



Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Leo Baeck Institute–New York | Berlin (LBI) invites nominations and applications for the position of Executive Director.

LBI is an archive and research library focused on preserving and promoting the history of German-speaking Jewry and its enduring value. Its extensive archives, 80,000-volume library, and art collection represent the most significant repository of primary source material and scholarship on Jewish life in Central Europe before the Holocaust. These materials reflect the Institute’s mission to preserve the documents, books, art, objects, and ephemera that reflect the history of German-speaking Jewry. The organization prides itself on adapting, expanding, and seizing opportunities as they arise. Most notably, LBI is now a digital archive, with nearly four million pages of documents from its collections (from rare renaissance books to the personal correspondence of luminaries and ordinary people alike to community histories and official documents) accessible in digital form. This digitization allows for the broad dissemination of information to scholars and the general population. Although support of scholarship remains a critical part of LBI’s mission, the Institute is eagerly expanding into the realm of public history, bringing its holdings closer to broader, non-academic audiences, in addition to its traditional constituencies. Based in New York and a founding partner of the Center for Jewish History, LBI also has a small office and staff in Berlin.

ABOUT

The [Leo Baeck Institute](#) was founded in 1955 by leading German-Jewish émigré intellectuals, including Martin Buber, Max Grunewald, Hannah Arendt, and Robert Weltsch, who were determined to preserve the vibrant cultural heritage of German-speaking Jewry that was nearly destroyed in the Holocaust. They named the Institute for Rabbi Leo Baeck, the last leader of Germany’s Jewish Community under the Nazi regime, and appointed him as the Institute’s first President, overseeing independent centers in New York, London, and Jerusalem.

German-speaking Jews have a history marked by individual as well as collective accomplishments that played a significant role in shaping art, science, religion, philosophy, business, and political developments in the modern era, as evidenced by the continuing relevance of figures such as Sigmund Freud and Franz Kafka. LBI is committed to preserving this legacy and promoting the study and understanding of German-Jewish history through its public programs, exhibitions, and support for research and scholarship. LBI’s rich and varied mission is cultural, academic, and educational in nature. While historians and other scholars will continue to pore through its increasingly digitized archives and collections, the Institute is the world’s primary venue for the exploration of this extraordinary chapter in the history of the Jews.

COMMUNITY

Staff

LBI's mission is carried out by and through a variety of constituencies. At the core is the [professional staff](#) of 20, including an administrative team, researchers, the public history group, collections managers and archivists, as well as the Berlin office staff.

Board of Trustees

Providing strategic guidance, fiduciary oversight, and financial support, LBI's [Board of Trustees](#) consists of engaged and committed members from across the United States and abroad. Its standing committees review LBI's programmatic and administrative operations and offer support and direction.

Academic Advisory Board

LBI's [Academic Advisory Board](#) provides essential, academically-grounded advice and leadership on the Institute's program and mission. Eighteen scholars comprise this group, bringing expertise and experience in German Studies, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, Jewish History, Modern European History, as well as culture and media.

Fellows

LBI also runs five fellowship programs that support Ph.D. candidates and academics working on topics related to the German-Jewish community across academic disciplines. These Fellowships are the [David Baumgardt Memorial Fellowship](#), [Fritz Halbers Fellowship](#), [Gerald Westheimer Career Development Fellowship](#), [LBI and German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\) Fellowships](#), and [The Ismar Elbogen Scholarship](#).

Partner Institutions

LBI, along with the [American Jewish Historical Society](#), [American Sephardi Federation](#), [Yeshiva University Museum](#), and [YIVO Institute for Jewish Research](#), is a partner organization of the [Center for Jewish History](#) in New York City. The Center houses each partner's collections, which together make up the world's largest and most comprehensive archive of the modern Jewish experience outside of Israel. The partners of the Center share space, capture operational efficiencies, and seize opportunities for collaboration where possible. The Center is home to [the Lillian Goldman Reading Room](#), [Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute](#), the [David Berg Rare Book Room](#), and the Collection Management and Conversation Wing.

In 2013, LBI–New York established a branch office in Berlin to maintain and deepen relations with scholars, Jewish communities, government, and corporate sponsors, as well as the wider public in Germany. Since the early 2000s, researchers have had access at the Jewish Museum Berlin to both unique LBI materials as well as a duplicate copy of its microfilm collections.

LBI–New York | Berlin collaborates with its sibling organizations through LBI-International. LBI International coordinates activities across three independent international institutes: New York | Berlin, London, and Jerusalem. LBI International also coordinates with the *Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des LBI in Deutschland* (an organization of scholars of German-Jewish history in Germany) and *Freunde und Förderer des LBI* (an organization that liaises with the German government and coordinates German funding for all the LBIs).

COLLECTIONS

LBI collections grew out of the founders' effort to salvage the material and intellectual culture of German-speaking Jews that was nearly destroyed in the Holocaust. Today, these collections are an essential resource for scholars, genealogists, educators, students, and the public.

The LBI archives preserve over 2,000 memoirs, 10,000 archival collections, 25,000 photographs, hundreds of audio interviews, and millions of pages of correspondence, genealogical materials, and business and civil records that touch upon virtually every aspect of the German-Jewish experience. Entrusted to LBI by refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe and their descendants, these papers document the lives and work of luminaries such as Albert Einstein and Joseph Roth as well as ordinary people from all walks of life since the 18th century.

LBI's 80,000-volume library is internationally recognized as the world's foremost collection focused on the history of German-speaking Jews. Rich in rarities (including early Renaissance-era pamphlets; first editions of works by Moses Mendelssohn, Heinrich Heine, and Franz Kafka; and limited-edition art books), the library also collects the latest publications in the field. A comprehensive collection of periodicals encompasses publications ranging from congregation bulletins to the major émigré paper, *Aufbau*.

From engravings depicting Jewish life in German lands in the 16th century to abstract works by German-Jewish émigrés in the second half of the 20th century to everyday life objects, the works in the art and objects collection complement the archival and library collections as a visual record of German-Jewish history. Among the thousands of paintings, sculptures, watercolors, drawings, prints, and objects are many fine works of great artistic and historical significance. More importantly, the art collection in its totality forms an unparalleled record of the material culture of German-speaking Jewry.

[DigiBaeck](#) encompasses LBI's digital collections, which are accessible worldwide. Scholars, genealogists, and the general public have access to a growing treasury of objects that document the rich heritage of German-speaking Jewry in the modern era. DigiBaeck provides instant access to materials ranging from rare 16th-century Renaissance books to memoirs that document the experience of German-Jewish émigrés across the world in the 20th century. LBI was early to digitize, and thousands of individuals access the collections annually through the Institute's portal.

PROJECTS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In working to expand LBI's focus beyond collections and supporting academic work, the Institute engages in a variety of projects and public programs to share knowledge and provide access to collections with a wider audience. Recent examples of such work include the following:

1938Projekt

The [1938Projekt](#) was launched in 2018, eighty years after the events of 1938. The project posed the question: how does one grasp the mixture of horror and surprise felt by the victims of the Nazi regime? Highlighting one document for each day in 1938, the project attempted to answer this question through the examination of letters, diaries, and photographs saved by German Jews and their families, using the LBI archives and those of several partner institutions. The materials illustrate the range of reactions and emotions that individuals and families had as they struggled to escape Germany and Austria in order to survive. In addition, significant world events were described alongside the calendar entries to provide a broad context for the individual stories.

LBI Executive Director | Storbeck Search

Shared History

Throughout 2021, the [Shared History Project](#) commemorated the 17 centuries of Jewish life in German-speaking lands. Highlighting one object per week, with accompanying essays by leading scholars, the Shared History Project tells the story of Jews in central Europe, illustrating how their history is deeply interwoven with the peoples, regions, and countries in which they resided.

Book Club

Each month, the LBI Book Club reads and discusses, with special guest speakers, a new book that touches upon subject matter intertwined with LBI's mission. Recent picks include [The Hare with Amber Eyes](#), [Panorama](#), and [Where She Came From](#).

Exhibitions

Dedicated to making collections and archives accessible to the public, LBI hosts numerous exhibitions. Currently, the Institute is holding both traditional and virtual exhibitions. Recent traditional exhibitions include [Refuge in the Heights](#) (running through March 15, 2022) and a traveling exhibition, [Shared History Project](#) (running through June 30, 2022). Recent virtual exhibitions include [Art of Exile](#) and [Business of Emancipation](#).

Public Programming

LBI reaches a wide variety of audiences through public talks, presentations, and events. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, these occur in both in-person and digital formats. Recent events include [Genealogical Resources for Researching Women](#) and [Using Personal Stories in Online Projects](#).

THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Building upon the success of retiring Executive Director Dr. [William H. Weitzer](#), the next Executive Director will oversee a staff of 20 and a \$3 million annual budget and will focus on the following opportunities and challenges:

- Reinforce LBI's commitment to supporting scholars and scholarship in a changing environment: LBI's DigiBaeck digitization project makes its collections freely available to the whole world. This access only increases the challenge for LBI to remain an invaluable source and active incubator for new scholarship. The new Executive Director will cultivate and forge new connections with the scholarly world.
- Deepen LBI's commitment to engaging the public in history and what it can teach us: Building upon a robust history of supporting the academy and academics, LBI is committed to expanding its work to engage the broader public, particularly younger generations. Through exhibitions, talks, podcasts, and other engagement, the next Executive Director will expand and deepen public programming, creating public forums for discussion of contemporary topics informed by the historical context LBI can provide.
- Build and diversify financial resources: In order to maintain high-quality preservation of collections, hire outstanding staff, and expand programming, the next Executive Director will diversify revenue streams, including a focus on individual, foundation, and corporate giving to build a sustainable endowment and stable annual fund. The Executive Director will also explore with partner organizations how to refine and potentially restructure the management of LBI's complex financials and revenue streams.

LBI Executive Director | Storbeck Search

- Reinforce LBI's international activities: The next Executive Director will maintain and deepen the connections between LBI and Germany and, at the same time, enhance relationships with other countries in the German-speaking world, as well as those which have a significant German-Jewish diaspora. In addition, the new Executive Director will maintain and enrich its partnership with its sibling organizations in London and Jerusalem.
- Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion: The next Executive Director will ensure that the Institute is a welcoming and inclusive workplace for all employees and volunteers. Acting as a model committed to this work, the Executive Director will ensure that all users of LBI, including academics and the general public, feel welcomed and safe while engaged with the Institute.

Qualifications and Personal Characteristics

To successfully meet the above goals, the ideal candidate will:

- Show passion for LBI's mission;
- Possess a good understanding of Jewish history and contemporary Jewish culture;
- Demonstrate highly effective communication skills;
- Understand the concerns of Jewish-German scholars and archivists;
- Inspire creativity and innovation among staff and with partners;
- Bring experience with organizational change management;
- Demonstrate financial management and fundraising savvy;
- Present robust leadership skills and broad leadership experience;
- Demonstrate political acumen and diplomatic skills;
- Express agile strategic thinking and a commitment to innovation; and
- Possess a history of partnering successfully across institutions, including internationally.

Additionally, knowledge of the German language is desirable.

For best consideration, please send all nominations and applications to:



Shelly Weiss Storbeck, Global Education Practice Lead
and Managing Director

Anne Koellhoffer, Senior Associate

LBIExecutiveDirector@storbecksearch.com

For more information, please visit the Leo Baeck Institute's home page at lbi.org.

The Leo Baeck Institute provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.