



Position Specification

The Witte Museum
President and Chief Executive Officer

Our Client

The Witte Museum inspires people to shape the future of Texas through transformative and relevant experiences in nature, science, and culture. As San Antonio's most-visited museum, the Witte reaches a diverse audience of hundreds of thousands from the regional communities it serves and beyond. The vision of the Witte is to be the preeminent center for relevant content and engaging experiences in environmental science, STEAM, and cultural stories where all people are empowered to create extraordinary lives and help shape the future of Texas.

Located between the enduring San Antonio River and historic Broadway, the Witte sits on a bountiful riverside campus of inspiring architecture and gardens, where nature, science and culture meet through the lens of what the museum calls "Texas Deep Time" and the themes of land, sky, and water. Fossilized specimens from the Cretaceous Period, artifacts from ancient times and the 1719 Acequia Madre de Valero and Diversion Dam from the Spanish period are just a few of the many wonders of the Witte.

Since the museum's founding in 1926, the Witte has welcomed visitors from throughout Texas and beyond, and has become a trusted steward of historic artifacts, personal stories, and scientific specimens. Looking forward, they have committed to always being a safe place for civic discourse so that challenges and differences can be discussed, engaged in, and ultimately part of solutions for progress.

The Witte Museum is a primary-source content provider and engages K-12 students in innovative, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) aligned curriculum, and inquiry-based learning experiences. The knowledge and experiences provided through on-campus and digital programming are unique. The museum maintains the Witte Where You Are, an online learning portal, with live-remote programs offered to teachers, school children, and families. Given the success of Witte Where You Are, particularly during the COVID 19 pandemic, the Witte has also launched a new initiative, Texas Museums 360, which will provide students with unique, museum-specific, inquiry-based experiences via digital platforms and hands-on learning to school districts throughout Texas.

The Witte team members embraces life-long learning. They continue to advance museum leadership, provide professional development, and champion diversity, inclusion, and equity. The Witte Museum ensures that access to the museum, riverside habitat, and the ever-growing collection are available to all. Through funding partnerships with multi-generational donors, the Witte hosts Free Tuesdays and is a proud participant in the national Museums for All program.

The Witte is a research museum, with a Texas state and federally certified curatorial collection repository with focuses on archaeology, history, geology, and paleontology. The B. Naylor Morton Research and Collections Center includes offices for Witte Curatorial and Collections teams and open storage for collections highlights. The Collections Repository houses 320,000 artifacts and specimens.

The Witte Museum stands on a platform of excellence as an American Alliance of Museum Accredited Museum, a status they have maintained since 1974, with the most recent re-accreditation awarded in 2018. The Witte is committed to sustaining accreditation by adhering to and exceeding the Core Standards for Museums regarding public trust and accountability, mission and planning, leadership and organizational structure, collections stewardship, education and interpretation, financial stability, and facilities and risk management.

The Witte campus provides countless moments of wonder, including glimpses into animal dens under the earth, soaring pterosaurs, evidence of ancient lifeways, and chili queens offering culinary delights on the plazas of San Antonio. Many of these experiences are the result of a \$100 million renovation and expansion of the Witte Museum over ten years, from 2007 to 2017, when the "New Witte" fully opened, with 174,000 square feet of change. Led by a visionary Board of Trustees and an ambitious Witte Team, the New Witte opened to critical acclaim and community pride.

Now, with hundreds of thousands of school children and families flocking to the expanded campus annually, the Board of Trustees of the Witte Museum quietly launched a Witte Forever Campaign for endowment,

capital and operating funding to ensure future excellence and plans to raise \$26 million in endowment funds by 2026, the 100th Anniversary of the Witte Museum.

For more information on the Witte, please visit <https://www.wittemuseum.org/>.

The Role

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President and Chief Executive Officer works together with the senior management and Witte team to ensure that the Witte fulfills its mission and realizes its goals for programmatic, financial, and organizational success. The CEO is the driver of the Witte's strategic vision, as well as long-term planning and goal setting. They have overall responsibility for fundraising, financial sustainability, and internal leadership, including senior team management, program development and administration, marketing and communications, and operational business management. The CEO devotes considerable time to building support for the Witte through public and private sources, as well as providing leadership and engagement in the San Antonio and Texas Museum community.

Specific responsibilities of the CEO include:

- **Strategy & Implementation:** Working closely with the Board of Trustees, internal team, and key stakeholders, the CEO will continually assess, refine, and implement the strategic vision for the Witte. They will be committed to ensuring that its collections are acquired, exhibited, researched, and preserved to the highest possible standards; expand its educational impact; disseminate knowledge about Texas nature, science, history, and culture to a diverse and growing audience; and continue to expand its base of support and engagement. They will directly manage the executive leadership team; recruit, develop, and retain a high-quality professional staff that is diverse and inclusive; and foster an environment of creativity, innovation, collaboration, and mutual respect, creating a healthy and productive work environment.
- **Fundraising/Financial Strategy:** The CEO will oversee the Witte's fundraising activities, particularly as they relate to public funding, foundations, corporations, and individuals. They will significantly grow private support for the annual fund and the endowment, including major gifts, programming support, and for any capital campaign. They will often be the face of the organization for significant development calls. The CEO is the leader in making a case for museums and for the Witte in specific. In addition to philanthropic support the CEO will lead in developing new earned revenue streams that are consistent with the mission of the Witte and the standards for an AAM accredited museum.
- **Programming:** The CEO will be responsible for the Museum's overall strategic vision regarding exhibitions, public and educational programming and the development of new strategic plans. The CEO is expected to lead the team in the development of permanent and temporary exhibitions, student, adult, and family programming, and other educational experiences to fulfill the mission to the museum. Through a participatory Program Process, the CEO will engage the community at all stages of programmatic development ensuring the Witte remains "the People's Museum."
- **Leading through DEAI:** It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that the Museum upholds the highest standards regarding Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion. This is holistically applied as a lens at all levels of the museum – including board recruitment, staff composition, community engagement, collections acquisition and exhibition and program development. Ensuring equitable access to the Witte remains a focus and priority for the institution moving forward.
- **Relationship Building and Partnership Development:** The CEO plays the primary role in representing the Witte to a wide variety of constituents vital to the organization's mission and future. Critical to this leader's success will be the ability to partner in an open, communicative, and mutually respectful manner with key partners and stakeholders, including but not limited to, the City of San

Antonio, Bexar County, the State of Texas, the Texas Association of Museums; individuals, foundations, and corporations from which the Witte derives support; peers in the educational, museum, and historic preservation fields; and the general public. The ideal candidate should be able to speak and write with passion and conviction to a broad public about the Witte and Texas' science, nature, and culture broadly. This role requires the ability to advocate for the Witte before the city, county, state, and other relevant bodies.

Candidate Profile

The Witte seeks an accomplished and collaborative individual who possesses the passion, diplomatic skillset, and managerial capacity to lead the organization forward effectively. The ideal candidate will be excited by the Witte's mission to shape the future of Texas through transformative and relevant experiences. They will have a clear vision for the role the Museum plays in achieving that outcome.

The ideal candidate will have excellent communication skills, with the ability to channel community passion into financial support for major initiatives, to cultivate and maintain relationships with donors and partners, to solicit funds effectively, ability to manage the business of the Museum to fulfill its mission, and to strengthen and expand relationships to the Museum. Foremost among the CEO's personal characteristics will be the ability to communicate in order to collaborate with, and to inspire the confidence and trust of a wide variety of individuals and entities, both internal and external to the organization.

They will have a strong orientation towards listening to others and will demonstrate the highest degree of personal responsibility, accountability, and integrity. They will ably lead the day-to-day operations of the Witte, represent the museum effectively, and have a passionate appreciation for and interest in Texas.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Strategic Thinking and Vision

- Ability to develop and implement a strategic vision that aligns with the mission and vision of the Witte. This includes adapting to changes in global trends impacting the museum and the community it serves.
- Ability to guide, shape, and continually enhance the Witte's organizational identity including its vision, mission, culture, and strategy while protecting the integrity of its uniquely imaginative and courageous spirit and mix of innovation, and collaboration.
- Track record of strong fiscal and strategic discipline and outcomes; results-oriented, thoughtful, and courageous; will take calculated risks and use resources creatively in terms of innovation while demonstrating pragmatism with respect to both expenses and revenues.

Fundraising and Resource Development

- Experience in expanding an institution's funding base – including from individual, corporate, and foundation funders – as well as through fresh pathways for earned income; demonstrates an ability to engage prospective funders and partners and to advocate for the organization locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Proven success forging and maintaining mutually productive relationships with peer institutions and partners to further the Witte's impact.

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- Ability to grow existing successful programs, as well as identify and champion new programs which leverage Witte's areas of expertise to expand the engagement of the existing audiences or connect new audiences to the museum.

Management of Teams and Resources

- A track record of hiring, developing, and managing a high-performing and diverse team.
- Ability to work effectively with a board, foster relationships between multiple boards and partner with other organizations internally and externally to achieve concrete goals and objectives.
- Experience dealing with intricacies of city and state government budgeting and government regulatory/management environment is a plus.

Inclusive Leadership

- Deep personal commitment to Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion in all aspects of their work; track record of building and championing teams that are substantively diverse and reflective of the diversity of the community their institution serves.
- Demonstrated commitment to inclusive leadership, displaying cultural competence while operating in an environment with a range of diverse constituents and communities.

Passion for the Mission:

- Ability to passionately advocate for the role museums play in the lives of their communities.
- Demonstrated passion for and an interest in Texas history, particularly that of the collections of the Witte, as well as nature, science, and culture more broadly. Fully embraces the Witte's mission and responsibility to the people of San Antonio and greater Texas through its programming, partnerships, and other offerings.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at witceceo@russellreynolds.com with a CV and brief explanation of interest.