



Director of Operations

The American Royal is a not-for-profit organization with one simple purpose: to champion food and agriculture. The organization coordinates events and programs, including nationally competitive livestock shows, the world's largest barbecue competition, regional and national equine shows, youth and professional rodeos, and elementary and secondary education outreach. All gatherings further the vision of a world where food and agriculture are celebrated, and all generations are committed to its future.

The Director of Operations provides strategic and operational leadership for one of the nation's premier agricultural and event destinations. This role oversees the day-to-day operations of a dynamic, year-round campus that hosts livestock shows, rodeos, equestrian competitions, sporting events, trade shows, corporate events, educational programming, community gatherings, and third-party events.

Responsible for the successful execution of a 365-day event calendar, the Director oversees venue operations, facilities, maintenance, event logistics, staffing, safety, and operational planning while developing scalable processes that support organizational growth. This position requires a collaborative, hands-on leader who thrives in a fast-paced environment, is comfortable working evenings and weekends as business needs require and leads by example to ensure operational excellence.

Essential Responsibilities

Operational Leadership

- Lead the day-to-day operations of the American Royal campuses, ensuring safe, efficient, and exceptional experiences for exhibitors, guests, partners, and staff.
- Develop operational systems, staffing strategies, and best practices that improve efficiency, service, and long-term sustainability.
- Oversee operational planning for multiple concurrent events while balancing facility, staffing, and logistical priorities.
- Lead and develop a diverse operations team consisting of full-time employees, temporary staff, contractors, vendors, and event personnel.
- Foster a collaborative culture focused on accountability, teamwork, employee development, and continuous improvement.



Event & Venue Operations

- Direct the setup, execution, and breakdown of agricultural, sporting, corporate, community, and third-party events.
- Ensure facilities, arenas, exhibit halls, barns, grounds, and infrastructure remain clean, safe, functional, and event ready upholding the highest standard for exceptional guest experiences.
- Coordinate staffing, equipment, contractors, vendors, and facility resources to support successful event execution.
- Support the operational readiness of future campus expansion and capital improvement initiatives.

Financial & Operational Management

- Develop and manage departmental operating budgets while identifying opportunities to improve operational efficiency and control costs.
- Oversee contractor and vendor relationships, service agreements, and operational resources.
- Ensure compliance with OSHA, fire, environmental, and other applicable regulations while maintaining emergency preparedness and workplace safety standards.

Experience

- Seven (7) + years of progressive operations leadership experience.
- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field preferred
- Three (3) + years leading managers, supervisors, or large operational teams.
- Experience managing operations within a convention center, arena, stadium, fairgrounds, event venue, hospitality venue, conference center, or similarly complex operation.
- Experience managing multiple concurrent events, budgets, vendors, and operational resources.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Strong leadership, communication, and relationship-building skills.
- Excellent organizational, planning, and problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities in a fast-paced, event-driven environment.



- Financial acumen with experience managing budgets and operational resources.
- Experience developing operational processes and efficient staffing models.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and operational management software.
- Commitment to delivering exceptional customer and exhibitor experiences.

Working Conditions & Physical Requirements

- Ability to work in both office and outdoor environments throughout the year.
- Ability to walk extensively throughout the campus and occasionally lift up to 50 pounds.
- Flexibility to work evenings, weekends, holidays, and extended hours as business needs require.