



PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Our Mission – To connect Californians to ideas and one another in order to understand our shared heritage and diverse cultures, inspire civic participation, and shape our future.

California Humanities seeks an inspiring **Chief Executive Officer** with the curiosity, imagination and energy to help define the organization’s next chapter, and lead its work to greater impact. While embracing the richness of the more traditionally-defined humanities disciplines, the position allows the CEO to stretch and envision the humanities as fertile ground for bold thinking, for new ideas, and essential for helping individuals and groups navigate challenge and change. The CEO should bring a thoughtful willingness to:

- Advance a humanities-driven approach to addressing a broad array of urgent societal issues, such as public health, social justice, civic engagement and climate change;
- Explore how issues of power, equity and diversity overlap with California Humanities’ giving policies and practices;
- See support of the humanities as essential to giving voice to the incredible communities and diverse cultural traditions in each distinct region across the entire state.

Such exploration is already reflected in California Humanities’ creative range of funding initiatives and public programs. In fact, a primary strength of the organization lies in its ability to respond to contemporary issues with deep engagement. However, California Humanities now seeks a leader with the strategic ability to push the work further – evolving the vision and programs into an organization even better prepared to embody its values and to meet this critical societal moment.

The organization currently has a budget of \$4.5 million, a staff of ten, and a passionate board of cultural leaders from across the state. With an expansive view of California – its people, places and promise -- the CEO will represent California Humanities in every region across the state, and beyond, giving voice to the organization’s purpose, encouraging partnerships and collaborations that advance the organization’s mission, and ensuring California Humanities is seen as an important resource for all.

It is important that within the first year, the Chief Executive Officer:

- Work to thoroughly understand California Humanities – its mission and values, history, culture, programs, operations, partners, stakeholders and potential;
- Gain the confidence of the Board and staff, forging relationships of trust and cooperation that continue to bring forth their best efforts and talents;
- Assess California Humanities’ structure – ensuring that staff are well-positioned, operations are efficient, and programs are focused, relevant and mission-aligned;
- Thoroughly understand the structure, policies and requirements of the National Endowment for the Humanities – California Humanities largest funder – advancing key relationships. Prepare for, and oversee the NEH’s 5-year assessment, scheduled for October 2023;
- Cultivate solid relationships with elected officials at the local, state and national levels, prioritizing efforts to sustain the support of California senate and assembly members; Maintain a strong presence in Washington, DC at the annual *Humanities on the Hill*;
- With a commitment to regional equity and a keen listening ear, proactively engage key partners across the state – humanities practitioners, artists, community leaders and others – learning about their needs, interests, and ideas on how to advance California Humanities’ work;
- Become active in the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the national membership organization of state councils; and
- Operationalize California Humanities’ equity values statement (*found under “Equity at the Heart of Humanities” at Calhum.org*). Lead and advance the deep institution-wide exploration currently underway on what cultural and racial equity mean both for California Humanities’ internal culture (staff, board, policies, and operations), and also as a lens for its external work (grantmaking, programs, communications, and advocacy).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is further expected that the Chief Executive Officer will:

Vision, Planning, & Leadership

- Evolve California Humanities' vision and distinct identity; strategically deploy the organization's resources to maximum impact;
- Inspire collaborative thinking in the design of new initiatives. Along with staff, external partners and communities, develop innovative programs that both respond to, and create, exciting opportunities in the cultural field;
- Lead staff and board in the development of a strategic plan that is both visionary and practical – maintaining California's Humanities leadership role in advancing critical thought and cultural practice state-wide and beyond;
- Ensure that the organization's grantmaking approach centers racial and cultural equity. Surface and eliminate any barriers to funding access for underrepresented communities;
- Continue to tease out and enhance California Humanities' institutional partnerships to deepen the organization's work, expand its reach, and raise its visibility as a valuable resource in every region across the state;
- Ensure ongoing institutional and programmatic evaluation, reflection and assessment;

Organizational Development and Operational Management

- Lead a highly-skilled professional team, providing meaningful opportunities for staff development and growth;
- Advance an organizational culture, grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusion that supports the agency and productivity of all staff;
- Manage all programmatic, administrative and operational activities to optimal efficiency; Ensure appropriate staff capacity – refining structure, roles and responsibilities, as needed;
- Ensure the right balance of onsite and remote working; Fine-tune policies, operations, and technology to support a continued flexible, multi-site work environment without sacrificing creativity, efficient communication, and meaningful connection of staff with each other, or with the communities they serve;
- Provide a framework for good team collaboration, so that staff learn from each other and programs aren't siloed;

- With the support of California Humanities' financial staff (currently a contract CFO and Accountant), and the Board, oversee all financial systems, including annual budgetary processes, audits, cash flow management and financial analysis; ensure that sound financial structures are in place and that reporting systems comply with federal, state, and local requirements;

Fundraising, Advocacy & External Relations

- Ensure the ongoing development and articulation of a clear and powerful narrative that communicates California Humanities' values, mission, goals and importance;
- As lead fundraiser, nurture key relationships to encourage ongoing investment from public, private and individual donors. Cultivate prospects to assure that California Humanities' funding base is robust and diverse;
- Serve as a visible thought-partner and spokesperson on issues central to California Humanities; continue to position the organization as an important convener;
- Maintain California Humanities' role as a collaborative member of the larger philanthropic community; advance high standards of effective practice and share impact strategies with peers, the philanthropic field, and the public;
- Serve as the organization's primary public representative with the media, elected officials, community leaders, and key constituents;

Board Relations and Governance

- Build and nurture good relationships with all Board members marked by open communication and responsiveness;
- Help to identify and cultivate new Trustees whose perspectives, talents and commitment will further California Humanities' mission and impact, and expand support;
- Support the Board Chair in encouraging all Board members to participate actively; facilitate Board involvement in activities important to California Humanities beyond the Board room, such as education, site visits, advocacy opportunities with policy makers and the like;
- Attend Board meetings; work closely with the Executive Committee in strategic planning and policy development. Oversee staff preparation of materials for all Board and Committee meetings, as needed, and ensure they are distributed in a timely manner.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate should have:

- A passion for and anchoring in the humanities – broadly defined by interdisciplinary perspectives on issues relevant to California Humanities’ work; a working knowledge of new ideas, practices, opportunities, and challenges emerging in the cultural field;
- Experience with a cultural institution known for delivering exciting public programs and attracting broad audiences;
- Working knowledge of the nonprofit sector; Grantmaking experience is considered a plus;
- A commitment to, and competency in, centering equity at an organizational level;
- Senior-level experience leading and managing an entity (nonprofit, public or private) of a scale and/or complexity similar to that of California Humanities, with commensurate planning, analytical, operational, fiscal, and human resource responsibilities; Experience leading and managing an active Board of Directors;
- Successful fundraising experience with both institutional and individual donors;
- Political savvy, with the ability to work effectively with, and gain the respect and support of individuals from an array of backgrounds and perspectives; the skill to generate awareness, excitement and appreciation that leads to buy-in from diverse interested parties;
- Presence to serve as an effective spokesperson and ambassador for California Humanities, with strong oral and written communication skills;
- An intuitive command of, and respect for, the role of community in the success of an institution;
- A working awareness, regard, and excitement for California’s history, diversity, and promise.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should be:

- Passionate about the humanities, the arts, and cultural practice; personally aligned with California Humanities' mission, values and goals;
- Intellectually inquisitive, thoughtful and probing; an inspiring leader who is excited about learning and effecting change;
- Able not only to articulate a vision, but to actualize and unify others around it;
- Strategic and able to think in interdisciplinary ways, and to anticipate and act on events which might create opportunities for California Humanities;
- Accessible and gracious, a relentless relationship builder who is able to connect with a broad spectrum of people in meaningful ways;
- A unifying team builder; able to cultivate an environment where mutual respect, collegiality and diversity are valued;
- Warm, authentic, transparent and self-possessed; an ethical person who listens well, imparts trust and integrity, and is able motivate others in a similar manner.

WHO WE ARE - ABOUT CALIFORNIA HUMANITIES

California Humanities is an independent nonprofit organization and a partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since 1975, we have been promoting humanities as relevant meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect us to each other in order to help strengthen California. We produce, fund, create, and support humanities-based projects and programs, eye-opening cultural experiences and meaningful conversations.

California Humanities believes that equity should be at the heart of humanities, and we are governed by values deeply rooted in equity, justice and fairness. Through grants and special programs that reach into every corner of our state, we help tell the story of California.

A sample of key Initiatives includes:

Humanities for All Project Grants – a grant program that supports projects in the public humanities, particularly encouraging participation in the humanities by new and/or underserved audiences;

Humanities for All Quick Grants – small-scale, short-term public humanities projects that help us understand local stories, distributed to a variety of community-focused cultural organizations across the state.

California Documentary Project – which provides Production and Research & Development grants to nonfiction media projects that document the breadth and richness of California’s cultures, peoples, and histories. This includes films, podcasts, and interactive media projects that explore California subjects and issues and that engage audiences both statewide and nationally;

Emerging Journalist Fellowships – which partners with California community colleges and engages a broad cross-section of Californians considering the vital connection between democracy and journalism;

Library Innovation Lab – which creates programs to engage immigrant communities by providing grants and an immersive “learn by doing” professional development experience for public library professionals;

Literature and Medicine – a nationally recognized humanities-based professional development program for health care workers that engages clinical staff members in reading and discussion programs facilitated by humanities scholars.

To learn more about California Humanities, please visit www.calhum.org.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for this position, please forward a substantive cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, and your resume, in confidence, to:

Sandi Haynes
Executive Search Consultant
Sandi@HaynesLink.com

Salary is anticipated at \$175,000 – 180,000, plus a full benefits package.

Equal employment opportunity and having a diverse staff are fundamental principles at California Humanities, where employment and promotional opportunities are based upon individual capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation/preference, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status or any other protected characteristic as established under law.