



# **Executive Director – Casa Romantica Cultural Center & Gardens**

## **About Casa Romantica**

Casa Romantica Cultural Center & Gardens is a nonprofit arts, history and horticulture center on the San Clemente bluffs, set in a 1927 Spanish Colonial Revival ocean view estate listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its mission is to provide cultural programs for all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities, celebrating the artistic, musical, historical, literary and horticultural life of California.

The estate is owned by the City of San Clemente and has been operated by Casa Romantica as a 501(c)(3) since it opened to the public in 2004. Today it draws more than 40,000 visitors a year to exhibitions, live music, opera, theater and dance, classes and workshops, free Family Sundays, and a youth education program that serves more than 2,000 Capistrano Unified School District students annually. It also earns revenue from memberships, a President's Circle giving program, and private events and rentals across 2.5 acres of Pacific-view gardens.

Casa has come through a challenging chapter. Landslides in 2023 destroyed about half an acre of its gardens, its interior rooms reopened in 2024, and the Ocean Terrace and surrounding gardens reopened on September 1, 2026. A small, creative team kept programming going throughout, and the next Executive Director joins an organization that is growing, and ready for its next chapter.

## **Position Summary**

The Executive Director is Casa Romantica's chief executive and public face, leading the organization in partnership with the Board of Directors. The ED is responsible for staff, finances, fundraising, programs, the historic estate and gardens, and the relationship with the City of San Clemente, and works with the Board to carry out the organization's vision and goals.

The ED leads daily operations, builds a capable and trusting team, and keeps the Board well informed. The role balances external work (donors, the City, community and cultural partners)

## **Key Responsibilities**

### **Staff leadership and culture**

- Lead, develop and support a small team of full-time, part-time and volunteer staff.
- Foster a culture that is collaborative, creative and flexible, with clear communication and room for professional growth.
- Clarify roles and decision-making so departments can act with confidence and coordinate well with one another.
- Manage hiring, onboarding, compensation, benefits and HR policy.

## **Board partnership and governance**

- Work with the Board to set goals, then carry them out and report on results.
- Provide regular, transparent information on financial, operational, fundraising and community-impact performance.
- Support the Board President and committees, and help strengthen Board planning, growth and governance over time.

## **Financial management**

- Oversee the annual budget, financial reporting, and financial controls.
- Manage cash flow and reserves, and build a path to long-term financial sustainability.
- Maintain sound financial systems and policies.

## **Fund development and revenue**

- Lead annual giving, major gifts, grants, corporate sponsorships and, as needed, capital campaigns.
- Cultivate and steward major donors and members, and engage Board members in fundraising.
- Grow earned revenue from memberships, rentals, events, ticketing and new sources.

## **Programs, audiences and partnerships**

- Guide the strategic direction of exhibitions, performing arts, education, family and youth programs, and gardens programming, working closely with program staff.
- Grow attendance and broaden the audience across all ages.
- Raise Casa's visibility across Orange County and Southern California through marketing, media and partnerships with arts, cultural and educational organizations.
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## **Historic estate, gardens and facilities**

- Oversee the maintenance, preservation and capital planning of the estate and gardens, working with qualified professionals and vendors.
- Lead the completion of recovery and restoration work, with attention to safety, accessibility and the visitor experience.
- Balance preservation of historic character with keeping the property vibrant for the community.

## **City and community relations**

- Maintain a strong working relationship with City of San Clemente leadership and staff.
- Serve as Casa's primary ambassador to residents, civic leaders, donors, schools and the media.

## **Systems and operations**

- Assess and improve operating systems, including ticketing, donor and volunteer management, communication and technology.
- Keep events, rentals and visitor services running smoothly.

## **Qualifications**

### **Required**

- Five or more years of senior leadership experience, including leading and developing staff.
- Integrity, transparency and strong communication skills, with a collaborative approach to working with a Board.
- An approachable, public-facing presence and an ability to build trust with donors, volunteers, civic leaders and community partners.
- Financial management experience, including budgeting, reporting and controls.
- A record of fundraising success, including cultivating and soliciting donors, as well as grant writing experience.
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

### **Preferred**

- Leadership experience in a museum, cultural center, performing arts organization, historic property, or a nonprofit of similar size and complexity. Horticultural experience is welcome but not required.
- Experience overseeing the care or restoration of a historic property, grounds or gardens through qualified professionals.
- Experience with capital campaigns, new revenue development, and earned income from rentals, events and ticketing.
- Advanced degree.

## Core Competencies and Attributes

| Competency                        | What it looks like at Casa Romantica                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integrity and                     | Honest, open communication with the Board, staff, donors and                                           |
| Collaborative leadership          | Works in partnership with the Board, welcomes feedback, and turns                                      |
| People leadership                 | Develops staff, listens, delegates, recognizes contributions, and adapts to what different people need |
| Communication                     | Clear, consistent and professional across staff, Board, City and donors                                |
| Financial acumen                  | Builds and reads budgets and financial reports, and maintains sound                                    |
| Donor and community relationships | A warm, credible public presence who builds trust with donors, members and civic leaders               |
| Strategic thinking                | Sets priorities, measures progress, and builds on Casa's strengths                                     |
| Calm under pressure               | Steady and communicative in times of change or challenge                                               |
| Respect for a living              | Protects the estate's history while keeping it relevant for today's                                    |
| Perseverance and                  | Strong work ethic, patience, and credit shared with the team                                           |

## First-Year Priorities

In the first year, the ED will focus on strengthening the foundation for Casa's next chapter:

1. **Lead with clarity.** Establish clear ownership of operations, programming, development and administration, with a defined staff structure and decision-making.
2. **Support and strengthen the team.** Learn how the organization runs, earn staff trust, and foster open communication and professional development.
3. **Build financial strength.** Take ownership of budgeting, reporting and controls, and share results regularly with the Board.
4. **Restoration.** Oversee remaining restoration work and strengthen the partnership with the City.
5. **Grow fund development.** Begin building donor and community relationships at every level.
6. **Partner with the Board.** Align on vision and goals, and begin expanding fundraising from a stable base.

Specific measures of success will be set with the Board in the first 90 days.

## How to Apply

This is a full-time, salaried position based exclusively in-person, on-site 5 days a week in San Clemente, with regular evening and weekend events.

- **Salary Range:** \$120,00-\$150,000
- **Benefits:** health, dental and vision coverage, paid time off

Casa Romantica Cultural Center & Gardens is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate or harass on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship or immigration status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, reproductive health decision-making, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. We encourage candidates from all backgrounds to apply, even if you meet most but not every qualification.

We provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities and for sincerely held religious beliefs throughout the hiring process. To request one, contact Dave Peter, [EDSearch@casaromantica.org](mailto:EDSearch@casaromantica.org)

We consider qualified applicants with criminal histories in a manner consistent with the California Fair Chance Act. We will not ask about conviction history until after we make a conditional offer of employment.

## **Applicant Privacy Notice**

**What we collect:** The information you submit, such as your contact details, resume, cover letter, work and education history, and references. If you choose to complete an optional voluntary self-identification form, we also collect the demographic information you provide. That form is kept separate from your application and is not used to evaluate you.

**Why we collect it:** To evaluate candidates, communicate with you about this search, and meet our legal record-keeping duties.

**Who sees it:** The Board search committee and the Casa Romantica staff and/or consultants involved in hiring, which may use it only for this search. We do not sell your information or share it for advertising.

**Confidentiality and references:** We will keep your candidacy confidential and will not contact your current employer or references without your permission.

**Retention:** We keep hiring records for at least four years, as California law requires, and then delete them securely.

**Your choices:** You may ask us to show you, correct or delete the information we hold about you, subject to our legal record-keeping duties. Contact Dave Peter [EDSearch@casaromantica.org](mailto:EDSearch@casaromantica.org)

Applications are reviewed by people, not by automated screening tools.

To apply, send a resume and a cover letter of two pages or less to [EDSearch@casaromantica.org](mailto:EDSearch@casaromantica.org).

Materials will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.