



**VICE PRESIDENT OF COLLECTIONS AND SENIOR CURATOR**  
**POSITION SPECIFICATIONS**

**CLIENT**



[The National WWI Museum and Memorial](#) is America's leading institution dedicated to remembering, interpreting and understanding the Great War and its enduring impact on the global community.

The Museum and Memorial holds the most comprehensive collection of World War I objects and documents in the world and is the second-oldest public museum dedicated to preserving the objects, history and experiences of the war. The Museum

and Memorial takes visitors of all ages on an epic journey through a transformative period and shares deeply personal stories of courage, honor, patriotism and sacrifice. Designated by Congress as America's official World War I Museum and Memorial and located in downtown Kansas City, Mo., the National WWI Museum and Memorial inspires thought, dialogue and learning to make the experiences of the Great War era meaningful and relevant for diverse audiences across the globe.

As a U.S. National Historic Landmark and prominent feature of the Kansas City skyline, the institution's 130,000 square-foot facility focuses on global events from the causes of World War I before 1914 through the 1918 armistice and after, to examinations of the war's enduring impact. The Museum and Memorial was brought into existence by the citizens of Kansas City in 1919 who raised more than \$2.5 million in just 10 days to create it. The equivalent of more than \$35 million today, this staggering accomplishment reflected the passion of public sentiment for the Great War that had dramatically changed the world.

In 1921, more than 100,000 people gathered to see the supreme Allied commanders dedicate the site of the Liberty Memorial. This was the first time in history these five leaders were together in one place. Construction on the classical Egyptian Revival-style monument was completed in 1926 and the Liberty Memorial was dedicated by President Calvin Coolidge before an audience of more than 150,000 people.

To address major issues of deterioration that developed over the decades, more than \$102 million was raised in the 1990s for its restoration and expansion. Upon completion of the restoration and expansion project, the U.S. Congress designated the museum as America’s national WWI museum, and opened on Dec. 2, 2006 to international critical acclaim. In 2006, the site was designated as a U.S. National Historic Landmark and in 2014, President Barack Obama signed legislation recognizing the Memorial as America’s official WWI memorial.

While carrying the same designation as memorial’s in the nation’s capital, the Museum and Memorial attracts no federal appropriations, but relies on private philanthropy, limited support from the City of Kansas City and earned income for its budget.

Since opening, the Museum and Memorial has received numerous honors, including being ranked among the top 25 museums in the nation by TripAdvisor and Yelp, being honored among the best military-related museums in the nation by CNN and *USA Today* and the Museum and Memorial received the highest national award from the American Institute of Architects. Since opening, millions of guests from all 50 U.S. states and more than 90 nations around the world have visited the Museum and Memorial.

The National WWI Museum and Memorial has experienced remarkable growth in its programs and visitor interactions. The Museum and Memorial continues to experience sustained growth in all areas of operations including ticketed attendance, online visits (over 2 million unique visitors in 2021), media impressions (over 7 billion in 2020), social media followers, K-12 student engagements and education programming (over 23 million minutes watched on YouTube in 2021).

**THE NATIONAL WWI MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL**

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[The Main Gallery](#) of the National WWI Museum and Memorial is located beneath the Memorial Courtyard, and holds the permanent exhibition, “The World War, 1914-1919.”

Designed by world renowned and highly awarded exhibit designers and interpretive planners, Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA), the main gallery presents a powerful and transformative narrative that include objects rarely seen together in like institutions due to the encyclopedic collecting approach by the Museum.

Four additional galleries, a 230-seat auditorium, several theatres, interactive experiences and the Edward Jones Research Center enable visitors to deepen their understand of the impact of the war on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

The Museum and Memorial has been going through a multi-year process to enrich and re-

invigorate what is considered the world’s most diverse collection of WWI objects. Led by RAA, the institution is embarking on a multi-year refresh to the main galleries, including the creation of a 4,200 sq. ft. open storage gallery, new interactive features, new multi-media content and enhancements to almost all areas of what is universally considered a world-class permanent exhibition.



Guided by a refreshed strategic plan using a consultative and iterative process, the institution adopted a refreshed strategic plan that focuses the organization around Three Big Ideas:

- **We will create** a richer and more immersive visitor experience by refreshing and expanding the galleries and access to the Museum and Memorial’s collection.
- **We will ensure** the stories of minorities, women and indigenous peoples who served in WWI are not lost but are preserved and told through a dedicated collecting initiative.
- **We will make** the Museum and Memorial more accessible to audiences across the globe through effective use of digital learning technologies.

These initiatives will further strengthen the work of the Museum and Memorial, guiding it for the next 5 – 10 years, to give deeper meaning and life to its mission.



When coupled with the work as a Memorial to those who lost their lives in service, the institution plays a role in honoring and memorializing veterans, active duty personnel and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives through ceremonial activities throughout the year.

Additionally, the Museum and Memorial is considered the ‘Front Porch of Kansas City, the gathering place of people of the region to congregate for celebrations, public and family events, exercise and to take iconic photos. With a 47-acre public park, the campus is a pillar of civic and community life in the city.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

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The successful candidate is a gifted leader, compelling communicator – both in writing and spoken word – an outstanding researcher, able administrator and a strong advocate for the museum. They will infuse energy into innovative and creative initiatives, and leverage collections, resources and partnerships.

It is essential that they be equally comfortable organizing major exhibitions, and/or using the platform to address timely and provocative topics. Must be committed to a cross-institution team approach to exhibition development and implementation, collaborate effectively with human resources, and be an advocate for inclusion, equity, and diversity.

A member of the Museum’s senior leadership team, the Vice President of Collections and Senior

Curator will work alongside the Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Corporate Engagement, Vice President of Marketing, Vice President of Facilities, Curator of Education and Interpretation, and Chief Development Officer. They will report directly to the President and Chief Executive Officer. Responsibilities include supervision of the Collections team, including Director of Exhibitions and Registrar, Director of Archives and Edward Jones Research Center, and Specialist Curator. They will develop plans for the department and its staff, volunteers, and associated programs.

The incumbent is expected to embrace the National WWI Museum and Memorial's stated mission and core values, and demonstrate support for them through professional interactions and performance of job duties. This includes supporting dynamic educational and public programs and working collaboratively to develop content to reach a global audience, with particular attention to the Museum and Memorial's Three Big Ideas.

Short-term / immediate objectives of the role, in addition to successfully integrating into the organization and its culture, will include: (1) embracing the organization's cross-institutional teams approach by forming partnerships with key stakeholders and strategic partners; (2) helping to populate the opens collection area by evaluating and then relocating items from closed to open storage; and (3) becoming familiar with the established exhibition schedule and working to extend that schedule into the foreseeable future.

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

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- Master's degree in history, early 20th century history, military history, or related field. PhD or equivalent will be highly valued.
- Applied knowledge of professional museum principles, practices and procedures.
- An understanding of visitor-centered approaches to content development and interpretation.
- Demonstrated experience managing substantial department, project and program budgets.
- Evidence of and commitment to original scholarship with a proven record of initiating, curating and delivering well-received exhibitions, publications and, to a lesser degree, public programs.
- Minimum of 6 years management-level museum experience required.
- Minimum of 7 years applied curatorial experience preferred.

## **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

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- Mastery of English language, both written and verbal.
- Knowledge of research tools and methodology.
- Strong background in material culture.
- Strong public speaker and presenter. Self-directed and motivated.
- Commitment to collaboration, and an advocate for inclusion, equity and diversity.
- Flexible and helpful; occasional evening and weekend hours required.
- Note: Must show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in order to work safely with staff, volunteers and guests in the Museum and Memorial. Applicants who become fully vaccinated by their start date will also be welcome.

## **GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

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The successful candidate will reside in Kansas City, Missouri, allowing them to develop deep and personal relationships with the community served by the National WWI Museum and Memorial.



Greater Kansas City has earned a reputation for being one of the best places to live and work in the nation, both for its desirable cost of living and optimal job market. Home to outstanding cultural and arts facilities and major athletic teams, the region has achieved numerous national accolades for high rankings in affordability, raising a family, innovation, charitable giving, museums and the arts. With a rapidly-developing downtown and public transportation there is a lot to explore, but the web sites below may provide an introduction to the area:

City of Kansas City, Missouri  
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art  
Kansas City Union Station  
Crossroads Arts District  
Kansas City Symphony  
Historic Jazz District  
Kansas City Ballet

[www.kcmo.gov](http://www.kcmo.gov)  
[www.nelson-atkins.org](http://www.nelson-atkins.org)  
[www.unionstation.org](http://www.unionstation.org)  
[www.kccrossroads.org](http://www.kccrossroads.org)  
[www.kcsymphony.org](http://www.kcsymphony.org)  
[www.visitkc.com/18th-vine](http://www.visitkc.com/18th-vine)  
[www.kcballet.org](http://www.kcballet.org)

## **COMPENSATION**

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The National WWI Museum and Memorial offers a competitive salary with an excellent benefit package, including: pre-tax/Roth 401(k) matching program; health, dental, vision, life with AD&D, and short-/long-term disability insurance, Section 125 flexible benefits; paid holidays, & PTO.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

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EFL Associates, an executive search firm, is assisting our client with this important search. All inquiries should be made through the search firm. Nominations and applications will be held in confidence. Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

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Our client and EFL Associates firmly support the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law.

**Contact:**  
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