



NEW ORLEANS
AFRICAN AMERICAN
MUSEUM

2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN



Photography: NOAAM Instagram



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GREETINGS!

In 2018, We began discussions with board members about reopening the New Orleans African American Museum (NOAAM) in historic Tremé. The museum had a 25-year history but had been closed for seven years. The process of reinvigorating this worthy institution required the work, faith, and belief of many stakeholders. The museum reopened on April 11, 2019.

Nine months later, the pandemic hit. Like the rest of the world, NOAAM was unprepared to offer digital and online programming. Instead, the museum focused on building strong business practices and systems. The board was re-organized, and the back-end business structures were professionalized. These efforts led to investments from the Greater New Orleans Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the Helis Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation. These organizations dared to dream of a fully realized two-acre campus for NOAAM.

NOAAM also worked to retire debt, complete audits, and conduct internal forensics. These efforts ensured that NOAAM would be a long-standing community resource that could be nimble and responsive to community needs. At the end of 2020, NOAAM was able to launch a part of its BUILD A NATION series called Saturdays@NOAAM.

Saturdays@NOAAM provided a platform for small Black-owned businesses, artists, and musicians to showcase their talents and connect with the community. We are proud of the work we are doing to decolonize museum policies and practices and establish a new way of operating, a culture of care, which anchors 'The NOAAM Difference.' Each quarter, we set goals that are specifically designed to create what we want as a community.

NOAAM's future is bright because of the support of our public officials from the State of Louisiana, Congressman Troy Carter, the New Orleans City Council, and Mayor Latoya Cantrell. Most importantly, NOAAM's future is bright because of the support of our community. Their belief in our continued success is what propels the museum forward.

As NOAAM moves forward with our new strategic plan, we will create an international epicenter that connects the lives and contributions of Black New Orleans to the diaspora and beyond.

Onward and upward.

In service,
Gia M. Hamilton
Executive Director and Chief Curator

Edgar 'Dook' Chase IV
Board Chair, New Orleans African American Museum



INTRODUCTION

The New Orleans African American Museum (NOAAM) is a space of history, contemporary art and culture, gardens, and architecture –all set in a thriving and famous community in one of America’s most renowned cities. NOAAM’s campus encompasses seven historical structures in the Tremé neighborhood, the oldest-surviving black community in the United States. NOAAM resonates deeply with the local community as well as attracting tourists from all over. It is the best of all worlds.

Created in 1991 with the purchase of the Villa Maillieur by the City of New Orleans, the historic landmark was restored under the administration of Mayor Marc H. Morial, the Mayor’s Division of Housing & Neighborhood Development, New Orleans Affordable Home Ownership, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Following years of instability, NOAAM has emerged as a financial success with national and local philanthropic success. In 2022, the museum’s leadership launched a Strategic Planning process facilitated by Lord Cultural Resources to harness that success to spur growth, visibility, as well as contributed and earned income. The purpose of this Strategic Planning process is to identify short-term and long-term goals for the success of NOAAM.

This Strategic Plan is the result of over a year of research, engagement, consultation and decision-making. Through the goals of this plan—activation of its entire campus, increased visibility and interaction—with its community and capacity-building among its staff, NOAAM will do more than survive, NOAAM will thrive.



NOAAM'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 & 2 culminated in a Strategic Planning Workshop that highlighted Board, staff, community and Stakeholder inputs from the Critical Issues and Strategic Opportunities Report. At this Strategic Planning Workshop, held on April 9, 2022, the Board began to prioritize opportunities and identify goals for the future. Following the Strategic Planning Workshop, the process returned to the staff to begin actualizing the goals set forth in the previous phases of the process.

PHASE

1

Nov 2021-March 2022

- Environmental Scan
- Internal Assessment (Staff/Board interviews, workshops, survey)
- External Assessment (Key opinion leader interviews, community workshops, public survey)



PHASE

2

April-May 2022

- Key Findings
- Critical Issues & Strategic Opportunities
- Strategic Planning Workshop



PHASE

3

May 2022-February 2023

- Strategic Workshop Report
- Implementation: Action Planning
- Draft Strategic Plan
- Final Strategic Plan



Photography: NOAAM Instagram



STRATEGIC PLANNING ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2022, the team facilitated internal engagement with both the NOAAM board and the current staff at the start of the process. These engagements included surveys, workshops, and individual interviews. These conversations were integral to identifying current operational capacity at NOAAM and setting the stage for external conversations about future opportunities with NOAAM's community.

Because NOAAM is an anchor institution in historic Tremé. It was imperative that the external component of this process prioritize voices from various sectors from all over the community. This included conversations with local culture bearers, artists, elected officials and neighbors. Lord facilitated one-on-one interviews and created a cultural participation survey, to extend the reach of this engagement beyond the Tremé community and into the larger New Orleans-wide cultural ecosystem.



Mission and Vision

Photography Fridays with Taylor Hunter



MISSION AND VISION

Mission and vision statements are foundational for an organization. These statements bring Board, staff and stakeholders into alignment, creating the basis for evaluation of program performance and community service.

Each statement has a different function. The mission statement articulates the organization's reason for existing, its *raison d'être*. The vision articulates the organization's aspiration for the impact that it will have on the world—tomorrow, in twenty years or a hundred.

During the Strategic Visioning Workshop, NOAAM Board determined a need to modify its mission and vision statements. The following are the result of revision periods after the Workshop, using insights from those in attendance.





MISSION

The New Orleans African American Museum (NOAAM) is the meeting point of Art, Culture, and History in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans. NOAAM works to preserve the historic neighborhood through the presentation and interpretation of the African Diaspora and African American cultural heritage with inclusive narratives and community storytelling.



VISION

NOAAM serves our community in Tremé, our city, and visitors from around the world with immersive exhibitions and public programs that weave together historical analyses and contemporary art reflections about how the peoples of the African Diaspora contributed to and continue to shape the culture of New Orleans and America. We reach beyond our campus by collaborating with under-resourced entities in a rapidly gentrifying area and create programs that empower residents to contribute their voices to highlight our past and enable visitors to engage respectfully with our unique community through place-keeping initiatives.

Strategic Goals





STRATEGIC GOALS

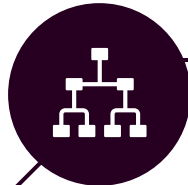
CASH

Address current financial obligations and sustainably plan for the future of NOAAM.



CAPACITY

Develop a strong organizational structure that supports all current and future operational opportunities.



CAMPUS

Activate the campus to serve the mission of NOAAM and create an evolving space for community engagement.



COMMUNICATION

Expand and amplify awareness of NOAAM through the implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy.



COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

Foster community attitude of ownership toward NOAAM through collaboration.





CASH

For too long, NOAAM has been saddled by the debt of the Tremé Guardians. In the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan cycle, NOAAM will retire the debt owed this this entity. NOAAM will align funding from city, state, and federal sources with increased financial support from foundations and local philanthropy, to complete the campus and increase general operating support.

With NOAAM's strengthened board, support for cultural infrastructure, and a historic shift recognizing the urgency of preserving and celebrating African American history and culture, NOAAM is perfectly positioned to successfully execute on this goal.

Objectives

- A. **Professionalize and consolidate** all the current debt
- B. **Reevaluate** funding relationships
- C. **Identify** a sustainable business plan model
- D. **Launch** Curatorial Studio
- E. **Create** fair pay framework for artists to document and produce work
- F. **Create model** for incubation space and residency opportunities for NOAAM
- G. **Develop** achievable goals for individual donations, corporate sponsorships, institutional funding and board giving



CAPACITY

NOAAM has the right leader in Gia Hamilton, and the current staff is skilled while still needing development. Additionally, NOAAM is under-staffed. An experienced deputy to oversee heritage and cultural relationships while also managing community outreach for the organization is needed.

NOAAM will strengthen its ability to deliver on the goals of this Strategic Plan by increasing its full-time staff, further professional development, and stronger operations support. By spreading operational responsibilities across skilled full-time staff, NOAAM will be able to operate at the capacity needed to meet the needs of the community as well as the robust tourism market in New Orleans.

Objectives

- A. **Increase** Full-Time Staff
- B. **Activate** Part-Time Staff with clear responsibilities and management structure
- C. **Build** out an Artist Teachers Program



CAMPUS

NOAAM's historic campus is its key asset. NOAAM needs a comprehensive activation plan to incorporate art, history, and culture throughout the campus.

Activating the empty lot next to the administration building following the first renovation priority is an important one and would include the historic buildings. Parking remains a challenge not only for NOAAM but the entire Tremé community.

Zoning must also be considered as a part of the municipal issues to be addressed as a part of master planning. After speaking with external stakeholders, staff, and Board it was evident that resilience planning is essential given ongoing climate challenges in New Orleans.

Objectives

- A. **Create** Campus Activation Plan incl maintenance, programming and renovation
- B. **Develop** a fundraising campaign for the renovation of the historic campus and activating the empty lot
- C. **Cultivate** on-going city/state/federal support opportunities for campus preservation and activation
- D. **Optimize** storage and collections



COMMUNICATIONS

NOAAM will nurture awareness of its wonderful work to be better known beyond its core supporters. It does not receive as much press and media attention as it deserves.

By creating a communication strategy that recognizes the concentric circles of audiences and partners is imperative to strengthen connections for NOAAM. This communication strategy can also help to establish on-going relationships with political champions to cultivate sustainable support.

Objectives

- A. **Create** communications strategy for NOAAM
- B. **Increase** marketing capacity
- C. **Create** audience and partner framework
- D. **Build** out an elevated brand strategy and update website



COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

NOAAM is ideally positioned to collaborate within Tremé, New Orleans, and nationally - to bring Tremé to the world and the world to Tremé. NOAAM is beloved by the Tremé community; it needs to find ways to serve the needs of the entire community.

NOAAM will enlist grass roots activists, culture bearers, historic church communities, entrepreneurs, and power brokers who hail from and/or love Tremé, evolving that passion into political and economic support. Collaboration throughout NOAAM's communities will also address a perceived threat - competition from other African American cultural institutions in New Orleans - by creating alliances with other institutions.

Partnerships and collaborations can extend beyond New Orleans to connect NOAAM to the broader landscape of cultural institutions of the African diaspora.

Objectives

- A. **Create** audience matrix to identify outreach necessary
- B. **Deploy** Board Members as ambassadors for NOAAM
- C. **Sequence and prioritize** possible partnerships and/or collaborations
- D. **Maintain** existing relationships (i.e., Alliance for Cultural Equity) while building new partnerships
- E. **Develop** community feedback processes for organizational policies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Photography by Juliana Kasumu @julianakasumu



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOAAM BOARD

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