

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Illinois State Museum Selects Heather Miller as New Director of Tribal Relations**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Illinois State Museum (ISM) has hired Heather Miller as its director of tribal relations, a new leadership position at the ISM, an Illinois Department of Natural Resources division.

As the director of tribal relations, Miller is responsible for building tribal relationships between the ISM and the State of Illinois. Additionally, she will ensure the state abides by the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and other relevant national regulations and state statutes.

“This position is important to me because we all call Indian land home, and I believe it is imperative to make it better for the next seven generations,” Miller said. “I come from a long line of leaders, negotiators, and ancestors who have loved and cared for this land. This position offers me the ability to continue in their footsteps. I fully intend to usher in a new direction with tribal relations in Illinois that is respectful of Native views and cares for this land.”

ISM Director Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko stated, “We are thrilled to have Heather join the ISM team. I know that her perspectives and experiences will open new opportunities for the Museum. Heather’s leadership will not only build new tribal relationships but also address past harms where the Museum has not included Native voices and made space for Native people to tell their own stories.

Under Catlin-Legutko’s guidance, the ISM has committed to serving the public as an inclusive museum, incorporating tribal perspectives and experiences in policies and practices, exhibits, programs, and more.

“Our future at the ISM is collaborative, and the director of tribal relations position will determine how we navigate this promise,” Catlin-Legutko said.

Miller is an enrolled citizen of the Wyandotte Nation and is involved with her Tribal Cultural Center on their language revitalization. She graduated from Miami University with a Bachelor of Philosophy. She received her Master of Native American Studies degree from Montana State University.

Most recently, Miller led Chicago's American Indian Center as their executive director. She has also provided cultural, organizational, and strategic planning consulting to nonprofit startups and tribal entities in Illinois and nationally.

Miller began her career working for Hopa Mountain in Montana, where she coordinated a program for Native nonprofit organizations to develop their capacities. She has also worked in Washington with the Potlatch Fund and in Colorado with the First Nations Development Institute; these are Native American foundations that worked to strengthen the Native nonprofit sector.

Additionally, she has further developed her skills as a graduate of the Leadership, Apprentice, Economic, and Development program through the First Nations Development Fund and a graduate of the Cascade Executive Program through the University of Washington.

Miller's most recent recognitions include the 2019 Leaders for a New Chicago Awardee, 2020 Association of Midwest Museums Promising Leader Award, and 2020 Crain's Business 40 under 40.

#### **About the Illinois State Museum**

Established in 1877, the Illinois State Museum is a dynamic institution that inspires the exploration of Illinois' past and present to inform and enrich everyday life and promote stewardship of cultural and natural resources. Headquartered in Springfield with branch facilities in Lewistown and Lockport, ISM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and a proud member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Learn more at [illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org).

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