

Mystic Aquarium Director of Human Resources

The new HR director will upgrade the aquarium's HR infrastructure, workflows, policies and career development practices, and in the process implement accountability approaches that encourage cross-departmental collaboration.

Founded in 1973 to serve as a living laboratory, Connecticut's [Mystic Aquarium](#) is today home to thousands of marine mammals, fish, invertebrates and reptiles central to its marine conservation, research and education mission. The 18+ acre campus provides a broad array of environments for different animals; research and care facilities; educational exhibits; and playful learning areas for children and families. Visitors are transported to shorelines of the Arctic; North America's Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coastal waters; and to tropical and other marine ecosystems in ways that bring into focus global concerns about how we treat our planet and its marine inhabitants. Highlights include a penguin pavilion, a ray and shark touch pool, a jellyfish gallery, an animal rescue clinic, and the largest outdoor Beluga whale exhibit in the United States. The Aquarium also serves as home to a Veterinary and Animal Health Center, a recently completed 18,000 sq foot Ocean Science and Conservation Center, and state-of-the-art classrooms, conference facilities, and a \$1.5m aquaculture lab and animal holding area.

Mystic Aquarium is a member of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA), and an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). With an annual budget of \$25m, 250 full-time staff and 600 volunteers, Mystic Aquarium enjoys outstanding local, national and international partnerships with premier educational and academic research institutions. A key driver of the regional economy, the Aquarium annually hosted 800,000 visitors prior to the COVID lockdown of 2020.

With America re-opening for business and attendance being rebuilt, the Human Resources Director will encourage a culture of collaboration and accountability. Cultural attributes and workflows will be shaped so that each member of each department has personal ownership for delivering a phenomenal experience to each and every Mystic Aquarium visitor.

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Human Resources ("Director") is a member of the management team, and will lead a three-person staff consisting of an HR Manager, Volunteer Manager and an HR Specialist. Along with the President/CEO and COO, the HR Department ensures that the mission, value and culture of the organization are upheld, and advances staff cohesion and camaraderie.

Working closely with the finance department (which manages payroll through a vendor – ADP), the Director will lead all HR functions including recruitment and on-boarding; training and career development; employee relations and recognition; reviews and assessments; termination and exit interviews; and legal matters as they relate to HR matters. Additionally the Director will:

- Become thoroughly familiar with Mystic Aquarium's history and culture, programs, conservation-focused research and current HR systems and processes.
- Understand the current business culture and its impact on the organization's overall ability to implement the CEO's vision for the organization; and evolve the business culture to more closely align with the CEO's vision for Mystic Aquarium.

- Establish collaborative working relationships with the senior leadership and management team, HR staff, and other constituencies; foster and sustain a culture of cooperation, trust, communication, mutual support, teamwork and integrity.
- Attract and retain high-performing staff by using best practices to guide and strengthen strategies to improve recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, compensation, recognition, evaluation, and career advancement opportunities.
- Assure a strong and thoroughly documented employee performance review system that distinguishes between employees who are critical to the organization's success and are exceptional performers aligned to the CEO's vision, from others who might require counseling or even exiting from the organization.
- Coordinate legal matters related to human resources and personnel, working with legal counsel as needed.
- Provide guidance, tools, training and coaching to staff leadership so they are able to manage employee relations with skill, compassion and fairness.
- Develop, strengthen and implement conflict resolution processes and facilitate team building and decision making based on a shared belief in the mission, vision and goals of the organization.
- Set goals for what needs to be accomplished to strengthen the HR function, and provide ongoing support to ensure goals are being met.
- Guide the development and updating of HR programs, policies and processes, ensuring they are aligned with best practices and reflect the mission, vision, values and goals of Mystic Aquarium.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE and CHARACTERISTICS

The Director of Human Resources should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Broad-based management experience as a leader in a human resources department, preferably in a complex nonprofit or business environment; experience with family attractions or science/education/conservation oriented museums or attractions would be advantageous;
- Extensive knowledge of benefits and the human resource management systems, workflows and operations of a modern, best-practices HR Department;
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills; a good listener who is comfortable receiving input from many sources;
- A mission-driven individual who values diversity, equity and inclusion, and has strong affinity for science, education, and conservation;
- A deep commitment to the vision, mission and values of Mystic Aquarium and with outstanding human qualities;
- A team builder – confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who understand the subtleties of motivating and directing a diverse group of personalities with different work styles;
- A facilitator who will be viewed by members of the senior management team as a strong ally and partner; a person able to make or support unpopular decisions when necessary and explain them; an ability to negotiate with people having sharply defined opinions while maintaining positive, respectful relationships;

- A hard worker with a high energy level; a “doer” with a willingness to work hands-on in developing and executing a variety of activities;
- Emotional maturity, self-reliance, and a sense of perspective and humor.

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