

# VOICES

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## INSPIRING

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## PROGRESS



AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF IOWA



## THE STATEWIDE VOICE

Since 1993, the African American Museum of Iowa (AAMI) has served as the statewide voice for black history and culture. No other institution in the state understands the scope of Iowa's African American history and has the resources to make this information available to our youth, families, and communities like the AAMI. The continuing need to share this valuable history is why the AAMI was founded and why it continues to play a vital role for all Iowans now and in the future. The Museum provides everyone the opportunity to explore the richness of the state's full history, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of Iowa's African American history and culture through conversation, engagement, and reflection.

As a voice for the voiceless, the African American Museum of Iowa has been inspiring progress for nearly 30 years. Our methodically researched and constructed exhibits have brought in visitors time

and again to learn about a wide variety of topics. Our educational programming has regularly gone into the community, reaching people of all age groups in towns across the state. Despite the financial setbacks faced by many organizations due to the pandemic, the AAMI has shown its adaptability and resiliency through multiple virtual fundraisers.

Now we have an opportunity to amplify this voice. As the City of Cedar Rapids updates its flood control system, the AAMI will need to make changes to our current building structure. This project provides an opportunity to make other, necessary changes to both the interior and the exterior of the Museum. These changes represent an opportunity to solidify the AAMI's place in the future of our state. We need your support. We invite you to join us as we raise \$5M for these necessary projects. Join us in becoming a voice inspiring progress.

# THE PROJECT

The City of Cedar Rapids is implementing new components of its flood control system. This work, which is taking place in the area near the African American Museum of Iowa through 2023, is both imminent and necessary for the Museum's protection. However, it will directly impact the AAMI building and operations. In order to address the immediate and long-term impact of the flood control system, the Museum will work with the City of Cedar Rapids to relocate its front entrance and renovate its lobby. The Museum's physical sustainability and operations infrastructure relies on proactive measures that will be addressed by tackling additional concerns raised by the flood control system.

These changes will not only ensure the Museum is accessible after the flood wall is installed but also create a modern and welcoming look to carry the AAMI into the future. Because of the direct impact to the Museum building and its operations, the City of Cedar Rapids has committed \$1.07M toward the overall project. The AAMI will raise an additional \$4M (with a stretch goal of another \$1M) to strengthen the Museum's endowment and complete this exciting and necessary project.

## PROJECT SCOPE

- Relocating the entrance to increase accessibility in light of the flood wall
- A building façade that will provide a modern and inviting aesthetic and compliment the neighboring structures
- The reinstallation of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. inspired "Trumpet" sculpture and gardenscape, formerly on the trail and river side of the building
- A new interior fire suppression system
- Updated HVAC system
- A reinforced roof
- Kitchen and restroom upgrades





# 1993

FOUNDED AT MT.  
ZION MISSIONARY  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# 1994

OFFICIALLY  
INCORPORATED AS  
501 C (3)

# 1998

HIRES FIRST  
EMPLOYEE

# 2000

MOVES TO  
WESTDALE MALL  
STOREFRONT

# 2003

AFTER RAISING  
\$3.1M, MOVES TO  
NEW BUILDING

# 2008

CATASTROPHIC  
FLOOD FILLS  
MUSEUM WITH 5.5'  
OF WATER



## CELEBRATED PAST

For nearly 30 years, the African American Museum of Iowa has served as the state museum for black history. Equipped with a passion for uncovering and sharing the untold stories of Iowa's African American history, members of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids set out on a mission in 1993. From a humble dream to a store front in Westdale Mall and a successful campaign to a brand new building in 2003, the Museum continues to exceed expectations. No stranger to hardship, the Museum took on 5.5 feet of water during the 2008 flood, sustaining significant damage to the building, exhibits, and collection. Through fundraising efforts and community support, the AAMI was able to reopen in 2009. Over the years, annual changing exhibits have examined African American contributions to music, the military, literature, and invention and also explored the impact of migration, beauty culture, and modern protest on past and present societal norms. The Museum's historical and cultural assets serve not only as tools for sharing this important story but also for inspiring a love of this state, inviting Iowans to be proud of their home, and inspiring visitors to make Iowa their home away from home.





## VIBRANT FUTURE

The African American Museum of Iowa has always taken pride in being a statewide museum, sharing history from across the state to communities from all segments of Iowa. While the Museum building must temporarily close for this project, the AAMI will use this opportunity to further strengthen our statewide reach. The AAMI will intentionally place traveling exhibits, including our 2022 temporary exhibit, *Suspended: Systematic Oppression in Our Schools*. These traveling exhibits will create an increased presence in locations around Iowa in order to raise awareness and visibility, secure support from various communities, and most importantly, share this important and often untold history with people throughout Iowa. When the work concludes, this milestone transformation will launch a new era for the Museum. Creating a more welcoming and accessible space as well as installing both on and off-site exhibits, providing alternative outreach programs, and utilizing additional digital opportunities for wider audience engagement will continue to be crucial to the organization's longevity and relevance to all Iowans.



2009  
REOPENS POST  
FLOOD

2016  
UPDATES  
PERMANENT  
EXHIBIT &  
TRANSITIONS  
LEADERSHIP

2018  
MARKS 25 YEARS  
WITH COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMMING

2020  
PROTEST ART  
FEATURED IN  
"UNWAVERING:  
21ST CENTURY  
ACTIVISM"

2022  
WORK BEGINS ON  
THE FLOOD WALL

2023  
CELEBRATES  
REOPENING AND  
30TH ANNIVERSARY



# CAMPAIGN GOALS

The Museum's \$5 million capital campaign is a multi-faceted plan that will:

- Fund the physical changes to the Museum's structure and facade
- Inspire an additional stretch goal to increase the Museum's endowment by \$1M
- Strengthen and build new donor relationships
- Increase employee salaries and benefits so the Museum is able to continue attracting and retaining a diverse and exemplary workforce
- Develop and maintain new partnerships



*"The African American Museum of Iowa not only educates about the real historical challenges and advances of Black Iowans, it provides a vision and institutional support for racial justice and democracy in the future."*

**Senator Rob Hogg,**  
Cedar Rapids



## READINESS

Because of the direct impact to the Museum building and its operations, the City of Cedar Rapids has committed \$1.07M toward the overall project. Support for this project is not limited to the City. The AAMI has a stellar campaign committee, led by Campaign Chair, Zach Bohannon. Committee members include people from a variety of communities across the state, with differing backgrounds and expertise. The AAMI is working with local firms to bring the design and construction of this project to life. To determine readiness, the AAMI conducted a digital assessment of members, donors, corporate sponsors, and patrons. The assessment shows 98% of respondents agreed that the Museum provides vital resources and should be supported financially.



## READINESS ASSESSMENT

Respondents are from communities across the state.

- 93% of respondents feel the Museum's case for support is convincing, with or without questions
- 97% of respondents believe that people will feel positive about the project
- More than half of the respondents financially support arts and culture, social justice, and educationally focused organizations
- 82% of respondents said they would consider a gift of support to this campaign at this time (Feb. 2022)
- 85% of respondents would consider an annual gift in addition to their campaign support
- 91% of respondents said the Museum is a good steward of its financial, collections, archives, and library resources

# CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

*"Now is the time to make our statewide vision tangible."*

LaNisha Cassell, Executive Director

## CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE

**Dr. Simon Estes**  
HONORARY CHAIR

**Zach Bohannon**  
CAMPAIGN CHAIR

**Anne Harris Carter**

**Matthew Gilbert**

**Nancy Humbles**

**Dr. Wilfred Johnson**

**Todd Kerska**

**Brianna Kim**

**Jemar Lee**

**Thomas Moore**

**Kristin Parrott**

**Leslie Wright**

## BUILDING COMMITTEE

**Stefanie Bowers**  
CHAIR

**Sarah Coleman**

**Matthew Gilbert**

**Scott E. Olson**

**Felicite Wolfe**

# 2022 AAMI BOARD

**Nancy Humbles**  
PRESIDENT  
Retired, University of Iowa

**Jamarco Clark**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
University of Iowa

**Maurice E. Davis**  
TREASURER  
Marketing Growth Strategy

**Kristin Parrott**  
SECRETARY  
Bankers Trust

**Stefanie Bowers**  
City of Iowa City

**Anthony Betters, Jr.**  
The Gardens of Cedar Rapids

**Katrina Davenport**  
Ruffalo Noel Levitz

**Marlon Ewing**  
JP Morgan Chase Bank

**Peg Fraser**  
Country Financial

**Dr. Anthony Ferguson**  
West Des Moines  
Community School District

**LaToya Harrington**  
Collins Aerospace

**Benjamin Hoover**  
Holmes Murphy

**Dr. Wilfred Johnson**  
Retired, University of Northern Iowa

**LaShonda Kennedy**  
College of San Mateo

**Dr. Scot Reisinger**  
University of Iowa

**Abena Sankofa Imhotep**  
Sankofa Literary & Empowerment Group

**Tonya B. Scott**  
Insight Partnership Group

**Reginald Ward**  
Nordstrom Midwest Fulfillment Center

**Leslie Wright**  
Collective Clarity



# VOICES INSPIRING PROGRESS

## MISSION

To preserve, exhibit, and teach the African American heritage of Iowa.

## VISION

We envision building a community that comes together to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of Iowa's African American history and culture through conversation, engagement, and reflection.

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*When I was growing up in Cedar Rapids, I got used to being the only Black (or one of a few) in the room - at school, in orchestra, at church, and most places. But I still remember the sinking feeling in my stomach when we studied slavery or Civil Rights in elementary school and the entire class would turn to look at me. I am grateful that we have a resource to make Black history part of the conversation for all ages - to acknowledge the past and help make a better future."*

Anne Harris Carter

Daughter of the late Dr. Percy and Mrs. Lileah Harris

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