DETAIL OPPORTUNITY
Announcement Number: DO-24-NH05

APPLICATION PERIOD: August 13, 2024 – August 19, 2024

POSITION TITLE: Provenance Researcher

ORGANIZATION:
Smithsonian Institution (SI)
National Museum of Natural History
Office of the Registrar

LENGTH OF DETAIL: 2-3 days per week, for 120 Days (may be further extended)

WHO MAY APPLY:
Current Smithsonian employees at grade(s) 9/11 with experience performing provenance research

WORK DESCRIPTION:

The incumbent will:

1. Undertake an in-depth review of anthropological and other museum collections, as needed, which may include human remains, archaeological or ethnographic objects or other items present in the collections of the National Museum of Natural History deemed to be of highest priority for research.

2. Research provenance/provenience of the collection or items in question to evaluate the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of collections item(s) using:
   a. museum records including, but not limited to, departmental ledger books (anthropology, mammals or other ledgers), accession and loan files, catalogue cards, and the collections database (EMu);
   b. SI archival collections, including fieldnotes and correspondence;
   c. relevant literature;
   d. oral histories and other nontraditional lines of evidence.

3. Consults with curatorial and collections management staff as needed, may be required to participate in ethical returns consultation meetings and other related meetings as required by Detail supervisor.

4. Writes a concise and well-researched report summarizing the collections information and the circumstances under which the collection(s) or item(s) entered the museum, including any information about the circumstances under which the collection(s) or item(s) were removed from their original cultural context, if known.

Incumbent works under the general supervision of the Head Registrar in collaboration with the Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Team and Human Dignity Team. Assignments are of a continuing nature and the effectiveness of work is measured by results. Assignments could involve sensitive collections materials, human remains and information, and discretion and confidentiality is required.
QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

- Demonstrated ability to plan and conduct primary and secondary provenance and other research using museum records, archival records, library and online resources, and resources held by other institutions to identify the sources and background of NMNH collections items and remains, how they were acquired, as well as other pertinent information.
- Demonstrated experience conducting biographical and other research and individuals and organizations associated with NMNH collections and remains.
- Experience writing detailed provenance reports to be used in assessing ethical and legal acquisition or custody status.
- Experience conducting and documenting museum collections inventory work.
- Comprehensive knowledge of computer operation and skill in applying this knowledge document management and creation.
- Ability to manage potentially sensitive information with discretion and confidentiality.

INQUIRIES ABOUT JOB REQUIREMENTS: Sarah Loudin, loudins@si.edu

HOW TO APPLY:

Send your resume and a brief cover letter electronically to Sarah Loudin, NMNH Head Registrar at loudins@si.edu.

NMNH welcomes diversity in all respects, including but not limited to age, occupation, nationality, and background.

Note: This is a reimbursable detail. NMNH will pay 100% of employee’s salary and benefits for the period of this detail. Current Smithsonian employees must provide written supervisory approval upon selection for this detail.

This is a Temporary Equal Employment Work Opportunity

During the period of detail, employee will continue to occupy his/her official position of record with same grade, step, benefits and status and will be compensated at their current rate of pay.

The detail is not an opportunity for promotion.

Smithsonian Institution