



Director of Exhibitions and Interpretation

The Historic Penn Center, Inc., St. Helena Island, SC

Description:

In recognition of its distinguished history and critical contemporary relevance, the Penn Center (St. Helena Island, South Carolina) was designated a Reconstruction Era National Monument by President Barack Obama. Through the prism of its own nearly 160-year story, the Penn Center illuminates for public audiences the legacy and present-day implications of post-Civil War Reconstruction in the United States. Its educational and cultural programs serve students and educators; rapidly growing public audiences; and local, core communities, including the tens of thousands of descendants of formerly enslaved West and Central Africans living in the Sea Islands, known as the Gullah Geechee people.

The **Director of Exhibitions and Interpretation** will join Penn Center to design and execute a new landscape of exhibitions and other programmatic offerings that empower diverse public audiences to:

- Experience site-specific connections to history on Penn Center's 47-acre campus;
- Encounter artifacts that stand as crucial evidence of the experiences of the Reconstruction era and beyond;
- Connect with the stories of African-American people who survived—and thrived—against all odds;
- Learn from the analysis and scholarship of preeminent historians, literary and cultural scholars, and thinkers whose work unlocks themes that remain painfully alive in our national conversation; and
- Gain new appreciation for the Penn Center's continuous presence and important roles since its establishment in 1862.

Essential Functions:

- Cultivate and draw on a deep understanding of Penn Center's history, mission, historic buildings and campus, archival collections, and contemporary relevance;
- Design and fulfill community engagement opportunities—including with the Gullah Geechee people—to learn from and energize Penn Center's growing and core audiences;
- Develop the permanent and temporary exhibitions that Penn Center will present in its York Bailey Museum building, featuring artifacts and storytelling that reveal the

significance of the Penn Center—from Reconstruction, to the Civil Rights Movement, to the present-day;

- Build and oversee scholarly and creative teams to achieve excellence in exhibition content and design, collection management, and visitor experience;
- Create exhibition-related, collections-based public and educational programs to empower diverse audiences—including students and educators—to access and understand history; and
- Pursue short- and mid-term opportunities to elevate the Penn Center’s offerings while working toward a comprehensive exhibition program (encompassing the entire Penn Center campus and perhaps traveling exhibitions as well).
- Other related tasks as assigned.

Salary Range: \$50,000 - \$60,000 annual salary

Qualifications:

- Advanced degree in history or the liberal arts or humanities; or equivalent work experience.
- 5 - 10+ years relevant experience, including successfully fulfilling a significant leadership role in a major museum or cultural institution that serves diverse public audiences.
- Proven success in working with collections of high historic value to fulfill museum exhibition planning, curation, and/or production.
- Strong organizational and management skills, and the ability to work effectively with team members from many disciplines.

In keeping with its history and mission, Penn Center is committed to diversity and inclusion. Qualified individuals who bring diverse perspectives to the workplace are especially encouraged to apply.

Please submit cover letter, résumé and salary requirement to Dr. Charlene Spearen, Associate Director at cspearen@penncenter.com.