

Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) Head of Engineering & Facilities

MFAH seeks a hands-on senior facilities manager to take charge of all building maintenance and repair, landscaping, construction projects, infrastructure, HVAC, electrical and mechanical systems, and associated services provided across the museum's main campus and other properties.

The visiting public, diverse partner organizations, and staff are heavy users of MFAH facilities on a 24/7 basis, with the museum's main campus functioning as a safe hospitality and patron services organization. The Engineering and Facilities team functions best when its important work is invisible to the public.

BACKGROUND

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston functions as an integrated visual arts experience and is counted among North America's largest museums. [MFAH](#) has [permanent collections](#) spanning more than 6,000 years of history with 64,000 works from six continents; a newly redeveloped main campus encompassing 14 acres in the heart of Houston's Museum District; and 300,000 square feet of permanent and temporary exhibition space. The museum also boasts a variety of horticultural features and visually stunning gardens, fountains and outdoor exhibition areas; restaurants and arts-themed retail shops; a school, classrooms, lecture hall and research facilities; archives, libraries and conservation facilities; administrative offices.

This role requires a person who is deeply familiar with the specific challenges of managing a fully renovated campus facility (14 acres) in the heart of an urban environment as well as off-campus properties in several locations (32+ acres). Main campus buildings are themselves considered to be works of art, and this sensibility informs the daily work of the Engineering & Facilities team. Physical features include:

- **The Caroline Wiess Law Building**, first opened in 1924, was designed by William Ward Watkin as an art exhibition space and expanded by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.
- **The Audrey Jones Beck Building**, designed by Rafael Moneo, first opened in 2000 and features several galleries for changing exhibitions as well as permanent collections.
- **The Nancy and Rich Kinder Building** is 183,528 square feet overall and integrates with the adjacent Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden, and the expanded Glassell School of Art, as well as 53,685 square feet of below-ground parking on two levels.
- **Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden** was designed by US-born artist and landscape architect Isamu Noguchi. The garden itself is a sculpture that unites the pathways between the Caroline Wiess Law Building and the Glassell School of Art.
- **Glassell School of Art** was founded in 1929, renamed in 1979, and has since been installed in enlarged quarters designed by Steven Holl Architects. The 80,000 square-foot building sits atop an extensive underground parking garage, features a ramped amphitheater that leads up to a walkable rooftop garden, and opens onto the sculpture garden.
- **Central Administration Building, 5100 Montrose**, which opened in 1994 and was designed by Texas architect Carlos Jimenez, houses many of the museum's administrative functions.

- **The Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation**, a 17,000 square-foot facility designed by Lake/Flato Architects, houses studios, laboratories and offices for the Museum’s conservators and scientists.

In addition to the **Susan and Fayez S. Sarofim Campus**, MFAH includes:

- **Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens**, which functions as a historic house museum, is located five miles from the main museum campus in an architecturally significant former home on 14 acres of formal gardens and woodland.
- **Rienzi** is a former residence located four miles from the main campus and situated on 4.4 acres in the Homewood Addition surrounded by Houston's River Oaks neighborhood.
- **Park 288 Storage Facility** sits on 14 acres 6 miles south of the Sarofim Campus. It includes a new 65,000 square-foot tilt-wall storage building and several landscape facilities.

[Houston](#) is one of America’s largest and most ethnically diverse cities by population and area, and is an economic powerhouse with a strong arts ecosystem that attracts more than 7 million visitors to the [Museum District](#) alone where MFAH is centered. The museum employs more than 663 permanent and temporary staff funded solely by MFAH, with 400 docents, supporting the educational mission and 1,500 volunteers supporting a broad range of MFAH activities. The museum is in solid shape financially, with an annual budget of approximately \$70 million.

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, the Head of Engineering & Facilities will lead a diversely experienced staff of 65 permanent and temporary personnel. This leader will be responsible for an annual operating budget of about \$7 million, a capital expenditure budget of several million dollars, and contractual relationships with a range of vendors and contractors. The Department regularly provides services to patrons, particularly during events, and periodically manages special construction projects and large-scale capital upgrades.

Central to this leader’s success will be:

- **A strong understanding of various maintenance crafts**, compliance requirements, and applicable regulations, as well as contracts and the terms & conditions governing the activities of contractors, suppliers and vendors.
- **Exceptional project accounting, procurement & management skills**, with an eye toward efficient use of personnel and other resources.
- **Skillful management of mixed teams** composed of MFAH, contractor and vendor personnel with different backgrounds, types of technical expertise, and sensitivity to the operating needs of a museum.
- **Graceful diplomacy and communication skills**, with an ability to hold all involved parties accountable to budgetary and time constraints while remaining focused on museum visitors and users.

This position also serves as a primary position responsible for all ADA and OSHA compliance.

PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Engineering & Facilities provides leadership, vision, direction, and administration of the museum’s facilities, maintenance, grounds, building safety, and renovation projects, and will be expected to:

- Rapidly acclimate to the organization; thoroughly know the museum’s history, culture, workflows, exhibitions, programs, events, facilities and their use, as well as the diverse communities served by, and drawn to, MFAH’s main campus and other properties.
- Provide immediate day-to-day leadership and general direction for all in-process and future facilities and maintenance services. The Head will be expected to immediately assess all aspects of building operations to ensure the safe, efficient and economical operation of all museum properties, buildings and equipment.
- Hire and supervise a staff of building engineers, building services assistants, HVAC specialists, electricians, lighting technicians, and administrative office staff in support of building operations and maintenance functions. In coordination with the Human Resources Department, cultivate a high functioning team; assess and appropriately recognize the performance of individual team members; provide for team training.
- Procure and oversee all outside contractors that help maintain the buildings and grounds of the various museum properties including the purchasing of goods and the letting of contracts as required. This includes negotiation of contract terms, and monitoring compliance with and execution of all contracts to ensure that funds are used effectively and appropriately and that agreed outcomes are delivered on time and within budgetary constraints.
- Develop policies, procedures, workflows, systems, budgets, personnel plans and other administrative tools, related to Engineering & Facilities management in collaboration with the Chief Operating Officer.
- Collaborate closely with the COO and with other departments to develop recommendations, prioritize investments, and anticipate future needs for facilities projects, upgrades, maintenance and equipment. The Head will prepare and update an Annual Engineering and Facilities Plan and manage the plan’s execution through an annual operating budget of about \$7 million to maintain the various buildings, grounds, and vehicles under their direction.
- Directly supervise and be accountable for the maintenance and installation of all electrical, plumbing and mechanical equipment and lighting in the above buildings, as well as the two physical plants that supply HVAC to the museum, school, and administration buildings. Oversee the purchase and/or lease and maintenance of museum-owned vehicles.
- Proactively advise the COO and other members of the museum’s executive team of existing and future building and grounds operations; attend staff meetings, contractor meetings, and walk-through meetings for events, construction or remodeling projects.
- Work with contractors and staff to ensure compliance with museum standards and processes, OSHA, related safety, and other accessibility standards (i.e. the Americans with Disabilities Act). Work with various state and city inspectors (i.e. boiler, elevator, plumbing, fire) to ensure compliance with city and state codes; make sure MFAH has all required building, boiler, elevator and other permits and inspections, and that all records are in good order and accessible.
- Oversee record keeping and documentation for campus facilities including physical space inventory. Supervise staff that maintains updated plans, blueprints and drawings. Maintain accurate records of building maintenance, repairs, restorations and new construction.

- Function as key representative of the organization's emergency preparations and disaster-response team.
- Attend professional development programs, workshops and seminars to remain up to date on topics related to facilities management, governmental codes, rules, regulations and other subjects related to campus operations.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have the following:

- Significant experience managing campus facilities of similar size and complexity. It would be advantageous to have experience in facilities that receive heavy use by a visiting public, where patron, visitor and guest services are integrated into the responsibility of all personnel.
- A strong educational background is required, which can come in the form of higher education degrees or other forms of advanced study. MFAH values continual improvement, continuing education, study of new methods and approaches, and an ability to train others in new methods.
- At least seven years of progressively responsible work experience managing large teams with a broad range of trades, and a career that includes the hands-on experience required to understand the nuances involved in delivering effective building maintenance and construction projects. Proven ability to manage and work with a diverse group of personalities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and persuasion skills, with the ability to present effectively internally and externally to those at the Board level, peers, contractors, partners and subordinates as well as visitors, donors, oversight agencies and others in the community.
- Outgoing and straightforward; one who shares information easily and respects the abilities of others; a critical thinker who can analyze data and capitalize on information. Someone who is well-organized and deadline-oriented, with exceptional attention to detail and follow-through; able to work both in structured and planned environments, and in situations where rapid response and instant decision-making is required.
- Emotionally mature and self-possessed; patient and tactful, with a sense of humor and the sensitivity to work with diverse personalities; persuasive and persistent in the pursuit of objectives set by the COO and the Executive Team.

For more information please contact:

Dennis Hanthorn

(404)806-8200 or dennish@moppenheim.com

Steven Oppenheim

(202)803-6673 or steveno@moppenheim.com

Mark Oppenheim

(415)762-2640 or marko@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Executive Search