

POSITION DESCRIPTION AND CANDIDATE PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

Open until September 30, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC) in its modern incarnation was established in 1966 by the State of Maryland to commemorate the first capital of the Maryland colony (est. 1634). After half a century of operation, HSMC is a well-established, fully accredited museum and historical park with a host of assets. The park and museum are open to the public from March through November; and they host some holiday events.

HSMC's mission is to preserve and protect the archaeological and historical record of Maryland's first colonial capital and to appropriately develop and use this historic and scenic site for the education, enjoyment, and general benefit of the public. The lands HSMC stewards have been designated as a National Historic Landmark, one of the highest designations conferred by the U.S. Department of the Interior. HSMC is recognized as one of the foremost early settlement site museums in North America.

Today, the museum consists of 850 acres supporting more than 100 structures, including the Reconstructed State House of 1676, the Godiah Spray Plantation, Farthings Ordinary, chapel, numerous "ghost frame" buildings, the recently commissioned (2022) *Maryland Dove* (a full-scale reproduction of a 17th century merchant ship), and visitor center. A new interpretive center is under construction with a planned opening in late 2026.

The museum's interpretive work is grounded in historical and archaeological research. Since the museum's inception more than 50 years ago, this research has contributed to new and transformative understandings of life in the first century of English colonization in North America. Most recently, staff archaeologists have uncovered traces of the original 1634 fort, erected not long after the colonists' arrival in March of that year.

A pioneer in living history, HSMC interprets for visitors the lives of the first English settlers in this region. The museum also interprets the histories and lives of the site's Indigenous people and the Africans and African Americans who labored on the site's historic townlands and plantations.

The museum's extensive 850-acre parkland provides opportunities for recreation in forests and fields, with a dramatic waterfront overlooking the St. Mary's River. A hike or bike ride on the miles of trails presents a timeless view of human occupation on this beautiful, environmentally protected landscape. Stewardship of this archaeologically sensitive land, water-adjacent

ecosystems, and other natural and cultural resources require thoughtful development and preservation.

HSMC is managed by the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, including 17 members who are not employees of the museum. Thirteen commissioners are appointed to four-year terms by the Governor with Senate advice and consent. Of four ex officio members, two vote and two are nonvoting members. The Commission names the Executive Director.

The museum is at an important moment in its history. Maryland is less than a decade away from its 400th birthday that will place it, with Virginia and Massachusetts, among a very small number of original English colonies (now states). HSMC will be at the center of that commemoration as the flagship institution interpreting the arrival of settlers to this land. There will be no better opportunity in our collective lifetimes to provide the first capital with the attention it deserves, making the museum and park a treasured gift and legacy to future generations.

HSMC seeks an experienced, innovative museum leader to continue the organization's path of building the museum while also strengthening support for the upcoming 400th anniversary. The achievements of this major early American landmark will live long past 2034 for Maryland and the United States.

The Executive Director/CEO will accomplish the following:

- Continue to build this first-class museum and park through development of a new and updated master plan.
- Provide a broad range of visitors with multi-day experiences, with more facilities and resources on the St. Mary's Townlands.
- Play a pivotal role in 400th anniversary plans with HSMC as the center of the commemoration for Maryland and the nation, working with the State Legislature to continue implementation of the master plan for the 400th.
- Embrace the growing and dynamic local community, the new Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, and the broader community.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

HSMC is located in St. Mary's County, Maryland, a peninsula on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay bordered by the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. Largely rural in character, St. Mary's County is a fast-growing region in the state, supporting national defense, higher education, and tourism. The county's extensive shoreline and nationally significant history are always within reach through the region's many attractions, scenic byways, historic sites, and recreational boating and camping opportunities.

Today, St. Mary's County is a vibrant blend of its rich past and a modern technology-driven economy. After World War II, the U.S. Navy consolidated Naval aviation research, development, testing and evaluation at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River. With approximately 20,000 personnel, it has become the major driver of St. Mary's County's thriving economy.

Historic St. Mary's City shares the National Historic Landmark with St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM; www.smcm.edu), a public (state), four-year liberal arts institution established in 1839 and administered by an independent Board of Trustees. As the National Public Honors College, SMCM is committed to a focus on Maryland's heritage. SMCM recently commissioned an innovative monument to the enslaved African American people of southern Maryland (<https://www.smcm.edu/honoring-enslaved/>).

HSMC enjoys two partnership initiatives with SMCM, including the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) and the College's Museum Studies Program. The CSD was founded as a joint initiative with HSMC to take advantage of the two institutions' proximity to the nation's capital for exploring contemporary and historical issues related to democracy. The Museum Studies Program, an academic program of the College, draws on HSMC for adjunct faculty and experiential learning for students who are planning careers in the heritage field.

SMCM also maintains agreements with HSMC to provide certain services on behalf of HSMC.

The long rich history of the Southern Maryland region, including St. Mary's, Charles, Calvert, and southern Prince Georges counties, is featured in the newly designated Southern Maryland National Heritage Area (SMNHA), one of two national heritage areas in Maryland eligible for federal support. The SMNHA promotes the greater region's many historic and cultural sites, including the St. Clement's Island Museum, Point Lookout State Park, Patuxent River Naval Air Museum, Historic Sotterley, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, the Calvert Marine Museum, and many others.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Executive Director (CEO) has the overall responsibility to carry out the mission and policies of Historic St. Mary's City as established by the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, including financial, educational, archaeological research and conservation, collections, operations, and staff management of the organization. The CEO and the Commission establish policies for programmatic and financial goals and will maintain a collaborative workplace.

The position is an on-site position. Remote work is not an option. It is strongly preferred that the CEO live within 30 miles of HSMC.

LEADERSHIP

The Executive Director/CEO:

- Reports directly to and works in partnership with the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, an independent 17-member state agency within the office of the Governor (hereafter referred to as the Commission) which functions as a board. Thirteen members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor. Several are appointed by General Assembly leadership.

- Meets regularly with the Commission Chair (selected by Commission members) to review operations, budget, and planning.
- Has the responsibility, authority, and decision-making power to manage operations and finances, staff and their activities, and the implementation of plans and programs.
- Is expected to follow State of Maryland policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations in all aspects of employment.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The CEO is supported by the following key positions:

- Chief Operating Officer (COO)
- Director of Research & Collections
- Director of Education
- Director of Facilities and Grounds
- Director of Finance
- Director of Advancement & Communications
- Director of Administration

There are 32 regular state employees, and approximately 44 contractual employees (some part-time or seasonal) for a total of about 76 staff, along with a cadre of local volunteers who assist with programs, events, and administrative support.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND FUND RAISING

HSMC's annual operating budget is approximately \$5.5 million, primarily State funds along with other earned income, grants, and philanthropy making a significant contribution. Increasing gifts will give HSMC greater flexibility.

The Executive Director is:

- Responsible for developing the annual operating and capital budgets in consultation with the COO. The Executive Director/CEO works with the COO to ensure appropriate financial controls and reporting are in place. The Commission reviews and approves budgets prior to submission.
- The chief liaison with the Governor's office and the General Assembly, its committees and individual members in Annapolis. These relationships are critical to the success of both HSMC and the 400th anniversary project for obtaining the necessary funding.
- Develops projects and opportunities that merit grant support and philanthropic contributions from individuals and other organizations.
- Oversees grant writing that provides support for archaeological exploration, research, historical programming and other activities.
- Serves as the primary institutional liaison with the President of SMCM. HSMC and SMCM have an agreement to share some administrative and other functions and some facilities. There are ongoing opportunities for cooperation that can provide great benefit to both institutions.

- Supports the Museum Studies Program at the College in ways deemed reasonable and mutually beneficial to both institutions. This support may include teaching a museum studies course at the College, serving on the Museum Studies Program Steering Committee, supporting the involvement of HSMC staff in the program, etc.
- Works with the HSMC Foundation, an independent 501(c)3 organization created to solicit and receive charitable gifts from individuals and grant making organizations.
- Works with staff and the Foundation to provide on-going and well-publicized activities attractive to donors and the community and recognition of donors.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

- Creates a clear and consistent identity for HSMC.
- Attracts visitors from local, state and broader communities.
- Develops compelling campaigns, newsletters and social media outreach.
- Pursue opportunities for local and national exposure.

FACILITIES

- Oversight and stewardship of the physical plant, archaeological resources and natural environment, assuring they are well maintained.
- Oversight of new construction, capital projects and appropriate use of existing buildings, landscapes and collections.
- Oversight of risk mitigation, preparedness and infrastructure.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Builds strong relationships with the local community which has strong roots in St. Mary's and the Navy at with the Patuxent River Naval Air Station.
- Represents HSMC in regional and statewide forums.
- Builds meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous and descendant communities, and other museums communities in Southern Maryland
- Fosters a balance of research and public programming that is both educational and entertaining.

OTHER ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

- Museum Experience.
- Communication Skills
- Knowledge of modern computer skills, social media, technology, and communication tools with a goal of making HSMC technologically effective
- Proven ability to manage a large program and staff,
- The ability to foster strong relationships between the various organizations, groups and individuals who all value what St. Mary's is and could be.
- Effective public speaking skills and the ability to represent HSMC at public forums.
- Confidence and experience in working with public officials.

- Working knowledge of history research and presentation and an affinity for the pleasures of discovering historical subjects.
- Creating a balance of research and public programs.
- Upholding national museum standards promulgated by the American Association of Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, the Society for Historical Archaeology, and the National Recreation and Park Association. HSMC received AAM accreditation in 2003.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Previous senior experience in organizational and museum management is the paramount qualification (10 years in senior management of a museum or public program operation)
- Master's degree preferred
- Cooperative leadership style that leads to overall results
- Willingness and proven ability to raise funds
- Ability to work successfully in partnership with other organizations
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills
- Experience in working successfully with local organizations and public officials

SALARY: \$175,000-\$195,000

To Apply:

Applications should include a cover letter and a CV. Two references should be provided. Contact will not be made until a final selection round.

Closing date: September 30, 2025

APPLICANTS WILL PLEASE SEND ALL QUERIES AND APPLICATIONS IN CONFIDENCE TO:

Porzia.Purves@maryland.gov

or

Ms. Porzia Purves, Director of Administration
Historic St. Mary's City Commission
P.O. Box 39
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

All applications must be received by September 30, 2025 when the position closes.

Historic St. Mary's City is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from all qualified candidates, including minority candidates.