

Exhibit Developer

Grout Museum District | Waterloo, IA | Full-time, Non-exempt | \$18-\$20 per hour

About Us

The Grout Museum District provides an understanding of the world through history and science. We preserve the rich and diverse history of Waterloo and its community, honor the service and sacrifice of Iowa's veterans from the Civil War through present, gather and share the voices and stories of history makers and those who witnessed it, and inspire curiosity and scientific exploration for future generations through hands-on learning, engaging exhibits, preservation of two historic homes, and a publicly programmed planetarium. Our exhibitions are how the community encounters our collections – and how we bring the region's past to life for visitors of all ages. The Exhibit Developer is the person who makes that happen, from the first research conversation to the final installation.

The Role

The Exhibit Developer owns the full exhibit development cycle at the Grout Museum District – from applied research and interpretive planning through physical fabrication, installation, and ongoing maintenance. This is not a divided role between someone who thinks and someone who builds. It is a single position for someone who does both – grounding every exhibit decision in what the collections can authentically support, and then bringing that vision to life with their own hands. The Exhibit Developer works across all GMD gallery spaces, including the Imaginarium gallery, and reports to the Collections & Research Manager.

What You'll Do

- Conduct applied research on exhibit topics – investigating historical context, filling source gaps, and ensuring every exhibit is grounded in primary evidence from the collections
- Develop and maintain the temporary and permanent exhibition schedule in coordination with the Collections & Research Manager and Director of Education & Media Production
- Design, fabricate, and install original exhibitions using collections objects and loans – working from concept through physical completion
- Maintain and update permanent exhibitions – daily equipment checks, repairs, and periodic content updates
- Coordinate all logistics for traveling exhibitions – contracts, insurance, shipping, installation, and reporting
- Work with the Collections & Research Manager and Archivist to select and locate artifacts, photographs, and archival materials for each exhibit

What We're Looking For

- Bachelor's degree in museum studies, history, design, or a related field – or equivalent professional experience combining interpretive and production skills
- Demonstrated experience developing exhibits that are grounded in collections or primary source material – not narrative-first
- Hands-on fabrication skills – comfortable with power tools, hand tools, basic carpentry, and paint
- Applied research ability – can investigate historical context, build object histories, and translate findings into visitor-accessible interpretive content
- Strong project management skills – able to manage multiple exhibit projects simultaneously from concept through installation
- Ability to lift and move objects up to 50 pounds and work at heights as needed for installation

What We Offer

- \$18.00-20.00 per hour, commensurate with experience
- Full-time schedule with occasional evenings and weekends for installations and programs
- Health, eye, and dental insurance, paid time off, pension
- A role with genuine ownership – you will see your work on the walls and in the galleries, and know that it reflects real history grounded in real evidence

How to Apply

Send your resume, a cover letter, and a portfolio or examples of exhibit work to diane.popelka@gmdistrict.org. Applications accepted through June 10 or until the position is filled. Portfolio materials may be submitted digitally – photographs of completed installations, design documents, or research samples are all appropriate.

The Grout Museum District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We welcome applicants of all backgrounds and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.