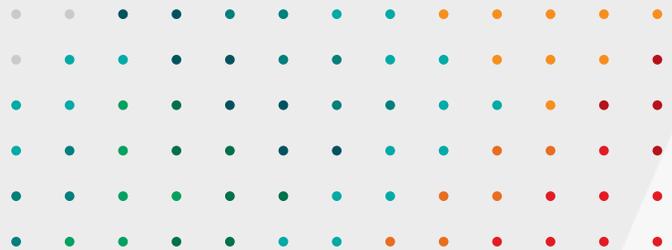




American  
Alliance of  
Museums



# 2022-2025 Strategic Framework



Approved by the AAM Board of Directors  
November 16, 2021



## Our Vision

A just and sustainable world informed and enriched by thriving museums that contribute to the resiliency and equity of their communities.

## Our Mission

Champion equitable and impactful museums by connecting people, fostering learning and community, and nurturing museum excellence.

## Dear Museum Community,

The museum field, like society at large, is at a pivotal moment of reflection and rebuilding. As the collective museum community, the choices we make in the coming months and years about what and how to rebuild will set our field's course for decades. It is a time for deep introspection, active and inclusive listening, and bold steps to help build a more just and equitable world.

The American Alliance of Museums is poised to bring the broad museum field together, inspire leadership at all levels, and rebuild a strong and sustainable sector. To guide our next steps, we are delighted to introduce the 2022-2025 Strategic Framework.

For a year, the AAM staff, board, and other volunteer leaders have engaged in dialogue with the field. We have heard from members and non-members alike through thousands of survey responses and numerous small group discussions. We have examined museum professionals' key areas of interest and concern in blog posts, session proposals, and community forums. And, with the help of our pro bono partners at McKinsey & Company, we have engaged

in analyses and "deep dive" workshops to determine how we—as an Alliance—can best advance the museum field.

**AAM's 2022-2025 Strategic Framework aims to support transformative field-wide work in partnership with our members, partners, and allies.**

We will bolster our Alliance's role in supporting, celebrating, and convening the broad scope of the museum community and rigorously examine ways we model best practices in the fieldwide programs we administer and our internal operations. The pages that follow detail our four priorities and summarize strategies for each.

During our strategic planning process, we drew inspiration from the field itself, as we witnessed the tremendous power of the museum community over the past few years. We were proud to support museum professionals in advancing their museums' missions, as they also addressed unprecedented community and societal needs. While museums provided important exhibitions and programming that deepened understanding, facilitated

dialogue, and fostered empathy, they also became more integral to their communities' responses to the global pandemic, racial tensions, extreme weather, and divisive national politics, among other challenges. While museum professionals elevated science, authentic artifacts, and primary sources of information, helping their communities explore nuance and context in a world of complex challenges, they also provided virtual education, donated PPE and food from their gardens, activated civic engagement and voting, combatted disinformation, and educated the public about COVID-19, vaccines and climate change. As museums modeled resilience and achievement, they also helped the public wrestle with our country's complex history of racism and colonialism. Museums have shown themselves to be essential community infrastructure in their service as schools, warming shelters, ballot drop-off

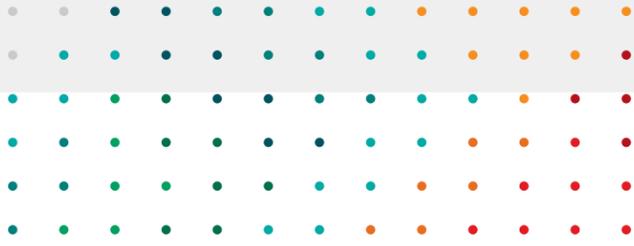
and vaccination sites, and places of respite, safety, and inspiration.

At the same time, a variety of trends have accelerated in recent years, disrupting traditional business models, calling on us to examine the inequities of our workplaces and governance structures, and demanding we be more transparent, empathetic, and collaborative than ever before. While much has been accomplished towards building more diverse, equitable, accessible, inclusive, and anti-racist museums, there is still much left to be done.

Our 2022-2025 Strategic Framework takes inspiration from the resilient mosaic of museums and museum professionals and the critical work that lies ahead. We are honored to serve the field and hope you will join us!

Laura L. Lott  
President & CEO  
American Alliance of Museums

Chevy Humphrey  
Chair of the Board  
American Alliance of Museums



## We Believe:

Museums are essential to communities and to helping society address many of our most pressing issues, from the climate crisis to racism and economic disparity. Museum professionals educate and inspire people of all ages, activate curiosity, facilitate discussion, preserve cultural heritage, and conduct critical research. They nourish minds and spirits, enrich lives, and support healthy communities.

Museums are human-centered institutions in the stories of human achievements and struggles they interpret, the audiences they engage, and the people they employ. They use the trust and authority granted to them by the public to remember, respect, and give voice to all peoples.

Museum experiences are characterized by interactions, not only with objects and living populations, but also with stories, experts, and primary learning experiences in welcoming places. These experiences are supported by scholarship and knowledge.

The Alliance’s strengths lie in our diversity, the breadth of the museum field, and our active participation in the global museum community.

## Our Values

### Partnership

As an Alliance of the entire scope of the museum field, we know the museum field is stronger when we work together. We value listening, learning, and collaborating to advance the field.

### Access & Inclusivity

We seek and embrace a diversity of people and perspectives to enhance our work, and we are generous in sharing our resources.

### Courage

We encourage curiosity and innovation, challenge assumptions, and take risks.

### Excellence

We aim to continuously learn and improve, striving to be exemplary in all we do, as we guide the field in its responsibility to preserve our natural, scientific, and cultural heritage according to the highest ethical standards, preserving the public trust, and supporting workplaces that value and respect the professionals who make museums possible.

# 2022–2025 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES



## Social & Community Impact

The Alliance will advocate for the value of museums, their power to change the world, and their essential roles in sustaining strong, inclusive, and resilient communities by enriching education systems, bolstering economies, strengthening the social fabric of communities, improving peoples' well-being, and beyond.

Defining **what** AAM will prioritize

## DEAI & Anti-racism

Building on our momentum as a driving force for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI), the Alliance will engage partners, allies, and experts to champion an anti-racism movement across the museum field, catalyzing and supporting changemakers in museums and efforts to create more equitable outcomes in all aspects of their structures and programming.

## The Museum Community

Our Alliance will bolster its role in supporting, celebrating, and convening the broad scope of the museum community. Following a period of radical disruption for the museum field, we will comprehensively review and adapt key fieldwide programs and initiatives to enable the museum community to connect and thrive.

Defining **how** AAM delivers and runs

## The Way We Work

Equally important as *what* we do, AAM will critically review *how we work* to ensure equity is at the core of our culture, our structure is agile and scaled to national service as a changemaker and leader, and our business model facilitates a financially sustainable future.

### Goals

Over the three-year term of this strategic framework, AAM aims to:

Celebrate, strengthen, and connect the museum professional community in all its diversity.

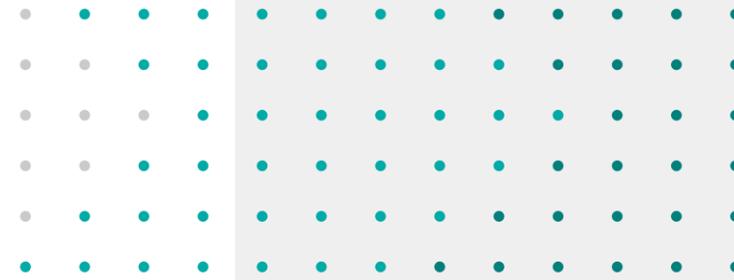
Support museum professionals in learning from each other, managing through crisis, and rebuilding strong, relevant, and sustainable institutions.

Lead the museum field in building support for museums as essential community infrastructure and becoming more equitable, inclusive, and impactful institutions and community partners.

Critically examine AAM's programs and operations to ensure we model our values.

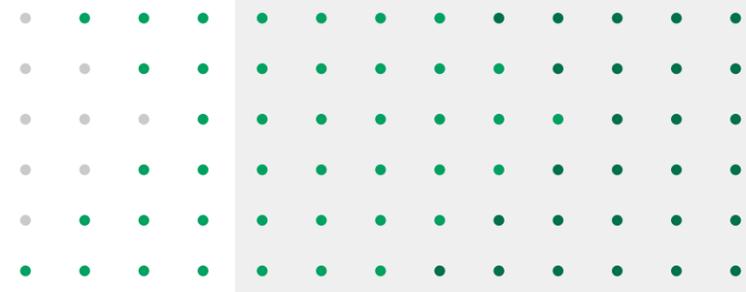
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## Strategies:

- Support museum professionals' skill-building and efforts to identify and address community needs and to measure and communicate the impacts their museums have.
- Develop, collect, and amplify research, data, and stories that articulate the valuable role museums play in creating a more just and equitable world.
- Build greater understanding and public support for the wide-ranging work of museums by amplifying the human-centered nature of museums.
- Champion legislation, government support, and policies that strengthen museums and their vital role in society.
- Activate our national network of museums to create societal change in pursuit of a better world in partnership with cause-based, mission-driven partners, agencies, and funders.

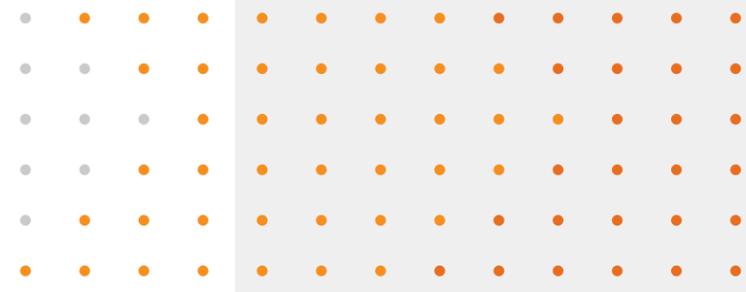


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## Strategies:

- Develop a five-year DEAI plan with an intersectional race equity approach, articulating our theory of change, building on lessons learned from the *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion* pilot, and creating a sustainable structure for long-term work.
- Embed DEAI into the field’s Excellence programs, including the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), Accreditation, and their underlying codes, standards, and best practices.
- Engage, convene, and equip museum trustees, leaders, and changemakers with the case studies, assessments, and benchmarking resources they need to build DEAI skills and lead more equitable and anti-racist museums.
- Recognize, celebrate, and support a network of museum professionals of color and DEAI leaders in museums, and showcase exemplary case studies of equitable and anti-racist outcomes in museum programs and operations.



# The Museum Community

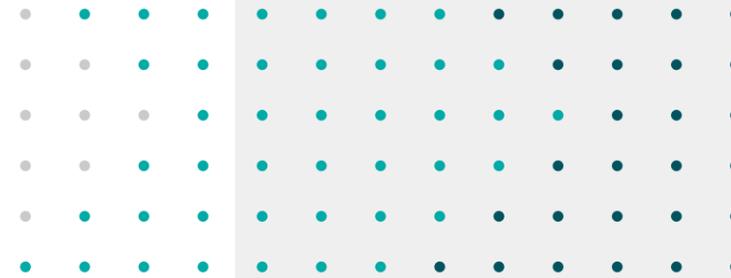
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## Strategies:

- Create more opportunities to highlight and celebrate the vital role every museum professional plays in building thriving museums, strong communities, and a better world.
- Provide opportunities for museum professionals to deepen their engagement with the Alliance, and platforms to share their expertise and grow their leadership skills.
- Through the Center for the Future of Museums, regularly assess key trends shaping the museum sector and the Alliance’s role in helping museum professionals to address issues such as environmental sustainability, community health and well-being, the future of work, challenges and opportunities arising from new digital technologies, and changing business models.
- Partner with other thought leaders and experts in the museum community, including individual museums, corporate partners, allied museum service organizations, and beyond, to address emerging issues of importance to the broad museum field.
- With our members, analyze the fieldwide impact of the AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, the Continuum of Excellence, the Center for the Future of Museums, and the Professional Networks; align these programs with strategic priorities; and explore collaborations, program improvements, and alternative operating/business models to meet the evolving needs of museum professionals.

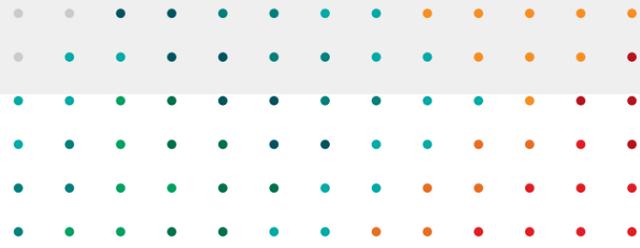
# The Way We Work

Equally important as *what* we do, AAM will critically review *how* we work to ensure equity is at the core of our culture, our structure is agile and scaled to national service as a changemaker and leader, and our business model facilitates a financially sustainable future.



## Strategies:

- Develop a comprehensive digital strategy and formal product development process to align AAM's programs and platforms, identify and implement new offerings that are most responsive to the museum community's needs, and improve the Alliance's ability to connect and serve museum professionals.
- Conduct a review of AAM's corporate structure (Board, Accreditation Commission, and Professional Networks), bylaws, governance processes, and culture to maximize the highest and best use of volunteer leader time, resources, and talent to advance strategic organizational objectives and to model inclusive leadership.
- Disaggregate organizational and programmatic data to identify and address any outcomes that vary by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Build a culture of philanthropy by growing individual giving while increasing other sources of contributions and identifying new earned revenue opportunities.
- Embrace flexible business practices and scalable programs/platforms to create a nimbler and more proactive AAM, including re-evaluation of this framework on a rolling basis.



# Join Us

We invite you to join us to actualize this strategic vision and framework. As a supporter, ally, or partner, your investment in one or more of these key areas will build a stronger Alliance for all museums.



If you're interested in joining our Alliance or contributing your skills and expertise, learn more about how you can get involved!

» [aam-us.org/get-involved-with-aam](https://aam-us.org/get-involved-with-aam)

## Museum Advocacy

**Champion** legislation and regulatory policies that further museum priorities and sustainability and provide individual skill-building around societal measures of impact.

## Research

**Amplify** the role museums play in our nation's educational infrastructure, as economic engines, and as community anchors by commissioning and publishing seminal social impact research and helping to develop and train museum professionals on measurement and storytelling tools.

## Strategic Foresight

**Increase** the capacity of the Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) to train professionals to anticipate mission-impact trends and develop actionable scenario-planning frameworks.

## Partnership

**Craft** strategic alliances among organizations and entities to advance the social well-being impacts of museums, address global issues such as the climate crisis, and support the nation's upcoming Semiquincentennial celebration.

## DEAI & Anti-racism

**Drive** equitable outcomes across the museum sector in partnership with DEAI leaders and museum professionals of color, and broadly share *Facing Change* tools that empower museums to undertake individualized work.

## Excellence

**Ensure** AAM's own evaluative processes and excellence programs—including the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) and Accreditation—are anti-racist through a rigorous and transparent review and transformation of key components.

## Volunteer Engagement

**Enhance** the Alliance volunteer program to emphasize the best and highest use of volunteer time and constitute appropriate advisory groups and ad hoc leadership task forces to source expertise.

## Resource Development

**Build** a multi-faceted fundraising program for increased and sustained giving, while strategically growing earned income in select divisions.

For questions or further information, contact [development@aam-us.org](mailto:development@aam-us.org).

# Board of Directors

## Officers:

### **Chevy Humphrey**

Chair of the Board (2020–2022)

President & CEO, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago

### **Jorge Zamanillo**

Treasurer (2021-2022)

Executive Director, HistoryMiami Museum (2019-2022)

### **Devon Akmon** (2020-2023)

Director, Michigan State University Museum and Science Gallery

### **Dina Bailey** (2021-2024)

CEO, Mountain Top Vision

### **Carrie Reborá Barratt** (2020-2023)

Tyson Distinguished Scholar, Crystal Bridges Museum of Art

### **Frederic Bertley** (2020-2023)

President and CEO, Center of Science and Industry

### **Alison Rempel Brown** (2020-2023)

President & CEO, Science Museum of Minnesota

### **Carole Charnow** (2021-2024)

President & CEO, Boston Children's Museum

### **Robert M. Davis** (2019-2022)

President and CEO, America's Black Holocaust Museum

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Trustee, Biggs Museum of American Art, Hillwood Estate, Museum and Garden

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Interim President, Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

### **Laura Lott**

(*ex officio*)

President and CEO, American Alliance of Museums

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Founder & CEO, Planet Word

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### **Charles L. Katzenmeyer** (2020-2023)

Vice President, Institutional Advancement, Field Museum

### **Julissa Marengo** (2021-2024)

Assistant Secretary & Chief Marketing Officer, Smithsonian Institution

### **Kelly McKinley** (2019-2022)

Chief Executive Officer, Bay Area Discovery Museum

### **James Pepper Henry** (2019-2022)

CEO/Director, First Americans Museum

### **Nathan Richie** (2021-2024)

Director, Golden History Museum & Park

### **Julie Stein** (2019-2022)

Executive Director, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

### **Karol Wight** (2021-2024)

President and Executive Director, Corning Museum of Glass

# Meet Our Staff

## Executive Office

**Laura Lott**, President and CEO

**Arthur G. Affleck**, Executive Vice President

**Brooke Leonard**, Chief of Staff

**Kaitlyn Murphy**, Executive Assistant

## Center for the Future of Museums

**Elizabeth Merritt**, Vice President, Strategic Foresight & Founding Director, Center for the Future of Museums

## Content

**Megan Lantz**, Director of Content and Community Engagement

**Dean Phelus**, Senior Director, Leadership Programs & Special Events

**Cecelia Walls**, Content & Editorial Strategist

**Joseph O'Neill**, Content Manager and Editor

## Development

**Jennifer Calvert Hall**, Senior Director of Development

**Eileen Goldspiel**, Director, Advancement

**Shelagh Grimshaw**, CFRE, Development Director

## Excellence Programs

**Julie Hart**, Senior Director of Standards & Excellence

**Danyelle Rickard**, Accreditation Program Officer

**Brianne Roth**, Museum Assessment Program Officer

**Martha Sharma**, Accreditation Program Officer

**Susan Zwerling**, Museum Assessment Program Officer

## Finance and Administration

**Carol Constantine**, Director of Finance & Administration

**Amy Kampf**, Senior Accountant

**Vanessa Garcilazo**, Staff Accountant

## Government Relations and Advocacy

**Ember Farber**, Director, Advocacy

**Barry Szczesny**, Director, Government Relations and Public Policy

## Human Resources

**Katherine McNamee**, Director, Human Resources

## Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI)

**Andrew Plumley**, Senior Director of Equity and Culture

**Grace Stewart**, Senior Manager, DEAI Programs

**Ibrahim Shafau**, DEAI Project Manager

## Information Technology and Media

**Joshua Morin**, Director, IT and Application Services

**Anthony Hovington**, IT and Digital Media Specialist

**Carlos Arroyo**, Senior Web Developer

## Marketing and Communications

**Natanya Khashan**, Director, Marketing & Communications

**Rachel Lee**, Marketing & Communications Manager

**Vida Mikalcus**, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

## Membership

**Ryan Bourke**, Director, Member Services

**Lauren Griffin**, Member Services Manager

**Kristin Herlihy**, Member Services Manager

## Meetings and Events

**Shelon Atwater**, CEM, Assistant Director, Exhibits & Business Partnerships

**Tiffany Gilbert**, DES, Manager, Conference Education

# Strategic Plan Task Force

Chair: Devon Akmon  
Michigan State University Museum and Science Gallery

Alison Brown  
Science Museum of Minnesota

Kaywin Feldman\*  
National Gallery of Art

William Harris\*  
Space Center Houston

Chevy Humphrey  
Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago

Ian Jefferson  
McKinsey & Company

Doug Jones\*  
Florida Museum of Natural History

Kelly McKinley  
Bay Area Discovery Museum

Laura Lott  
American Alliance of Museums

Brooke Leonard  
American Alliance of Museums

*\* former AAM board member*

AAM is grateful to the McKinsey & Company consultants who volunteered their time to support our strategic planning process: Judy D'Agostino, Andrew Doy, Ian Jefferson, Thomas Merizalde Martinez, Loïc Tallon, and Rob Wavra.



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