

OVERVIEW

Job Title:	Executive Director
Reports To:	Board of Directors
Position Type:	Full-Time / Exempt
Compensation:	\$115,000-\$125,000 (commensurate with experience), plus benefits and 401k
Hours:	40+ hours per week, including evenings/weekends/holidays as needed, depending on museum events, community engagements, and other duties, as required
Location:	Little Rock, Arkansas

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Board of Directors of Little Rock's Museum of Discovery is seeking an inspiring, creative leader to serve as our new Executive Director and drive our continued growth and evolution. The Museum is preparing for a landmark achievement in its 97-year evolution. As of the end of November 2024, for the first time since the Museum moved to its downtown River Market location in 1998, all our galleries are completely updated with brand-new exhibits designed to inspire and engage visitors of all ages. The opening of these galleries – along with Sensory Cove, an area designed specifically to support guests with Sensory Processing Disorders (SPD) and neurodivergent individuals – is the final stage of the Museum's broader, three-phase Reimagination Campaign. Each of the new galleries has been transformed into a hub for innovative learning, inspiring the next generation of thinkers, creators, and problem-solvers. By empowering young minds in STEAM, the Museum of Discovery is investing in Arkansas's future workforce, addressing a critical need for STEAM skills across the state.

To support this transformation, there are several critical objectives the Board has identified that should serve as clear foundational elements for building the next phase of the Museum's story. Specifically, the ideal Executive Director candidate will:

- **Cultivate a culture of philanthropy.** Historically, the Museum has relied on periodic capital campaigns to generate funding for milestone projects. With the completion of the fully renovated galleries at the end of 2024, the time is right to make key shifts in some of our central practices. The next Executive Director will be expected to develop a strong core of sustaining donors, members, community champions, and advocates to drive the Museum's ongoing growth and success.
- **Encourage innovation.** Build on the current operational and programmatic practices to create the space necessary to encourage the generation, testing, and implementation of fresh, new ideas and approaches for community-based collaborations and partnerships, revenue generation, educational outreach, grant opportunities, organizational dynamics, and program development / delivery with other museums.
- **Create a people-first environment.** Build and sustain a positive, engaging workplace culture by leading from a place of empathy. Culture begins at the top, and it is imperative that staff and volunteers see an Executive Director who models best practices, treats people with respect, holds everyone accountable, learns from missteps, and values collaboration and transparency. The Museum's staff and volunteers are our most valuable asset, and the Executive Director is responsible for leading the team to its full potential.
- **Focus on Board relations.** Foster transparent communications with the Museum's Board founded on an expectation of trust and collaboration. The Executive Director will actively engage with the Board to develop strategic plans (for annual operations, annual finances, and a five-year horizon), foster connections between the Board and staff members, and communicate in a timely, open, and honest fashion.
- **Develop and implement a sustainable financial planning process.** The Museum is examining both revenue and expenses to ensure that all elements are aligned with our mission and that we are as resilient as possible. There are specific opportunities in both short- and long-term financial planning, as well as improving transparency and accountability in the budgeting process.
- **Explore new partnerships.** Expand strategic outreach and partnerships to a broader pool of community partners, potential donors, organizations that offer grants, similar museums, and educational institutions. This is a key facet of innovating and supporting all these critical objectives, as well as delivering on the key

responsibilities outlined below. Bringing a passion for our mission, a desire to expand our reach and impact, and a clear commitment to representing the Museum with vigor and enthusiasm will be crucial elements of successfully embracing this opportunity.

To learn more about the evolution of the Museum, our reach, our goals, and our mission to ignite and fuel a passion for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math through dynamic, interactive experiences, check out the Museum's Scope & Impact Summary (attached below).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The scope of the Executive Director role is broad and includes overseeing all aspects of the museum's strategic vision, including education, exhibits, community engagement, donor cultivation and stewardship, and financial growth.

In support of that overall view and in addition to the key objectives described above, there are several mission-critical elements that will inform the daily responsibilities for the Executive Director:

- Serve as the primary representative of the Museum in the local community and beyond. In this role, seek out opportunities for collaborating with other museums / museum boards, Little Rock City boards, and other non-profit organizations, as appropriate.
- Actively lead the development and ongoing implementation of a refreshed five-year strategic plan for the Museum, focusing on the execution and expansion of the Museum's mission and the key critical objectives highlighted above.
- Seek out specific opportunities to reach underserved communities in the state.
- Collaborate with the Chief Development Officer to create a long-term plan for donor outreach, engagement, and retention as part of the key strategic initiative to cultivate a culture of philanthropy. Actively participate in fundraising efforts to support financial targets and development goals.
- Lead a collaborative effort with the management team to develop the Museum's annual budget for review by the Board of Directors' Finance Committee and ultimate approval by the full Board of Directors. Actively manage the budget throughout the year to meet targets, examine shortfalls, and drive adjustments as needed.
- Develop and implement – in collaboration with the Board of Directors and staff – an annual operating plan with clear priorities, rationale, and objectives. This plan should be developed in tandem with the annual budget and should be aligned with the overall strategic plan and the donor outreach/engagement plan.
- Provide direct oversight, mentoring, and career support/development to the Museum's management team – these leaders are responsible for managing the key operating departments, overseeing day-to-day activities, and delivering on the mission of the Museum.
- Oversee the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and development of all staff and volunteers.
- Prepare for and actively participate in an annual review of your strategic, operational, and people management performance with the Board's Executive Committee.

EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ATTRIBUTES

Building on the objectives and responsibilities articulated above, candidates for Executive Director should also ideally demonstrate:

- A clear passion for STEAM education, outreach, and community building.
- Experience and commitment to staff engagement, development, team building, and leading from a place of empathy. Comfort with supervision, delegation, evaluation, and mentorship.
- Bachelor's degree required, preference for study in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, or business administration. An MBA preferred.
- Minimum of 5-7 years of senior management experience, with a proven track record in leadership. Previous experience in a museum, nonprofit, and/or membership-based organization preferred.

- A track record of success in fiscal management, budget analysis and development, program innovation, and fundraising.
- Experience with successful board development and collaboration.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders to drive fundraising efforts, community collaboration, and development / expansion of the Museum's mission.

The Museum of Discovery is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In addition, we recognize it is unlikely that an applicant will meet 100% of the qualifications for a given role. If much of this job description describes you, you are highly encouraged to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply in confidence, submit the following materials via email to Megan Eves, Search Committee Chair at jobs@museumofdiscovery.org for the Search Committee's review:

1. A letter describing your interest in and qualifications for this position, including brief examples of past related experience, as relevant.
2. A résumé or C.V.
3. The names of three references with contact information.

The committee will start considering applications on December 12, 2024. The position will remain open until January 24, 2025. References will not be contacted without prior authorization.





Scope & Impact Summary

Located in Little Rock, Arkansas

Little Rock, the capital and largest city of Arkansas, is home to over 202,000 residents. As a vibrant hub of culture, commerce, and government, the city offers a rich tapestry of experiences. The Museum of Discovery stands proudly in the heart of the River Market District, surrounded by a bustling mix of shops, restaurants and entertainment venues.



Things to do

1. Foodie haven.

Little Rock boasts of several farm-to-table restaurants and a thriving craft beer scene.

2. Explore culture.

Visit ESSE Purse Museum, Little Rock Central High Historic Site, and the Clinton Presidential Center, among other top attractions.

3. Family friendly fun abounds.

From the Museum of Discovery to parks and playgrounds, there's plenty to enjoy.

4. Quick trips.

Visit Hot Springs National Park, the Buffalo National River, and Northwest Arkansas's Ozarks in three hours or less, respectively.

Little Rock Fast Facts

1. Location, location, location.

The city's strategic location at the crossroads of Interstates 30 and 40 positions it within a 550-mile radius of 40% of the nation's population and buying power, enhancing its appeal for businesses and residents alike.¹

2. Rooted in history.

Little Rock derives its name from a small rock formation on the Arkansas River, named "La Petite Roche" by French explorer Jean-Baptiste Bénéard de La Harpe in 1722.

3. Experience The Natural State.

Little Rock offers over 60 parks, the 17-mile Arkansas River Trail, and Pinnacle Mountain State Park for hiking, biking and scenic views — all just minutes from downtown.

In October 2024, Realtor.com identified Little Rock as one of the top 10 U.S. cities with the lowest cost of living, highlighting its affordability in various aspects.²



Past to Present

Museum Historical Timeline

1927

Founded by Bernie Babcock on Main Street

1998

Moved to the River Market District and changed name to the Museum of Discovery

2012

River Market Galleries renovated

2022

Capital Campaign launched to rebuild galleries after '21 flooding

2024

Curiosity Spot & Small Fry Fish Camp debuted

The Museum of Discovery, founded in 1927 by author and women's rights advocate Bernie Babcock, began as the Arkansas Museum of Natural History and Antiquities. Originally located on Main Street, it later moved to MacArthur Park, evolving into a center for science and interactive exhibits. In 1998, the museum relocated to the River Market District, **where its mission continues to be to ignite and fuel a passion for science, technology, engineering, arts and math through dynamic, interactive experiences.**



Science Lab '23



Dynamic Earth '24



Curiosity Spot '24



Small Fry Fish Camp '24

Breaking Barriers and Closing the Gap

While STEM job opportunities continue to grow in the state, producing a skilled workforce remains difficult. The innovators who will solve the problems of tomorrow are being inspired at the Museum of Discovery today. Research shows that informal science education settings such as museums is one of three integral pieces (the other two being K-12 education and higher education) needed to insure a healthy cohort of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and technologists.³

Science for All

Museum of Discovery has welcomed more than 15,000 guests who are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries through Science for All (Museums 4 All). The program discounts admission to \$2 for the SNAP cardholder and up to five additional people in their party.



Title I Outreach

Annually, the Museum of Discovery provides free admission to thousands of children from Title I schools, where at least 95% of the student body receives free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch.



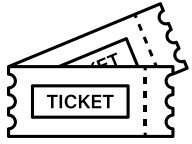
Empowering Girls

The Girls in STEM program encourages participants, ages 12-16, to realize their potential in STEM education and STEM careers. In 2024, 7 out of 10 participants said that their STEM interests changed as a direct result of the program.



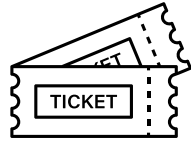
The Museum of Discovery by the Numbers

*All numbers reflect data collected from January 1, 2023 to Nov 20, 2024, unless otherwise noted.



254,719

Public Attendance*



235,226

Group Attendance



51,551

Students Attended MOD
Field Trips



1,015

Field Trips at MOD



57,427

Museum-Lead Outreach



323

Participants in
Girls in STEM



8,480

Title I Sponsored
Museum Outreach



35,000

Museum 4 All
Participants since
2018



437

Educators Trained via MOD
Professional Development
Workshops



3,185*

Active Museum
Memberships as of
*Nov 25, 2024

Accolades and Awards Over the Years

2013

National Medal for Museum & Library Service Finalist



2013

#6 Best Science Center in the United States. MENSA poll of members who are scientists and educators.



2018

Achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums



2017, 2022

2022 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for Resilience via the Association of Science and Technology Centers.



2020, 2021

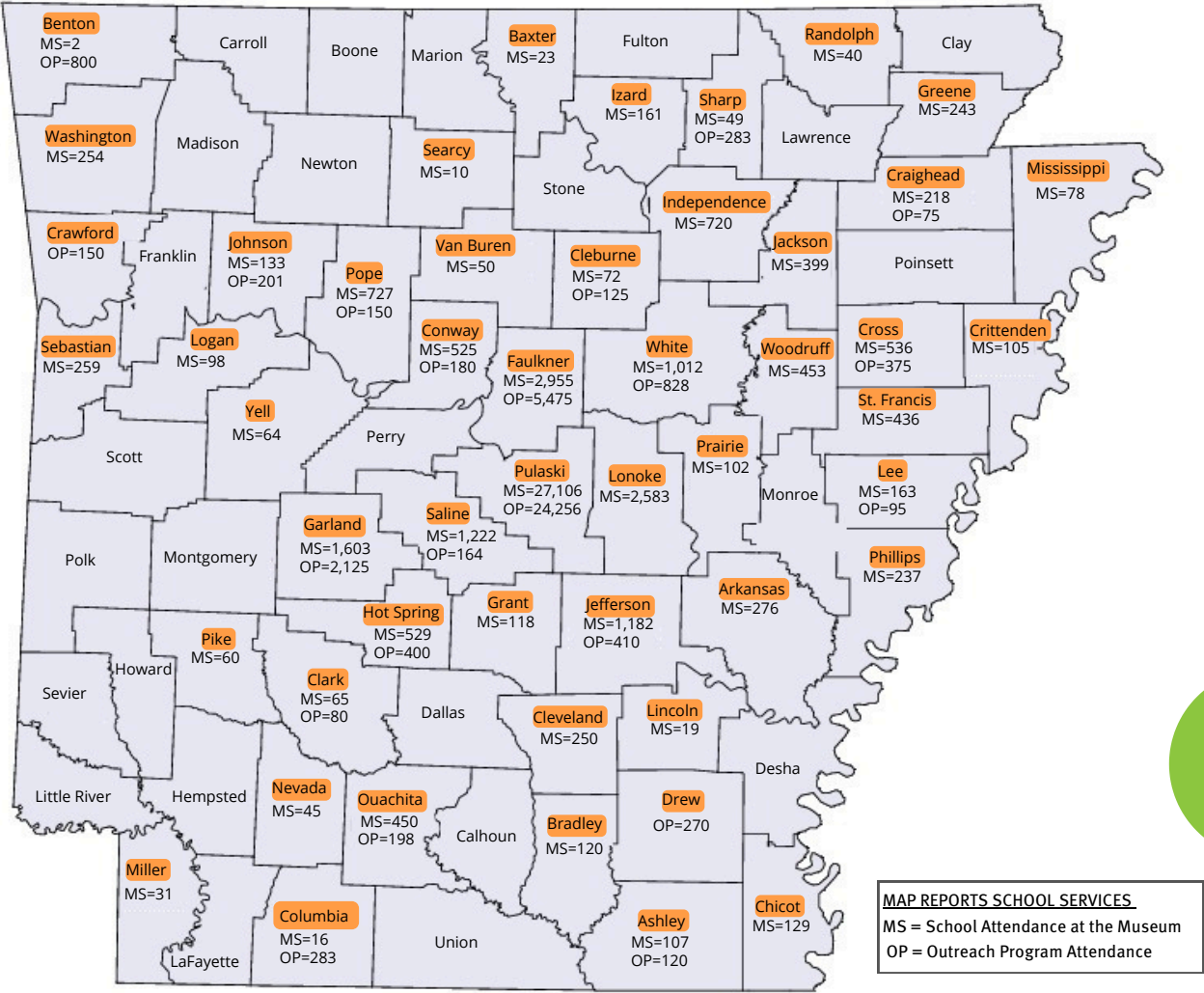
Voted #6 Best Children's Museum in the United States
USA Today Reader's Poll 2020 and 2021



Statewide Impact

The Museum of Discovery significantly enhances STEAM education across Arkansas through its dynamic exhibits and programs. In 2023, the museum’s educational programs reached 229,420 school children in 48 of the 75 Arkansas counties, as well as students in Oklahoma & Tennessee. The same year, 1,023 museum volunteers contributed a total of 9,831 volunteer hours to support these efforts.

2023 Attendance at Exhibits and Programs by School Classes



2023 ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN*

AT MUSEUM: 191,877

- Public Attendance **140,887**
- Student Attendance At Museum **50,990**
- Number Of Counties Provided School Services At *The Museum* **46**

OUTREACH: 37,543

- Festivals Special Events And Off-Site Exhibits **35,493**
- Outreach Program **2,050**
- Website **118,892**
- Number Of Counties Provided Program Services By *Outreach* **22**

*The Museum of Discovery is more than just an Arkansas institution; it’s a regional and national destination. The museum receives visitors from every state and multiple countries in a typical year.

Testimonials

From Those in the Know

“ This was just so amazing for our scholars because many of them will NEVER have the opportunity or experience of going to the museum, but if they could, they could voice wanting to because they got the chance to have a wonderful learning experience with it being brought to them! Thank you all so much!!! Please keep Daisy Bates Elementary on your hearts and minds for more outreach experiences!!”

-- LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER,
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSEUM OUTREACH PROGRAMS

“ Girls in STEM impacted me by helping me get an idea of what I want to do or not to do later on in life by showing me different jobs I can do depending on my strengths and weaknesses. My favorite memory of Girls in STEM was when we went to the Museum of Discovery and then went and dissected the catfish at the Witt Stephens Center. This showed me that while I had fun with friends and got to experience something new, I also was able to do hands on learning that isn't available to me on the regular classroom.”

-- GIRLS IN STEM PARTICIPANT, '24

“ “Thank you, Discovery Network, for your amazing guidance and support for STEAM learning in our school! From the awesome STEAM kits for our students to the relevant, engaging and fun professional development workshops for our teachers. You all have led the charge to bring STEAM education to our school!”

-- SHARON CONE,
IDA BURNS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CONWAY, ARKANSAS

“ For the future of the museum, I just hope it continues to impact lives in a positive way... Investing in the museum is investing in your community, in your quality of life.”

-- JENNY HOLMES,
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER

“ By being a member of the STEM Initiatives Program at the Museum of Discovery, we are able to bring high-quality exhibits and experiences to the Mississippi Delta.”

-- PHYLLIS HAMMONDS,
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

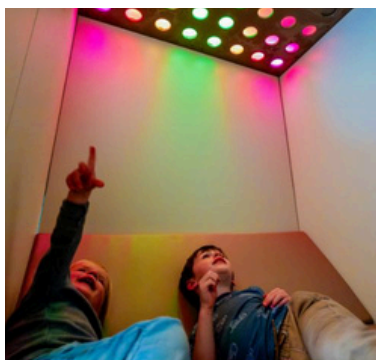


The Future is Bright

In 2027, the Museum of Discovery will turn 100. With a plan to tackle a strategic planning process, now more than ever, the museum aims to continue and expand on its mission **to ignite and fuel a passion for science, technology, engineering, arts and math through dynamic, interactive experiences.**



Accessibility for All



The Museum of Discovery is proud to be on its journey toward becoming the first museum in the state with a Certified Autism Center designation. The museum has already made significant strides, such as offering sensory-friendly backpacks at the front desk, hosting sensory-friendly hours on select Sundays, and recently unveiling Sensory Cove, a dedicated space for neurodivergent guests or those with sensory processing disorders to take a break from the excitement of the museum.

Strategic Planning

The Museum of Discovery is embarking on an exciting new chapter, with plans to develop and implement a refreshed five-year strategic plan. This initiative will advance the Museum's mission, foster innovation, engage the community, and strengthen collaborations with staff, the Board of Directors, and external partners.





Address

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Website

www.museumofdiscovery.org



Email

jobs@museumofdiscovery.org
Please contact Megan Eves, Search Committee Chair