

POSITION OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE CINCINNATI OBSERVATORY



ABOUT CINCINNATI OBSERVATORY

Tucked away in a historic residential neighborhood of Cincinnati sit two buildings from a different era. When you drive up the narrow, tree-lined street past grand Victorian homes you feel the history in your bones. And at the end of the street stands the definition of “Observatory” – a picturesque jewel-box of a building capped by a silver dome.

The Cincinnati Observatory is known as ‘The Birthplace of American Astronomy.’ It houses one of the oldest working telescopes in the world and was the first public observatory in the western hemisphere. Recently restored to its original beauty, the Observatory is a fully functioning 19th century observatory used daily by the public and amateur astronomers. The historic buildings are designated as a National Historic Landmark, and the grounds provide a serene, park-like setting while still being centrally located in the city of Cincinnati.



MISSION & VISION

The mission of the Cincinnati Observatory Center will be to maintain the integrity and heritage of a historic 19th century observatory while promoting the study and practice of 21st century astronomy and science.

Our vision is to be a primary resource in furthering astronomy and science education through programming:

- For K-12 schools and the public on and off our campus
- For universities and classes for teacher professional development
- To promote the rich history of the Observatory
- To strengthen our connection to allied STEM organizations



HISTORY

In 1843, Cincinnati professor Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel began raising money for a telescope and to build a public observatory to be enjoyed by all. He went door to door asking \$25 (an average monthly salary in that time!) In 45 days, Mitchel raised \$7,500 – enough for Mitchel to travel to Europe to shop for a proper telescope. In Munich, he discovered a Merz & Mahler 11-inch lens of incomparable quality. The tube was then constructed of brass and mahogany and the completed refractor telescope was shipped via New Orleans to Cincinnati.

On November 9, 1843, a crowd of thousands witnessed former President John Quincy Adams, who traveled from Massachusetts to lay the new Observatory building's cornerstone on Mt Ida, which was renamed Mt. Adams to commemorate his visit. In 1873, the Observatory moved six miles east to escape downtown Cincinnati's smoke to a place that would become known as Mt. Lookout in honor of the new Observatory. Developer and later Cincinnati Bell president, John Kilgour donated the land for the new 14 acre campus and underwrote construction of the new building. Famed Cincinnati architect Samuel Hannaford designed the Greek revival building. In 1904, the Observatory purchased a 16-inch Alvan Clark and Sons refractor telescope and built a second building on the campus to house the original Merz & Mahler 11-inch refractor telescope to continue sharing the universe with the public.



HISTORY

Unfortunately, by the mid-twentieth century, the Observatory sat dormant and there was talk of demolishing the Observatory buildings. Thankfully, in the 1990s, a coalition of neighbors, historians, preservationists, and astronomers “saved” the Observatory with a dedication to “preservation, renovation, education.” In 1999, the Cincinnati Observatory Center (COC) was established to operate the Observatory and adopted a bold new mission to serve as a center for astronomy education utilizing the Observatory for STEM education in local K-12 schools. Under the new organization, both telescopes were brought back into working order and the domes were repaired. Currently, the COC serves over 12,700 school students a year. In addition, more than 32,000 people come annually to the Observatory to participate in astronomy presentations, learn about planets, and view through the two historic telescopes. The Observatory annually presents over 850 events and programs on the campus and in community settings and schools.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The Executive Director is responsible for the stewardship of the Observatory's resources and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organization to achieve its mission of educating, engaging, and inspiring the community about astronomy and science.

STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Leads the development and execution of a cohesive strategy for future growth and sustainability.

- Leads the annual strategic planning process and champions the development and communication of the organization's vision, strategies, and long-range operating plans and objectives.
- Serves as a change agent who identifies the future needs of the organization and provides the framework, resources, and direction to enable the Observatory to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Establishes clearly defined key performance indicators and holds the organization accountable for executing annual strategic and operational plans that align with annual operating budgets and goals.
- Works with the Board and senior staff on the development of financial plans, budgets, and forecasts.
- Monitors financial performance and seeks outside counsel from trusted advisors to challenge internal assumptions on the organization's operating model.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Manages relationships and programs that strengthen partnerships, create well balanced revenue streams, and build engagement with key constituents.

- Champions the Observatory in the community. Objectives include educating the public on the value of astronomy and science, furthering the organization's reach, and generating interest in the organization's mission and programs.
- Deepens the connections with current partner organizations and identifies new partners and corporate sponsors through networking and research.
- Develops partner-specific business models that create long-term value and advances the Observatory's mission.
- Participates in the recruitment and onboarding of Board members and ensures Board members' expectations are clear and the members are appropriately engaged.

THE OPPORTUNITY

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

Cultivates and diplomatically wins the support of donors to ensure appropriate revenue streams.

- Partners with the Development Director on developing donor strategies and communication plans, including cultivating relationships with major donors and prospects.
- Ensures establishment of a cohesive plan to diversify the organization's revenue streams and, with the Development Director, identifies and develops alternative sources of funding.
- Ensures building the Observatory's brand equity with donors, members, partners and the community-at-large by consistent messaging through traditional and non-traditional marketing, social media and communication channels.
- Works closely with staff and Board in establishing and maintaining a robust marketing plan to promote the Observatory's programs to members, schools, and the general public.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Effectively manages, motivates, and engages with staff to ensure professionally managed finances, public relations, and operations within budget.

- Builds a team committed to operational excellence and fulfillment of the Observatory's mission. Remains in tune with the team's needs and empowers members with the training, tools, and resources necessary for success.
- Works with Observatory staff, committees, volunteers, and community partners to plan, develop, and implement new programs, projects, and initiatives consistent with the Observatory's mission and to assess the feasibility of such new programs, projects, and initiatives.
- Monitors the overall effectiveness of the Observatory's processes, systems, and operations.
- Interacts with Board members and staff to develop and implement best practices, coordinate activities, and solve organizational or departmental challenges.
- Works with Facilities and Collections Manager to ensure the historic buildings and collections are properly maintained consistent with their National Historic Landmark status, including preventative maintenance, capital requirements for renovations and upgrades, and management of the Observatory's historical artifacts and assets.

IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

EXPERIENCE & EXPERTISE

- Preferred 7-10 years of executive or senior management experience successfully leading teams and organizations is required
- Previous leadership experience in the nonprofit sector is strongly preferred
- Bachelor's Degree (required) or Master's Degree (preferred)
- Proven ability to establish a strategic vision, setting a comprehensive strategy for the COC and to lead the organizational, management and cultural changes to realize that vision
- Proven financial acumen and experience with diversified revenue sources, and success in maintaining fiscal stability
- Experience in building successful funding and financial relationships with partners
- Has demonstrated experience in building consensus among diverse stakeholders and facilitating action towards a common goal
- Ability to manage staff including the ability to improve team and individual performance
- Ability to perform and provide clear decision-making leadership while juggling multiple responsibilities
- Must have a collaborative, team-oriented management style that engages leadership
- Must possess an entrepreneurial and visionary mindset with the ability to implement solutions that realistically embrace aspirational goals
- Excellent interpersonal, written and oral communication skills, confidence and experience in public speaking
- Background in science, astronomy, museums, or educational institutions is strongly preferred

ATTRIBUTES

- Positive, upbeat personality
- Leadership and inspirational qualities
- Exhibits openness, transparency, and honesty
- Experience managing through conflict and crisis
- Able to provide candid feedback with good intentions
- Builds relationships that are strategic and not transactional
- Views management and leadership as a form of mentorship

HOW TO APPLY

CONTACT

Jessica Multhauf from ALINITI is leading the search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications (including a resume and letter of interest) should be directed electronically to this email

jmulthauf@aliniti.com

Cincinnati Observatory provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

ABOUT ALINITI

ALINITI goes beyond basic HR consulting and provides the guidance, roadmap, and support needed to reach your organizational goals. We have been helping organizations and business leaders solve people and organizational challenges for 20 years. We're here to assist you with everything from recruiting and HR compliance to organizational development and training. For more information, please visit www.aliniti.com.