

POSITION PROFILE**Director**

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services
and Smithsonian Affiliations (SITES | Affiliations)

Washington, DC





The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service | Smithsonian Affiliations (SITES | Affiliations) brings Smithsonian content, resources, and expertise to people across the nation in collaboration with museums and cultural organizations. The Smithsonian seeks a collaborative, strategic, inspiring Director to lead SITES | Affiliations into its next stage of transformative impact.

ABOUT THE SMITHSONIAN

The Smithsonian Institution is the world’s largest museum, education, and research complex, with 21 museums, three cultural centers, 21 libraries and archives, six research centers, six education centers, and the National Zoo, considered “units” of the Smithsonian—shaping the future by preserving heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing resources with the world.

The Institution was founded in 1846 with funds from the Englishman James Smithson (1765–1829) according to his wishes “under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge.” Congress delegated the authority and responsibilities of the United States to the Smithsonian Board of Regents, initially comprising fifteen members. The Board of Regents now has seventeen members: The Chief Justice, the Vice President, three members of the Senate, three members of the House of Representatives, and nine citizen members appointed by Joint Resolution of Congress.

To read “Smithsonian 2027: Our Shared Future,” the Institution’s Strategic Plan, [follow this link](#).





ABOUT SITES | AFFILIATIONS – THE SMITHSONIAN’S PATHWAY TO COMMUNITIES

SITES | Affiliations deepens the reach and impact of the Smithsonian beyond Washington, DC, by bringing its high-quality content, resources, and expertise to people across the nation in collaboration with communities, museums, education ecosystems, and cultural organizations. SITES supports learning and engagement through traveling exhibits and related digital experiences that foster dialogue and connect Americans to a more inclusive and holistic understanding of a shared experience through history, art, culture, and science. One of its signature programs, Museum on Main Street, partners with state humanities councils to share the Smithsonian with rural and underserved populaces across America by focusing on place-based storytelling. Smithsonian Affiliations creates long-term relationships with Affiliate museums and other cultural and educational organizations by coordinating a range of opportunities such as scholarly initiatives, public programs, educational resources, professional development, and collaboration across the Institution and with fellow Affiliates.

This outreach and engagement reaches 36 million visitors at Affiliate organizations and 4.5 million visitors via traveling exhibitions, through approximately 215 Affiliates and 1700 host communities. The program includes approximately 175 public programs involving Smithsonian researchers and 45 temporary exhibitions involving Smithsonian loans at Affiliate museums annually and traveling exhibitions of all sizes and in all disciplines with approximately 30-40 traveling exhibitions in circulation each year. SITES | Affiliations brings over 70 years of history as a trusted partner in supporting and enriching communities.

To learn more about SITES | Affiliations, [follow this link](#).





THE OPPORTUNITY

The Smithsonian Institution seeks a collaborative, strategic Director to lead SITES | Affiliations. This role is a cornerstone in extending the reach and impact of the Smithsonian’s vast resources and expertise to diverse audiences across the United States. SITES | Affiliations connects the Smithsonian with audiences and communities which may not have the opportunity to access the nation’s museum complex in Washington, DC. The Director will be pivotal in shaping the vision, planning, and execution of SITES | Affiliations’ mission, ensuring high standards of excellence in traveling exhibitions, rural initiatives, public programs, and collaborations with a wide array of museums, cultural, and educational organizations. They also will lead a process of renaming/rebranding the unit, to increase its national profile and to reflect and foster greater collaboration among the team members.

In this role, the Director will lead a dedicated team of approximately 55 staff members and interns, fellows, and contractors, managing an annual budget of \$13 million from federal, trust, gifts, and grant sources. The successful candidate will provide strategic leadership and direction, setting unit goals and policies, and overseeing all aspects of SITES | Affiliations’ diverse operations. This includes coordinating with the SITES | Affiliations advisory board, enhancing collaborations within the Smithsonian and with external partners, and ensuring with the unit’s advisory board the highest quality of offerings to reach communities across the nation.





The Director will spearhead significant outreach and engagement efforts, developing and maintaining relationships with community leaders, educational institutions, and cultural entities. The Director will lead and inspire team members around a unifying vision of SITES | Affiliations as a critical point of connection providing access to all Smithsonian museums, their teams, and the vast collections they steward, developing innovative approaches to leverage those resources for a nationwide audience. They will champion efforts to reach underserved audiences, promote cultural diversity, and support the delivery of impactful traveling exhibitions and programs. This leadership position involves active fundraising, budget management, and advocacy, representing SITES | Affiliations to various stakeholders, including members of Congress and the broader public.

Reporting to the Smithsonian’s Under Secretary for Education, this role presents a unique opportunity to make a significant impact on the nation’s cultural and educational landscape, enriching the lives of millions and advancing the Smithsonian’s mission nationwide. This Director will have the opportunity to advance Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III’s goal of ensuring that the Smithsonian is truly the Nation’s Museum.





CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate for Director of SITES | Affiliations will be a transformative, inspirational leader with a deep understanding of cultural organization and exhibition operations and a passion for education and access. They will be a visionary leader capable of driving innovation, fostering collaboration, and enhancing the Smithsonian’s mission of promoting knowledge and understanding through its multitude of outreach programs. They will be an excellent fund- and friend-raiser, able to develop and steward meaningful relationships with existing and new donors and funders through a sincere passion for the work of SITES | Affiliations and the Smithsonian at large.

While it is understood that no one candidate will bring every desired skill, characteristic, and experience, the following offers a reflection of the ideal candidate profile:

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AND VISION

Successful candidates will demonstrate the ability to provide clear, inspirational vision and executive leadership, bringing cohesion and collaboration across all SITES | Affiliations programs and operations to amplify reach and impact. Comfortable leading organizational change and gathering buy-in from multiple constituencies, this Director will set ambitious strategic goals, formulating policies that encourage transparent communication, and ensuring the successful delivery of all programming and strategic initiatives.

COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Director will excel in fostering and stewarding collaborative relationships with internal and external partners and constituents, including the advisory board and other entities both within the Smithsonian and beyond. Warm and engaging, they will build on their existing network of cultural and educational organizations; they will strengthen connections with community members through strategic initiatives and fundraising efforts, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Candidates must demonstrate a strong commitment to cultural diversity and inclusion, developing programs that engage underserved audiences. They will be skilled in understanding and responding to the needs of diverse communities, creating inclusive exhibitions and programs that reflect the Smithsonian’s mission and values. Further, they will have actively cultivated and supported a culture of equity, access, inclusion, and belonging both with those who report to them as well as across their broader organizations.

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

This individual will bring expertise in planning and executing comprehensive fundraising strategies, including donor cultivation, proposal development, and grant oversight. Inspiring and committed to the mission of SITES | Affiliations, they will drive financial sustainability and growth of SITES | Affiliations programs through successful fundraising and development efforts.

PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Candidates should be proficient in managing complex programs and projects and overseeing exhibitions, educational initiatives, and partnerships encompassing a broad range of topics and formats. They will ensure effective resource allocation, budgeting, compliance with institutional policies, and delivery of high-quality outputs that uphold the Smithsonian’s standards.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The salary range for this position is \$250,000 - \$300,000. The Smithsonian Institution provides a generous and comprehensive benefits package. Note: Washington, DC-area residency required. This position is NOT fully remote and consists of a hybrid in-office and remote work schedule.

CONTACT

Naree W. S. Viner and Tenley Bank of Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, have been exclusively retained for this search. To express interest in this role please fill out our [Talent Profile](#), or email Tenley directly at tbank@koyapartners.com. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

Koya Partners is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to individuals living with disabilities. If you are a qualified individual living with a disability and need assistance expressing interest online, please email NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.

Equal Employment Opportunity at the Smithsonian Institution means opportunity for all. The Smithsonian is committed to ensuring that all employees and affiliated persons are treated equitably in an environment that is free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, gender stereotyping, pregnancy, and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, parental status, or marital status and reprisal for reporting workplace harassment.

ABOUT KOYA PARTNERS | DIVERSIFIED SEARCH GROUP

Koya Partners, a Diversified Search Group company, is the nation's premier search firm dedicated to mission-driven leadership. Since its founding in 2004, Koya has had an exclusive focus on mission-driven clients and was founded on the belief that the right leader can transform an organization and have a deep and measurable impact on our world. Koya works with nonprofits & NGOs, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Diversified Search Group is consistently recognized by Forbes on its top 10 list of "America's Best Executive Recruiting Firms" and is an industry leader in recruiting transformational leaders for a changing world. The firm is deliberately different in its approach, with best-in-class teams who have decades of experience in cultivating inclusive leaders, understanding the dimensions of diversity, and building equitable teams.

Learn more about Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group via the [firm's website](#).