



Director of Visitor Experience and Interpretation

Full Time Exempt

About Whitney Plantation

Whitney Plantation is the only plantation museum in Louisiana with an exclusive interpretive focus on slavery. The museum is a nonprofit 501(c)3 with a mission to educate the public about the history and legacies of slavery in the United States. Located on the site of a former sugar, rice and indigo plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish, Whitney Plantation maintains 13 original buildings that form the core of the Whitney Plantation Historic District. Through memorials, artwork, exhibits and tours, Whitney Plantation helps the public understand the present day by educating them about the past. Whitney Plantation opened to the public in December 2014 and is still a growing organization. Since opening, the museum has greeted over 450,000 people. In 2019, the museum's visitation was 106,000. Though the coronavirus pandemic has caused a downturn in visitation, Whitney Plantation is still poised for dramatic growth in the coming years. Visitors to the museum come from all over the world – 20% are international – and from around the United States. Staff, visitors and board members are ethnically and racially diverse, and the greatest share of visitors are young adults in the 18-44 age bracket.

About the Position

The Director of Visitor Experience and Interpretation is responsible for the day-to-day management of the site and high-level interpretive oversight. This position plans and executes staff training and interpretive strategies. Working with other director-level staff, the Director of Visitor Experience and Interpretation engages in long-range planning for the interpretive methods employed at the site. This includes developing and implementing new tour scripts, interpretive signage and interpretive programs. The Director of Visitor Experience and Interpretation is also responsible for making sure that overall visitor interaction with the site is seamless and well-planned. This includes working with managers to make sure the site is staffed appropriately, recruiting and training staff as needed, and ensuring that managers have all the supplies they need to successfully run the museum daily.

Visitor Experience

- Understand the totality of the visitor experience on a deep level and identify areas of improvement. Advocate for visitors' needs to the leadership team and board of directors.
- Monitor grounds regularly with the Visitor Services Manager and report facilities and preservation concerns to the Director of Historic Preservation and Facilities

- Ensure that the visitor center is always clean and presentable; report concerns stemming from cleaning crews to outside contractors or the DHPF.
- With the VSM, create training procedures for the front-line staff that are responsive to visitor needs.
- Take responsibility for visitor communication – ensure that the website, outgoing phone messages and menus, and online ticketing & sales platforms have clear communication with a unified voice. Ensure that the Visitor Services Representatives and Interpreters are clear on information and talking points.
- Make sure the grounds are accessible daily and properly staffed for regular open hours
- Kindly and professionally respond to visitor concerns through email, phone or in person
- Create schedules of tour availability through Fareharbor, the museum’s online ticketing platform
- Act as main point of contact for Acoustiguide, the museum’s audio tour provider. Coordinate audio device lease agreements; return defective devices; purchase supplies as necessary
- Coordinate with tour companies who visit the site daily

Interpretation and Training

- Implement training programs for new Interpreters and Visitor Services Representatives, coordinating as needed with other staff members
- Run regular enrichment training events including lectures and field trips for staff members
- Create trainings for any new programs, events, or exhibits that the museum hosts; ensure all staff are up to date on the museum’s functions
- Set interpretive goals and frameworks; create new tour scripts as needed; coordinate with the Education department on interpretive needs for education tours.
- Write interpretive materials as needed, which may include exhibit labels and text, interpretive signage, newsletters, or social media posts.
- Become an expert on the history of the site; deliver tours, programs and talks on site and off site about Whitney Plantation
- Keep up to date with industry-wide practices and standards for historic site interpretation; attend conferences and present on behalf of the museum
- Engage in long-range planning for the interpretive strategy of the site; actively participate in processes to create strategic plans, site plans and interpretive plans
- Work across departments on expanding interpretation of the site as new buildings are restored and opened to the public
- Create and execute interpretive events for the general public such as film screenings, lectures and seminars

Staff Supervision and HR

- Directly supervise the Visitor Services Manager, Gift Shop Manager, and Marketing Manager (vacancy).
- Indirectly supervise all Historic Site Interpreters (approximately 10); Visitor Services Representatives (approximately 5), Visitor Services Coordinator, and the Social Media Coordinator.
- With the Visitor Services Manager and HR consultant, ensure all front-line staff members and indirect reports have accurate hours submitted for payroll

- With the Visitor Services Manager, ensure that the site is appropriately staffed
- Update and contribute to the employee manual as needed; ensure labor posters are appropriately displayed in the employee break room
- Recruit, hire and onboard new historic site interpreters and visitor services representatives
- Annually review all direct reports and recommend raises to the Executive Director; supervise and assist the Visitor Services Manager to annually review all indirect reports.
- Run regular department meetings and act as liaison between the Board/Leadership team and the Visitor Services Department.

Recordkeeping, Finances and Budgeting

- Maintain accurate records of purchases in keeping with the museum's document retention policy
- Reconcile credit card statements with the accounting team in a timely fashion
- Prepare cash deposits and bring them to the bank
- Make sure downstream processes for cash handling are tight; ensure the Visitor Services Manager has good systems in place to check cash drawers and make safe deposits nightly.
- Advocate for the financial needs of the department and present budget proposals to the Executive Director annually
- Ensure that all visitation is being accurately tracked in a timely manner
- Identify relevant grants and write grant proposals for the Visitor Services department

Requirements and Experience

- BA required in a field of study related to the position
- 5+ years experience in a museum setting
- 2+ years of management experience
- Dedicated interest in African American history
- Experience in managing interpretive programs; previous work in a historic site desired
- Excellent communication skills both written and oral
- Experience with guided tour interpretation
- Experience with the museum's software a benefit: Office suite; Apple products; Paychex; Lightspeed; Fareharbor; Wordpress; Canva; Thryv; Asana

Salary and Benefits

- \$70,000 annual starting salary with yearly salary review
- Health, dental, life and short term disability insurance
- 401k with employer match
- Employee Assistance Program
- Generous schedule of paid holidays in addition to sick, vacation and FML
- Most work will be performed on site; work from home is available occasionally