

PA Museums Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Mission

Adopted January 2021

PA Museums strengthens Pennsylvania's museum community through networking, collaboration, professional development, and advocacy.

Vision

Adopted January 2021

Fostering stronger museums for a vibrant Pennsylvania

Organizational History/Profile

PA Museum is a nonprofit, statewide trade association serving a membership of museums and historical organizations that represent a sample of the more than 1,000 organizations in Pennsylvania's diverse museum community. A variety of museums, historic sites, history organizations, zoos, children's museums, science and nature centers, and arboreta engage millions of visitors annually with world-class collections and programs.

Founded in 1905, PA Museums is governed by a board of directors made up of leaders drawn from its 325 member organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Our association has a long history of advocating for museums and the history field. We recommended the establishment of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) over a hundred years ago, and we continue to support that state agency's funding and grant programs that benefit many organizations in our membership. We have worked at local, state, and federal levels to secure museum funding or other kinds of support that make museums more successful. We give a voice to the field when museums need to be heard. We organize non-partisan, grass roots efforts to communicate the worth and value of museums to lawmakers.

PA Museums hosts an annual, statewide museum conference each year that brings together between 125 and 200 museum professionals for two days of intensive programming. Our conference includes educational sessions, behind the scenes tours of museums, presentations from nationally known museum thought leaders, and social events designed to connect attendees. The conference strengthens relationships between large and small institutions too. Our annual conferences are hosted in a different region of Pennsylvania by one of our member organizations to better serve our statewide membership. During COVID-19, the conference happened, very successfully, virtually.

In 1980 PA Museums established an awards program to recognize exemplary work being doing in museums and history organizations in Pennsylvania. The program, modeled on the national awards programs at the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and the American

Alliance of Museums (AAM), has grown over the years to recognize emerging museum professionals, projects that transform institutions, outstanding educational programs, and lifetime achievements in the field. Our nominations are judged by a committee using a nationally recognized model that was developed by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

PA Museums partners with our members to present workshops and webinars. Our programs are responsive to the museum and history community’s immediate needs. In 2020 we shifted to presenting all of our programs in a virtual environment and attracted attendees from well beyond Pennsylvania’s borders. Our programmatic focus is helping organizations with less capacity that need professional development the most.

PA Museums frequently shares information and news with our membership and broader audiences that informs and strengthens the field. Our Tapestry e-newsletter, sent every two weeks, is consistently read by around 350 subscribers and exceeds the industry average for deliverability, readability, and engagement with its content. PA Museums is active on Twitter and Facebook with an increasing audience on both platforms. We use social media as a source for our newsletter and website, <https://www.pamuseums.org>. In turn, as we update information on our website, we drive traffic there with our social media tools.

Planning Process

The organization’s last strategic plan covered the period 2012-2017. After its conclusion, the Board and Executive Director discussed the process of creating a new plan and formed a Strategic Planning Committee to do so.

Goals & Action Steps

Goal	Action Step	Responsible	Deadline
Advocacy Committee			
Explore retaining a lobbyist for museum issues in Commonwealth	Rusty defines need and proposes potential lobbyists	Executive Director	10/15/2023
	Committee reviews proposal and sponsors it for board action at April 2023 board meeting	Committee	4/15/2023
Integrate advocacy training into programming & communications	Rusty offer advocacy training session during 2022 conference	Executive Director	4/15/2022
	Share recording of above training post-conference	Executive Director	5/15/2022
Engage with Federal, state, and local legislators on a regularly scheduled basis, to build	Schedule meetings in Harrisburg between	Executive Director	April each year of plan

connections with PA Museums and with specific museums and their legislators	museum staff members and legislators		
	Participate in AAM Museum Advocacy Day	Executive Director	Feb, annually
	Executive Director sends new lawmakers an intro to PA Museums packet	Executive Director	At beg of new legislative terms
Finance & Development Committee			
Make financial sustainability the bedrock of our programs, operations, & initiatives	Develop a business plan format for financial planning related to each program initiative – to be completed before broader decision making by Exec Director or in committees	Committee	5/1/2022
Diversify our sources of revenue, to improve organizational strength	Review current and historic revenue streams; create findings report	Committee	12/31/2023
	Out of revenue stream findings report, identify areas where our strengths meet member needs to bring in new revenue types	Committee	4/15/2024
Implement investment strategy policy	Review and finalize proposal to board for investment policy	Committee	6/15/2022
Create and execute a basic development plan	Identify grant and corporate sponsor opportunities	Executive Director	6/1/2022
	Nurture relationships with those identified above, and apply for funding	Executive Director	Progress reports, Jan and June annually
Nominating & Governance Committee			
Increase visibility of PA Museums' bylaws, policies, and nomination opportunities.	Create a website page for bylaws and policies	Executive Director	4/1/22
	Create nomination form on website	Executive Director, Averie	5/1/22
	Use Tapestry newsletter to invite	Executive Director	6/1/22

	nominations through the new page.		
Review & evaluate bylaws	Review organization's bylaws; create findings report	Committee	9/30/22
	Revise bylaws if findings note need for revision	Committee	12/31/22
Nominees, and board members, accurately represent the diversity of stakeholders	Create org and personal characteristics matrix doc for consideration of nominees	Committee	Draft 11/1/21; Final doc 1/21/22
Review & evaluate committee structure	Review organization's committee structure	Committee	6/30/22
Program & Awards Committee			
Incorporate equity & inclusion initiatives across program work	List programs and define "equity and inclusion" measures for each	Committee	4/15/2022
	Create measurable plans with timelines to work towards equity and inclusion in each program	Executive Director	6/15/2022
	Execute plans, with reporting to the board	Committee & Executive Director	Report each board meeting
Begin engaging with members at the regional and local level, in-person or virtually	Develop this plan in collaboration with the Advocacy Committee – events should be dual function such as hear from museums and highlight PA Museums resources with legislators present to catch the spark of the work	Advocacy & Program Committees	12/31/2023
Develop relationship and explore programming partnerships with established museum groups across Pennsylvania	Identify potential partners and create a partner profile document	Executive Director & Committee	4/1/2023
	Prioritize contact with several potential programming partners	Committee	9/15/2023
	Get a signed MOU before proceeding with program partnerships	Executive Director	12/31/2023