

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*Approved and Adopted, July 2005, AAM Board of Directors  
Amended November, 2005*

### I. VISION

For Museums: America's museums will strengthen and enrich communities and cultivate lifelong learning.

For the Field: The museum field will be an inclusive and dynamic community of individuals, institutions, and associations.

For AAM: The American Association of Museums will be the relevant and trusted leader, partner, and advocate for this nation's museums.

### II. MISSION

AAM's mission is to enhance the value of museums to their communities through leadership, advocacy, and service.

### III. CORE BELIEFS

- ◆ ***Museums strengthen communities.*** They educate and inspire, nourish minds and spirits, and enrich lives.
- ◆ ***The museum experience is characterized by the encounter with the real object and/or the primary experience, in a positive place, supported by scholarship and knowledge.***
- ◆ ***AAM's leadership and service are vital assets for museums.*** AAM enhances the capacity of museums to achieve the highest professional standards and deliver the greatest value to their communities.
- ◆ ***Collaboration is important to advancing the museum field.*** AAM is strengthened through its relationships with people, museums, communities, and other organizations both here and abroad.

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### IV. VALUES

- ◆ **Integrity.** We are committed to honest and ethical behavior in all that we do. We are accountable and responsible for our decisions and actions.
- ◆ **Openness.** We are committed to transparency in our operation and communicate truthfully about our efforts and activities.
- ◆ **Courage.** We strive to do the right thing by being proactive, valuing criticism, accepting tension, and taking risks.
- ◆ **Inclusiveness.** We embrace diversity of participation, thought, and action.
- ◆ **Creativity.** We envision what might be, encourage innovation, tolerate ambiguity, and understand that the risk of failure is inherent in the creative process.
- ◆ **Excellence.** We value the highest quality in everything we do and how we do it.

### V. ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** Articulate and effectively communicate the value of museums to enhance support for the museum community.

**Objectives:**

- Influence public policy makers to support museums.
- Support advocacy activities through data collection and research and the dissemination of valid and reliable information.
- Educate the media, funders, and the public about the diversity of roles and benefits of museums.
- Collaborate with and support regional and state associations to strengthen advocacy on the state and local level and to educate the public.

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**Goal:** Provide, nurture, and sustain leadership at every level to strengthen the museum field.

**Objectives:**

- Serve as a venue and catalyst for the exploration of new ideas.
- Identify, analyze, and provide a process for addressing field-wide issues (see Appendix A).
- Be a trusted voice for the museum field.
- Encourage museums to take a central role in their communities.
- Identify and disseminate competencies necessary for leadership in museums.
- Provide, facilitate, and encourage opportunities for individual leadership development.

**Goal:** Provide the intellectual resources and services to support excellence in museums and to advance the field.

**Objectives:**

- Identify, analyze, and disseminate best practices.
- Support museums' management and operational needs through data collection.
- Define and advance professional standards.

**Goal:** Encourage, pursue, and support collaborations at home and abroad to advance the museum field.

**Objectives:**

- Be a unifying force and alliance builder within the museum field acting in a variety of roles such as leader, convener, facilitator, and partner.
- Work to create an environment that invites field-wide collaboration.
- Respond to the invitation of others to address common issues.

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Appendix A

### **AAM Strategic Issues**

#### ***Leadership***

Museums are called upon as never before to enhance the quality of life in American communities. The museum field must now invest in and fully support the leadership development of current and future museum staff.

#### ***Sound and Current Information***

The efficient and effective management of a museum requires reliable and current data and information about the museum field that can be analyzed and used for effective planning and decision-making.

#### ***Advanced Communication Strategies***

The public expects museums to deliver accurate, complete, and relevant information. In a rapidly evolving telecommunications environment, museums must communicate more quickly and effectively than ever before.

#### ***Systematic and Coordinated Advocacy***

Museums must be effective advocates on issues that affect their ability to serve the public. Museums and their service organizations must work together to advance their advocacy efforts and influence the decisions of public policy makers

#### ***Diversity***

Museums across the country must actively address the growing diversity of national and local populations, recognizing new audiences and community goodwill as indispensable, as well as knowledge from diverse experiences as enriching each institution's intellectual capacity. Museums must strive to increase the number of culturally and ethnically diverse museum professionals in the institution and join with their communities in celebrating the value of diversity.

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### ***Small Museums***

The majority of museums in the United States are small institutions, many of them enjoying close ties with their communities. More needs to be done to understand and meet the special needs of this vital segment of the museum field.

### ***Professional Standards***

Museums need to debate, agree upon and adhere to standards and best practices that are appropriate for the entire museum community. Identifying and advancing such standards and best practices will be critical to helping museums fulfill their responsibilities as public institutions.

### ***International Focus***

Virtually all communities served by American museums have deep international roots and current international connections. In our increasingly fragmented world, museums have an obligation to engage their great resources in working with communities to foster an examination of America's worldwide cultural and natural connections and to promote increased understanding, tolerance, and sophistication.

### ***Building AAM's Capacity***

As the museum field's capacity to serve the public expands, so too must AAM's capacity to serve the field. Increasing AAM's resources—its staff, its volunteers, and its financial resources— will be essential if the association is to address the growing number of strategic issues facing the museum community.

### ***Accountability***

There is an increasing expectation on the part of policy makers and the public that museums be transparent about how they operate and how they serve as stewards of public resources. Museums need to increase accessibility to information regarding their policies and procedures, and proactively demonstrate how they fulfill their public purpose.