

## Executive Director HumanitiesDC



HumanitiesDC (HDC) seeks an experienced executive to build upon a substantial record of achievements. The next Executive Director (ED) will be a visionary and entrepreneurial leader responsible for setting new strategies to expand access to the humanities for all Washington, DC residents. Drawing inspiration from generations of Washingtonians past, present and future, they will shape public discourse about the city's culture and civil society for decades to come.

Status: Full-time, exempt employee  
Salary: \$135,000 - \$150,000, commensurate with leadership experiences  
Reports to: Board of Directors, in close partnership with the Board Chair  
Location: Residency in Washington, DC required within 180 days of hire  
Deadline: Apply by March 18th for best consideration. Early applications encouraged.

### About HumanitiesDC

Founded in 1980, HDC has a mission to enrich the quality of life, foster intellectual stimulation, and promote cross-cultural understanding and the appreciation of local history for all DC residents. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), HDC is the federally-designated humanities council for Washington, DC and provides humanities education, lifelong learning, and public programming to communities across the city.

HDC is an independent nonprofit governed by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of local civic, cultural, and business leaders and staffed by a team of seven. HDC has a \$2.3M budget, largely derived from contributed sources including the NEH (30%) and local government (65%).

Now in its fourth decade, HDC has steered millions of dollars to the local community through grants and programs to achieve its mission. HDC engages with numerous partners, including schools, museums, historic sites, civic associations, community centers, and independent scholars to ensure equitable access to all of DC's diverse communities. A sample of signature programs include:

**Various grant programs**, which amplify DC's diverse voices, perspectives, and stories, support scholarly programming, oral history, documentaries, curriculum development, youth empowerment, and more. Awards range from \$5,000 to \$30,000. In 2021, HDC will award \$1.2M in competitive grants to various humanities organizations and projects.

**The DC Oral History Collaborative**, an innovative partnership with the DC Public Library, preserves stories and memories of DC residents as communities change. HDC equips residents with the training and financial resources they need to conduct and record high quality interviews. Since 2016, over 200 recordings have been documented, a portion of which are archived in the DC Public Library's Washingtoniana collection.

**The DC Digital Museum**, a collection of nearly 1,000 items of cultural and historic significance to DC, includes documentaries, oral histories, photographs, and other digital artifacts. The museum also archives public humanities projects funded by HDC. This resource is accessible to students, educators and scholars locally and throughout the world. [Visit the museum here.](#)

**The DC Writers Homes Project**, a database preserving the works of more than 300 novelists, poets, playwrights, and memoirists, honors Washington's literary history. In 2018, HDC became the repository for this historical research and will continue to expand this resource.

### **Recent Accomplishments**

- Achieved a major legislative victory in 2019 when it secured an annual line item of over \$1M from the DC Council. This new revenue stream significantly increases resources for the local humanities field and will expand HDC's impact for years to come.
- Increased annual total grant awards as a result of new local funding from \$158,000 in 2018 to \$1.3 million in 2020. Since 2015, HDC has awarded 290 grants totaling \$2.3 million across all eight wards of DC.
- Celebrated HDC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 with a special event honoring Marjan and Andy Shallal with the *Distinguished Service to the Humanities Award* for their commitment to creating space for art, culture, and political activism at Busboys & Poets, their local chain of restaurants named for the poet Langston Hughes.
- Partnered with NEH to administer 2020 CARES Act Emergency Relief Grant Funding. Distributed 38 grants totaling over \$400,000 in general operating support to public humanities nonprofits facing immediate economic challenges related to the pandemic.
- Launched Voices from the Frontlines in December 2020 to preserve stories of people on the frontlines of today's historical events, including struggles for racial justice, the fight against COVID-19, and the 2020 election.
- Soul of the City, HDC's former signature youth initiative, was recognized as a 2015 finalist by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' Coming Up Taller Awards.

### **Position Overview**

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the ED works closely with the Board, staff, and key stakeholders to engage the public with compelling, academically rigorous humanities content that addresses and interprets pivotal historical moments, pressing current events, and the experiences of Washingtonians from all walks of life.

HDC recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the incoming ED joins the organization at an exciting moment in its history. To prepare for HDC's next chapter, the Board will task the new ED with leading a formal planning process that charts a five-year strategy. Key priorities will include deepening the public's understanding of DC's diverse cultural and historical legacy, ensuring programmatic and grant investments prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, and expanding HDC's role as a convener and leader for the humanities.

As chief spokesperson, advocate, and partnership builder, the ED will grow HDC's presence in the community, in the media, among scholars and academics, and through key partnerships. They will form strong relationships with major donors, the DC Council, the Mayor, and local and federal agencies to sustain current revenue streams. In addition, they will develop fundraising strategies to diversify revenue and increase unrestricted funds to expand HDC's impact.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- In collaboration with the Board, staff, and stakeholders, craft a bold vision for the role of the humanities in DC. Refine programmatic and grants strategy to reflect community's needs.
- Hire, manage, and develop staff who have the expertise, skills and capacity to administer programs and grants with a high degree of professionalism, intellectual rigor, and creativity.
- Manage finances with Board oversight. Prepare budgets and track expenses. Oversee timely and accurate financial statements, funder reports, and cash flow projections.

- Supervise administration, including contractor and vendor relationships. Ensure conformity to HDC's bylaws, nonprofit best practices and local and federal laws and regulations.
- Set fundraising strategy with development staff and key board members to significantly increase support from individuals, corporations, and institutional funders.
- Shape local and federal advocacy agendas that will promote HDC's impact on the public.
- Serve as chief spokesperson, representing HDC to a broad constituency of local and federal governments, funders, community groups, schools, and the media.
- Direct an effective marketing and media relations strategy using print, broadcast, and social media platforms to maximize placement and expand HDC's visibility.
- Oversee an impactful branding strategy to apply across all platforms. Select and work closely with a web developer to upgrade HDC's website to promote programs and activities.
- Develop strategies that use grants and programs to prioritize and reflect HDC's strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.
- Collaborate with the Mayor, the DC Council, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the DC Public Library, and other agencies to advance HDC's local impact.
- Build a national profile by establishing new partnerships with peer humanities councils, the NEH, the Smithsonian, the National Park Service, and the diplomatic community.
- Monitor local and federal policies and legislation to find opportunities to expand HDC's work.
- Work with the Board to achieve good governance practices and grow financial resources.
- Partner with the Board to recruit and onboard new members. Create orientation sessions for new members to learn about HDC and their roles and responsibilities on the Board.

### **Experience, Skills, and Qualities**

The next ED will share HDC's belief in the power of the humanities to foster dialogue across communities, encourage lifelong learning, and promote civic engagement. The Board seeks an experienced senior leader who brings vision, skill, flexibility, and creativity to this role.

While no single candidate will possess every qualification listed below, all candidates will be evaluated on these priority areas that were identified by HDC's Board and staff:

- Previous professional experience in the humanities is strongly preferred.
- At least 10 years of executive-level leadership in nonprofit, public sector, academic, or social enterprise settings. Past experience as a proven, successful ED is strongly preferred.
- Regard for DC's diverse voices, history, and culture. Active in professional, social, community, and/or political networks within DC is considered a major plus.
- Proven ability to develop and implement plans that appeal to diverse audiences.
- Strong background cultivating innovative, collaborative, and academically rigorous approaches to public programming.
- Exceptionally polished and persuasive skills in written and verbal communication.
- Respect for diverse backgrounds and points of view. Track record using a racial equity lens to create inclusive programming for historically underrepresented communities.
- Working knowledge of advocacy, policy, and legislation at local and/or federal levels.
- Success with senior-level fundraising efforts; ideally has existing relationships with prospective individual and corporate donors.
- Skilled in nonprofit administration of budgets, finances, human resources, contracts, and public relations. Successful track record building and managing a high-performing team.
- Demonstrated leadership in maintaining an effective partnership with a Board of Directors, including governance, fundraising, recruitment, and facilitating committee work.

## **Compensation & Residency Requirements**

Compensation is in the range of \$135,000 to \$150,000, subject to experience and meeting performance objectives. HDC offers a generous benefits package that includes health, dental, vision, life insurance, retirement, and paid leave.

HDC's bylaws require the ED to reside within DC's boundaries. If relocating to DC, the new hire has up to 180 days after accepting offer to establish residency. Failure to do so may result in termination by the Board of Directors.

## **Process to Apply or Refer Candidates**

Good Insight, a national nonprofit executive search firm headquartered in Washington, DC, is conducting this search. Visit [www.good-insight.org/careers](http://www.good-insight.org/careers) to upload application materials. Confidential references and inquiries about the role may be directed to Carlyn Madden or Kessa Thompson at [recruiting@good-insight.org](mailto:recruiting@good-insight.org).

For best consideration, applications should be received by March 18, 2021. Interested applicants should submit a resume and a cover letter that describe their interest in and qualifications for this role, emphasizing their leadership experiences. Qualified applicants will be contacted on a rolling basis. Early applications are encouraged due to the pace of the search.

## **Equal Opportunity Employer**

HDC has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and strongly encourages applications from candidates who identify as Black, Hispanic, or other people of color. Employment decisions are based upon one's qualifications and capabilities to perform essential functions of a particular job. All opportunities are provided without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual identity, family status, pregnancy-related medical conditions, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

## **Physical Requirements**

HDC is committed to providing access, equal opportunity, and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities in employment, its services, programs, and activities. This employee is regularly required to sit, stand, bend, stretch and kneel for long periods of time; frequently required to talk, hear, and use repetitive hand motions; and should possess the ability to push, pull, and lift up to 20 pounds unassisted.

Contact Kessa Thompson ([kessa@good-insight.org](mailto:kessa@good-insight.org)) to request reasonable accommodation for this application process.