



Collections Curator

Department: Collections

Classification: Full Time, Regular

Reports to: Executive Director

Status: Exempt

Proposed Salary: \$48,000-\$55,000

Eligible for Benefits: Yes, Full Benefits

Position Summary:

At the Tri-Cities Historical Museum (TCHM), we create connections to local history! We're seeking a detail-oriented, dependable, and curious professional to join our team as Curator of Collections. This key leadership role oversees the care, documentation, and ethical management of more than 74,000 historic items housed at the Akeley Museum and the Community Archive and Research Center. The Collection Curator is the primary contact for research requests, supports public access to collections, and collaborates with the Executive Director on departmental planning, strategic projects, and compliance with standards, including NAGPRA. The ideal candidate is passionate about local history, experienced in museum best practices, and comfortable managing multiple projects in a dynamic, team-oriented environment.

Primary Responsibilities:

Collections Stewardship & Registration

- Manage all aspects of the accessioning and deaccessioning process, including intake paperwork, legal documentation, object isolation, and cataloging.
- Lead the effort to identify, record, and organize the TCHM holdings
- Maintain and update the museum's collections management system (CMS), Collective Access, with accurate, current records.
- Prepare, maintain, and administer paperwork associated with collections shared through loan agreements.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and manage associated responsibilities and consultations.
- Assign and record storage locations and oversee the proper packing, relocation, and storage of collections.

- Working with the exhibit curator, reviewing and recommending artifacts for professional conservation.

Institutional Planning & Accreditation

- Prepare and maintain core documents related to museum standards (Collections Management Policy, Emergency Response Plan, etc.) used for AAM Accreditation and Museum Assessment Program (MAP) reviews.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director to set annual departmental goals, timelines, and priorities for collections-related projects.
- Contribute to and support TCHM's strategic plan, annual priorities, and institutional initiatives.

Committee & Budget Oversight

- Prepare relevant information for presentation, review, and consideration by the Collection Committee.
- Write agendas for and facilitate meetings of the Collections Committee.
- Recruit, train, and manage Collections Committee members in collaboration with the Executive Director.
- Develop and manage the annual collections department budget with the Executive Director.
- Direct supervisor of one full-time position: Collection Manager, including interviewing, scheduling, managing, preparing necessary job-related documents, and day-to-day tasks.
- Supervise and coordinate with interns or volunteers as needed.

Public Engagement & Outreach

- Serve as point of contact for all research requests, coordinating access to archives and objects. Assist in research requests and provide public access to the collection.
- Write regularly for the *Grand Haven Tribune* and *River Winds* newsletter on topics related to local history and the museum's collections.
- Support TCHM staff, exhibitions, and programming with research, interpretation, and access to collection materials.
- Promoting the use of the Community Archive and Research Center for individuals and groups to learn about the history of the Tri-Cities and NW Ottawa County.
- Support collaborative work on local history projects with the Loutit District Library, Spring Lake District Library, Kutsche Office of Local History through GVSU, and any other historical and genealogical society within West Michigan.
- Enhance donor relationships to create opportunities to support the collections and acquire new artifacts.

Qualifications:

A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in history, museum studies, or a related discipline, Master's preferred, plus two to five years of museum collection experience, including one year of supervising other employees or volunteers. Knowledge of the Collective Access database is preferred.

General Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Demonstrate and effectively communicate a comprehensive understanding of the TCHM Mission and Value Proposition from the current Strategic Plan.
2. Understand a public historical museum's general philosophy, principles, programs, and practices.
3. Able to handle multiple projects simultaneously while meeting all critical deadlines. Prioritize and organize workload effectively to complete tasks on time. Delegate where appropriate.
4. Adhere to the highest ethical standards.
5. Outstanding written and verbal communication, with proven ability to communicate effectively in public speaking and when interacting with key partners, professional affiliates, and staff colleagues.
6. Possess exceptional customer service skills, with the ability to work with diverse customers, volunteers, and TCHM staff. Strong interpersonal and excellent listening skills.
7. Be an outgoing, optimistic, and professional representative of TCHM to all stakeholders.
8. Be creative, collaborative, and strategic with good analytical and problem-solving skills.
9. Be a self-starter and able to work independently and as part of a team.
10. Be proficient with technology and familiar with TCHM social media, computer programs, and databases.
11. Manage budgets in areas of oversight; provide forecasts of expenditures and estimates of revenue; understand and ensure adherence to budgets in dynamic operating conditions.
12. Be flexible and able to work weekends, holidays, and evenings as necessary.
13. Physical requirement – be able to lift and move objects up to 50 lbs.

Collections roles – understanding of Collective Access, collection management, care, conservation, environmental and pest control, display, and creative presentation.

To apply, please send your cover letter, resume, and references to Erica Layton, Executive Director at careers@tchmuseum.org by June 6, 2025.