

MPA Executive Director Position Description

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, Inc. (MPA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit historic preservation organization, invites applications for the full-time, salaried position of Executive Director to lead the organization into its 20th year of operation and beyond.

MPA is seeking a highly motivated individual to lead the organization through its next phase of growth and evolution. The ideal candidate will be an experienced and passionate professional who possesses collaborative, strategic, and entrepreneurial skills, and has experience in historic preservation or related disciplines with a deep commitment to the mission of the organization. This full-time, salaried position reports directly to the Board of Directors and is based at MPA's offices located at 1100 S. 5th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204. MPA is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors and is a member of the National Preservation Partners Network.

Founded in 2003, MPA is a growing and dynamic private, non-profit, member-based organization whose mission is devoted to promoting stewardship and awareness of the historic, cultural, and economic value of Milwaukee's built heritage. MPA aims to strengthen Milwaukee's neighborhoods by advocating for preservation in order to foster a strong and vibrant community. MPA's vision is to "make preservation mainstream" by demonstrating to residents, business proprietors, and building owners the link between historic preservation and viable economic development, environmental sustainability, and social justice. MPA supports a broad understanding of historic preservation that incorporates much more than buildings and includes intangible and cultural heritage, landscapes, and sense of place. We seek to be a vibrant and people-centric preservation organization for the 21st century and beyond, welcoming diverse audiences and perspectives, embracing partnerships, and providing thought leadership on what preservation can do for people and planet.

The organization's ongoing efforts center on advocacy and programming. Particular attention is given to ongoing advocacy campaigns at the 1860s Milwaukee Soldiers Home and 1960s Mitchell Park Domes, both listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list and designated as National Treasures. MPA's efforts to Save the Soldiers Home were recognized with a prestigious Richard H. Driehaus Foundation National Preservation Award in 2021. MPA is developing an active volunteer base and works closely with numerous agencies and organizations at the local, state, and federal level. See www.milwaukeepreservationalliance.org for more information.

Applicants who bring experience relevant to helping people save important places are welcome to apply. That includes, but is not limited to, historic preservation, social justice, community organizing, urban and regional planning, economic development, real estate development, design, and storytelling. A formal historic preservation background is beneficial but not required.

Position

MPA's next Executive Director (ED) must bring a passion for Milwaukee's built environment and a willingness to collaborate across diverse constituencies. They are encouraged to have prior administrative or management experience in non-profit contexts, exceptional communication skills, the capacity to be a successful fundraiser, a basic understanding of real estate development, and a strong business and financial acumen.

The ED is responsible for the organization's strategic and administrative functions while focusing on historic preservation advocacy, financial performance, community outreach, marketing and communications, grant writing, and program development in order to fulfill MPA's mission. Duties also include identifying and implementing strategies to expand and diversify MPA's membership base and partnerships as well as expanding MPA's material resources to position the organization for continued long-term stability and sustainability.

The ED reports to the Board of Directors and supervises one part-time administrative staff member.

Responsibilities

Preservation Advocacy (30%):

- Formulate positions on preservation issues of importance to the diverse communities of Milwaukee and the surrounding area in collaboration with community organizations. Utilize MPA's advocacy criteria to evaluate and respond to preservation issues.
- Serve as a strong advocate for local, state, and/or national preservation efforts and legislation.
- Respond to inquiries for information and assistance and to specific inquiries about preservation issues citywide, coordinating a response closely with the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), neighborhood groups, elected officials, and other interested parties as necessary.
- Connect stakeholders with the resources they need to succeed, including funding, professional expertise, studies, and talking points.
- Manage ongoing multi-year advocacy campaigns related to the Milwaukee Soldiers Home and Mitchell Park Domes, as well as future projects.
- Attend and testify at public meetings and hearings that pertain to preservation projects.
- Ensure that preservation is a part of the conversation in public discussions surrounding the future of Milwaukee's built environment.
- Develop and implement new ways to acquaint property owners, elected officials, and community members with the benefits of historic preservation.
- Develop and implement procedures and strategies for proactive, rather than reactive, preservation.

Fundraising, Funding Development, and Fiscal Oversight (20%):

- Develop an annual operating budget and present to the Board for review and approval prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. Ensure that organizational expenses remain within approved budget throughout the year.

- Oversee accurate internal record keeping and timely preparation of monthly financial statements, as well as an annual audit or review by an outside CPA firm. Ensure sound budgetary and financial management.
- Continue development of a comprehensive fundraising plan that supports the current and long-term goals of the organization and ensure appropriate internal systems are in place to support the organization.
- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and maintain existing relationships with individuals, foundations, and corporate donors to meet fundraising goals.
- Prioritize the growth of major gifts through individuals, corporations, and foundations by building a ladder of giving to move donors from initial gifts to major gifts.
- Manage and grow MPA's corporate sponsorship program.
- Create an appropriate strategy for developing and growing an MPA planned giving program.
- Develop and lead MPA's Annual Appeal. The Annual Appeal is one of MPA's primary fundraising efforts and takes place each December.
- Develop and implement new fundraising strategies in cooperation with the Board's Development Committee including, but not limited to: expanding membership programs; annual, major, and planned giving; foundation and corporate giving; sponsorships; and programs/special events.
- Work with the Board of Directors, partners, and real estate developers to implement a successful Historic Tax Credit partnership program. Foster and develop positive working relationships with property owners, developers, construction professionals, and preservationists to increase program participation.
- Secure grants to support programs and operations, and track and follow up as required.

Donor and Stakeholder Engagement (10%):

- Develop new ways for MPA to gain relevance in the community and engage new audiences.
- Engage historically underrepresented communities.
- Engage with donors and stakeholders at MPA events and programs, and through surveys and other opportunities, to assess their satisfaction, identify improvements, and implement modifications.
- Oversee communications with donors. Working with staff, includes engagement and stewardship of donors and acknowledgement/recognition for donations received.
- Develop effective working relationships with elected and appointed government officials at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Engage and partner with organizations at the local, state, and national levels that can provide knowledge and resources that contribute to MPA's mission.

Communications and Outreach (10%):

- Serve as an articulate and effective spokesperson for the organization and as the lead public advocate for preserving Milwaukee's historic built environment, landscapes, and places.
- Represent MPA in a variety of public settings including industry associations and conferences, public relations, fundraising, governmental affairs, and the media.
- Keep members and the community engaged and informed of MPA's activities by preparing timely communications via email, website, and social media.

- Assist the Board of Directors in recruiting and managing MPA volunteers to serve as committee and board members and in other capacities. Ensure that policies and procedures are in place to maximize volunteer involvement and engagement.
- Increase awareness of MPA's work, how preservation is developing as a field, and how preservation can benefit communities through public presentations, participation in workshops and conferences, and engagement in planning conversations.
- Give interviews with reporters on advocacy projects and preservation topics when necessary.

Programming and Education Management (10%):

- In collaboration with staff and the Board of Directors, develop and manage events that celebrate Milwaukee's unique sense of place, provide technical education, and engage diverse audiences in the history of Milwaukee and the value of preservation.
- With staff and volunteers, manage regular public walking tours of the Milwaukee Soldiers Home.
- Develop measures to evaluate operational and program efficiency and effectiveness and to support an ethic of continuous quality improvement.

Leadership (5%):

- Provide strong management, vision, and collaborative leadership to support the organization's mission, values, and goals.
- Work together with the Board of Directors on matters of strategy, governance, and fundraising. Provide administrative support to the Board and its committees.
- Provide leadership in developing and initiating creative programs and organizational plans with the Board of Directors.
- Work, at all times, to carry out the fiduciary responsibilities of MPA and ensure compliance with all applicable rules, policies, procedures, laws, and regulations. This includes annual reporting to the State of Wisconsin and the Internal Revenue Service.

Board of Director Relations (5%):

- Attend monthly Board and committee meetings.
- Engage with the Board in the development of long-term strategic plans, fund development plans, organizational plans, and financial sustainability efforts.
- Apprise the Board of major efforts/activities of the organization through regular communication and reports to include weekly written reports disseminated electronically, and verbal updates.

Staff Management (5%):

- Effectively oversee part-time administrative staff and collaborate on the successful implementation of organizational goals. The ED is expected to work closely with administrative staff to oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization.
- Create an environment built on integrity, teamwork, and respect.
- Give clear direction and feedback through regular communication and periodic evaluation.

General Office Duties (5%):

- Evaluate and provide for the organization's infrastructure requirements, including effective and appropriate information technology (hardware, software, and storage), data security, and redundancy.
- Maintain accurate and organized files of all activities.

Qualifications

This position requires a commitment to work a flexible schedule, including nights and weekends as required.

Successful candidates will ideally possess most or all of these attributes:

- Creativity, flexibility, and a passion for advancing the mission of MPA and the cause of historic preservation.
- Bachelor's degree and 3-5 years of demonstrated success in fundraising and development, non-profit management, and historic preservation. An advanced degree or professional certification in historic preservation, planning, history, or other related field is preferred.
- A strong working knowledge of historic architecture, historic preservation rehabilitation techniques, and/or preservation policies at the local, state, and national levels.
- An appreciation for the Milwaukee region's unique architectural and cultural features.
- Significant administrative and volunteer management experience in a nonprofit setting and experience working with a volunteer board.
- Proven experience in nonprofit leadership, including public relations/communications, staff supervision, financial management, compliance requirements, development, grant writing, marketing, and advocacy.
- An entrepreneurial spirit. The ED should be a self-starter who is imaginative, well-organized, and capable of functioning effectively in an independent environment.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills. The ED is expected to regularly communicate on behalf of the organization through written statements, newsletters, social media, and speaking at meetings and events.
- Strong interpersonal skills. The ED should be comfortable in many different social and professional circles including with public officials, funders, attorneys, architects, government employees, etc.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail with the ability to balance, prioritize, and manage multiple projects and deadlines.
- Proven track record in building and maintaining collaborative relationships with partners, donors, foundations, grantors, diverse constituencies, and stakeholders.
- Strong software and database management skills. The ED will regularly use Word, Excel, PowerPoint, QuickBooks, Mailchimp, Weebly, and Google Drive.
- Experience in event planning and execution.
- High degree of personal and professional integrity.
- Competency in Spanish–beneficial but not required.

Compensation and Benefits

Starting compensation range is \$60,000 to \$65,000, plus a monthly stipend of \$650 to assist with health care costs. The benefits package also includes 15 days of paid vacation/sick time, 6 paid holidays, and parental leave (parental leave subject to separate agreement with Board of Directors).

MPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind. MPA is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity for all employees and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. Employment decisions are based on business needs, job requirements, and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or veteran status, or any other status protected by the laws or regulations in the location where MPA operates. MPA encourages applicants of all ages.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should email a cover letter, resume, writing sample (1-2 pages), and two letters of reference to pzanghi@milwaukeepreservation.org. Your cover letter should describe why you are excited by this position and how your existing skills and experience would benefit MPA. Interviews will be scheduled on an as-needed basis for qualified applicants and will be held at the MPA office in Milwaukee, another convenient Milwaukee area location, or over Zoom.

Not sure if you qualify for the position? Research shows that men apply for jobs when they meet an average of 60% of the criteria, yet women and other people who are systematically marginalized tend to only apply if they meet every listed requirement. MPA will work with committed and motivated individuals to grow into the position if many but not all requirements are met. If you believe that your perspective, approach, and experience would enable you to succeed as the ED, we encourage you to apply.

Questions can be directed to:

Peter Zanghi, President

pzanghi@milwaukeepreservation.org

Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

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