



**American
Alliance of
Museums**

2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Approved by AAM Board of Directors
February 24, 2016

American Alliance of Museums 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Our Vision:

A world informed and enriched by thriving museums.

Our Mission:

Champion museums and nurture excellence in partnership with our members and allies.

We Believe:

- Museums educate and inspire, nourish minds and spirits, enrich lives and create healthy communities.
- Museum experiences are characterized by encounters with objects and living populations, stories, experts and primary learning experiences in welcoming places, supported by scholarship and knowledge.
- In the integrity of research, the preservation of cultural heritage and the celebration of human achievement.
- Our strengths lie in both the diversity of the people we represent and the breadth of museums we engage.
- In active participation in the global community and embracing international perspectives.

Our Values:

- **Partnership**—As an Alliance, we value the importance of listening and learning—and the power of collaboration. The museum field is stronger when we unite, speak with one voice and join together with allies across sectors to advance the field.
- **Access & Inclusivity**—We are generous with access to our programs and resources. We seek out and embrace a diversity of people and cultures to enhance our understanding of the world and to connect museums in a global context.
- **Courage**—We lead by being proactive, engaging different perspectives and taking risks. We are curious about what might be, challenge assumptions and encourage innovation.
- **Excellence**—We aim to be exemplary in everything we do. Our field's responsibility is to preserve society's treasures, cultural heritage, discoveries and stories for future generations. This requires adherence to the highest ethical standards and practices that preserve the public trust.

Goals:

This plan commits the Alliance to pursuing new goals that advance our mission:

- **Access:** deliver relevant content and superior user experience
- **Thought Leadership:** influence and inspire action
- **Global Thinking:** connect US museums to the international community

The plan re-commits the Alliance to continuing to grow and evolve our work in these areas that advance our mission:

- **Advocacy:** champion museums
- **Excellence:** build and celebrate a stronger museum field

Focus Areas:

As we pursue our goals, we will focus on topics that our membership strongly believes are vital to the future viability, relevance and sustainability of museums, including:

- **Diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion** in all aspects of museum structure and programming
- Museums' expanding role in an evolving ecosystem of **P-12 education**
- Changing business models for museums' **financial sustainability**

Strategic Approaches:

The Alliance will employ these prevailing approaches in the pursuit of our goals:

- Build **alliances and partnerships** within and outside of the museum field.
- Focus on **audience:** empower the broad museum workforce, engage and serve museum trustees, and develop the next generation of museum leadership.
- Embrace **flexible** business practices and **scalable** programs/platforms to create a more **nimble** and **proactive** AAM including re-evaluation of this plan on a rolling basis.
- Enhance the **intercultural competencies** of Alliance staff and volunteer leadership and ensure **inclusiveness** in our organization and our work.

2016–2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



Goal Details



Access: deliver relevant content and superior user experience

Support museum professionals in doing their jobs better at every stage of their careers.

Establish a framework for developing, aggregating and delivering quality content and professional development, with a focus on outstanding user experience and helping audiences to find their place in the Alliance.

Strategies:

- Develop a scalable, digital platform for museum professionals to find and exchange relevant content.
- Activate and foster communities for engagement, learning and networking.
- Partner with state, regional, discipline-specific museum associations and others to scale successful resources and programs to broader audiences.
- Focus on highly flexible, convenient, personalized and pleasant user experiences in all of AAM's programs and resources.
- Enhance the Annual Meeting experience.



Thought Leadership: influence and inspire action

Provide thought leadership and innovation to inspire and support action among museums in areas of key importance for the vitality of the museum field.

Expand research and development efforts for the museum field, with a 25 year horizon, to bolster museums' financial health and welfare as well as their beneficial impact on communities.

Strategies:

- Actively seek trends, models, and insight from outside of the museum field for a broader perspective.
- Engage fellows to explore key social, economic and political trends.
- Initiate innovation labs with museums/communities to test and prove scalable innovative solutions, tools and models.
- Provide case studies and forums for sharing successful practices.

Provide thought leadership around museum operational trends and potential ethical challenges.

Strategies:

- Define relevant issues and provide guidelines to help museums address ethical challenges and implement standards and best practices.
- Facilitate discussions of divergent viewpoints, when appropriate.



Global Thinking: connect US museums to the international community

Foster a global exchange of ideas to broaden US museum perspective on museum practice.

Facilitate relationships between US museums and museums around the world.

Strategies:

- Leverage existing frameworks to better connect US museums with museums abroad for dialogue, collaboration and exchange.
- Partner to support regional gatherings of US and non-US museum professionals, study tours and other opportunities to exchange ideas and perspectives.
- Develop alliances with museum associations and others abroad to share thought leadership, best practices, research and resources.
- Identify and share international trends, best practices and innovations to strengthen US museum practice.
- Actively welcome museums from around the world to participate in and contribute to AAM's resources and programs.



Advocacy: champion museums

Advocate for the vital cause of museums.

Build advocacy skills among members of the museum field.

Strategies:

- Equip museum professionals with messaging, training, templates and customizable tools to articulate and demonstrate the value of museums.
- Aggregate and generate data, research and stories to support the value of museums.
- Model advocacy techniques and initiate action in the field through field-wide events and communications.



Excellence: build and celebrate a stronger museum field

Support museums in implementing standards and best practices, and celebrate excellent museums.

Increase accessibility and participation in the Continuum of Excellence and Accreditation by museums of various sizes and types.

Strategies:

- Strengthen the value proposition and visibility of excellence programs.
- Radically grow participation in pipeline programs (Core Documents, MAP).
- Use lessons from thought leadership work to inform new/revised standards that address contemporary issues.
- Improve measurement of standards achievement and provide greater resources for museums to monitor/measure their progress and impact.
- Aggregate and widely share strategies, resources, templates and training on standards and best practices.
- Welcome and support museums outside of the US to participate in standards programs.
- Celebrate museums that obtain accreditation.