

SPRINGFIELD • LEWISTOWN • LOCKPORT

# STRATEGIC PLAN

**ILLINOIS**  
**STATE • MUSEUM**  
*explore. discover. learn. share.*

# Planning for a Dynamic Future

Illinois is a diverse state, both in its geography and its people, stretching 400 miles from north to south and 200 miles east to west. To be effective, the Illinois State Museum must reach into all corners of Illinois, seeking stories, starting conversations, and providing opportunities for learning and growth. Only by adapting to current needs and by listening to the voices of patrons, visitors, and friends can the Museum continue to serve Illinoisans and everyone else curious about Illinois' history.

No other institution is so uniquely qualified to share the Story of Illinois.

The ISM board approved the current strategic plan in December 2018 which focuses on a stable ISM future, museum best practices and an accreditation review, and anticipation of the hiring of a new director. To respond to the COVID-19 health emergency, the ISM's plans required recalibration. The board approved a revision in December 2020, scaling the plan's timeline down from five-years to 18 months.

## MISSION

The Illinois State Museum inspires exploration of Illinois' past and present to inform and enrich everyday life and to promote stewardship of cultural and natural resources for the future.

## VISION

The Illinois State Museum will connect the world to the Story of Illinois and encourage and inspire all to explore, discover, learn and share their experience.

As a principal steward of objects that embody the story of Illinois' natural and human history, the Museum will seek to be a unique marketplace of information and educational experiences for current and future generations. Visitors and researchers alike will have the opportunity to see authentic objects and engaging exhibits at all Museum facilities as well as online through a rich, new generation of digital assets and experiences including images, interactives, and educational content.

## VALUES

The Illinois State Museum, Museum Board of Directors, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Museum Society Board of Directors all share fundamental values:

- **Accountability:** The Museum will fulfill the responsibilities to collect and preserve, to educate the public, and to investigate and study as expressed in Illinois state statutes and applicable federal and international laws.
- **Trustworthiness:** The Museum will operate transparently and ethically according to best practices and will be exceptional stewards of resources held in the public trust.
- **Curiosity:** The Museum believes in the value of research and encourages exploration and discovery, the acquisition of knowledge, and using that knowledge to resolve issues and improve quality of life.
- **Responsibility:** The Museum embraces the mandate to educate by sharing knowledge with all people to promote informed and open discourse.
- **Inclusivity:** The Museum represents all Illinoisans and reflects Illinois' diversity in everything it does.
- **Collaboration:** The Museum encourages partnerships to foster achievement by sharing resources and responsibilities.
- **Excellence:** The Museum strives to be outstanding in all it does by routinely evaluating all aspects of its performance.

## OPERATIONAL COMMITMENT

- Create work that is visible to the people of Illinois.
- Staff members will work in a team environment across geographic locations and disciplines.

The Museum has a statutory obligation to maintain a State Museum, to investigate and study, to collect and preserve, and to educate the public (20 ILCS 801/1-25).

## GOALS

To respond to the current COVID-19 health emergency and to create a feasible strategy, the ISM board tasked the Museum Director to revise the strategic plan in August 2020. The following goals are re-fashioned from the 2018 five-year plan for clarity, feasibility, and for a shortened, 18-month timeline (11/1/2020 through 4/30/2022). Goals that require a more extended timeframe were omitted.

This revised plan assumes that the pandemic and its impacts will continue for at least the next 18 months and that staffing levels and government budgets will be stable. Should those assumptions change, the director will be sure to inform the board and make appropriate adjustments. In turn, the board will need to re-calibrate its expectations.

Additionally, as part of a broader government system, some numerous processes and situations are often out of staff and board control. In this revision, the focus is on strategic priorities and tasks that the ISM team can impact. When there are situations where the team cannot control processes (procurement, hiring, etc.), great care will be taken to do the work so that when processes catch up to the ISM, the team is ready to respond.

Ideally, during the first board meeting of each year, the Museum Director will provide a strategic plan update. In January/February of 2022, the strategic planning team will convene with the leadership team (Museum Director, Director of Collections and Research, Director of Interpretation, and Director of Advancement) to determine the outlook for the next months/years and what shape the strategic plan will need to take.

As able, we will provide progress reports for these goals in the coming months and offer related content via our blog.

### **1. Build organizational capacity and create an inclusive museum.**

1A. As part of the ISM's revitalization goal to build organizational capacity, the board and staff will develop a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) practice and participate in the creation of an inclusion statement.

1B. The ISM board and staff will ensure that organizational policies and procedures reflect current activity of the ISM.

## **2. Promote the ISM and nurture a culture of advocacy.**

2A. Develop a communication plan that supports operational efficiencies and advocacy efforts, and raises awareness of the ISM.

## **3. Ensure that the ISM is sustainable.**

3A. Develop a cultural norm of project planning at the ISM so that projects are well funded and timed for maximum success

3B. Engage the ISM in Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-wide activities and engage with agency leaders.

## **4. Strengthen collections care and management.**

4A. Empower the collections team to secure and make operational an integrated collections management software system.

4B. Maintain Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) compliance protocols and begin consultation.

## **5. Activate knowledge of Illinois art, history, and science.**

5A. Develop a new standard of community engagement with particular attention to projects that focus on underrepresented and historically-excluded human experiences and perspectives.

## **6. Improve audience engagement opportunities and value community engagement.**

6A. Create a new standard for program development and delivery and exhibit planning and production that is focused on visitor learning and amenities.

6B. Support collaborative projects that create mutually-beneficial outcomes that further the ISM mission and its partners' missions.