



CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Executive Director
California Museum
Sacramento, California

THE SEARCH

The California Museum seeks an experienced and innovative leader to serve as its next executive director. The executive director will further the Museum’s mission to “engage, educate, and enlighten people about California's rich history, its diversity, and its unique influence on the world of ideas, innovation, art and culture” and will expand the Museum’s resources and platform to enrich lives in the Sacramento area, California, and beyond. The next executive director will be a forward-thinking leader who will bring the institution to the next level of operations and inspire the staff, board and stakeholders in creatively envisioning what the Museum can be.

Situated in the capital city of Sacramento, the state’s fastest-growing urban center, the California Museum draws nearly 50,000 annual visitors to its 35,000 square feet of exhibition space. Permanent and temporary exhibitions, popular educational and public programming, and high-profile events such as the [California Hall of Fame](#) engage a broad and growing public, offering a perspective on California’s past, present, and future that honors the state’s rich history and focuses on its lesser-told stories.

The next executive director will join an organization that has significantly increased in size, scale, and impact since its 1998 launch. Today, the Museum has an operating budget of approximately \$6.3 million and a staff of 27. The executive director is responsible for overseeing day-to-day Museum operations and will guide the next stage of the Museum’s trajectory by providing strategic leadership within the organization and continued partnership with its wide range of stakeholders.

The California Museum has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in recruitment. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

THE CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Officially named the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts, the Museum was originally conceived by California Secretary of State March Fong Eu in the late 1980s as the public showplace for the California State Archives. The Museum opened in 1998 through a partnership with the State of California as a private non-profit institution focused on California history and culture.

In 1999, the Unity Center at the California Museum was established with support from the State of California in response to a series of Northern California hate crimes. Its interactive multimedia exhibits highlight leaders in the state's rich civil rights history and encourage visitors to find common ground while embracing their own individuality.

In 2004, former First Lady Maria Shriver began working with the Museum to expand its vision and mission, opening the *California's Remarkable Women* exhibition as the first of her many collaborative efforts with the Museum. Since then, the Museum's exhibitions have continued to emphasize stories that reflect all aspects of California's diverse population and culture, with an emphasis on the contributions of women and under-represented groups. In 2006, Shriver and former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched the California Hall of Fame as the Museum's annual gala and an official award from the governor of California. Subsequent governors and their partners have also collaborated on the California Hall of Fame and other initiatives.

Today, the Museum works with Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom to present the California Hall of Fame and to develop exhibits and programs highlighting women in California.

To learn more, visit <https://californiamuseum.org>.

EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMMING

With expertise in telling compelling stories and utilizing 35,000 square feet of exhibition space, the California Museum covers 10,000 years of California's history, arts, and culture, with a particular emphasis on its people. In addition to the California Hall of Fame, signature exhibitions are [California Indians](#), [California Missions](#), [Gold Mountain: Chinese Californian Stories](#), [Health Happens Here](#), [the Unity Center](#), [Uprooted: An American Story](#), and [Women Inspire](#). Each year the Museum also presents multiple temporary exhibits that supplement and expand upon on the stories told in its signature exhibitions. Previous temporary exhibitions—some developed in-house and others traveling from other institutions—include [Black Pioneers](#), [Our War Too: Women in Service](#), [California Is in the Heart](#), and [Kokoro: The Story of Sacramento's Lost Japantown](#). “Help Wanted/Leave Now!”, launching at the Museum in 2026, will become its first large-scale traveling exhibition. Additional traveling exhibitions are anticipated and represent an area of expansion for the Museum.

The Museum offers extensive in-person and virtual programming to provide tools and resources that meet the practical needs of teachers in classrooms across California. Programming includes onsite field trips,

virtual programs, summer camps, and opportunities for educators. All field trip tours and learning programs feature accompanying materials aligned with California History-Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Common Core ELA, Civics outcomes and CASEL Core SEL Competencies. The Museum's longest-standing and most cherished K-12 education program is the annual [Time of Remembrance](#), which focuses on the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Supported by a dedicated cadre of volunteers who share personal or family stories, the program teaches about the responsibilities of citizenship, increases understanding of constitutional rights, and encourages civic engagement.

The Museum also offers a wide variety of public programming designed to engage residents and visitors with California's unique history, including commemorative events in partnership with community groups, a popular annual Día de Muertos celebration and walking tours of locations such as Sacramento's former Japantown and historic Black Sacramento.

The Museum's highest-profile program and largest fundraising event is the [California Hall of Fame](#). Celebrating the remarkable achievements of individuals and families who embody the California dream, the California Hall of Fame honors inductees from all walks of life, with achievements in the arts, entertainment, business, food and wine, literature, music, public service, science, and sports. The Governor and First Partner participate in the selection of each class of inductees. The event features an induction ceremony with the presentation of "Spirit of California" medals by the Governor and First Partner and provides support for the Museum's exhibits and education programs for the upcoming year. In addition, the event includes the premiere of an all-new exhibit highlighting the accomplishments of the newest class of inductees through personal artifacts on loan to the Museum. To date, 174 Californians have been inducted by three California gubernatorial administrations.

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

The Museum is a private non-profit organization supported by earned revenue, contributed revenue, and state support. Its total operating budget is approximately \$6.3 million. The Museum is located in the March Fong Eu Secretary of State complex.

The Board of Trustees is comprised of dedicated civic, community, business, and arts leaders who support the Museum's mission. It meets regularly to set policy, review financial statements, develop and implement strategic initiatives and coordinate fundraising activities.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the board, the executive director will continue to advance the California Museum's impact and legacy in California, increasing its regional, state, and national profile. The executive director will lead the vision and serve as the public face of the Museum, nurturing and expanding relationships with the California Governor, Secretary of State, Department of Parks and Recreation, government and community partners, donors, scholars, stakeholders, and cultural organizations. The executive director will also lead a dedicated team of 27 full- and part-time staff. The executive director is responsible for overseeing day-

to-day Museum operations, including administration, employees and volunteers, financial operations, fundraising, exhibition development, programming, public communications, long-range planning, and community engagement.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the California Museum looks to the future, the executive director is expected to address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges as key priorities.

Strategically lead the California Museum into a new era.

As the Museum transitions to its next chapter, the executive director will build on the institution's strong foundation and partner with the board, staff, and stakeholders to envision new directions. The Museum has the positioning needed to have influence in numerous fields, including California history, education, civic life, and community engagement. In service of this goal, the executive director will guide stakeholder engagement to fulfill its strategic direction. A successful vision will balance multiple priorities: cultivating and harnessing the existing community as a key asset; increasing the Museum's visibility locally, regionally, and nationally; sustaining its reputation as a trusted storyteller of California's diverse histories; continuing to align exhibitions and programming with the mission; and leveraging emerging opportunities including traveling exhibitions, digital strategy, and increased programming. Balancing ambition with sustainable growth, the executive director will further unlock the Museum's potential.

Enhance institutional resources in support of the Museum's ambitions.

The executive director will bring strong financial expertise and experience managing complex organizational budgets to actively oversee operations, ensure the Museum's fiscal health and sustainability, and guide its long-term strategic growth. Cultivating and maintaining strong relationships with state government and the next gubernatorial administration will be a key priority to maintain its strong position. Fundraising is a strategic priority, and the executive director will be adept at stewarding existing support while attracting and retaining new philanthropic investment. The executive director will bring a passion for and track record with fundraising and will pursue opportunities in the Sacramento area, California, and nationally. The executive director will also identify new sustainable sources of earned revenue to enhance institutional resources for programming, operations, and strategic projects.

Deepen foundational strategic partnerships.

The Museum's growth has been bolstered by its board of trustees, which represents a range of backgrounds and contributions to California. The executive director will maintain an open, collaborative, and responsive working relationship with the board, understanding its members' strengths and bringing forth their best ideas, resources, and contacts in service of the Museum's mission and future goals. The executive director will work with the board to recruit trustees with expertise in fundraising and other strategic areas and look holistically at board development to ensure success in the Museum's next phase.

This includes actively cultivating a new generation of trustees to strengthen the Museum's connection to the diverse communities it engages.

The new executive director will step into strong, well-established relationships with the governor and secretary of state, leaders across Sacramento region, and partners across California. As the public face of the Museum, the executive director will skillfully navigate and strengthen relationships with this complex ecosystem of stakeholders, which includes state and local government, longstanding community partners such as local chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League, teachers and school districts, cultural institutions, members, donors, and business and cultural leaders. There is an opportunity to advance the Museum's impact and visibility among a younger generation of museumgoers in the Sacramento area, among Californians more broadly, and with cultural institutions nationally. To do so, the executive director will be a champion for the Museum's work and tell a compelling story that resonates with multiple audiences. The executive director will also identify opportunities to expand the Museum's visibility, leveraging technology and marketing strategies to engage new audiences and enhance the Museum's offerings.

Partner with, support, and develop Museum staff.

Staff at the California Museum are mission-driven, passionate, and capable. The executive director will inspire and motivate staff at all levels, fostering a transparent, collaborative, and team-oriented environment. The executive director will develop a keen understanding of the strengths of and opportunities for each team and will provide resources and support for further growth and impact, ensuring that staff align their work with the Museum's strategic goals. To recruit and retain high-caliber staff, the executive director will foster an inclusive and welcoming work culture that reflects the Museum's values of innovation and inclusion, recognize and elevate contributions across the organization, and inspire a shared belief in advancing the Museum's service to its communities.

Champion authentic engagement and inclusion in service of the Museum's diverse communities.

The next executive director will embody professionalism, inclusivity, and genuine enthusiasm while deepening the Museum's connection to the diverse communities of Sacramento and California. The executive director will nurture a welcoming environment for staff, visitors, volunteers, and partners while expanding the Museum's reach into communities that have historically been underrepresented. Building on successful past and current initiatives and partnerships with community organizations, the executive director will champion authentic engagement that reflects changing demographics and lived experiences nearby and throughout the state. Through highly relational leadership and a commitment to inclusive storytelling, the executive director will ensure the Museum remains a vibrant civic space where all Californians feel seen, respected, and invited to participate in shaping its future.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one individual will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- A demonstrated passion for, credibility in, and commitment to history, culture, and the arts
- A passion for the values and mission of the Museum
- Track record of increasing institutional visibility and impact locally, regionally, and nationally while attaining mission-aligned objectives
- Successful track record of nonprofit revenue development encompassing individual, institutional, and earned revenue fundraising; ability to supervise, at a high level, the development team and donor relations
- A flair for supporting and promoting creative thinking and activity
- Experience executing best standards and practices in the museum field and ongoing professional service
- Experience leading, serving, and working with a nonprofit board and with civic and government leaders
- Experience working with a variety of constituencies to create and support mutually beneficial partnerships and other externally focused initiatives
- A fair, collaborative, direct, and transparent leadership style that engenders trust and support among staff while holding the team, oneself, and, as appropriate, the board accountable to professional standards and deliverables
- The ability to communicate well and work collaboratively and effectively with staff, board members, civic and government leaders, external stakeholders, and the visiting public
- Experience building and managing budgets while driving sound financial and policy decisions in an organization of, ideally, comparable complexity and with similar funding streams
- Sustained track record of successful senior management experience, including strong strategic planning, staff management, operations, and communications skills
- A record of dedication to and success in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Ability to model and establish a culture of mutual respect, transparency, and empowerment
- Demonstrated success in proactively building bridges to and with diverse constituents
- Exceptional written, oral, and electronic communication skills; encouraging and facilitating dialogue around challenging issues with grace and humility
- Intellectual and emotional integrity, critical listening, perspective, and, good humor
- A graduate degree in a related field strongly preferred

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a permanent, full-time position in Sacramento with a targeted starting salary range of \$200,000-225,000 and a generous benefits package.

Sacramento, located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers in Northern California's Sacramento Valley, is the capital city of California and county seat. It stands on the ancestral lands of the Nisenan People and the Valley and Plains Miwok Peoples, who, along with other Indigenous peoples of California, continue to play an important role in the community. Today, Sacramento is the fastest-growing metropolitan center in California and the state's sixth most populous.

Sacramento is family-friendly with major cultural resources, competitive professional sports teams, and a rich farm-to-fork food scene. It offers numerous outdoor activities, from riverfront parks to nearby hiking and skiing in the Sierra Nevada. The city is the decision-making center for the world's fifth-largest economy, is measurably decreasing its poverty rate and increasing employment and productivity rates according to national averages and is ranked the #1 city to live in for first-time homebuyers in the state. Sacramento has the nation's top midsized airport with an announced \$1B expansion. The city boasts more than 230 days of sunshine each year and is one of the most diverse and integrated cities in the U.S., as determined by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, providing a rich cultural tapestry and a welcoming community. To learn more about Sacramento, please visit: <https://www.visitsacramento.com>.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/california-museum/executive-director>.

Sarah James, Jackie Mildner, Aku Ammah-Tagoe, Pamela Carty
Isaacson, Miller

The California Museum is dedicated to diversity, inclusion, accessibility and equity. We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ability/disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Since it is unlikely that any applicant meets 100% of the qualifications for a given role, if much of this posting describes you, you are encouraged to apply.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the California Museum. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by the California Museum would supersede any conflicting information in this document.