teach and train FTE and LTE staff in the duties and responsibilities associated with experience facilitation and historical resource management.
15. Knowledge of personnel principles as they relate to overseeing the work of seasonal interpretive staff.
16. Ability to effectively manage a departmental budget.
17. Ability to travel independently throughout OWW, the State and the Midwest.
18. Ability to legally operate a motor vehicle on the grounds of Old World Wisconsin.
19. Able to legally operate a motor vehicle from the Wisconsin Department of Administration State Fleet.