

WINONA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OPEN POSITION: CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS

JOB LOCATION: On-site, Winona County Historical Society, 160 Johnson Street, Winona, MN

JOB TYPE: Full Time, Exempt

HIRING TIMELINE: Applications accepted through September 8. Desired start date October 15.

POSITION OVERVIEW

Winona County Historical Society is seeking a full-time Curator of Collections to steward, develop, document, and interpret its collections and archives. This position plays a vital role in the direction of WCHS collection activity, implementing exhibitions, developing and adhering to organizational policies, and bringing forward new opportunities to understand and engage with history through ethical and sustainable collecting practices. The Curator of Collections is a key member of the WCHS staff and needs to be willing and excited to collaborate with WCHS Staff, Partners, and Volunteers on exhibition and research initiatives.

The ideal candidate will have strong curatorial and scholarly judgement, with demonstrated expertise in managing both public-facing history projects and care and storage of collections. They will possess strong written and verbal communication skills, attention to detail, and the ability to build collaborative relationships with organizational partners.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Collection Management and Conservation: 50%

- Responsible for the development and care of the WCHS collection and archives and maintaining its intellectual integrity
- Participate in long-range planning as the primary advocate for curatorial issues
- Ensure that the items in the collection meet the guidelines of the WCHS Collections Management Policy
- Meet with the public regarding collections activity
- Work with the Collections Committee to oversee accessions, deaccessions, and loans, and keeping accurate records of all activity
- Oversee and implement accessioning and cataloging new and existing collections of 3D artifacts, paper archives, books, and photographs, and maintaining Collective Access records
- Establish appropriate storage methods for collection, and monitor the conditions in regard to environmental, pest, security, and risk management
- Make recommendations to the Executive Director and Board of Directors for the preservation of collections

Exhibits and Exhibit Content Development: 20%

- Develop new exhibition ideas, update existing exhibits, and collaborate with staff and partners on exhibition opportunities in conjunction with the Exhibition Committee
- Oversee and orchestrate exhibit installations and de-installation in collaboration with other staff
- Collaborate with exhibition team, with focus on research and content preparation from the collection and archives
- Provide outlines, speaking points, and scripts for staff and volunteers showcasing exhibitions to the public

Research and Archives: 20%

- Facilitate and educate staff volunteers on research and use of the collection and archives
- Develop, lead, and assign projects to archives staff, volunteers, and interns
- Lead oral history program, and ensure adherence to oral history policies and procedures
- Become familiar with resources specific to Winona County to respond to research requests
- Assist with public research requests as needed by archive/library staff

Other Related Duties: 10%

- Collaborate on grant applications and management activity
- Support WCHS programming, initiatives, and basic facility upkeep
- Attend regular staff meetings and board assigned committee meetings
- Participate in professional activities and organizations to ensure continuing education on new methods, opportunities, and networks

QUALIFICATIONS

Experience comes in many forms, and while we are seeking applicants that match our desired qualifications, encourage applications from people whose experience is strong but may not perfectly align with what's written.

- Bachelor's Degree in Museum Studies, Library and Information Studies, Native American Studies, History, or related field
- Five years of experience in a museum, library, or academic/scholarly field, or similar, with curatorial or collections experience preferred
- Experience with 3D materials in museum, cultural heritage organization, or research context
- Demonstrated experience conducting, managing, preserving, or interpreting oral history projects and community-based documentation initiatives that capture and amplify historically underrepresented voices and perspectives.
- Strong organizational skills, and ability to build repeatable process
- Clear communication methods
- Success in adhering to organizational mission, policies, procedures, and strategic plans
- Comfort in working with members of the public
- Experience in grant management
- Demonstrated interest and knowledge of local history and culture

REQUIREMENTS

- Valid driver's license. Periodic travel within the region may be required for collection and research activities.
- Work on-site at Winona County Historical Society, with some occasional travel for project and research work
- Experience leading efforts with culturally sensitive materials, including research, consultation, documentation, communication, acquisition, and deaccession
- Ability to work independently as well as collaborate effectively and positively and adhere to deadlines

WORK SCHEDULE

The Curator of Collections is classified as exempt, and is expected to work the hours necessary to fully perform the duties and responsibilities of this position. A general schedule of eight hours per day and 40 hours per week will be followed. On occasion programming or work hours may happen outside of the standard workday. If extra hours are worked due to unique circumstances, adjustments may be made during the same work week or the week immediately following if feasible.

SALARY/BENEFITS

- \$50,000 Annual Salary
- Partial coverage of Individual medical and dental insurance
- Cell phone stipend
- Participation in the WCHS 403(b) retirement plan with employer match
- 120 hours PTO

TO APPLY

- Send a single pdf including a cover letter, resume, and three references to jobs@winonahistory.org
- Please direct any questions to WCHS Executive Director, Emily Kurash Casey at director@winonahistory.org.
- Deadline for applications is Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

ABOUT WCHS

The Winona County Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation that exists to collect, preserve, interpret and disseminate the human history of Winona County, Minnesota. Located in downtown Winona, Minnesota, in the historic Armory, WCHS manages the History Center located in the historic Armory building, the Bunnell House in Homer, MN, and the Rural Heritage Museum in St. Charles, MN. WCHS values active learning, respectful representation, transformative storytelling, inclusive collaboration, and responsible stewardship. To learn more about WCHS, visit www.winonahistory.org.