

POSITION PROFILE

Director

South Carolina State Museum Foundation

Columbia, SC

June 2025





Director South Carolina State Museum Foundation

<https://scmuseum.org/>

Reporting To Executive Director, South Carolina State Museum

Location Columbia, SC

The South Carolina State Museum is the largest museum in the state, showcasing South Carolina's rich cultural and natural history and achievements in art, science, and commerce. The State Museum is a vital educational resource to the state, offering exhibitions and programs that advance its mission:

"Through innovative partnerships, comprehensive collections, and stimulating exhibits and programs, the South Carolina State Museum provides educational environments that entertain, inspire imagination and creativity, and enrich the lives of visitors."

The State Museum opened its doors in 1988 and has since inspired millions of guests through innovative exhibitions, educational programs, and engaging experiences. The museum is housed in the historic Columbia Mills Building, located in downtown Columbia along the Congaree River. Built in 1894, this structure was the first completely electrically powered textile mill in the world and marked the first major industrial installation for General Electric. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and is considered the museum's largest artifact. Original features like the mill's flooring, complete with embedded textile brads and rings, have been preserved, offering visitors a tangible connection to South Carolina's industrial past. In 2014, following a successful \$23 million capital campaign, the museum grew to include an observatory, planetarium, 4D theater, and expanded programmatic spaces. The State Museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and is a Smithsonian Affiliate Museum.

The State Museum is supported by the South Carolina State Museum Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that raises funds to advance its mission and expand its impact. Together, they work to preserve the state's stories and inspire lifelong learning across South Carolina.

The State Museum is officially recognized as a state agency within South Carolina state government. This affiliation means the museum operates under state oversight through a Board of Commissioners and is eligible to receive public funding to support its mission. This relationship underscores the museum's role as a public institution dedicated to serving the educational and cultural needs of South Carolina residents.

For over 36 years, the Foundation has been the primary fundraising and advancement partner to the museum. Through an operating agreement with the museum, the Foundation Director reports to the Executive Director of the museum and all Foundation staff are state employees (receiving state employee benefits). In addition, the Foundation Director partners very closely with the Foundation's separate Board of Directors.



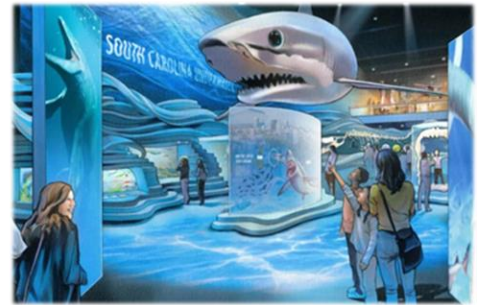


Future Plans

This is an exciting moment for the South Carolina State Museum as it embarks on a new \$75 million [Reimagine the Experience](#) Capital Campaign. With over half already pledged through public and private sources, the campaign will revolutionize the museum experience for visitors and expand its educational impact state-wide. This collaborative project will allow the museum to share more of its extensive collection of over 1.1 million objects and specimens and renew over 150,000 square feet with updated permanent exhibitions and immersive multimedia experiences which highlight the fascinating stories and people throughout South Carolina's history. Through these new spaces and engaging explorations of objects, the museum will offer guests the opportunity to connect with each other and the many communities that call South Carolina home.

Featured additions will include:

- New immersive exhibitions and exciting multimedia experiences.
- Hands-on and accessible education spaces and state-of-the-art collection storage
- In-depth explorations of historical artifacts, natural history specimens and fossils, and art from the museum's collection.
- More people and their stories represented from across South Carolina
- Expanded state-wide educational reach and impact.



Columbia, SC

As South Carolina's capital and home to the University of South Carolina and several HBCUs, Columbia offers a vibrant downtown, a thriving arts scene, diverse dining, and a strong sense of community. Named one of [Southern Living's Top 5 "Cities on the Rise"](#) in 2024, Columbia blends small-town charm with urban opportunity.

Downtown Columbia is a lively and dynamic urban center known for its unique and historic architecture, weekly ["Soda City Market"](#) (named the 2025 best farmers market in the country by USA Today) and exceptional dining experiences, including a 2024 James Beard award-winning wine bar and restaurant. The city features a variety of [neighborhoods and suburbs](#), each with its own appeal. The housing market is notably affordable, well below the national average, and surrounding suburbs offer a variety of community amenities. Lexington is ideal for families, known for top-rated schools and parks. Lake Murray offers lakefront living with easy city access, while Forest Acres provides a mix of convenience and character near downtown.

Surrounded by scenic rivers and parks, including Congaree National Park and its annual synchronous fireflies natural event, Columbia is perfect for outdoor enthusiasts. Centrally located in the state, it is less than two hours from both the mountains and the coast. With a low cost of living, mild winters, and a growing job market in education, healthcare, and government, Columbia delivers a well-rounded lifestyle and growth opportunities.





Scope and Responsibilities

The Foundation Director, an experienced senior fundraiser and an expert in good philanthropic practices, is a vital advocate for the Foundation and its signature role in supporting the State Museum. The Foundation Director will lead ongoing donor stewardship efforts as well as private fundraising towards the ambitious Capital Campaign goals. This role is crucial for driving the museum's strategic fundraising initiatives and enhancing and building donor relationships in support of the museum's future. They must be able to cultivate, build, and maintain strong and authentic relationships, both internally and externally, with a wide range of funders, partners, and community leaders. Additionally, the Foundation Director, in close collaboration with the Museum's Executive Director, will lead, inspire, and support the Foundation Board in their philanthropic work, communicating effectively so that each member is heard, valued, and understands their part in the success of the Foundation and the State Museum.



The Foundation Director reports to the SCSM Executive Director and holds responsibility for both the day-to-day operations of the Foundation and shaping the future of the Foundation through vision, values, leadership, and strategy. While responsible for managing the activities of 501c3 Foundation and working with the Foundation's Board of Directors, the Foundation Director is a state employee (with state employee benefits) and a key member of the Museum's Executive Leadership Team.

Specific responsibilities will include:

- Develop and implement a smart, comprehensive and effective fundraising strategy to raise significant funding for the museum's priority initiatives and *Reimagine the Experience* Capital Campaign. Coordinate Campaign efforts with funds being raised for ongoing museum operations, ensuring strategies to meet these two major needs work hand-in-hand.
- Represent the SCSM Foundation and Museum with key stakeholders, donors, partner organizations and diverse communities throughout South Carolina.
- Assure that the Foundation's stewardship efforts align with the museum's funding priorities through thoughtful planning, communication and decision-making with key stakeholders.
- Maintain a portfolio of major donors and be responsible for cultivation and stewardship of this portfolio. Identify and steward new prospects that have both capacity and demonstrated interest in advancing mission-related priorities of the Museum and Campaign. Expand relationships with donors throughout the state.
- Communicate about the Museum and the Campaign in public arenas to spread awareness of the museum's initiatives and garner support.
- Work closely with the SCSM Foundation Board Chair, SCSM Museum Executive Director, and SCSM Foundation Board Executive Committee to understand and advance appropriate board governance; maintain clear lines of communication and provide well-defined opportunities for board engagement; lead the Board in its strategic planning and establish objectives based on goals and budget considerations agreed upon by the Board; arrange and attend board meetings and activities including preparing facilities and agendas; oversee





materials development; implement board directives; communicate with the Board between meetings.

- Lead and staff manage the SCSM Foundation team, which includes staff responsible for donor stewardship, museum membership, grant management and Foundation administration and finances. Ensure that each Foundation team member understands their responsibilities, has the resources to do their job well, and has opportunities for continued professional development and growth.
- Hold fiduciary responsibility for the Foundation's budget and annual audit, ensuring that the Foundation's financial and administrative practices adhere to non-profit best practices and American Alliance of Museum's accreditation standards for public trust and accountability.
- Regularly prepare and present general fundraising and Campaign strategy, data and reports to Museum and Foundation Leadership, the SCSM Museum Commission and the SCSM Foundation Board.
- Serve as a thought partner to the SCSM Museum Executive Director, and a key member of the Museum's Executive Leadership team.

Key Selection Criteria

- A proven fundraising track-record with significant major gift and/or capital campaign experience and demonstrated success in cultivating, soliciting and successfully closing 6- and 7-figure leadership gifts.
- Demonstrate integrity, strong diplomatic skills, poise, and extraordinary emotional intelligence in interacting and building relationships with diverse constituencies and significant partners.
- Successful experience mentoring and managing a talented and effective team of fundraising professionals.
- An appreciation of and respect for the Museum's history, mission, values, programs, and brand.
- Some travel, evening and weekend work is required.
- A bachelor's degree in business, arts/non-profit management or related field.
- An MBA, MS in arts/or non-profit management, or related advanced degree is preferred.
- 10+ years soliciting major gifts of \$500K+ and/or leadership of a major non-profit capital campaign is highly preferred

Personal / Professional Attributes

- A good listener and strategist with a professional and resourceful style; the ability to take initiative; comfortable receiving input from many sources and able to bring others together, build consensus, and create cohesive and well-supported plans.
- Strong work ethic coupled with an enthusiastic and optimistic approach to one's work.
- Strong financial and project management skills.
- Proven success in a complex and fast-paced environment
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and ability to expertly present the Museum and Foundation to a wide range of constituencies and audiences.
- A history of strong collaboration and actively seeking strategic partnerships.
- Curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Experience using donor database management technology; experience utilizing CRM software is a plus.





Contact Information

DHR Global has been exclusively retained to assist with this search. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to any of the individuals listed below:

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