

EXECUTIVE SEARCH



PEQUOT
LIBRARY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP

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Client: Pequot Library
Role: Executive Director
Location: Southport, CT
Reports To: Board of Trustees
Website: pequotlibrary.org



SITUATION OVERVIEW:

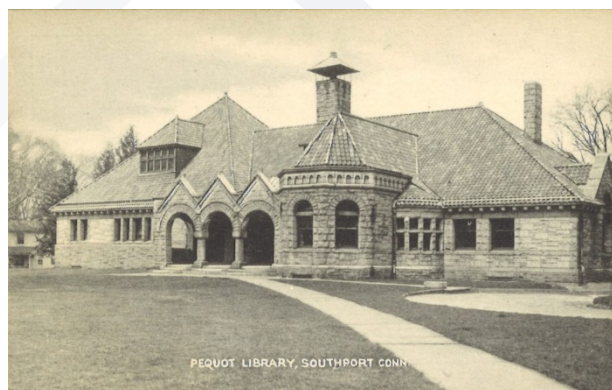
Aspen Leadership Group, a ZRG company, has been engaged to recruit an **Executive Director** for **Pequot Library**.

ABOUT PEQUOT LIBRARY:

Pequot Library enriches lives by serving the cultural, educational, and intellectual needs of the entire community. Bringing literature, music, art, science, and the humanities to their community, their mission extends far beyond most traditional lending libraries. The only public association library in the town, Pequot Library is housed in an historic building, framed by a Great Lawn, and located on more than three acres in the charming village of Southport in Fairfield, CT. A small gem to be discovered, Pequot Library is a vibrant programming library where visitors of all ages arrive for high-impact cultural events and leave enriched and inspired.

Pequot Library was founded in 1889 by Southport, CT residents Virginia Marquand Monroe and Elbert B. Monroe. The library building, designed by noted American architect Robert H. Robertson, opened to the public in March 1894. It was Mrs. Monroe's intention that Pequot be as "free as air to all." Pequot Library is a destination library listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For over seven generations, Pequot Library has been a cultural beacon of Fairfield County, providing traditional library services and diverse programming to their local and regional community. They help children develop a lifelong interest in reading and learning through engaging programs and special activities. Their robust calendar of events includes musical performances, exhibitions, lectures, book sales, and a wide range of cultural, educational, and community events. They integrate their Special Collections of rare books, manuscripts, and archives into their day-to-day services to the community through exhibitions, programs, and hands-on classes and workshops.



The Pequot Library serves readers of all ages with a circulating collection of over 116,000 books, audiobooks, and DVDs. Their dynamic calendar of first-rate arts and literary programs and events educates and entertains a broad audience. They curate multiple exhibitions during the year that highlight and explore rare books, manuscripts, and archives from their Special Collections of approximately 25,000 items.



The library collects, preserves, and makes accessible a collection of rare books, manuscripts, and archives; provides public library services; organizes engaging programs about history, literature, and the arts; curates Special Collections exhibitions; and hosts community-wide gatherings in a historic setting. In conjunction with their exhibitions, they also organize guided tours and educational programs for K-12 students throughout the area, including Fairfield and Bridgeport.



POSITION:

The **Executive Director (ED)** will provide the strategic vision, leadership, and management of all aspects of the library – the lending library, cultural programs, children's programs, Special Collections, and physical assets such as the building and property. They will be responsible for the creation of innovative programming, effective operations, and aggressive fundraising. The ED will oversee more than twenty full-time and part-time staff members and over 500 programs that bring 55,000 people to Pequot Library annually.

They will be dedicated to Pequot's mission to educate and enrich people of all ages through literature, music, art, science, and the humanities. Pequot Library is committed to bringing together people from various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and ages. As a dynamic leader, the Executive Director will serve as the face of the library and must be comfortable with public speaking and sharing its mission throughout the community. They will develop synergistic partnerships, which result in a positive collective impact for the community.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

BOARD RELATIONS

The **Executive Director** will

- serve as the primary liaison between the Board of Trustees and the staff;

- carry out the by-laws and all policies, procedures, and resolutions approved by the Board of Trustees;
- work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees to enable all members to be motivated, engaged, and energized, and to act as force multipliers;
- partner with the Nominating Committee to identify, cultivate, and develop new Board members; and
- play a key role in the strategic planning process.

ADVANCEMENT

The **Executive Director** will

- serve as the chief fundraiser for the library, and act as its visionary and spokesperson;
- supervise the capital and annual giving campaigns in collaboration with the Director of Development;
- creatively generate earned income through cultivation and solicitation of major individual and institutional donors, fundraising events, ticket sales to performances, venue rentals, grants, and corporate sponsorships;
- promote Pequot's image and work to increase its visibility locally as a cultural beacon and throughout the region as a national treasure;
- build and steward relationships within the local and state-wide library and cultural arts community; and
- oversee marketing, public relations, and communications, in collaboration with the staff.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

The **Executive Director** will

- have responsibility for the care of the library's holdings, buildings, materials, and equipment;
- lead the development and evaluation of the library's financial strategies;
- provide effective leadership, ensuring that the day-to-day operations and budgets are professionally and efficiently administered; and
- recruit, manage, inspire, and retain a high-performing team.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Pequot Library seeks an **Executive Director** with

- a commitment to the mission of Pequot Library - to enrich lives by serving the cultural, educational, and intellectual needs of the community through its diverse programming, special collections, and traditional library services;
- experience with fundraising and development, including the management of annual fundraising initiatives, major donor programs, and capital campaigns;

- demonstrated skills in developing and implementing financial plans that appropriately engage board and staff members and result in balanced operating budgets and increased long-term financial security;
- an ability to manage the development and implementation of a strategic plan;
- ambitions to expand the library's reach and positive impact on stakeholders and the community;
- proven capacity to combine visionary thinking with clear and compelling short-term as well as long-term strategic planning;
- excellent diplomatic skills and an ability to build productive relationships with staff, volunteers, community members, and all library stakeholders;
- proven capacity to build, inspire, mentor, and lead a high-performing team;
- excellent communication, influence, and change management skills; and
- experience in a leadership role within a cultural or educational institution.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and at least seven years of experience are required for this position. A master's degree or Ph.D. in Library Science, or an MBA or MPA with experience in education or the arts is preferred.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

The Executive Director will report to the [Board of Trustees](#). The Executive Director will oversee a team of 20 full-time and part-time staff, including six direct reports, along with a dedicated group of contractors and volunteers.

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIR:

Thank you for considering the role of Executive Director at Pequot Library. This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead an institution that has been defying expectations and transforming lives for 135 years.

Founded in 1889 with Virginia Marquand Monroe's revolutionary vision that all holdings, including rare books and manuscripts as well as our circulating collection, should be "free as air to all," Pequot Library continues to challenge the traditional boundaries between private collections and public access. What makes us truly exceptional isn't just our remarkable Special Collections - including complete second, third, and fourth Shakespeare folios and a partial first, early American sermons by Mohegan tribe Reverend Samson Occom, and the first published cookbook from 1475 - but our unwavering commitment to making these treasures accessible to everyone in our community.

Pequot Library is uniquely positioned between the intimacy of a private institution and the mission of public service. Our hybrid model has created something remarkable: a place where a Title I school student from Bridgeport can handle the same 400-year-old documents that

visiting scholars travel from across the country to study. Last year alone, 95% of our 642 K-12 program participants came from underserved populations, experiencing hands-on learning with primary sources that connect them directly to American history.

The library is also deeply integrated into the life of Southport and greater Fairfield. It is one of three public libraries in town, and an important partner to Fairfield Library, but it is the only public association library in town. The Town of Fairfield recognizes its value to the broader community and provides annual financial support through the town budget. This municipal commitment is complemented by private philanthropy, estate bequests, grants from government and private foundations, and revenue from events and programs. The result is a sustainable hybrid model that blends public support with entrepreneurial fundraising, ensuring both stability and innovation.

With more than 20 full- and part-time staff and a dedicated corps of volunteers, the library delivers over 500 programs each year, attracting approximately 55,000 visitors annually. The next Executive Director will lead this team, ensuring that the institution balances visionary cultural leadership with operational excellence, and inherit an institution experiencing unprecedented momentum. We've successfully secured multiple NEH grants, expanded our digital presence through partnerships with Yale's Beinecke Library, and created programming that bridges centuries - from quill pen writing workshops inspired by our Shakespeare collection to planetarium shows connected to our maritime navigation archives. Our weekly e-newsletter reaches 5,500 engaged community members with open rates approaching 50%.

But this is just the beginning. We are poised for transformational growth, with building renovation plans that will expand our capacity for exhibitions, education, and community engagement. Our strategic planning process has identified clear opportunities to amplify our impact: deepening partnerships with area universities, expanding our acclaimed school programs, and leveraging our unique position to attract new audiences to the joy of historical discovery.

The challenges are real and energizing. We operate with the entrepreneurial spirit required of an independent library while maintaining the stewardship standards demanded by our irreplaceable collections. We're expanding our collection of works by and about African Americans while simultaneously preserving 17th-century folios. We're planning for digital innovation while caring for manuscripts that predate electricity.

Pequot Library requires a leader who sees opportunity where others might see complexity - someone who can articulate why a 135-year-old institution remains utterly essential in 2025 and beyond. You'll work with a passionate Board of more than a dozen Trustees that includes professionals with a broad base of skills, longtime community members, and new voices bringing fresh perspectives on equity, access, and relevance. Our staff combines deep institutional knowledge with innovative thinking, from our Special Collections librarians who

regularly present at national conferences to our Youth Services team that creates programming you simply won't find anywhere else.

This role demands both visionary thinking and operational excellence. You'll be stewarding million-dollar collections while ensuring our weekly storytime remains magical for three-year-olds. You'll be cultivating major donors while making sure teachers in New Haven and Bridgeport can access our resources without cost. You'll be planning capital campaigns while personally greeting the chess club members who gather every Friday afternoon.

What excites me most about Pequot Library is our community's hunger for what we offer. When we display a 300-year-old sermon by a Mohegan reverend, local families show up alongside serious researchers. When we partner with Music for Youth to bring Bridgeport students to our auditorium, we're not just providing a field trip - we're engaging young people to explore the arts in a historical, warm, and inclusive space. The person we're seeking will understand that libraries aren't just repositories - they're engines of transformation. They'll see our Special Collections not as precious objects to be protected, but as powerful tools for education, inspiration, and social justice. They'll recognize that our hybrid funding model isn't a complication but an opportunity to innovate beyond the constraints of purely public or private institutions.

If you're energized by the prospect of leading an institution where Revolutionary War pamphlets inform contemporary discussions of democracy, where first-generation college students conduct original research alongside established scholars, and where the phrase "free as air to all" continues to guide bold decisions about access and equity, then I encourage you to engage with us about this remarkable opportunity.

We're not just preserving history at Pequot Library - we're actively writing the next chapter of what it means to serve the community through cultural stewardship. I invite you to consider being the leader who helps us write that chapter with the same vision and audacity that inspired our founders 135 years ago.

We look forward to meeting you.

— Ali Fellowes, President and Chair of the Board of Trustees

SALARY & BENEFITS:

The base salary for this position is \$150,000. Pequot Library offers a comprehensive package of benefits, including medical, vision, dental, and employer-paid life insurance, a 403(b) retirement plan with an employer match, and generous paid time off. Housing may also be available; please inquire for more information.

LOCATION:

Fairfield, Connecticut is a vibrant coastal town located in Fairfield County, just 50 miles northeast of New York City. Known for its strong community values, excellent public schools, and a high quality of life, Fairfield offers an ideal environment for both residential living and business development.

With a population of over 60,000, the town blends New England charm with modern convenience. Fairfield boasts a thriving local economy supported by a diverse mix of industries, including finance, education, healthcare, retail, and professional services. Its strategic location along the Metro-North Railroad and proximity to I-95 make it a key hub for commuters and businesses seeking easy access to regional markets.

Home to Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University, the town benefits from a well-educated workforce and a steady pipeline of talent. Fairfield's business-friendly environment is further enhanced by proactive municipal support, local chambers of commerce, and a community that values innovation and entrepreneurship.

Southport is a beautiful coastal hamlet that boasts breathtaking views of the Long Island Sound, along with a walkable village center that gives it a small-town feel within the larger town of Fairfield. It offers outdoor recreation, historic attractions, and activities for all ages, along with historic and well-protected New England architecture.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

Pequot Library will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to Pequot Library, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, they encourage you to apply.

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Pequot Library and the responsibilities and competencies presented

in the position prospectus. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Executive Director, Pequot Library](#).

ABOUT ZRG PARTNERS:

ZRG is a global talent advisory firm that is changing the way companies find, hire, and manage through its data-driven approach to executive and professional search.

ABOUT ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP:

Aspen Leadership Group (ALG) supports exceptional careers in the nonprofit sector, recruiting presidents, executive directors, and chief advancement officers and helping them recruit, train, and inspire high-performing teams. The company's search services and leadership consulting focus on building teams that enable an organization to engage all its potential donors and volunteers and to drive unprecedented fundraising results.



Ron Schiller
Managing Director and Founding Partner
ronschiller@aspenleadershipgroup.com

Ron Schiller is a nationally recognized advisor to presidents, chief advancement officers, board members, and other leaders and emerging leaders in the nonprofit sector. Since 2011, he has focused his attention on executive search, strategic consulting, writing, and speaking about philanthropy, drawing on his experience as a fundraising leader, executive team member, board member, and search consultant built over a 30-year career. He is an AIRS-certified Diversity and Inclusion Recruiter.

Ron has held leadership positions in seven educational and cultural institutions, including the University of Chicago, where he led a team of more than 450 that completed a \$2.3 billion campaign and facilitated two nine-figure gifts.

He serves on the faculty of the annual CASE conference, "Inspiring the Largest Gifts of a Lifetime" and has served as co-chair of CASE's Winter Institute for Chief Development Officers. He is the author of four books: [The Chief Development Officer: Beyond Fundraising](#), published by Rowman & Littlefield, [Belief and Confidence: Donors Talk About Successful Philanthropic Partnership](#), (CASE), [Raising Your Organization's Largest Gifts: A Principal Gifts Handbook](#), (CASE), and [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Advancement: A Guide to Strengthening Engagement and Fundraising Through Inclusion](#) (CASE), co-authored with Angelique Grant. He is a regular speaker for regional and national conferences of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, CASE, the League of American Orchestras, and gift planning organizations, among others, and he is a recipient of CASE's Crystal Apple Teaching Award.

Ron has served on the Cornell University Council and on the boards of the American Friends of Covent Garden, Chicago's Harris Theater for Music and Dance, the Cornell University Glee Club, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Aspen's Buddy Program, the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, the Salt Bay Chamberfest, and the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh.

Prior to founding the Aspen Leadership Group, he served as President of the NPR Foundation, Vice President for Alumni Relations and Development at the University of Chicago, and in various leadership roles at Carnegie Mellon University, Northeastern University, New England Conservatory of Music, and the Eastman School of Music. He began his career in philanthropy at Cornell during the university's groundbreaking \$1.25 billion campaign in the late 1980s.

Ron earned a bachelor's degree at Cornell University.