



Job Description

Position Title: Textile Associate
Reports to: Curator
Status: Fulltime, Hourly, Non-Exempt
Classification: Associate
Supervises: Interns, Volunteers as needed

Job Summary:

This position is responsible for the care, upkeep, restoration or conservation of historic textiles (quilts, clothing and other artifacts) in the museum's historic collection. This position delivers mission related programs (including front line interpretation) related to period clothing, textiles and historic dress in Millinery shop and other historic sites as assigned. The Textile Associate is responsible for all textile programming, period appropriate clothing for all staff interpreters and interpreting in the Millinery during the general touring season. In this position, the textile associate may also create and/or order reproduction hats and period clothing for interpretive programs. This position is responsible for establishing the policies and procedures for textiles and period clothing. The textile associate serves as a resource for accurate information about period dress, hair styling, jewelry and accessories and develops digital trainings to this end.

Specific Duties:

Interpretation Programming

- Provides excellent customer service to museum patrons, whenever interacting with the public.
- Supervises, demonstrates and interprets daily activities at the 1876 Millinery to school tours, day camp groups, adult tour groups and the general visiting public.
- Plans and ensures the execution of the daily interpretive program at the Millinery for museum visitors, including demonstrations and hands-on activities in line with site themes. Encourages general visitors, especially children, to participate in interactive activities, including the scheduled summer hands-on activity program.
- Leads education programming in Millinery for adults and children, including enrichments, adult education classes, day camp, tour groups and other programs. Creates and maintains approved plans for school tour lessons, day camp lessons and enrichment activities.
- Trains, supervises and evaluates Millinery site interpreters, both paid and volunteer. Provides training for all LHF staff in wear and appropriate care of Period clothing.
- Purchases Millinery supplies and materials for demonstrations, activities and classes within the parameters of the site/program budget.
- Supervises use of on-site artifacts in Millinery according to museum guidelines, conducts assigned site inventories, and notifies collections staff when repairs are needed.

- Supervises routine Millinery site upkeep and maintenance including site cleaning, according to museum guidelines, alerting museum maintenance or collections department when further repairs are needed.
- Plans/designs and ensures the manufacture of appropriate millinery wear for other LHF historical sites and designated interpreters. This construction is done primarily during general season hours in the Millinery shop.
- Works with Sales Director to fulfill millinery production items for museum sale, when interpretive demands allow.
- Studies and understands historical resource materials and other information provided.
- Cross-trained to interpret at several sites, including period farms and other town buildings, as assigned.

Period Clothing

- Provides excellent customer service and public relations skills when dealing with museum staff, both paid and volunteer, as well as public inquiries.
- Trains, schedules and supervises part-time period clothing volunteers.
- Responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, positive, and productive work environment (proper use/maintenance of equipment, welcoming/friendly atmosphere).
- Constructs new period clothing (dresses, fitted bodices with skirts, shirts, trousers, vests, aprons, petticoats, outerwear, etc.)
- Performs alterations and mending of existing clothing.
- Conducts fittings for new interpreters and determines whether new garments need to be constructed or existing inventory can be altered.
- Strives for historical accuracy of reproduction clothing (styles, fabrics, colors, etc.), accessories and footwear, while balancing the demands of a living history museum using third person interpretation.
- Purchases fabric, notions, equipment, etc. needed to meet the demands for the clothing while staying within the approved budget.
- Purchases ready-made reproduction clothing (such as baseball uniforms and overhauls) when deemed appropriate, from reputable, accurate, sources.
- Maintains departmental records including clothing checked out to individuals and sites, clothing deposit/return paperwork, inventory and end of the year reports.
- Contacts former employees, volunteers and interns who have not returned period clothing in order to have it returned to the museum.
- Ensures fabric, period clothing (including three sets of historic baseball uniforms) and limited service clothing items are laundered as needed.
- Instructs staff on clothing policies and procedures; visits historic sites to monitor and enforce period clothing rules as needed.
- Provides advice and resource information to historical interpreters and sites for accurate portrayal of hair styling, jewelry and other accessories to complete period dress.
- Works with interpreters who want to construct their own clothing; retains final approval of all period clothing worn on sites in order to meet accepted standards (fabric, styles, etc.)
- Conducts clothing and period dress research as needed/approved by Director of Interpretation
- Drafts patterns from historical clothing or photographs/drawings, both from museum's own collections and external resources.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Historic Textile Collections (approximately 500-520 hours annually)

- Organizes, inventories, and maintains items held in the museum's historic textile collections, identifies and resolves storage and conservation problems, prioritizes conservation needs.
- Conducts physical work and research related to textile artifact restoration, preservation or repair when needed.
- Conducts research when appropriate to assist in acquisitions of textile artifacts.
- Procures needed materials, supplies, and equipment for textile collection management, with approval of the Director of Collections.
- Supervises, organizes and provides training for textile restoration volunteers and interns.
- Conducts training sessions for interpreters on collections department policies and procedures
- Works with interpreters to maintain the authenticity and preservation of the textiles found in the historic buildings on museum grounds.
- Assists in moving textile collections to appropriate storage facilities or loan sites, as needed.
- Assists in creation and installation of textiles in exhibits.
- Leads behind the scenes textile specific collections tours, as assigned.
- Actively participates in Staff & Collections Committee meetings, as assigned.
- Recommends acquisition of de-accessioning of and authentication of objects and materials for the museum Collections Committee.
- Participates in the development of Collections Department policies, manuals and staff training.
- Other collections duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Passion for the vision and mission of Living History Farms and desire to be a positive influence in sharing this mission with the general public, especially children.
- Excellent organizational skills, attention to detail, and ability to work independently with moderate supervision.
- Warm, professional demeanor and excellent oral communication skills.
- Ability to work as part of a team with other staff and volunteers.
- Proven professional quality clothing construction and alteration skills required (applicants will be asked to bring samples of their sewing projects).
- Able to perform the physical tasks (minimum strength requirement—lift 30 pounds) needed to authentically demonstrate activities at a re-created historic site.

Education & Skills:

- Bachelor's degree in textiles/clothing or related field, or equivalent experience.
- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple tasks.
- Non-profit or historical museum experience preferred.
- Conservation or Textile collection preservation background preferred.
- Flat pattern experience essential with knowledge of historical styles and fabric
- Proven High level of organizational skill and office computer skills in Microsoft Word, Outlook and programs for data entry, maintaining clothing database, monitoring budget.
- Excellent communication skills required.
- Excellent interpersonal skills required with previous experience supervising employees and/or volunteers helpful.

Position Hours & Conditions

Typical hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Occasional evening or Sunday activity for special event days. Historic Site work environment requires standing for long periods of time, often working in outdoor environment including heat/cold.

General Information:

Living History Farms is an interactive outdoor museum which educates, entertains and connects people of all ages to Midwestern rural life experiences. It is a privately run, not-for-profit organization on 500 acres located in Urbandale, Iowa. Historical interpreters dress in period clothing and re-create the daily routines of early Iowans on three farm sites spanning the years 1700-1900 and an 1876 town. For more information, please visit www.LivingHistoryFarms.org.

Application procedure:

Send resume and cover letter with LHF application to:

Living History Farms
2600 111th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322
Email: rhaus@lhf.org
FAX: (515) 278-9808

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