



POSITION DESCRIPTION:

Director of Public Programs, Education, & Community Engagement

The High Line is the public open space built on an historic freight rail line elevated above the streets of Manhattan's west side. Opened in 2009, it now attracts over 4.4 million visitors a year. The third and final section is scheduled to open in 2014, extending the High Line from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to 34th Street at the West Side Rail Yards. The High Line has been an engine of economic development, a platform for the arts, and an international model of community involvement and adaptive reuse.

Founded in 1999, Friends of the High Line (FHL) is the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation's non-profit partner working to ensure the park on the High Line is maintained as a great public place for all New Yorkers and visitors to enjoy. In addition to overseeing the maintenance, operations, and public programming for the High Line, FHL is currently working to raise the essential private funding to help complete the High Line's construction and create an endowment for its future operations.

Job Description

The Director of Public Programs, Education, and Community Engagement is responsible for cultivating a vibrant community around the High Line through envisioning, producing, and evaluating unique and memorable public events, activities, and multi-faceted initiatives. Programs seek to engage with diverse groups of neighborhood and wider New York City residents to build a connection with the High Line in unique, creative, and enduring ways. This position is a key member of the Executive team of Friends of the High Line, and is responsible for overseeing the Adult, Kids, Education, Teen, Volunteer, Community Engagement, and other programs both on and off the High Line. Reporting to the Director are four full-time employees and one seasonal, part-time employee who, in turn, manage two part-time educators, two seasonal family program leaders, over twenty teen staff, and a team of event production staff.

Reporting to FHL's Chief Operating Officer, the Director's responsibilities include but are not limited to the ones outlined below.

Primary Responsibilities and Qualities

1. **Vision.** Develop and execute a year-round calendar of over 450 events, activities, and initiatives from idea through evaluation. Invent new, unique, high-quality programs from scratch and evaluate and tweak returning programs to make them better. Creatively envision ideas that achieve multiple goals, articulate their value, and work toward them over time with many different partners and collaborators.
2. **Values.** Promote public space as a key democratic element of city life. Believe in the ability of public cultural and educational activity to improve lives. Have a strong drive to work towards a more just and equitable society. Possess an interest in providing a platform for life-long learning, the arts, good design, and nature. Strive for excellence and detail orientation in all initiatives. A respect and admiration for the history of Friends of the High Line and the High Line, while seeking to bring new & fresh ideas, is a must.
3. **Leadership.** Be an advocate and strong "voice" for public programming, community engagement, and related initiatives. Evaluate intradepartmental initiatives with regards to their impact on accessibility,

program support, and more. Be able to articulate and advocate for these values in a patient yet firm way. Manage selected other initiatives and weigh in on strategic plans for the organization that relate to the future of programming and community engagement. Possess strong decision-making capabilities and a flexible nature to accommodate many ideas and working styles.

4. **Programming & Education.** Evaluate and improve upon current programs. Keep up to date with museum and park-based programming and education around NYC, the country, and world, and seek to strengthen FHL's position as a thought leader for community-based park and cultural projects. Some experience in the evaluation of programs is preferred as the department is currently undergoing an overhaul of its evaluation and reporting system.
5. **Community Organizing.** Build support for the High Line in the various communities around it and throughout New York City. Possess an interest in -- and ability to -- understand the various dynamics at play in vibrant, diverse neighborhoods and develop personal relationships through spending time and being an effective listener and community partner.
6. **Event Production.** Produce small and large-scale events across the arts and humanities disciplines. Producing events on the High Line requires flexibility and adaptability given its restrictions as an outdoor, elevated public space with limited gathering areas.
7. **Staff Management.** Excel in staff management and interpersonal interaction, have keen listening skills, strong ability to guide others at differing levels of experience, and ability to teach and be taught by his or her staff.
8. **Budget Management.** Working closely with the COO and FHL's Finance Department, draft the annual program budget; monitor expenses throughout the year ensuring adherence to budget.
9. **Collaboration.** Internally, be a team player, and seek to actively work with the fundraising, communications, planning, design, horticulture, park services departments, among others. Externally, maintain active contact with a variety of neighborhood leaders and organizations and seek to collaborate with them in new and fun ways, both on the High Line and off.
 - a. **Fundraising.** Maintain close working relationships with members of the Development department and promote the department's ability to raise funds for the organization by occasionally liaising with donors and helping with funding applications. Manage Program Committee of the Board of Directors by maintaining close communication with key members and scheduling and facilitating several meetings throughout the year.
 - b. **Communications & Marketing.** Work with Communications & Marketing Department to produce key communications and promotional materials, and shape the language used to describe programs and community engagement. These materials include press releases, print calendars, postcards, flyers, and advising on newsletter articles, blog posts, and more. Oversee some of the department's marketing initiatives in the neighborhood to help build a local audience. Occasionally, speak with members of the press.

Qualifications

In addition to the qualities listed above, the successful candidate will possess:

- A minimum of five years programmatic and staff management experience
- Master's Degree or equivalent preferred; Bachelor's degree required
- Demonstrated ability to both envision and execute a broad range of public events and activities; some experience with educational programming is required
- Ability to thrive in a busy, fast-paced environment and be adept at juggling many projects at once
- Experience in converting nascent ideas into working programs
- Strong computer skills (facility with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)
- Track record of leadership, managing staff, and exceptional interpersonal skills

- Ability to articulate strategy, and provide ongoing direction to implement that strategy
- Strong written and oral communications and presentation skills, including the ability to deploy tact and diplomacy in pursuit of results
- Experience engaging and strong interest in working to develop the High Line's relationships with currently underserved populations
- Availability during select weekends and evenings is required
- Flexible, fun, and collaborative personality
- Ability to look at the big picture and search for insightful, creative solutions; the flexibility to say Yes instead of No
- Appreciates and relentlessly pursues the high level of excellence required in all aspects of the operation of this high-profile, locally- and internationally-renowned public space
- Adroit with the unexpected and with meeting aggressive deadlines
- Appreciation for aesthetics and design

For confidential consideration, please submit your cover letter, resume, to jobs@thehighline.org. No phone calls, please. Those whose candidacy is being considered will be contacted.

Friends of the High Line is an equal opportunity employer and considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status