

Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) Head of Security & Safety

MFAH seeks a seasoned professional to manage security and safety for a main campus and other properties comprising 46+ acres that have a broad array of publicly accessible buildings and gardens housing sensitive and valuable art collections.

MFAH properties, buildings and gardens are shaped to be open and inviting to the public, and the museum welcomes more than 1.5 million visitors and partners annually onto its grounds.

The Security Team balances a very hospitable and friendly approach to supporting visitors, with their core mission to safeguard people and secure great works of art.

BACKGROUND

The Head of Security & Safety for the MFAH is the highest-level member of senior management directly responsible for the entire organization's security and safety function.

This role requires a person who is deeply experienced with the specific challenges of securing a large campus facility (14 acres) in the heart of an urban environment as well as other off-campus properties in several locations (32+ acres). This is a considerable challenge because this department's security and safety personnel frequently function as the first line of contact for visitors. Members of this department must not only protect the art and facilities, but they must also welcome patrons and keep them safe. Security in this environment resembles the kind of operation one might find at a large luxury resort and hotel, a large performing arts facility, college campus, or national park – welcoming with a light and nearly invisible touch, but also deeply structured, specific and professional, with an ability to proactively surface potential vulnerabilities and take measures that protect all from possible threats.

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 spaces. 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.

Campus security is affected by its physical attributes, which are comprised of grounds and buildings that house and exhibit art collections, and host administrative and operations offices. Physical features of the main campus 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 amphitheatre 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 Faye 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 Security & Safety role is an extremely important one to all members of the MFAH Board and staff. This is NOT a retirement position or a role for someone ready to slow down. The Head of Security & Safety will oversee a strong and vibrantly professional staff. This leader will also cultivate in colleagues, from curators to facilities personnel to senior staff and Board members, a real appreciation for the central role this function plays in the operations of the museum and the visitor experience.

The Head of Security & Safety oversees a team of more than 150 Security Officers, Gallery Attendants, plus third-party providers, including off-duty law enforcement, at the main museum campus and at multiple separate museum properties.

The overall Department includes 159 full-time staff, and this leader will be responsible for a personnel budget of about \$7 million and operating budget of about \$1.1 million. The Department operates 24/7, opening, closing and securing all MFAH properties, provides services to visitors and staff during museum hours and at after-hours events, secures the art and

grounds after hours, and provides a rapid response capability when emergencies arise. This person must be knowledgeable in the use of various kinds of security-related technologies, including video surveillance via CCTV and other tech, proximity sensors, and control & monitoring systems used in buildings and outdoor environments. That said, MFAH's emphasis is on the expertise of security personnel, with tech taking a supporting role.

This Head of Security & Safety must cultivate strong, respectful relationships with local law enforcement, other area security professionals, representatives of Houston's wider legal and law enforcement community, and owners of adjoining properties.

Central to this leader's success will be:

- **A strong understanding of various aspects of campus security**, including development and implementation of security & safety standards, processes, procedures and protocols; techniques for controlling and limiting physical access to certain campus areas using various human, physical and technical means.
- **Exceptional personnel management, training and coaching skills**, with deep experience leading and guiding people and personalities attracted to these kinds of protective, security, and customer service-oriented roles. It is important to lead by example in a hands-on way and avoid being viewed as just a back-office leader on the one hand, or front-of-house talent on the other.
- **Knowledge of security support technology, techniques and tools** and experience working with security counterparts, including vendors, local law enforcement and other security personnel.
- **Grace, diplomacy and strong communication skills**, with an ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally to different audiences including staff, Board, user and visitors. Some of these audiences might not immediately grasp security concepts but want to learn, and others might be resistant. The Head of Security & Safety must develop a team culture that focuses on security and treats all with measured respect.

It is critically important that this role ensures a high level of customer service and positive experiences for all museum visitors and affiliates.

PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This department Head provides security and safety leadership, vision, direction, and administration across the museum's main campus and all other museum facilities, grounds and buildings, 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 security and safety services. The Head will be expected to immediately assess the state of play to secure and assure safe 24/7 museum operations.
- Develop/implement effective policies and procedures (including crisis management protocols) to secure and protect MFAH's physical assets, art works, facilities, people, users, dignitaries, visitors and the general public. As part of this daily responsibility: undertake security system certifications and inspections; be prepared to conduct and

document security and safety investigations; have standards in place to protect the dignity of all involved; forge strong relations while undertaking this sensitive role.

- Establish strong and effective coordination and communication between departments to ensure smooth and efficient day-to-day operations, and a calm and effective approach to routine and urgent security matters and emergency preparedness. Always be prepared to respond to emergencies in times of need.
- Hire, supervise, train and continually upgrade the skills of all back-office and front-of-house security personnel. Cultivate a high-functioning team and, in coordination with the Human Resources Department, provide for team training, continual education and certifications. Provide regular performance assessments for team members, and the performance of individuals as appropriate.
- Oversee and ensure proper personnel management through maintaining effective shift schedules, overtime administration, and payroll administration for standard museum operations as well as more than 300 separate events per year.
- Implement and ensure the highest level of customer service orientation for security and gallery operations staff through establishing quality standards and providing continuous training in communication, problem solving, and product and service knowledge.
- Continuously and proactively assess security and safety threats to the Museum; plan and implement appropriate strategies and countermeasures; develop and train for emergency response scenarios, including with local law enforcement and other first responders.
- Develop and maintain cross-sector partnerships with appropriate government agencies, officials and security partners related to Critical Infrastructure Protection, including local law enforcement, state and federal agencies that can share critical intelligence and analyses. Develop and maintain effective partnerships with peer industry security professionals.
- Function as a key point of contact and coordination during security and safety, WPV (workplace violence), theft or other onsite occurrences or emergencies, and have appropriate standards and procedures in place to actively manage and document such occurrences.
- Play an advisory role on security to the Human Resources Department for new hires across MFAH; play an advisory role on security to the museum's Engineering & Facilities, Curatorial and other departments; advise the senior management team and Board members on security matters.
- Oversee record keeping and documentation for campus security including representation of physical spaces and security measures; in coordination with the Engineering & Facilities Department assure that their updated plans, blueprints and drawings include information on installed security measures and devices.
- Function as one of the key representatives 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 and regulations and other subjects bearing on campus operations.

This is a role of influence and leadership. As the head of the department and a key representative of the organization, internally and externally, this leader will have a sphere

of influence on a daily basis that includes internal staff, external partners and guests of the institution.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have the following:

- Significant experience managing security and safety functions for campus facilities of similar size and complexity. It would be advantageous to have experience securing facilities that receive heavy use by a visiting public, where patron, visitor and guest services are integrated into the responsibility of all personnel.
- At least 15 years of progressively responsible work experience, of which 10 years should be related to safety and security and at least 5 years managing large teams of diversely talented individuals. Candidates must have hands on experience required to understand the nuances involved in shaping secure environments that receive heavy use by a visiting public. Proven ability to manage and work with a diverse group of personalities.
- A strong educational background is required such as an MA in management or a BA combined with professional experience that includes personnel management, payroll, scheduling, contract management, event planning and strategic people management.
- An understanding of the current state-of-the-art in security and safety technology, devices and practices to monitor, control and secure physical facilities. MFAH seeks someone strongly experienced with central control, reporting systems and tech, balanced with equally strong experiences with up close, high-touch, in-person practices.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and persuasion skills, with an ability to present effectively internally and externally from Board level to peers, contractors, partners and subordinates as well as visitors, donors, oversight agencies and others in the community.
- An outgoing and straightforward manner; 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.
- Emotional maturity and self-possession; patience and tact, with a sense of humor and the sensitivity to work with diverse personalities; persuasiveness and persistence in the pursuit of objectives set by the COO and the Executive Team.

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