

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum



Executive Director Opening Announcement Packet





The Opportunity

As SBMM celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2025, the museum is seeking a dynamic leader to guide it through its next chapter. SBMM is poised for continued expansion and innovation and is seeking a new Executive Director to lead this exciting effort.

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

The Santa Barbara Maritime Museum (SBMM) opened its doors on July 29, 2000, inside the Waterfront Center Building in the Santa Barbara Harbor. Founded by local fishermen, divers, and sailors, SBMM began as a small endeavor with a big mission: to celebrate the region's maritime heritage and key environmental issues. Now recognized as one of the top 10 maritime museums in the U.S. by Marina Life Magazine, SBMM earned its 10-year accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums in 2021—a distinction held by fewer than 4% of museums nationwide.

The museum's current five-year Strategic Plan runs through June 2026. The incoming Executive Director will play a pivotal role in collaborating with the Board and staff to shape the next phase of SBMM's strategic direction. The museum has consistently demonstrated growth and currently boasts over 850 household members, with more than 160 households contributing at the \$1,000+ annual giving level as part of the Navigators Circle. Additionally, more than 40 members belong to the Flagship Society, which recognizes planned gifts of \$10,000+. The museum currently employs 10 full-time staff and 7 part-time staff, with additional external consultants for specialized services such as accounting, IT support, and human resources.

Mission Statement:

Creating excellent exhibits and educational experiences that celebrate the Santa Barbara Channel and illuminate our rich connections with the sea.

Vision Statement:

To be the recognized flagship institution for information on the Santa Barbara Channel by showcasing our rich maritime history, presenting inspirational programs, and prompting insightful discussions about the future of our coastal community.

The Candidate

Professional Qualifications:

The ideal candidate will possess a strong background in museum management, exceptional communication skills, and the ability to provide clear direction to staff. They should be capable of collaborating effectively with the Board of Directors, creating budgets, forecasting revenue and expenses, and analyzing financial statements. Public speaking skills, professional representation of the museum, and cultivating strong relationships with donors, members, and staff are essential. They should demonstrate the ability to empower and hold staff accountable, while fostering a positive work environment.

Personal Traits:

The ideal candidate will have a passion for maritime history and culture and excels in problem-solving, communication, and relationship-building with a diverse range of stakeholders, including Board members, donors, volunteers, and business leaders.

Education and Experience:

A bachelor's degree is required, with a master's degree or higher in an appropriate discipline preferred. The ideal candidate will have at least five years of managerial experience, preferably in an Executive Director or Deputy Director role, potentially in a non-profit setting, as well as at least five years of experience in fundraising for nonprofit organizations.

Work Location:

The Executive Director will be based onsite at the Santa Barbara Harbor Waterfront Center Building. Some duties may also be conducted at the museum's Kieding Collections Chandlery, located approximately two miles from the main museum.

Compensation:

Details regarding compensation will be discussed with qualified candidates during the interview process. The annual salary range for the position is \$120,000 - \$175,000, negotiable. Full benefits will also be provided.

Duties:

Development and Public Relations

- ⚓ Work closely with the Board of Directors to identify, solicit, and acquire new sources of funding and to build long-term, sustainable sources of income for the organization.
- ⚓ Actively seek major donor support; maintain and build on-going relationships with existing major donors to ensure continued support.
- ⚓ Serve as chief liaison with specific SBMM community groups/partners.
- ⚓ Ensure appropriate representation of SBMM by all employees.
- ⚓ Develop annual public relations strategies to maintain a high public profile in the local community
- ⚓ Effectively represent SBMM in the community with governmental bodies, private donors and

foundations, the media, and other community-based organizations.

Management and Administration

- ⚓ Develop and facilitate an active strategic and program planning process as directed by the Board of Directors.
- ⚓ Develop and implement organizational goals and objectives consistent with the mission and vision of SBMM.
- ⚓ Compose and administer operational policies as approved by the board, and develop appropriate procedures for implementation.
- ⚓ Oversee all programs to ensure that program objectives are met.
- ⚓ Oversee business development relative to organizational stabilization and future program growth.
- ⚓ Ensure compliance with funding sources and regulatory requirements.
- ⚓ Provide information for evaluation of the organization's activities.
- ⚓ Conduct talks, tours, and provide historical context as needed to community groups, volunteers, staff, and media.
- ⚓ Represent SBMM to museum-related organizations (CMM/AAM).
- ⚓ Maintain working knowledge of museum industry-related issues and local maritime history.
- ⚓ Make presentations to government entities.

Fiscal

- ⚓ Develop, recommend, and monitor annual and other budgets.
- ⚓ Ensure effective audit procedures.
- ⚓ Approve expenditures.
- ⚓ Provide for proper handling of cash, fiscal record keeping, and reporting.
- ⚓ Submit monthly financial statements to the Board of Directors.
- ⚓ Manage the preparation and submission of grant applications and funding proposals as appropriate, ensuring that funds are used properly.

Personnel

- ⚓ Administer board-approved personnel policies.
- ⚓ Ensure legal hiring and termination procedures.
- ⚓ Oversee any and all disciplinary actions.
- ⚓ Provide for adequate supervision, guidance, and regular evaluation of all staff and volunteers.
- ⚓ Assume a strong leadership position in conjunction with the Board of Directors to ensure that the organization has effective training policies and procedures.
- ⚓ Supervise direct reports (subject to organizational chart) and provides guidance to those they supervise.

Board Relations

- ⚓ Assist the board president in planning the agenda and materials for board meetings.
- ⚓ Initiate and assist in developing policy recommendations and in setting policies.
- ⚓ Facilitate the orientation of new board members.
- ⚓ Work to staff all board committees as appropriate.

External Relations and Fundraising

SBMM is an active member of several organizations, including the American Alliance of Museums, the Council of American Maritime Museums, the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, and the Harbor Merchants Association, among others.

Ongoing fundraising is essential for sustaining general operations, exhibits, and educational programming. The Executive Director, Deputy Director, Development staff, and Board work collaboratively on fundraising efforts. The Navigators Circle and Planned Giving committees support these activities. The museum conducts several fundraising events each year, and a Fundraising Events Committee plays an integral role in organizing these initiatives.

Governance and Financial Health

The Santa Barbara Maritime Museum is governed by a Board of Directors that convenes seven times a year, including an Annual Meeting in June, with additional sessions scheduled as needed. The Board consists of 5 to 30 members, and it is responsible for overseeing the museum's governance, financial health, and long-term strategic planning. The Board also hires the Executive Director, who reports directly to the Board. Board members serve for two consecutive three-year terms, with exceptions for Board Officers. The Board President can serve a maximum of two years.

SBMM has twelve standing committees, each chaired by a Board member and supported by staff liaisons. Additional ad-hoc committees are formed as needed. The Executive and Finance Committees meet monthly, with other committees meeting on a variable schedule. Committee minutes are included in Board packets, and Chairs provide updates at each Board meeting.

The museum's annual budget is approximately \$2 million, supported by a \$1.7 million endowment and other restricted and unrestricted funds. Basic accounting functions, such as payroll and accounts payable, are handled by an external accounting firm, and annual audits are conducted. Both the annual audits and Form 990 filings are publicly accessible on the museum's website.

In addition, SBMM acts as the fiscal agent for the following organizations and initiatives:

- ⚓ Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area
- ⚓ Santa Barbara Deepwater Diving Monument (Unveiling April 2025)
- ⚓ West of the West II: Tales of the Eight Channel Islands

Exhibits and Educational Programs

SBMM occupies approximately 8,000 square feet of exhibit and office space across two floors of the Waterfront Center Building, as well as a 3,000-square-foot offsite warehouse for artifact storage. The museum and Visitor Center welcome approximately 40,000 visitors annually.

The Curator / Director of Exhibits leads the development and maintenance of permanent exhibits and the installation of 3-4 temporary exhibits each year. Additionally, SBMM has an expanding collection of exhibits that can travel to other venues. Permanent exhibits focus on the maritime history of the Santa Barbara Channel, while temporary and traveling exhibits cover a range of maritime-related topics.

SBMM offers 13 experiential, project-based educational programs for learners of all ages. A monthly lecture series caters to adult audiences, while youth education programs—focused on STEAM curriculum—reach nearly 5,000 students annually, primarily from low-income schools in Santa Barbara County. These programs include museum and coastal tours, as well as on-the-water activities. The Education Department is led by the Director of Education, supported by one full-time and one part-time staff member, along with over 20 outside consultants.

Additionally, nearly 100 volunteers and docents assist with educational programming, events, and museum operations under the supervision of the Guest Services Manager.

Key Relationships

SBMM has cultivated many essential partnerships, including with:

- ⚓ The City of Santa Barbara
- ⚓ NOAA
- ⚓ Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
- ⚓ US Coast Guard
- ⚓ Santa Barbara Yacht Club
- ⚓ UCSB
- ⚓ Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
- ⚓ Central Coast Ocean Adventures
- ⚓ Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara
- ⚓ Channel Islands National Park

The current Executive Director is an active member of the Santa Barbara County Museum Directors Roundtable, an invaluable local resource for museum leadership.

Vision and Strategy

The Strategic Planning Committee, comprising key Board members and staff, oversees the development and execution of SBMM's goals. The committee reviews and adjusts the strategic plan annually, meeting quarterly to evaluate progress. The current FY 2021-2026 plan identifies six key goals:

- ⚓ Visitor Experience and SBMM Visibility
- ⚓ Fiscal Sustainability
- ⚓ Education
- ⚓ Exhibits
- ⚓ Public Trust and Accountability
- ⚓ Leadership and Organizational Structure

From the museum's inception, the vision has been to create the most interactive maritime museum on the West Coast. This vision continues to guide the development of both exhibits and educational programs.

SBMM provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

Interested applicants should submit cover letter and resume to HR@sbmm.org no later than August 1, 2025.