

The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum

Executive Director

Spring 2024

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Success Profile – The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum

01 Our Client

The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum (CJM), which opened to the public in June 2023, explores the past, present, and future of Jewish life in the capital region. Its mission is to connect, reflect, and act – to explore the Jewish experience in the national capital region and inspire visitors to connect personally and collectively, reflect on the relevance of the past to today, and act on behalf of their communities and values. With its unconventional, experimental spirit, CJM explores the Jewish experience in the DC-area and serves as a secular space for storytelling, connection, and dialogue across cultural communities in the national capital region.

Specific programming and activities include:

- Dynamic arts and culture programming, including lectures, roundtables, festivals, craft activities, and more. CJM’s public programs cultivate conversations, prompt reflection, and inspire action. The full events calendar appears on the CJM website (<https://capitaljewishmuseum.org/calendar/>).
- Engaging exhibitions that explore the continuing project of building community at the intersection of American democracy and the American Jewish experience in the nation’s capital. Visitors of all religions and backgrounds can find something to reflect their own story in the stories on display.
- Public history-focused educational experiences for all ages, including school visits. Serving school-age children from the DC area is a critical focus of CJM’s activities. Beginning this academic year, they offered outreach and services to K–12 audiences. School visits by Title I schools are free, ensuring broad access for a diverse audience of local schoolchildren and their teachers. CJM is currently developing curriculum guides and a menu of field trips for DC public school students tied to key educational standards.

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Photo Credit: Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum. External view of the Historic Synagogue and new building.

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History of CJM & the Historic Synagogue Building

CJM grew out of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington (JHSGW), founded in 1960 and incorporated in 1965 as a nonprofit dedicated to preserving local Jewish history. JHSGW maintained the 1876 Adas Israel Synagogue, the first purpose-built synagogue in the nation's capital (listed on the National Register for Historic Places and DC Inventory of Historic Sites) and shared the stories of the regional Jewish community through archival collections, traveling exhibitions, educational programs, walking tours, and several published books. In 2016, as part of the Capitol Crossing development project, the historic synagogue building began its move to its forever home, first resting down the block as neighborhood construction continued.

In 2019, JHSGW became the Capital Jewish Museum (CJM) and set to work expanding its mission and audience. There has long been a need in the DC area for a secular museum devoted to Jewish history and culture, which embraces the unique history and contributions of the Washington-area Jewish community, which CJM fills for the first time. Today, CJM is an exciting and valuable addition to the Capital region's cultural landscape. Over the past several years, the museum and its architects designed an addition to the historic synagogue building that serves as a transition to the larger-scale mixed-use development of the neighborhood while cradling the landmark building in a light-filled envelope.

The new state-of-the-art, accessible building totals 32,500 square feet over four floors, and is LEED silver-certified. The museum features a terrace with views of the Capitol, a lobby atrium, a flexible education space, three floors of exhibition galleries, and the largest and best-known artifact – Washington's oldest purpose-built synagogue, which has been moved to its new location and renovated and restored to reflect its original condition. Since opening in June 2023, thousands of DC residents and visitors of all ages have visited the museum.

Organizational Structure and Governance

The Capital Jewish Museum is governed by a 32-person Board of Directors, who have fiduciary responsibility for the organization and contribute leadership, expertise, and judgment in working to sustain and ensure the museum's mission and impact. The Board of Directors is dedicated to an engaged, thoughtful partnership with the Executive Director.

The Capital Jewish Museum team today includes 14 staff members and operates an annual budget of approximately \$3.5 million. For more information on the Capital Jewish Museum, please visit <https://capitaljewishmuseum.org/>.



VOTER

ATHLETE

TEACHER

EXECUTIVE

PROBLEM SOLVER

JUDGE

AUTHOR

PROTESTOR

ARCHIST

"Perhaps the most vivid memory I have is sitting around a table ...
at the Hot Shoppes and asking questions of each other—
'WHAT ARE WE? Are we Jewish first, or are we American first?'"

TAMARA HANDELSMAN, THE RECORD, v24, 2009

KAMENY WAY NW

BOYCOTT GRAPES

CARL BERNSTEIN

"The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum explores the Jewish experience in the national capital region and inspires visitors to connect, reflect, and act—Connect personally and collectively, Reflect on the relevance of the past to today, and Act on behalf of their communities and values."

Photo Credit: Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum. "Connect. Reflect. Act." galleries.



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The Role

Reporting directly to and working closely with the Board of Directors, the Executive Director of the Capital Jewish Museum is the driver of the museum's strategic vision, as well as the long-term planning and goal setting. The Executive Director will partner with the Board to continue to develop the long-term strategic vision for the museum drawing on the organization's history, mission, and values. They will also continue to evolve programming and exhibitions and build partnerships to solidify the museum's unique identity in the national capital region and guide the development of a sustainable business model that continues to deliver high level programming that advances the museum's mission.

The Executive Director will galvanize support and fundraise effectively for the museum in coordination with the Board. Ensuring a wide range of donors feel included, appreciated, and involved, the Executive Director will increase and diversify financial support from individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government funders to ensure financial sustainability.

The Executive Director will lead the museum's dedicated professional staff and will ensure the organization's vision and strategic objectives are collectively agreed upon, effectively implemented and realized in a fiscally responsible manner. They have overall responsibility for internal leadership, including the senior team management, program development and administration, marketing and communications, and operational business management. They will be accessible to staff, the Board and the broader community and eager to interact with a wide range of constituencies with the goal of expanding audiences, attracting new philanthropic supporters, and broadening the museum's relationships.

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The Role

The Executive Director of the Capital Jewish Museum will demonstrate a decisive and collaborative leadership style, along with an entrepreneurial drive and a deep passion for Jewish culture and community. The ideal candidate will bring a track record of innovative, creative, and strategic leadership experience in a multi-faceted institution with varied internal and external constituencies.

They will be an inclusive and inspiring leader, with the ability to motivate a diverse range of staff, donors and community members in the Washington area and beyond around a shared vision of what an inclusive cultural platform like the Capital Jewish Museum can mean to its community. The next leader of the museum will have demonstrated a high level of achievement in developing or contributing to a compelling vision and forward-looking strategy for an organization, building the financial, operational, and ideological support for its implementation, and skillfully balancing and aligning the needs of multiple interests. The ideal candidate will be a natural team builder with the energy, optimism, warmth and drive to lead the Capital Jewish Museum into the future.

The Executive Director will exhibit a demonstrated passion for CJM's mission, as well as a fundamental belief in the value of Jewish culture, values, and community.

Specific responsibilities of the Executive Director include:

- **Setting strategy:** Partner with the Board of Directors to continue to develop and operationalize the long-term strategic vision for CJM.
- **Growth and change management:** Leading the organization through its next phase of growth, through a transformative time in its history.
- **Management of teams:** The Executive Director will be able to translate the museum's goals into clear objectives for the staff. They will foster a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, teamwork, and empowerment.
- **Fundraising:** The Executive Director will need to build the museum's funding base – in partnership with the Board of Directors – to increase and diversify financial support.
- **Financial management:** They will approach the financial oversight of the museum with accountability and transparency, with a balanced and reasoned approach to financial decision-making and management of resources.
- **Connective and collaborative leader:** The Executive Director will be an empathetic, thoughtful and intellectually agile leader; they should be able to listen, challenge ideas, and make decisions.
- **Community engagement and partnership-building:** Alongside the staff and Board, the Executive Director will serve as an ambassador for CJM, building relationships and raising awareness with local and national partners.

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In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we highlight the following skills of the ideal candidate (while recognizing that no one candidate is likely to have all of these strengths):

Personal Attributes and Competencies



Setting Strategy

- The vision, creativity, and judgment to guide the articulation of the museum’s vision and strategy and identity for the future.
- Demonstrated track record as a creative and entrepreneurial thinker.
- Ideally, demonstrated knowledge of the key issues affecting the Capital Jewish Museum, including the ways in which the Washington area’s diverse audiences engage with the Jewish experience and history.



Fundraising and Resource Development

- Experience building an institution’s funding base—in partnership with the Board—to increase and diversify financial support from individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government funders.
- Adept relationship builder, able to broaden the museums’ outreach and engagement across the Washington area, as well as nationally, and inspire engagement in and support for the museum.
- They will engage their professional network to substantively further the museum’s mission.



Leading Teams

- The ideal candidate will be able to translate the Capital Jewish Museum’s over-arching goals into clear objectives for the staff.
- They will foster a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, teamwork, and empowerment.
- They will have the ability to counsel and coach the senior management team and curatorial leadership for success; they will respect, encourage, and celebrate the talents of that team while also holding each accountable to mutually agreed-upon goals.
- They will approach the oversight of the museum with an even-handed, transparent, and reasoned approach to decision-making.
- The new Executive Director will lead CJM with integrity, courage, and enthusiasm.



Relationships And Influence

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in their beliefs, and active drive.
- Comfort in public speaking and presenting on behalf of an institution.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- The ideal candidate will be an energetic and charismatic leader who genuinely enjoys and excels in both the internal and external aspects of a museum Executive Director’s role.



Financial Acumen

- They will bring strong financial acumen and experience in managing budgets and financial resources, ideally in an evolving and developing environment.
- Ability to analyze financial data and make informed decisions.



Demonstrated Passion for the Mission

- The ideal candidate will bring a demonstrated passion for, or lived experience with, CJM’s mission.
- They will embrace the Washington area community professionally and personally, continuously building a local network for themselves and the museum.
- They will tirelessly and optimistically drive the museum forward in clarifying and asserting its identity and individuality.

04 Contact

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are encouraged.

Interested candidates should submit confidentially, a resume and letter of interest to Capitaljewishmuseum@russellreynolds.com

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