



# Historical Society of Princeton

## Executive Director

Princeton, NJ



From the time of the native Lenne-Lenape people to today's city of ideas, education, and economic success, Princeton's history captivates, with elements of just about all the movements, trends, rights, and wrongs, of the American story. A mission-driven team and the Board of Trustees at the Historical Society of Princeton has preserved and told this story since 1938, with a long-time home at the historic Georgian Bainbridge House in downtown Princeton, but now, since 2016 at the six-acre Updike Farmstead.

To replace the successful departing Executive Director, the Society seeks a leader ready to build upon the Society's strengths while guiding it through a transition to new messages detailing its important work. This is a compelling opportunity for a mission-driven leader with strong external affairs skills, the ability to lead a collaborative, hard-working team, and an eagerness to partner with a talented Board of Trustees on behalf of the Society.

## About the Historical Society of Princeton

The Historical Society of Princeton headquarters is at Updike Farmstead at 354 Quaker Road. A hub for cultural enrichment, experiential education, and stewardship of collection and places, HSP preserves and shares Princeton's diverse, important, and fascinating stories with wide audiences. In so doing, HSP enhances community vitality and builds historical literacy, cornerstones of healthy civic culture.

### Our Mission

Inspired by the worldly and entrepreneurial spirit of the citizens of Princeton, and graced by the important legacy of the town, the Historical Society of Princeton develops signature programs of learning and discovery to connect the lessons of the past to the issues which inform our future. Using historic sites and collections, we teach local and international visitors that history is relevant in daily life and can be used to explore a shared connection among people; to celebrate a love of place; and to promote conversations on creating a better future.

### Our Vision

If we are successful in our mission, our audiences will have a passion for history and will appreciate its importance in connecting with others and learning about the world around them. By inspiring children and adults to be curious history stewards, we hope to pass along the important lessons of the past. We believe our work will ultimately lead to respectful and responsible behavior among people, toward each other, and toward the built and natural world around us.

## Program

It isn't possible to capture the richness of the Society's collection or programming here. Candidates should visit the HSP website to learn more and then be prepared to marvel when viewing the fullness of the collection during finalist visits. Here are a few highlights:

## Collections Stewardship

The Society's diverse collection of manuscripts, photographs, maps, and artifacts are the building blocks of strong programming and resources frequently used by patrons and researchers. Highlights include the largest college of Albert Einstein's personal belongings in the world, including 65 pieces of furniture from his home in Princeton, the Rose Studio Photo Collection, papers from important Princeton families, and oral history audio tapes collected in the Princeton History Project.

## Exhibitions

Permanent exhibitions include the Einstein Salon and Innovators Gallery, Rex Goreleigh: Migrant Worker's Witness, the Farmstead History Trail, Garden State History Garden, and artwork created at Updike Farmstead. Planning has continued to progress for the development of a new Princeton history exhibition at our Updike Farmstead headquarters. This permanent exhibition will use HSP's remarkable collections to highlight the many extraordinary stories -- both known and unknown -- found throughout our small town's history.

Additional permanent and temporary exhibits are housed at the Arts Council of Princeton, Mountain Lakes, and the Princeton Public Library, along with digital exhibitions on the website.

## Public Programs

The weekly Princeton History walking tour, along with other focused walking tours, incorporates Princeton and a sense of place into the Society's work. And in a throwback to earlier times, the yearly vintage baseball game brings a sporting part of the past back to town. In addition, the Updike Farmstead facilities are a popular location for weddings and special occasions.

The Society presents lectures, panel discussions, gallery talks, and author talks on a regular basis, and joins other collaborative community events over the course of the year.

## Co-Curricular Support for Schools

Students from local public schools and Princeton University participate in walking tours of the town and campus. Additionally, elementary school students take field trips to Updike Farmstead. The Society also created the required third-grade local history curriculum for Princeton Public Schools.

Throughout these programs, there is a heightened awareness of the overlooked stories of underrepresented people living in the Princeton area over the years. The Society is keenly aware of its responsibility for telling all the stories of Princeton, including those yet to be discovered.

## Position and Responsibilities

HSP seeks a visionary and entrepreneurial Executive Director with demonstrated success in implementing a vision, high-level management, and operational and development skills to lead and direct activities at HSP. This full-time staff member serves as HSP's organizational leader. The Executive Director oversees all daily operations and is responsible for maintaining HSP's fiscal health and managing and inspiring HSP's talented team of staff and volunteers. With the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director develops and executes HSP's strategic plan and long-range vision, ensuring HSP is forward-looking and innovative. The Executive Director will establish an appropriate balance between revenue and capacity-building initiatives in order to achieve mission-driven growth and transformation. This position reports to the Board of Trustees.

## Priorities

In considering the work ahead at HSP, the search committee and staff members have identified six key competencies that they seek. They hope for a leader who will:

- Drive vision and purpose
- Drive Engagement
- Collaborate
- Communicate effectively
- Build effective teams
- Provide operational insight.

Candidates will be asked for examples around these competencies during the interview process. In addition, the Society seeks:

- A leader who brings a sense of mission and an appreciation for the importance of history in the life of individuals and the community.

- A leader who can effectively balance the need for internal and external work, with particular attention on fundraising and building strong ties with donors, grant makers, and the wider community.
- A dynamic speaker and writer who can quickly learn and then compellingly tell the story of the Society, and Princeton history, to a wide range of audiences.
- An entrepreneurial leader familiar with the energy and strategies needed to create something new at the Society and then scale it to serve a wider audience.
- A leader who can work alongside other strong local non-profit organizations with similar missions while also understanding the competition for support and attention faced by all non-profit organizations.
- A person of great energy and work ethic
- A thinker and strategist who can bring innovative ideas and strong problem-solving skills to the Society
- An open-minded leader who comes with an understanding and a willingness to learn about the intersection of history and today's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

## Qualifications

Optimal experiences for candidates would include:

- Minimum of 10 years demonstrated successful senior-level experience with nonprofit, business development, and/or historic site management or other translatable sectors, with proven people development, budgeting, and fundraising skills.
- A degree or advanced degree in a relevant field such as education, non-profit leadership, library science, history, business, or museum work.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising and building relationships with potential donors, building/growing a diverse donor base, and raising significant funds for capital projects or new business ventures.
- Evident commitment to experiential public engagement for culturally diverse audiences.
- Track record of effectively collaborating with, motivating, and engaging a volunteer Board of Trustees.

## Start Date

As soon as possible, but flexible with regard to candidate obligations with current employer.

This position description is based upon material provided by the Historical Society of Princeton, an equal opportunity employer.

The Historical Society will give equal treatment to all applicants for employment and to all employees. It will not discriminate due to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, religion, or national origin.

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