



# Chief Curator

AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MUSEUM AND LIBRARY  
AT OAKLAND (AAMLO)





## THE CITY OF OAKLAND - VIBRANT, DIVERSE, AND THE PLACE TO BE

The City of Oakland is dynamic with 50 distinct and eclectic neighborhoods, 17 commercial districts, an increasingly vibrant downtown, a strong economic base, world-class arts and entertainment venues, superior cultural and recreational amenities, and a rich multicultural heritage. Oakland is the eighth largest city in California with an estimated population of 425,195 (2017 U.S. Census Bureau). The city serves as the administrative seat of Alameda County and the center of commerce and international trade for Northern California.

Oakland is one of the most diverse and ethnically integrated urban cities in the nation, with nearly equal representation from Hispanic and Latino, Asian, African-American, and Caucasian residents, speaking over 125 languages and dialects, as well as one of the country's largest Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) communities. Oakland encompasses 56 square miles and is ideally located on the east side of the San Francisco Bay with easy access to anywhere in the Bay Area.

Oakland's landscape is a picturesque mix of 19 miles of bay coastline to the west and rolling hills to the east, which provide unparalleled views of the San Francisco Bay. Oakland has more parks and open space per capita than any other city in the Bay Area. Oakland is at the heart of the East Bay Regional Park District, a splendid system of 65 parks covering more than 119,000 acres and 29 regional hiking trails stretching 1,200 miles in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Jack London Square, the waterfront area, and beautiful Lake Merritt are destinations enjoyed by both residents and tourists. Sports enthusiasts enjoy year-round professional events including the Oakland Raiders, 2018 NBA Champion Warriors, and Oakland A's.

Oakland is a major economic force in the region. As a center for international trade, the Port of Oakland is the nation's fifth busiest container port. The Oakland International Airport is served by 12 major domestic and international airlines. Oakland is home to several corporate headquarters including Clorox, Kaiser Permanente, Pandora, Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, and Revolution Foods. Many of these corporations are in close proximity to new businesses and various small retail shops that have sprung up in the downtown area. High quality educational opportunities abound as six major universities, including U.C. Berkeley, are within a 40-mile radius.

In concert with ongoing development efforts, the City urgently strives to maintain a balance between preserving its cultural, historic and ethnic richness and the unintended consequences of gentrification. The City is a regional hub for multicultural arts and boasts one of the largest visual and performing arts communities on the West Coast. Oakland is home to two major historic entertainment venues that anchor Oakland's emerging downtown entertainment district—the Paramount Theatre and Fox Theatre. The City has completed its part in a \$350 million revitalization effort to create a multifaceted government center that links major historical landmarks with new developments. Oakland is a mature city that has been able to preserve its abundant natural beauty and holds a wealth of resources and opportunities.

## OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY (OPL)

With eighteen distinct locations serving the cities of Oakland, Emeryville, and Piedmont, the Oakland Public Library is a leader in service to a diverse and politically engaged community. The Library is made up of sixteen branch libraries, a Main Library

in downtown Oakland, an African American Museum & Library (AAMLO), as well as a Tool Lending Library in North Oakland. Library staff go beyond the Library's physical walls to embed themselves in Oakland's vibrant event scene, taking the Library's fleet of bike libraries or all-electric mobile outreach vehicle to community festivals and school events to ensure all residents have access to library services.

The Library strives to be at the center of every community and a place for patrons of all ages to feel at home with welcoming and easy access to library resources and information. The Library prioritizes "people over things" with strategic goals and policies focused on reaching more community members, developing staff, improving the Library's physical spaces, increasing operational efficiencies and continuing to increase funding. The Oakland Public Library values equity, inclusion and diversity, and celebrates staff innovation and creativity and community involvement.

The Oakland Public Library mission is to empower all people to explore, connect, and grow.

The Library is supported by an active Friends of the Oakland Public Library, as well as by local branch Friends' groups and by the Library Advisory Commission. The Library Advisory Commission reports and makes recommendations to the Oakland City Council on Oakland Public Library policies; provides community oversight of dedicated library parcel tax funds and advocates on behalf of OPL programs and services. The Commission consists of 15 seats, appointed by the Mayor and Council.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM AND LIBRARY AT OAKLAND (AAMLO)

The African American Museum and Library at Oakland is a division of the Oakland Public Library dedicated to the discovery, preservation, interpretation, and sharing of historical and cultural experiences of African Americans in California and the West for present and future generations.

AAMLO, currently housed in the former Charles S. Greene library, an Andrew Carnegie building, encompasses three distinct components:

**A unique non circulating reference library** that consists of 12,000 volumes, a special collection of books and other materials by or about African Americans that speak to the history, religion and the African American experience in Oakland, Northern California and California.

**A museum** that is housed on the second floor regularly hosts traveling and original exhibitions that highlight the art, history and culture of African Americans. The museum includes collections and historical representations of significant African American people and families from Oakland and Northern California. It also serves as a community meeting space offering engaging experiences to be used for community gatherings and educational experiences, such as lectures and significant events.

**An archival collection** that includes an oral history, microfilm and historic paper collection of the history of African Americans in Northern California and the Bay Area. The archives include over 160 collections left to AAMLO and new collections acquired by the institution documenting prominent families, pioneers, churches, social and political organizations.

## HISTORY OF AAMLO

In 1946, Eugene and Ruth Lasartemay and Jesse and Dr. Marcella Ford began collecting the oral histories and artifacts that documented the activities of African Americans in and around Oakland, the Bay Area, and California. On July 2, 1965, this effort officially became the East Bay Negro Historical Society (EBNHS). As their efforts continued, the founders needed to find a larger space for the growing collection. In 1970, the EBNHS moved to a storefront located at 3651 Grove Street.

In 1976, it moved to 4519 Grove, where it operated a museum and library. In 1982, the EBNHS was invited into the Golden Gate Branch of the Oakland Public Library, making it the first Oakland city library with a predominantly African American focused collection. The assistance of Mayor Lionel Wilson, Assemblyman Elihu Harris, and others helped the organization establish a solid foundation in their new home. Following the appointment of Dr. Lawrence Crouchett as its executive director in 1988, the organization changed its name to the Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life (NCCAHL).

In 1994, the City of Oakland's public library system and the NCCAHL merged to create the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO). This unique public/private partnership entered a historic juncture with the opening of AAMLO in February 2002. Located at 659 14th Street, AAMLO is housed in the former Charles S. Greene library, a historic 1902 Carnegie building.

## CHIEF CURATOR

The Chief Curator directs and leads the curatorial work and operational administration of AAMLO. Reporting to the Director of Library Services, the Chief Curator integrates the resources and services of a museum, archives and a library to create a unique and innovative historical preservation and learning center that advances and achieves the mission of AAMLO. The Chief Curator will provide visionary programmatic, exhibition and collection development leadership to a staff of 6 and oversee a budget of approximately \$1M annually. Most of the funding is for staff and building maintenance. AAMLO is funded as part of the Oakland Public Library's budget and programming and exhibits are enhanced through private donations and grants raised by the Oakland Public Library and Chief Curator.

The Chief Curator will be expected to direct operations of the archives and library, promote and enrich the existing collections and create interesting, relevant and engaging programming for the local community using the museum space.

## Specific Responsibilities/Key Objectives:

- Oversee library, archives and museum operations at AAMLO.
- Under direction of the Oakland Public Library and City of Oakland leadership and in collaboration with community partners and public stakeholders, conduct a strategic planning process to define goals, objectives and programs that will allow AAMLO to be an anchor for the African American legacy in the community.
- Review practices and policies regarding the archives, library and museum space with a goal of fully integrating their services; and establish operating standards that align with Oakland Public Library and industry best practices around collection development, preservation, digitization, presentation and usability;
- Address the capital needs of the institution;
- Develop and administer grants; and secure alternative funding to support programming for the museum space, library, and archival collection and experiences;
- Reimagine the museum space to create an updated interactive experience that is entertaining, educational and engaging;
- Direct and oversee the development and implementation of relevant touring and special exhibitions of the African American experience, popular culture and history;
- Create, manage and direct programming for AAMLO that builds on its resources and collections to tell the intergenerational story, present and past, of the African American community in Oakland and Northern California;
- Engage with the community to increase the visibility of AAMLO and create a welcoming and responsive culture within the institution; and educate the public regarding the history and contribution of African Americans;
- Raise the profile and embed the mission of AAMLO within the Oakland Public Library system, making the institution a well-known, must visit destination.
- Seek and respond to local community needs and stakeholder input; and prioritize access when crafting policies, services and programs.



- Manage and direct the selection, supervision and evaluation of AAMLO staff, volunteers and consultants.

### The Ideal Candidate:

The successful Chief Curator candidate will have a demonstrated commitment and passion to preserve and exhibit African American history, culture and experiences. The successful candidate will have a vision for AAMLO and an engaging leadership and communication style that brings people together to create a best in class culture and a historical preservation and engagement institution that expresses the intention of AAMLO's founding mission. Oakland is interested in a candidate who recognizes the value of sharply curated archives and library that inform and support an interactive, engaging museum experience both educational and advocacy oriented. The Chief Curator should be someone who's had experience educating a diverse, urban and multicultural public about the contributions of African Americans through a library, museum or cultural institution and can help the public value and appreciate how those contributions continue to influence and be influenced by present day events. The ideal candidate should be someone who values all aspects of dynamic learning using technology, public forums, sensory experiences, scholarly research, and other tools to support and stimulate the curiosity of the public. The ideal candidate is a progressive, thoughtful and proactive administrator who is politically astute, operates with a high level of trust, integrity, sophistication, cultural competence, and possesses a track record of responsiveness to a diverse community, users, staff and community stakeholders.

### The candidate will have:

- Knowledge and professional experience using a wide range of technology including: interactive and digital programming, systems for archive and information retrieval; and other applications designed to engage the viewer, listener and participant in a dynamic learning and sharing environment;
- Management experience that includes staff management, institutional management and fiscal management within a complex institutional environment, either with a museum or library in an urban setting;
- Demonstrated experience working closely with a wide range of public constituencies: political communities, activists, scholars and members of the community;
- Fiscal management experience that includes fundraising;
- Experience working within a complex urban environment where a commitment to racial equity and inclusion are core values;
- Experience creating a range of programming that is intergenerational, courageous and that credibly represents the best interests of the African American experience.

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Pursuant to the Oakland City Charter 902(b) and Oakland Municipal Code, this position is exempt from the regulations of the Civil Service Board. The following qualifications are guidelines, as the appointing authority has broad discretion in filling this position.

### Education:

A Master's degree from an accredited college or university

in the field of history, American studies, African American History, anthropology or related field. Coursework in African-American History, African-American Studies, and/or African-American Life and History is preferable.

### Experience:

Three (3) years of responsible museum, archival, library, history and/or special collection administration or management experience at the supervisory level or 5 five years of progressively responsible curatorial experience working within the African American History or African American Studies field or related field is preferable.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The salary for this position is **\$116,739.72 - \$143,345.88** depending on experience and qualifications.

The City of Oakland also offers an attractive benefits package that includes participation in CalPERS (California Public Employees Retirement Systems) with a pension formula of 2.5% @ 55 (for Classic PERS members) and 2% @ 62 for new PERS members. Employees currently contribute 8% of pre-tax wages.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To be considered, please submit your resume and cover letter electronically to [AAMLO.ChiefCurator@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:AAMLO.ChiefCurator@thehawkinscompany.com). Resumes received by **November 16, 2018** will receive first consideration. The position is open until filled.



### THE HAWKINS COMPANY

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For additional information or questions, please contact Ms. Brett Byers at 323-403-8279, [brett@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:brett@thehawkinscompany.com); our special library consultant Martin Gomez at 415-999-9601, [mjgomezassociates@gmail.com](mailto:mjgomezassociates@gmail.com) or Bill Hawkins at 310-348-8800, [bill@thehawkinscompany.com](mailto:bill@thehawkinscompany.com).

*The City of Oakland is an equal opportunity employer, values workforce diversity and seeks to create an environment and culture that embraces employee differences. All qualified applicants are considered in accordance with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status or veteran status or any other legally protected status.*

#### Citations:

*Cover page woman - National Council of Negro Women brochure, Colored Women's Clubs Associations collection, MS 1, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.*

*Cover page musicians - Local 802 American Federation of Musicians marching in parade, Cottrell Laurence Dellums papers, MS 14, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.*

*Page 3 baseball players - Three unidentified Oakland Larks players with automobiles in background, West Coast Negro Baseball Association collection, MS 17, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.*

*Page 3 hospital - Dr. William Watts and three nurses standing in front of W.M. Watt's Private Hospital, Oakland, California, William M. Watts papers, MS 37, African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.*

