

Temporary Executive Director of the Woodland Plantation

Position Overview:

The Interim Executive Director (TED) will provide strategic and operational leadership for a nascent house museum at Woodland Plantation. Recently purchased by The Descendants Project, the museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the 1811 Slave Revolt, which began at the site, and the life of jazz pioneer Kid Ory, who was born at Woodland. The TED will oversee all aspects of the museum's startup phase, including planning, fundraising, operations, community engagement, and establishing a sustainable organizational framework. This is a **2 year-position** intended to guide the museum through its formative phase, with a focus on building a foundation for long-term success.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership and Strategic Planning:

- With the advisory committee, develop and implement a comprehensive operational and strategic plan for the museum's establishment and early growth.
- Manage a small, effective team to support the museum's goals, including staff and volunteers.
- Collaborate with the Woodland Advisory Committee to develop the museum's mission, vision, and governance structures.
- Develop the Woodland Board alongside the Woodland Advisory Committee.
- Establish an Executive Committee both for the Woodland Advisory Committee and Woodland Board.
- Develop site emergency plans (for fires, hurricanes, active shooters, etc.)

Fundraising and Financial Management:

- Work with founders of The Descendants Project to refine financial systems for the museum.
- Set up insurance for museum objects and systems for temporary loans.
- Carryout the Executive Committee's fundraising strategies to secure initial and ongoing funding from grants, donors, corporate sponsors, and public funding sources.
- Prepare and manage budgets, ensuring efficient use of resources and compliance with financial policies.

- Cultivate relationships with stakeholders, including foundations, government agencies, and private donors.

Program and Exhibit Development:

- With the direction of the Woodland Advisory Committee, the director will work with a team of historians, curators, and community advisors to conceptualize and develop exhibits and programs that reflect the significance of the 1811 Slave Revolt and Kid Ory's contributions to music and culture.
- Oversee the Woodland Advisory Committee's Education Subcommittee development of programming to attract and educate a diverse audience, including school groups, scholars, and local residents.

Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- Establish the museum as a trusted resource and partner in the community.
- Foster relationships with local organizations, educational institutions, and cultural leaders to create collaborative opportunities.
- Act as the primary spokesperson for the museum, representing its mission and goals to the media, donors, and public.

Operational Management:

- Oversee day-to-day operations, including facility management, staffing, and administrative functions.
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and best practices for museums and non-profit organizations.
- Create and implement policies and procedures for museum governance and operations.
- Work with preservationist/cultural resource management team to develop a preservation plan for the property and items within and around the museum, including archeological findings.

Working with the Woodland Advisory Committee and The Descendants Project:

The Woodland Advisory Committee:

- Develops key strategies to engage the Woodland Advisory Committee and their expertise.

- The TED will serve as the lead of the Woodland Advisory Committee, developing all suggestions and input on key initiatives from the committee including exhibits, design, mission, fundraising, programs and outreach opportunities.
- The TED will outline and communicate responsibilities to the advisory committee to ensure participation as outlined in the committee members' memorandum of agreements.

The Descendants Project:

- The TED will create a communication system with The Descendants Project founders, Joy and Jo Banner, to ensure the usage of Woodland for media, programs, and other events as it relates to TDP's mission.
- The TED will organize regular meetings with the founders to update them on progress of all deliverables.
- The TED will work with TDP to ensure that current grant initiatives are moving forward and are completed on time. (e.g., Humanities in Place through the Mellon Foundation)

Expected Deliverables:

- Hiring of an executive assistant in the first two months
- Hiring of an operations manager in the first three-six months
- Strategic plan with the Advisory Committee
- Mission, vision, and governance plan
- Board: including board members, descriptions, by-laws, and terms
- Budget Systems
- List of financial/sponsorship leads and community partners
- Permanent Exhibit
- Presentation at 2 panel conference sessions

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in history, museum studies, non-profit management, or a related field preferred.
- Minimum 5 years of leadership experience in a museum, cultural organization, or non-profit setting.

- Demonstrated success in fundraising, strategic planning, and program development.
- Strong knowledge of African American history, particularly the 1811 Slave Revolt and/or the cultural history of jazz.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with a proven ability to engage diverse audiences and stakeholders.
- Experience managing staff and volunteers, with a commitment to fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.
- Entrepreneurial mindset, with the ability to work independently and navigate the challenges of a start-up organization.

To apply, please send your resume and cover letter to the Director of Public History, Kalie Dutra at kalie@thedescendantsproject.org.

Salary: \$70,000 per year (starting) + benefits

Interviews will take place during the third and fourth week of March.