



Conservation & Collections Manager (Conservator)

Department: Material Culture

Reports to: Director of Material Culture

Full Time; Exempt, Full Benefit Package Eligible

Level 5, Revised: January/2024

Salary: \$53,600 – \$75,000

Position Description

As a member of the Material Culture team reporting to the Director of Material Culture, the Conservation & Collections Manager serves as the department manager. The Conservation & Collections Manager is responsible for the conservation and restoration of collections while overseeing the care and preservation of collections and historical interior spaces, which include furnishings, decorative arts, textiles, paintings, outdoor sculptures, vehicles, and architectural features and historic finishes.

The Conservation & Collections Manager performs a wide range of advanced conservation and administrative duties requiring specialized knowledge of collections materials. They provide both strategic guidance and practical experience about the collections' long-term preservation and oversee the day-to-day workload of the collections care team. They will also work with the Archivist and Registrar to assist in prioritizing and ensuring completion of conservation needs.

Responsibilities

Considering the unique needs and challenges of Ford House, whose collections are housed in historical buildings with features and finishes that are part of the historic fabric of the site, the Conservation & Collections Manager will be involved in the conservation and preservation of the collections.

- Oversees the day-to-day care, preservation, and housekeeping of collections and historical spaces and supervises the collections care team members.
- Manage the preventative conservation program including implementation of a cyclical maintenance program for collections and interiors, environmental monitoring, and pest management oversight.
- Works closely with Director to maintain, track, and monitor safe physical environmental requirements for all collections, including security, climate control, lighting, housing materials, integrated pest management, and appropriate storage and display conditions.
- Effectively supervise the work of the collections care team, interns, and volunteers, overseeing the care and cleaning of the interior of the historic buildings and their contents according to established procedures and museum practices.
- Performs preservation cleaning and basic conservation treatments of historical buildings on a scheduled basis according to Ford House's cleaning and preservation standards.
- Responsible for planning and implementing cyclical deep cleaning projects with Director and Registrar. Oversees project completion, including all documentation.
- Plays major role in researching, testing, and implementing cleaning practices and preservation standards for collections, historical interiors, and exhibitions.
- Assess and prioritize the objects within the collection for conservation treatment.

- Create conservation proposals/treatment options for objects in need of conservation, performing conservation treatments, when appropriate, adhering to the standards and practices set out by the American Institute of Conservation, and solicit proposals for conservation treatment(s) by contractors.
- Develop, review, and manage the long-term conservation and preservation plan.
- Conduct object handling and collections-related care and safety training for staff.
- Maintain departmental and conservation lab supply inventory.
- Work with other departments to ensure care and preservation of institution-wide collections elements, including but not limited to outdoor sculptures, historic buildings and structures, and use/hands-on objects.
- Assist in annual budget preparation for departmental activities and facilities.
- Participate in disaster preparedness planning and any recovery efforts.
- Participate in Ford House projects, programs, and events.
- Represents Ford House at relevant professional forums and establishes and maintains collaborations with appropriate institutions.

Physical and Environmental Demands

Ability to walk up and down stairs while carrying objects weighing up to 55 pounds; to bend, stoop, and lift to move materials; to push/pull, lift and carry up to 55 pounds on a regular basis; and to reach above and below shoulder height. Ability to stand and walk for long periods of time. Ability to sit at a computer terminal for long periods of time. Tolerance of dust and mildew (protective gear provided). The nature of the position requires the ability to work in both indoor and outdoor environments in varying temperatures and weather conditions.

Supervisory Responsibilities

- Directly supervises Museum Technicians, Historical Buildings Housekeeper, volunteers, and interns.

Uniform Requirements

This position does not require a uniform, but the manager must present a clean, professional appearance. A uniform shirt will be provided to wear at specific events, and the shirt should be maintained by the Manager.

Skills and Requirements

- Successful completion of background and credit check.
- Bachelor's degree in a field related to conservation and considered preparatory to graduate studies in conservation (e.g., art history, anthropology, fine art, or chemistry). A master's degree in conservation or degree in progress is highly desirable.
- Three to five years' supervised conservation treatment of historical and/or decorative objects experience.
- Considerable knowledge of the theories, principles, and practices of conservation, as well as the techniques, tools, and equipment used in practical conservation of objects and historic finishes.
- Considerable knowledge of materials and current scientific processes used in conservation and restoration.
- Identify and assess preservation needs for various objects, architectural features, and historic finishes.
- Plan future conservation and maintenance projects and manage projects.
- Demonstrated personnel and project management experience.
- Write accurate, clear, and concise proposals and reports detailing activities.
- Motivate and lead staff and work groups in a professionally effective manner.
- Train and supervise personnel engaged in preservation and collections care activities.
- Maintain confidentiality in all professional matters.

- Demonstrated ability to communicate, orally and in writing.
- Good organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Office suite.
- Familiarity with collections database software.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to establish and maintain effective relationships with coworkers, visitors, vendors, and others in the workplace, and to work cooperatively and productively as a member of a team.

Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they meet all the listed criteria. We are most interested in finding the best candidate for the position, so we encourage you to think broadly about your background and skill set in relation to the role.

Work Schedule

- This is a full-time position with benefits.
- Must be able to work evenings, weekends, and some holidays.
- Must be able to travel to various locations including Ford House and the off-site collections facility.

Benefits

- 403(b)
- 403(b) matching
- Dental insurance
- Employee assistance program
- Employee discount
- Flexible spending account
- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Paid time off
- Parental leave
- Professional development assistance
- Retirement plan
- Vision insurance

Please, no phone calls.

To apply, send letter of interest and resume to collectiondept@fordhouse.org.

Ford House is committed to a policy of Equal Employment Opportunity and will not discriminate against an applicant on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, national origin, alienage or citizenship, disability, marital status, veteran or military status, genetic information, or any other legally-recognized protected basis under federal, state or local laws, regulations or ordinances. Applicants with disabilities may be entitled to reasonable accommodation under the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or certain state or local laws.