



national children's museum

Chief Executive Officer · National Children's Museum

Position Guide · June 2024

KITTLEMAN
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National Children's Museum (NCM) is a unique hybrid institution, combining learning elements found in a science center with children's museum experiences.



Through science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) focused exhibits and playful, in-person and virtual program offerings, the Museum sparks curiosity and ignites creativity for all learners, with an emphasis on children ages 2-12.

National Children's Museum served children and families for 30 years in its original home on H Street in Northeast Washington, DC. Founded in 1974 as the Capital Children's Museum, this community museum was run by local volunteers and hosted a charter school and adult literacy

programs in its early years. In 2003, the Museum was renamed National Children's Museum by Congressional-designation, and the original building location was sold. For 17 years, without federal appropriation or space, the Museum worked to serve children in various temporary locations throughout the District and Maryland. During that time, Washington, DC was the only major city in America without a children's museum or science and technology center, leaving a void for hands-on, early childhood and science learning.

In 2016, the District of Columbia provided critical start-up funding to reopen National Children's Museum. After a long search, the Board of Trustees identified an empty federal space in downtown DC and hired a CEO from the science center community to lead the initiative.

The new National Children's Museum was envisioned as a next-generation institution, with an enhanced and updated look and feel, designed for kids and families. In February 2020, National Children's Museum reopened in its new home at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW, welcoming visitors into a first-of-its-kind children's museum and science center designed for modern families. Soon after reopening in 2020, the Museum was forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic and pivoted to offering virtual resources for over 1,000,000 families across the nation. After being closed for 18 months, the Museum was able to successfully reopen to the public in September 2021.

ABOUT NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

In 2023, National Children's Museum saw 234,876 visitors from all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and around the world and more than 11,000 students and educators on field trips. To increase [access](#), the Museum partnered with 17 local organizations to provide community members facing economic barriers with free Museum admission and joined the nationwide Museums for All program. During the current 2023-2024 school year, National Children's Museum expanded the number of field trips offered, welcoming over 8,900 students with an additional 2,500 students expected throughout the summer. Fifty percent of field trips this school year are from Title 1 schools; 40% of these Title 1 field trips were offered at no cost.

[new offerings!](#)

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding, National Children's Museum has invited the community to commemorate the Museum's history through an archival campaign, special exhibit, and anniversary gala. The special exhibit, which opened in June 2024, pays homage to the beloved Embassy of Mexico immersive experience from the Museum's past home on H Street NE.

[sensory friendly hours](#)

During dedicated play sessions, families will have the opportunity to enjoy an adapted Museum experience with fewer visitors and additional resources.

[climate action heroes exhibit sharing program](#)

The Museum is partnering with Nickelodeon to expand climate action education. A new version of its Climate Action Heroes exhibit—one that incorporates iconic Nickelodeon characters—is available to any cultural or educational institution around the world free of charge.



Position Chief Executive Officer

Reports To Board of Trustees

Location Washington, DC



MISSION

To inspire children to care about and change the world.

VISION

We will spark curiosity, ignite passion, and foster inclusivity to empower future innovation.

CORE BELIEFS

the values and beliefs that guide how we operate internally and externally

joyful: We believe that a joyful working environment leads to a joyful experience for our visitors and partners. We believe that work and play should be joyful, and we infuse joy into our staff culture, interactions with internal and external stakeholders, and Museum offerings.

playful: Our Museum experience is grounded in learning through play. While the work of STEAM learning and providing access and inclusivity are serious endeavors, we believe we can achieve them through play.

inclusive: We are a local institution with a national reach and strive to create a safe space for all identities. From Museum design to recruiting and beyond, we are a space for all.

innovative: We are creative, make wonder out of anything, and are on the cutting edge of experience design to spark curiosity. We will continue to evolve as the world evolves so that we can remain at the forefront of STEAM and play-based learning.

empowering: We provide opportunities for children and adults to find their voices, experience joy, and harness their assets to make the world a better place. Our employees have agency over their work.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Over the next several years, the CEO of National Children’s Museum will have the opportunity to build upon the solid foundation of the museum. The opportunity to be transformative and take the organization to the next level is fully supported by the Board.

The CEO will have the opportunity to work with and further develop a strong community Board and committed donors to outline a vision for the museum that is respectful of its past 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 the core staff leadership within the Museum to achieve ambitious goals.

National Children’s Museum is at a pivotal time in its history. Having achieved wonderful success while managing through past challenges, the institution is poised to step forward into the future and expand upon all its excellent accomplishments.

In implementing a new strategic plan, the Museum will commit to the following priorities from 2024 through 2029:

- **joyful experience:** cultivating a positive work and play environment with moments of all-sensory delight
- **education partnerships:** developing resources and relationships to further empower educators
- **sparkling STEAM:** pushing the bounds of what STEAM learning looks like within and outside Museum walls
- **uniquely DC:** reflecting the people we serve—both DC locals and tourists— in our offerings
- **sustainability:** maximizing efficiency building strategic partnerships for fiscal health

Reporting to the 21-member [Board of Trustees](#) and working with a passionate and committed staff of approximately 40 individuals, the CEO of National Children’s Museum is responsible for the overall leadership and management of a \$7.5M annual operating budget, including strategic direction, finances, fundraising, programs, staff, and external relations with funders, community partners, visitors, government officials, and others.

National Children’s Museum seeks an accomplished leader who has a compelling vision for the power of informal learning environments. This individual is a curious, lifelong learner who is passionate about visitor and member engagement. This leader will be a tireless advocate for the Museum’s mission and will inspire others to support the institution’s outcomes and success.

Key skills and attributes include:

Creative, Focused, Strategic Thinking: An adept strategist and visionary leader, the next CEO will exhibit robust business acumen and the understanding of the impact of interactive, alternative learning environments, which may include children’s museums, science centers, or other nonprofit or government backgrounds.

Internal and External Communications: As the key spokesperson for National Children’s Museum, the CEO will be an enthusiastic, passionate, and outgoing individual who will serve as an ambassador for the Museum. The leader will be willing to engrain themselves into the unique fabric of Washington, DC and seek partnership with Board members, donors, elected officials, corporate executives and other supporters. The ideal candidate must 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, and national level. Experience working in public/private partnerships with a high level of community involvement and impact is beneficial.

Proven Organizational Leadership and Management Skills: This individual will be both leader and coach – one who understands effective design and implementation of staff management and organizational structures. This leader will have experience in hiring, coaching, collaborating, delegating, problem solving, and goal setting within a multidisciplinary staff. The successful candidate will be a good listener, someone who invites input before acting decisively. This person will enjoy working in a collaborative environment and can demonstrate the ability to successfully manage people and operations while empowering, delegating, motivating, and mentoring the work force. A strong desire to build and support volunteer resources is highly valued.

EEO STATEMENT

National Children’s Museum is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Museum’s EEO policy prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliations, physical handicap, or any other basis prohibited by applicable law. National Children’s Museum prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and will reasonably accommodate applicants with a disability, upon request, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the Museum. Under this policy, equal employment opportunity is required in recruitment, hiring, training, and development, promotion, termination, compensation, benefits, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment as required by applicable law.



National Children’s Museum offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

The salary range for this position annually is between \$250,000 - \$300,000 and will be commensurate with experience.

The comprehensive benefits package includes health and dental insurance as well as a 403(B)-retirement savings plan. National Children’s Museum provides basic life and short-term disability insurance coverage. NCM observes six paid holidays each year and offers generous paid time off.

How to apply

For best consideration, please submit a current resume and letter of introduction, by 08/06/2024, to Kittleman & Associates, LLC.

→ **SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO KITTLEMAN ONLINE**
(CLICK THE APPLY BUTTON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE)

For more information about National Children’s Museum, visit <https://nationalchildrensmuseum.org/>.

