

Position Description:

Executive Director, History Center of Olmsted County

Location: Rochester, Minnesota

Website: [History Center of Olmsted County](#)

About the Olmsted County Historical Society (legally known as the History Center of Olmsted County since 2006):

The Olmsted County Historical Society was established in 1926 with a mission to collect and preserve the history of Olmsted County. Its first museum opened in the basement of the Rochester Public Library in 1940. In 1959, the society moved into what had been the Bethel English Lutheran Church but soon outgrew the space. It then built a new museum building on 54 acres of land purchased in southwest Rochester in 1972, where it has been collecting, preserving, and educating ever since.

The History Center of Olmsted County is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by members via a Board of Directors. Each year, together with enthusiastic volunteers, the History Center provides presentations, educational and outreach programs, special events, museum exhibits, and more. It currently owns a classic pioneer farmstead that includes three unique structures on the National Registry of Historic Places. It currently is rejuvenating its campus to expand its ability to develop and provide historical educational programs and exhibits. It also operates seasonal tours of the Mayowood Historic Mansion, the former family home of both Dr. Charles H. Mayo, one of the two Mayo brothers who founded the Mayo Clinic, and his son, Dr. Charles W. Mayo.

The History Center currently has eight staff members ([History Center of Olmsted County](#)). Valerie Wassmer, Associate Director and Director of Education, is serving as interim Executive Director. The Board of Directors consists of sixteen community leaders. The History Center has an ambitious and comprehensive seven-year plan to fully restore and activate its historic Stoppel Farmstead, renovate and enlarge its existing 21,000 square foot history center, and increase community engagement on its 54-acre campus. It also is dramatically expanding its historical programs for students of Olmsted County, residents, and visitors.

Vision

To become a gathering place for the broader community that inspires and encourages the exploration of history.

Mission

Give people of all ages and backgrounds access and opportunity to learn about the past through interpretive programs and exhibits, research, publications and events.

Position Description

The History Center of Olmsted County is seeking an experienced and dynamic Executive Director for a full-time, on-site position.

The Executive Director will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of HCOC's operations, including program development, financial management, and staff supervision. As a mentor to staff, the Executive Director will motivate and empower the team to achieve their best work.

In addition to operational responsibilities, the Executive Director will be a passionate leader who inspires others to engage with the History Center's mission. The leader will work in partnership with the Board of Directors to ensure sound organizational governance and fulfillment of HCOC's mission. The Executive Director will also have responsibilities in cultivating and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, including partner groups, donors, members, volunteers, and community leaders.

Specifically, the Executive Director will:

I. Governance and Organizational Leadership:

- Partner with the Board of Directors to ensure HCOC is fulfilling its mission.
- Communicate effectively with the Board and provide all information necessary for the Board to make informed decisions in performance of its governance functions.
- Work with the Board of Directors to develop, implement and update policies and procedures as needed to guide HCOC's operations and support its mission and goals.
- In collaboration with the Board of Directors, develop, implement, and regularly refine a strategic plan that both upholds the History Center's values and maximizes its impact.
- Promote HCOC's programs and services to key stakeholders to increase awareness and support for the HCOC's mission and the importance of preserving, collecting, researching, and interpreting historical information.
- Act as HCOC's spokesperson and represent it at public events, speaking engagements, and in the media.

II. Financial Management & Leadership:

- Oversee HCOC's financial management in partnership with the Board to ensure the organization is financially sound and operating with financial prudence for long-term sustainability.
- Work with the Board Treasurer and Executive Committee to develop the History Center's annual budget and ensure its alignment with organizational goals and priorities.
- Monitor financial performance and making adjustments as needed to ensure that the organization is operating within its budget.
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- Collaborate with the Board of Directors and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for revenue growth and cost savings, while also ensuring the organization remains financially stable and sustainable for the long term.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of best practices in nonprofit financial management and ensure HCOC's financial policies and procedures are in compliance with all relevant regulations and guidelines.

III. Fundraising and Development:

In partnership with the Board of Directors:

- Develop and lead the implementation of a comprehensive fundraising plan that aligns with the History Center's mission and goals and focuses on those strategies with the highest potential return on investment.
- Identify and cultivate relationships with high-level donors, foundations, government agencies and other potential funding sources that will lead to deeper relationships with and support for HCOC.
- Provide leadership and direction to staff and volunteers involved in fundraising and development activities and ensure all efforts are aligned with HCOC's strategic goals and priorities.
- Seek and manage grants to fund a variety of projects, including rejuvenation and activation of our unique historical structures.
- Ensure the organization raises sufficient funds to meet its goals and expand its impact, monitoring progress toward fundraising goals and making adjustments as needed.
- Stay current regarding best practices in fundraising and work to continuously improve HCOC's fundraising efforts.

IV. Staff Management and Mentorship:

In partnership with the History Center's Associate Director:

- Build and lead an effective team capable of achieving the History Center's goals through effective management and innovative thinking.
- Foster a positive work environment and promote teamwork and collaboration, encouraging staff members to contribute their unique perspectives and talents.
- In conjunction with our Associate Director, ensure that the organization provides regular feedback to staff members through ongoing mentoring and formal performance evaluations, with the goals that they are meeting performance expectations and growing professionally.
- Model and promote the organization's values and culture, setting a high standard for ethical and effective behavior in all interactions and ensuring that all staff share a common vision.

Qualifications

- Master's degree in a relevant field, such as nonprofit management, business, marketing, museum studies with a focus on management practices.
- Minimum of three years of experience in nonprofit management or a related field.
- Experience with historical preservation principles and best practices.
- Strong leadership, communication (oral and written), and interpersonal skills. Proven comfort and effectiveness with public speaking.
- Previous experience supporting and partnering with a Board of Directors.
- Demonstrated experience in fundraising and development, including grant writing.
- Knowledge of nonprofit financial management and budgeting.
- Self-directed and able to work independently, as well as with a team.
- Strong project management skills, ability to balance competing priorities, complex situations, and tight deadlines.
- Strong knowledge and skills in organizing and leading meetings/trainings in both person and virtual settings.

Core Knowledge and Competencies

- Exceptional organizational, interpersonal, and administrative skills, with a keen attention to detail.
- Knowledge and competency related to history, including an ability to effectively communicate about trends and issues in operating historical museums.
- Proven track record of completing strategic and tactical operational improvements with metrics-driven results.
- Strong leadership abilities, complemented by excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work in partnership with a Board of Directors.

Location

Rochester, Minnesota, with a population of 122,000 residents, is the county seat of Olmsted County. The county's population is nearly 165,000 residents. It is the largest city in southeastern Minnesota and the state's third largest city behind Minneapolis and St. Paul. It attracts more than 3.5 million visitors year-round, primarily due to Mayo Clinic but also for regional, state, and national sporting and cultural events.

Olmsted County is part of Minnesota's vast prairie and oak savannah natural area. It is located on the northwestern corner of the Driftless Area, also known as Bluff Country, comprised of southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin, and northeast Iowa. Never covered by ice during the most recent ice age, its landscape is characterized by steep hills, forested ridges, deeply carved river valleys, and karst geology with spring-fed waterfalls and cold-water trout streams, offering abundant opportunities to enjoy and explore the outdoors.

Outside of Rochester, the county is primarily rural and includes the communities of Stewartville, Byron, Chatfield, Oronoco, Pine Island, Dover, and Eyota. Each has made unique contributions to the history and growth of Olmsted County, and each plays an important role in supporting the significant farms and agribusinesses of southeastern Minnesota, as well as the large businesses in Rochester.

Rochester is renowned for its scenic beauty, relaxing pace, and abundant dining, shopping, and entertainment options. It is internationally recognized for its healthcare excellence, with the world-renowned Mayo Clinic located there. Mayo Clinic employs approximately 35,000 healthcare workers in the city. It also is home to a major site of International Business Machines (IBM) and numerous related technology companies. Four universities and the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science offer educational programs that culminate in certifications Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D., and M.D. degrees in a wide variety of fields. It is conveniently approximately an hour's drive southeast of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Interview Process

Our interview process includes the following:

- Submit a resume and cover letter to warner@olmstedhistory.com (Mark Warner, president of the History Center Board of Directors) by April 30, 2025.
- Initial interviews with the History Center of Olmsted County's search committee.
- Selected candidates subsequently complete a simple questionnaire and submit three references prior to interviews with the search committee.
- Formal referencing.
- Offer extended.

Start Date: Negotiable

Salary: \$75,000 – 90,000 annually, depending on qualifications and experience, with advancement in compensation dependent on meeting performance metrics as determined collaboratively with the History Center's Board of Directors.