



Chief Financial Officer
Folger Shakespeare Library
Washington, DC

THE SEARCH

The **Folger Shakespeare Library** (the Folger) seeks a seasoned, strategic, and mission-aligned financial executive to serve as the organization's **Chief Financial Officer** (CFO). This is a remarkable opportunity to partner closely with Director [Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper](#) at a time of strategic growth and organizational transformation. As the Folger embarks on a new strategic planning process, the CFO will play a defining role in shaping a sustainable financial future for the Folger—balancing innovation in public engagement with careful stewardship of its extraordinary legacy.

The Folger boasts the world's largest collection of printed works of William Shakespeare, an array of rare materials from the early modern period, and both physical and electronic resources related to the understanding and interpretation of Shakespeare and his time. It offers advanced scholarly programs, national outreach to middle and high school students and educators, Shakespeare-inspired performances and programming, and workshops and activities for families, all of the highest quality. The Folger finds its strength and distinction in cultivating so many paths to engage with Shakespeare and the humanities. Each year, millions visit in person and virtually.

The strategic planning process comes on the heels of their 2024 reopening, following the completion of an \$80.5 million comprehensive capital project. The reimagined Folger features an additional 12,000 square feet of public space, two new exhibition halls, a learning lab, collaborative research spaces, accessible entrances, a café, and a new gift shop. This four-year renovation reflects an expanded ambition: to continue serving scholars and researchers while significantly increasing public engagement with the diverse communities of Washington, DC, the surrounding region, and visitors from across the nation and around the globe.

The Folger Shakespeare Library maintains a distinctive and longstanding affiliation with [Amherst College](#) rooted in the bequest of its founders, Henry and Emily Folger. Under the terms of Henry Folger's will, Amherst College serves as the Folger's governing body, with fiduciary oversight vested in Amherst's Board

of Trustees. The Folger operates as a separate institution with its own leadership and Board of Governors. The CFO will attend all Board of Governors meetings, work closely with the Board Finance Committee, and cultivate a strong, collaborative relationship with the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer of Amherst College, effectively managing the Folger's complex shared services and governance partnership.

Reporting to the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library and serving as a key member of the senior leadership team, the CFO will serve as a critical strategic partner to the Director and act as an essential advisor to the Board. With an annual operating budget of approximately \$28 million and an endowment of approximately \$510 million (FY2025), the CFO will have overall responsibility for the financial operations of the institution, ensuring the efficient and effective stewardship of the Folger's physical and financial resources, including budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, long-range financial planning, asset and liability management, and risk management. The role also encompasses administrative oversight of revenue management, retail, and legal functions, including leadership of the Finance team (five full-time staff and one contractor) and a revenue and retail position.

The CFO should demonstrate deep expertise in the financial administration and regulatory compliance of federal and state grant funding, including budgeting, cost allocation, reporting, and audit requirements.

The Folger Shakespeare Library has retained the national executive search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

Henry and Emily Folger acquired their first rare book in 1889, a copy of the 1685 Fourth Folio. In the following decades, the collection grew, such that when the library was opened in 1932, the collection amounted to some 200,000 items. The Folgers opted for Washington, DC, the nation's capital, as the home for their extraordinary collection as a gift to the American people. Emily Folger wrote that Shakespeare "is one of our best sources, one of the wells from which we Americans draw our national thought, our faith and our hope." This belief in the deep connection between Shakespeare and America is the reason the Folger Shakespeare Library is located in the nation's capital. In 1938, the Folger acquired the collection of Sir Robert Leicester Harmsworth, comprising more than 8,000 rare books printed in England between 1475 and 1640. These collections were supplemented by another 20,000 editions dated between 1701 and 1800. Still growing today, the Folger's collection constitutes the ultimate resource for exploring and researching the early modern age.

The activities of the present-day Folger constitute four broad and overlapping pillars:

Exhibitions & Collections

The Folger is a member of the Independent Research Libraries Association and boasts remarkable collections, second only to the British Library in its holdings of books printed in England between 1475

and 1640. Among its numerous highlights are 82 copies of 235 existing First Folios of 1623, which represent the largest collection of First Folios anywhere. The Folger also holds 58 copies of the Second Folio, 23 copies of the Third Folio, and 38 copies of the Fourth Folio. Additionally, the Folger holds nearly 200 early modern quartos of Shakespeare plays and the only copy of the first edition of *Titus Andronicus* (1594). Shakespeare and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English books constitute the heart of the Library's holdings, accompanied and extended by 60,000 handwritten (mostly English) manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century; rare English and Continental Renaissance books including a 1477 edition of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*; and 90,000 prints, drawings, photographs, paintings, and other works of art. The Folger collections also include a wealth of performance history, including playbills, films, recordings, and stage costumes.

Research

Research and discovery are fundamental to the Folger; the collections are intended to be actively used. Founded in 1970, the Folger Institute serves as an international center for Shakespeare scholarship and the study of the early modern period. The Institute gathers interdisciplinary communities of scholars and artists for collections-based research, innovative scholarly programs and exhibitions, and Critical Race Conversations, and is one of the largest direct funders of early modern scholarly work. It provides researchers with access to the world's greatest collection of Shakespeare and related materials and delivers peerless support to scholars of all ranks who pursue important questions about the early modern period. Roughly 25 percent of the fellows supported by the Institute are scholars of Shakespeare; the balance ranges across related fields of interest in early modern humanities. The Folger Institute's [Consortium](#)—a collaborative endeavor of the Folger and more than 40 universities in the US and abroad—takes a leading role in advancing research and teaching in the humanities. The renowned scholarly publication *Shakespeare Quarterly* publishes cutting-edge research on Shakespeare and his time, and the bestselling Folger Editions of Shakespeare's plays provide access to students of all ages.

Performance

Through professional theater, poetry readings, lectures, concerts, and other events, the Folger provides tens of thousands of people each year with opportunities to experience Shakespeare and the humanities live and in community in an Elizabethan-style theatre. Folger Theatre annually performs a season of Shakespeare-inspired productions, featuring Shakespeare's plays as well as contemporary plays inspired by his work. The 2025-2026 season includes *Julius X*, *As You Like It*, *How Shakespeare Saved My Life*, and a series of public readings of world-premiere plays and commissions accompanied by conversations with scholars, artists, and critics.

[Folger Consort](#) is the Folger's resident early music ensemble. Founded in 1977, the Consort performs medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music in its concert series. Since 1970, the Folger has also hosted contemporary poets for readings and moderated conversations.

Learning and Education Programs

Beginning with educational outreach in the 1970s, the Folger has grown to be a leader in K-12 performance-based education. In partnership with schools in DC, Maryland, and Virginia, the Folger is revolutionizing the way that Shakespeare is taught in classrooms. The Folger Method is a way of teaching complex texts that enables all students to own and enjoy the process of close reading, interrogating texts, discovering language with peers, and contributing to the ongoing human conversation about words and ideas. More than two million teachers and students benefit each year from in-person workshops, lesson plans, webinars, online field trips, and detailed teaching guides.

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper, Director

Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper stepped into her role as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in October 2024. She is the eighth director of the nearly century-old institution, which is home to the largest collection of Shakespeare's works in the world.

Dr. Karim-Cooper is widely recognized as a Shakespeare scholar. Prior to joining the Folger, Dr. Karim-Cooper was Professor of Shakespeare Studies, King's College London, and Director of Education (Higher Education & Research) at Shakespeare's Globe, where she worked for 20 years. She served as President of the Shakespeare Association of America from 2021-2022 after serving 5 years on their Board of Trustees. She has published widely on Shakespeare, his theaters, and the culture of early modern England. Her book, *The Great White Bard: How to Love Shakespeare While Talking About Race* (Viking 2023) was recognized as a top book of 2023 by Time Magazine, NPR, and The New Yorker.

She is a field leader in the theaters of Shakespeare's time and was a project leader in the construction of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, the indoor Jacobean theater at Shakespeare's Globe. She is also a leader in the examination of the plays through the lens of race. In 2018 she founded and curated the Globe's Shakespeare and Race Festival. In the UK she founded the first ever Early Modern Scholars of Colour Network.

Amherst College + Board of Governors

Amherst College manages the Folger's endowment, and Amherst students are eligible for scholarly fellowships to draw on the Folger's collections. The Folger is proud of the continuing connection to Amherst and sees opportunities to deepen the programmatic relationship in the future. The Folger Shakespeare Library is overseen by an independent 23-member [Board of Governors](#), which includes two Amherst trustees. The Board is chaired by [D. Jarrett Arp](#). The Director of the Folger is accountable to both its Board of Governors and to [Amherst College President Michael Elliott](#).

ORGANIZATIONAL + FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The work of the Folger is enabled by more than 150 full- and part-time staff, with deep passion for, commitment to, and expertise in their respective fields. The annual operating budget is \$28 million, with approximately \$1 million allocated to acquisitions, approximately \$4.5 million to collections and preservation, more than \$2 million to support scholarship through the Institute, nearly \$600,000 to exhibitions, more than \$3 million to performance, and more than \$500,000 to education. These constitute the major budgetary commitments. Annually, the Folger raises roughly \$3 million in philanthropic and other external support. As of the close of fiscal year 2025, the endowment stood at \$510 million.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Reporting to the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library and serving as a key member of the senior leadership team, the CFO will serve as a critical strategic partner to the Director and act as an essential advisor to the Board. The CFO will have overall responsibility for the financial operations of the institution, ensuring the efficient and effective stewardship of the Folger's physical and financial resources, including budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, long-range financial planning, asset and liability management, and risk management. The role also encompasses administrative oversight of revenue management, retail, and legal functions, including leadership of the Finance team (five full-time staff and one contractor) and a retail and revenue role. The CFO will attend all Board of Trustees meetings, work closely with the Board Finance Committee, and cultivate a strong, collaborative relationship with the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer of Amherst College, effectively managing the Folger's complex shared services and governance partnership.

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KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Lead the effort to advance Folger's mission and vision through collaborative strategic visioning and financial analysis

The CFO will work in close partnership with the Director, senior leadership team, and staff to shape and advance the Folger's new strategic direction. As part of the strategic planning process, the CFO will ensure that financial strategy and operational execution are fully aligned with institutional priorities. As a key member of the senior leadership team, the CFO will play a central role in translating strategic plans into sustainable long-range financial models, strengthening service delivery, and integrating revenue-generating activities across the organization.

Serving as a trusted advisor to the Director and the Board of Governors, the CFO will bring strategic insight and disciplined analysis to the exploration of new strategic revenue opportunities, including thoughtful investments in programs and initiatives that advance the Folger's mission. They will lead the institution's

revenue development efforts, overseeing retail and sales strategy while chairing the Revenue Strategy Group—an interdisciplinary forum that draws on expertise from across the Folger to identify, evaluate, and recommend innovative approaches to diversifying revenue growth.

Create a new finance culture and strengthen financial processes

The CFO will be a trusted and strategic leader responsible for cultivating a modern finance culture that strengthens processes and aligns with the Folger’s mission. They will serve as a key partner to the Director of Operations, guiding capital improvements planning and advising on financial resources and institutional priorities, while collaborating closely with Amherst College’s Chief Financial and Administrative Officer on endowment management and capital financing strategies. A critical aspect of this role will be to evaluate and enhance financial systems—including Workday—alongside related processes, policies, and procedures, implementing scalable tools and operational efficiencies that support diversified programming, revenue growth, and strong internal controls. The CFO will be a clear and effective communicator, providing timely updates across all levels of the institution and sharing complex financial information, policies, and decisions with transparency and clarity. They will exercise disciplined judgment, make difficult decisions when necessary, prioritize resources thoughtfully, foster financial literacy across the organization, and model a service-oriented culture that builds trust, encourages openness, and drives momentum for transformational change.

Bring expertise and leadership to areas of nonprofit finance and compliance

The CFO will serve as a strategic steward of the Folger’s financial resources, ensuring alignment between financial strategy and institutional priorities. They will design and sustain a financial model that enables continued innovation and supports both immediate objectives and long-term growth, partnering closely with leadership to address capital needs through fundraising, borrowing, and operational planning. The CFO will lead all financial planning and budgeting processes, ensuring resources are deployed efficiently and effectively to advance the Folger’s mission. In doing so, the CFO will ensure strong financial governance and compliance across a complex nonprofit environment, including stewardship of restricted funds and endowment assets, oversight of fund accounting practices, and management of tax-related matters such as unrelated business income.

In addition, the CFO will oversee key external relationships, including insurance and risk management in consultation with Amherst College, the Five Colleges Consortium, and senior leadership, and—working closely with the Director of Operations—maintain strong partnerships with planning and regulatory bodies in the District of Columbia. The CFO will also ensure sound financial administration related to the Folger’s fellowship programs, including the management of J-1 visa processes and compliance considerations for international scholars, as well as oversight of financial processes related to international contractors and associated tax reporting requirements. Through disciplined financial oversight and collaborative engagement, the CFO will strengthen institutional resilience and sustainability.

Lead, manage, and retain Finance team

The CFO will provide leadership and supervision of the Folger's finance team. They will inherit a committed, dedicated, and passionate staff, and will be expected to support this team, utilizing the institutional knowledge and expertise of seasoned members while providing mentorship and opportunities for professional growth and cross-functional training for staff. The CFO will foster an environment of inclusion, transparency, mutual respect, integrity, service, and accountability. They will lead by example and communicate clear expectations.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will bring deep nonprofit finance expertise, strong experience in financial planning and analysis, and fluency in endowment strategy, while enhancing internal financial transparency, elevating enterprise-wide financial literacy, and guiding disciplined, data-informed decision-making across the Folger's diverse programs spanning scholarship, performance, education, retail, and public engagement.

While no person will embody all of them, the successful candidate will bring many, if not all, of the following professional experiences and personal qualities:

- Advanced degree (MBA or related) required; CPA preferred. 15+ years of financial leadership experience with expertise in accounting, finance, risk management, in museum or academic environments.
- Proven success in nonprofit, arts, culture, advocacy, or academic settings, leading complex organizations and highly skilled teams.
- Strategic and analytical thinker, able to set priorities, assess financial implications, and chart a sustainable, ambitious institutional path.
- Skilled collaborator and trusted partner to the Director, senior leadership, and unit heads, fostering approachability, empowerment, and mutual respect.
- Expertise in financial systems, processes, policies, and internal controls; implements scalable tools and operational efficiencies to support institutional goals.
- Exceptional communicator, able to clearly and transparently convey complex financial information to staff, Board members, Amherst College leadership, and external stakeholders.
- Represents the institution to financial partners, auditors, insurers, and other external organizations while building strong, lasting relationships.
- Models integrity, transparency, and high standards; fosters a culture of service, trust, and accountability across the organization.
- Champions equity, diversity, and inclusion, embedding these values throughout the institution.
- Maintains visibility and presence across the organization, engaging with programs, staff, and stakeholders to provide guidance, mentorship, and trusted advice.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The Folger offers competitive compensation, with an anticipated annual salary range between \$200,000 to \$225,000; a benefit package that includes annual vacation, sick, and personal time; 12 paid holidays; employer-paid individual health, dental, and vision insurance; 403(b) with contribution match; life insurance; short- and long-term disability; flexible spending; pretax transit; educational assistance; grant-in-aid for dependents; credit union membership; care.com membership; employee assistance program, and more.

WORKING CONDITIONS

This position operates in a professional office and library/museum environment. The employee may be exposed to various components of an office environment, such as fluorescent lighting, pollen, dust, recycled air, cooling fans, semi-enclosed areas, central heating, seasonal warmer temperatures, and office noise. The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Ability to work at a computer for an extended period of time, with accuracy, is required.

Capacity to communicate, in-person or using video, phone, or electronic communication methods in a manner which can be understood by others, is required.

LOCATION

The Folger Shakespeare Library is in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC. It is one block away from the US Capitol, next to the Library of Congress (Thomas Jefferson and John Adams buildings), and diagonally adjacent to the Supreme Court.

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](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Dan Rodas, Partner
Steph Simon, Senior Associate
Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate
Nicole Sancilio, Managing Search Coordinator

The Folger Shakespeare Library currently defines diversity in compliance with the [DC equal opportunity definitions](#) of protected classes, age, color, credit information, disability, family responsibilities, gender

identity and expression, genetic information, homeless status, marital status, matriculation, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, status as a victim or family member of domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, district, or local EO laws and regulations.

To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the Folger are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. This policy of equal opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, retention, termination, layoff, recall, furlough, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Folger Shakespeare Library. 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 Folger Shakespeare Library would supersede any conflicting information in this document.