Preserving America's Heritage

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH
Position Description
GG 0301 – Grade 15

Summary

The Director of the Office of Communications, Education, and Outreach (OCEO) reports to the Executive Director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and operates under his general supervision. Using print, electronic, and other media, the incumbent has responsibility for conveying the ACHP's message and image, in addition to information about the economic, educational, and cultural benefits of historic preservation, to the Administration, Congress, federal agencies, the preservation community, and the public.

The Director identifies and fulfills communications needs and strategies, and informs appropriate entities of the ACHP's policies, programs, services and activities. The Director plans, executes, and evaluates the effectiveness of information and communication exchanges in furthering agency goals. To that end, the incumbent oversees four ACHP professional staff responsible for conducting all agency communications, education, and outreach activities.

The ACHP was established from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) which charges the agency with advising the President and the Congress on historic preservation matters and entrusts the ACHP with the unique mission of advancing historic preservation within the federal government and the national historic preservation program. In addition, the ACHP has a key role in carrying out the Administration's Preserve America initiative.

Skills required for this position include demonstrated managerial and supervisory experience, written and oral communications expertise, proficiency in print and Web design oversight, effective analysis of media and outreach needs, as well as a talent for and experience with marketing and promotion, and budget and contracting expertise.

Duties

With general oversight by the Executive Director, the Director is responsible for planning, developing, and executing all ACHP communications and outreach efforts to inform and educate the Administration, Congress, federal agencies, and the general public about agency mission, and the economic, cultural, and educational benefits of historic preservation and heritage tourism. The Director coordinates with the ACHP Chairman on high-level policy issues and matters pertaining to coordination with the White House, and works closely with the ACHP's CEO Committee and its chairman on establishing priorities and carrying out office activities.

The Director:

1. Determines communications needs and informs appropriate entities of ACHP policies, programs, services, and activities, and plans, executes, and evaluates the effectiveness of information and communication exchanges in furtherance of agency goals;

2. Determines the content, design, and distribution of all ACHP print and electronic material to convey agency image and message, and the benefits of historic preservation;

3. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with key national historic preservation organizations, Congress, the Administration, federal agencies, and other specialized groups interested in the ACHP's programs, initiatives, and activities;

4. Directs all ACHP award programs, including development of award criteria, management of the nomination and review process, and conduct of media outreach;

5. Ensures appropriate ACHP presence and participation in workshops, conferences, seminars, and other meetings with various organizations to stimulate interest and understanding of ACHP activities, historic preservation, and heritage tourism;

6. Ensures that appropriate members of Congress and the Administration are kept apprized of relevant ACHP activities and issues;

7. Targets or develops special events, ceremonies, and other activities intended to foster interest in historic preservation, heritage tourism, and the full range of ACHP duties under NHPA;

8. Oversees appearance, design, and content of all ACHP-managed Web sites;

9. Manages contracts with outside sources for production of print and electronic products critical to agency success when necessary;

10. Provides print and electronic media with timely, relevant information about the ACHP, its activities, and the economic, educational, and cultural benefits of historic preservation, ensuring broad and appropriate distribution of such information.

Knowledge Required

Experience in managing communications and media outreach is required for this position. Expertise in using print and electronic media, overseeing design and production of publications, and developing innovative strategies to reach constituencies through all forms of media, as well as through marketing and promotional venues, is essential. The ability to oversee the creation of innovative and high-quality Web and print products, exhibits, and other communications vehicles is mandatory.

Familiarity with the field of historic preservation and the National Historic Preservation Program and roles of the federal, state, and local governments, private organizations and the public is important. Also required is the ability to analyze and convey ACHP preservation policy and practice to federal, state, and local preservation partners and the public.

Knowledge of interagency coordination, intergovernmental relations and public participation principles and techniques, the ability to work with many varying personalities, and the exercise of tact, independent

judgment, and discretion. Experience in managing a communications unit and coordinating the activities of other professional staff is essential. Knowledge of federal employment and employee relations practices, government-wide legal and ethics requirements, customer service standards, and fiscal controls.

Knowledge of contracting, issuing Requests for Proposals, and bid review is desirable.

Ability to develop new methods to exchange information regarding ACHP activities with Congress and preservation partners and oversee the ACHP's Office of Communications, Education, and Outreach to ensure consistency of message and graphic appearance.

Supervisory Controls

The Director works under the general supervision of the Executive Director. The Director coordinates closely with the Chairman on matters of high sensitivity and visibility and with the Communications, Education, and Outreach Committee comprised of council members. Priorities and tactics are established using knowledge of policies and previous experience. The Director identifies, initiates, and completes most initiatives without direct supervision and must be able to analyze and make recommendations regarding any difficult or complex situations not covered by previous instruction or experience with Executive Director. The Director consults with the Executive Director, the Chairman and his immediate staff, other ACHP Office Directors, and council members regarding major decisions involving education, media, communications, outreach, and congressional liaison activities on an as-needed basis.

Supervisory Responsibilities

The Director supervises a staff of four: Communications Coordinator, Web manager, Writer/Editor, and Program Assistant. The Director establishes office work plans, priorities, and adjusts schedules as necessary. The Director reviews and evaluates staff products and performance, and works with employees to improve quality and timing of deliverables. Director is responsible for writing all office position descriptions, advertising for recruits, interviewing, and recommending to the Executive Director the hiring and promoting of OCEO staff. The Director works closely with employees to develop performance standards and monitor staff progress in meeting these standards. Incumbent meets with staff to discuss working conditions, expectations, advancement, and improvement to OCEO. In consultation with employees, identify developmental and educational needs and provide necessary training.

Guidelines

The Director essentially works without formal or specific standards other than those contained in the NHPA, implementing policies, procedures, and regulations of the ACHP, the ACHP's Strategic Plan, relevant Office of Management and Budget policies and guidelines, and general federal rules and policies regarding ethics and conduct. Within this frame of reference, activities are largely determined by the Director's professional experience and understanding of how best to represent the interest of both the ACHP and historic preservation. Daily guidance for the position is use of one's own initiative and resourcefulness; discussions with supervisor are for specific instructions not found elsewhere and only on an as-needed basis.

Complexity

The Director must assimilate all pertinent perspectives on a wide and complex range of preservation issues, synthesize relevant information, and formulate a plan of action to address the issues in relation to ACHP policy and mission. The latter includes oversight of publications, media outreach, Web site

appearance and content, and external communications to ensure quality, consistency, timeliness and accuracy of those materials created by the ACHP for public, external consumption.

Responsibilities entail intimate knowledge of a wide variety of extremely complex subject areas and sensitive issues and require the ability to recommend and establish office policy relating to communications and media affairs and close coordination with the Administration in furtherance of the components of the Preserve America initiative. These involve the knowledge and application of varying regulations, policy determinations, history of emerging preservation issues, the ability to work with many varying personalities, and the exercise of tact and independent judgment.

Scope and Effect

The Director exercises a high degree of independence to speak on behalf of the ACHP and convey to various preservation partners an accurate sense of ACHP preservation policy, attitude, and direction. The Director serves as primary ACHP contact for initiatives that crosscut all or many federal agencies and non-federal partners with programs that affect, or have the potential to affect, cultural resources. The Director's actions directly affect the manner in which the ACHP, federal agencies, and others fulfill the policies of the NHPA.

The Director's actions affect the successful implementation of the ACHP's communications program that conveys agency message and image to all sectors of society, promotes federal stewardship of historic properties, and encourages historic preservation and heritage tourism nationally. Work must be timely and accurate, requiring the incumbent to communicate with personal contacts listed below. If work is not properly performed it can negatively affect the overall work of the agency, the legislative program, public affairs efforts, media outreach, and general educational and outreach programs.

Personal Contacts

Personal contacts include the full spectrum of the media, preservation partners, federal, state, and local officials, businesses, non-profit organizations, and the public.

Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are to ensure that the ACHP's views, direction, and policy are effectively understood and conveyed to advance the ACHP's goals and objectives. Personal communications are made to give or exchange information, to provide or receive services, to secure concurrence or opinions, to recommend changes in processes, and to coordinate strategies to affect outcomes. Contacts are through direct personal meetings or written, electronic or telephonic communications.

Physical Demands

Work is normally sedentary, but it does require occasional travel and long working days or weekends, and physical stamina is occasionally necessary. Special events and conference participation can require packing, shipping, and moving of heavy boxes, set-up of exhibits and display materials, and other physical work. Work-related travel might expose the incumbent to the normal hazards of commercial transportation, urban environment, or extreme weather conditions, but not to the extent that they would be dangerous.

Work Environment

The work environment is typically offices, conference and meeting rooms.