



Short Essay Questions

Director of Finance Applicants

Seacoast Science Center (SSC) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization operating in partnership with NH Division of Parks and Recreation for over 30 years from its oceanside location at Odiorne Point State Park. SSC's annual operating budget is \$1.8M–\$1.9M supporting 23 regular staff, 40 seasonal staff, 140 active volunteers, and a Board of Directors representing the seacoast community and various stakeholder groups. SSC is fortunate to have attracted and retained a dedicated group of talented museum professionals, animal care staff, educators, communications specialists, fundraisers, and administrators. The SSC team is organized into 7 general departments: Visitor Experience, Educational Programs, Camps, Exhibits & Animal Care, Communications, Fundraising, and General Administration. Each department is further broken down in business areas or projects that can be managed and evaluated as profit centers, tracking revenue and expenses in ways that give the organization visibility and financial control while honoring donor intent and supporting grant compliance. To gain further insight into SSC, its mission, and its functional financial structure please go to www.seacoastsciencecenter.org and review the posted [SSC Impact Reports, Audited Financial Statements, and IRS Form 990](#) tax filings.

Short Answer Responses

1. Budgeting and budget compliance, revenue forecasting, and cash flow management are central for rigorous financial management and decision-making necessary in every business environment. Nonprofit cultural institutions are no different. **Please describe your experience in the areas of budget development and compliance, forecasting, and cash flow management. Please comment on the scale of your involvement in these areas.** (Total dollars is less important than scope. Institutional or business? Departmental? Project-level?)
2. The SSC team is a collection of very talented museum professionals. However, staff whose hearts and professional training draw them to the world of museums and education generally do not have strong business or financial backgrounds. Nonetheless, they manage projects, people, and money on behalf of SSC, directing activities and programs with significant financial implications. Part of your charge as the Director of Finance would be to provide the SSC team coaching and support in terms of business thought and practices so that they can make sound financial decisions on behalf of SSC. **How would you approach the business coaching aspect of your role as the Director of Finance?**
3. Nonprofit cultural institutions leverage mission related program fees, grants and donations to generate social capital, rather than financial capital to the benefit of the community. **How might you approach balancing mission and money at a cultural institution like SSC?**