Position Guide

Executive Director

https://www.montshire.org/
POSITION: Executive Director
REPORTS TO: Board of Trustees
LOCATION: Norwich, VT

MISSION

The Montshire Museum of Science’s mission is to awaken and encourage a lifelong interest in science through exhibits and programming dedicated to hands-on discovery and education for people of all ages. Unique to this mission is Montshire’s 110-acre New England riverfront setting, which fosters deep and creative learning in both the physical and natural sciences.

ABOUT MONTSHERE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

The Montshire Museum of Science is a nationally recognized, hands-on science museum in Norwich, Vermont. Sited on 110 acres along the Connecticut River, we offer over 150 exhibits on nature, technology, astronomy and the physical sciences. Montshire is committed to the social and intellectual development of our community, and to providing new, rewarding experiences with each visit. Our team is passionate about creating rich opportunities for inquiry-based learning and discovery.

The Montshire opened its doors to the public in 1976, in Hanover, New Hampshire. We cut the ribbon on the current museum building and learning landscape in Norwich, Vermont, in 1989. We
are now one of the busiest museums in Northern New England, welcoming 165,000 visitors in a typical year, and reaching 15,000 students in regional schools. The Museum’s current operating budget is approximately $2.6 million with total assets of $18 million, of which $9 million is endowment or other investments.

The Montshire has become a national model for excellence, attracting research and program support from numerous private foundations and federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation, Institute for Museum and Library Services, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of State and NASA. The Montshire has also been honored with a National Award for Museum Service.

Over the course of its history, the Montshire has become the official interpretive site for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (1995), added the Quinn Preserve (2001), and developed the Leonard M. Reiser Learning Center (2002), the outdoor David Goudy Science Park (2002), the Woodland Garden (2008), the James A. and Elizabeth S. Hughes Pavilion (2010), the Play Grove (2020), Wonder Woods, a permanent early childhood exhibition (2020) and the Anderson Center (2021), which includes gender inclusive restrooms, spacious coatrooms and accessible features that better serve the community.

The Montshire regularly partners with Dartmouth College under the auspices of the Dartmouth-Montshire Institute for Science Education. In recent years, the Montshire has also partnered with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, University of Vermont, national museum networks and numerous community organizations. In 2017, the Museum engaged in its first international partnership with the University of New Hampshire and several organizations in Bhutan. *The Montshire STEM Alliance* provides professional development and curriculum resources for rural schools in Vermont and New Hampshire.

The Montshire is committed to breathing life into its vision of making science accessible and available to everyone. We are especially committed to ensuring that the meaningful experiences we offer are accessible to low income children and families. Our Warm Welcome Program, made possible through the generous support of donors, enables us to offer Museum admission and scholarships for camps and education programs at fees that are set below the actual cost.

The Covid-19 pandemic required a 3-month closure to in-person visitors, but the Museum was able to maintain its staff and support the community in new and creative ways. The Montshire reopened its outdoor spaces to the public in July 2020, and was pleased to partially reopen its indoor spaces, exhibits and galleries in October 2020. Full reopening, with approval from the State of Vermont, is now occurring.

During this crisis, the Montshire developed strong partnerships with our sister science and nature centers in Vermont. *Four Science Vermont (www.foursciencevt.org)* was developed to offer inter-institutional support, guidance, coordination and strategic development of STEM experiences for Vermonters in this time of crisis. The partnership enables each organization to draw from its
unique collections, areas of educational focus and talents in engagement to provide a robust offering of learning experiences.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Set to celebrate its fiftieth year in 2024, the Montshire continues to expand its influence and reach, developing new approaches to engage our communities in the joy of science.

Over the past six years, the Museum has been working to achieve the goals and objectives of “Montshire 2020,” a strategic plan created and supported by the Board and staff. The adoption of its six “Brand Pillars” provides a broad framework around which the Museum enhances the quality of the visitor experience and deepens its relevance to the community. The Montshire Museum of Science has emerged as a sought-after destination in the region. The leadership of the organization has worked tirelessly and effectively to meet the community’s needs and be true to their mission focus on science and education which has been marked by strong achievement across the organization in many areas including excellent exhibits, robust fundraising, solid financials and deep community partnerships.

Over the next several years, the Executive Director will have the opportunity to build upon the very solid foundation of the Museum including the development of a new strategic plan to guide the Montshire into the future. The opportunity to be transformative and take the organization to the next level is fully supported by the Board. Growth of programming, fresh thinking about the possibilities of our large outdoor campus and leveraging the excellent reputation of the Museum are just a few of the strategic objectives.

The Executive Director will have the opportunity to work with and further engage and develop a dedicated group of corporators, strong community Board members and committed donors to outline a vision for the Museum that is respectful of its past and founding principles while also recognizing the trends and needs of children and students in the future. This will include seeking out new resources in the community, creating new partnerships and developing core leadership within the Museum to achieve ambitious goals.

The Montshire is at a great time in its history. Having achieved wonderful success, the institution is poised to step forward into the future and expand upon all of its excellent accomplishments.

POSITION SUMMARY

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director is responsible for the leadership and management of the organization including strategic direction, finances, fundraising, programs, staff, partnerships and external relations. The Executive Director is charged with delivering on the mission and goals of the organization in a manner that is fiscally sound, responsive to effective practices in nonprofit management and reflects best practices for museum operations.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek an innovative and visionary leader who demonstrates a passion for engaging others in a lifelong learning agenda of science and the natural world. The Montshire is a special and joyful place, and our next leader must be a steward who builds upon our success while growing and evolving for the future. The ideal candidate is a proven leader who understands the power of collaboration and has extensive experience and success leading high performing teams that foster a culture of excellence from programming to facilities to the visitor experience.

**Experienced and motivated executive** with the skills and competencies to provide oversight for the operational and financial management of a growing organization. The individual must be a strategic thinker and problem solver without seeking or desiring to solve every challenge themselves; a healthy and intentional reliance on staff and volunteers is desired, as is a commitment to ongoing professional development of the staff. The candidate should have a keen understanding of their role as steward as demonstrated by a track record of managing and overseeing long-term projects and initiatives. High integrity, sound judgment, humility and decision-making skills are essential to success in this role. A track record of successfully partnering with an engaged governing board will be essential. This person will establish and maintain a climate of trust in all leadership and board-related matters and sustain a learning environment, encouraging active inquiry by the Board and staff in pursuit of organizational excellence.

**Passion for Science** is critical; experience in a setting like a museum and a fierce commitment to the idea that science education, research and discovery can contribute to a better world is highly valued. Our next Executive Director will be a curious and lifelong learner who is passionate about our natural world. This person will be a champion for the sciences, and the Montshire, and will inspire others to support the outcomes and success of our mission. Our next leader will bring a love of science education to the community with a corresponding commitment to the mission and brand pillars. The Executive Director will be an advocate for education and will be skilled in creating and sustaining strategic partnerships with other organizations locally, nationally and internationally.

**Team builder and mentor** who can cultivate, develop and inspire a united high-performing team of staff and volunteers who embody the organizational values of collaboration, trust and respect for one another. The Executive Director will have the temperament and skills to continue the development of talented staff as well as a demonstrated ability to bring passion, vision, direction, business discipline and inspiration to the organization. The successful candidate will be a good listener and open to dialogue and critical conversations that lead to shared success. A management approach that is accessible, collaborative and empowering must be demonstrated, and balanced by results-oriented accountability. Guided by an authentic interest in hearing all voices, the Executive Director will be deeply committed to creating an engaging, joyful, respectful and inclusive work environment.

**Strategic Visionary** who serves as the Chief Mission Officer of the Museum and has a clear vision for the organization. The Executive Director will excel at confronting the complex realities of the environment and inspiring a better future by providing purpose, direction and motivation. A focus on strategic leadership and brand identity is balanced with authenticity, respect for others and trust-building within the organization, with the Board of Directors and with stakeholders. The Executive Director drives the organization to a higher level of performance, efficiency and growth.
through inspiring action and commitment to excellence at all levels of the organization. Our next leader will deepen and widen our network of relationships, build upon our reputation, be viewed as a thought leader in the field and will lead and guide the Museum forward.

**Persuasive and Charismatic Communicator** who will serve as the key spokesperson for the Museum. The Executive Director will be a dynamic communicator who can influence others to action, be they staff, board members, donors, elected officials, corporate executives or other supporters. This person must eagerly and enthusiastically take on the role as the public face of the Museum and share the story of the Museum and the beauty of science and nature passionately and convincingly.

**Engaging Fundraiser** with experience working to build and cultivate a network of relationships, our next Executive Director will show evidence of successful fundraising leadership that includes the acquisition of major gifts and grants from foundations, corporations, individuals and the public sector at the local, state or national level. The Executive Director will bring others along as we explore the opportunities ahead. As the Museum approaches its 50th anniversary in 2024, the next leader must value and engage fully in the successful development of a fundraising strategy for the next 10 years. Capital campaign experience is highly desirable.

**Partner and Relationship Builder** who will understand the importance of leveraging the Museum’s unique position to proactively increase the visibility and reputation of the organization. Politically savvy, the Executive Director thrives in partnerships and successfully navigates the dynamics of the local and regional environment, particularly in relations with other nonprofit organizations, academic partners and other public/private partnerships.

**CREDENTIALS**

A bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university is required; a graduate degree(s) is preferable. A respect and appreciation for science, conservation and our natural world is a must. Evidence of continuing education in the sciences, museum studies, general business, finance, marketing or related disciplines would be a plus. The preferred candidate will demonstrate museum experience with evidence of advancement to high levels of responsibility and leadership.

*The Montshire is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates.*


For more information about the Montshire Museum of Science, please visit [https://www.montshire.org/](https://www.montshire.org/).

**THE UPPER VALLEY**

Nestled between the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire, Norwich occupies a scenic stretch of the Connecticut River just across from Hanover, New Hampshire, and Dartmouth College. The area, known as “The Upper Valley,” offers an incredible array of activities including numerous outdoor pursuits, a lively arts and culture scene befitting a college town, and the intellectual pursuits offered by a world-class university and medical center. For more information, please visit the website of the Upper Valley Business Alliance (uppervalleybusinessalliance.com).