

STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2026

LOOKING BACK

MOVING FORWARD



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service
Smithsonian Affiliations



Cover: Through dynamic exhibitions, thought-provoking programs, and impactful educational activities, SITES | SA engages diverse communities across the U.S. and beyond with Smithsonian content, resources, and expertise. [photo: James Kegley]

Right: *Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission*, organized by the National Air and Space Museum and SITES, traveled exclusively to Affiliate museums across the country. Here, a visitor views the exhibition at the Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh. [photo: James Kegley]



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WELCOME

The new Strategic Plan for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Smithsonian Affiliations (SITES | SA) will guide our work in the coming years.

When we embarked on the planning process, the world was a different place. A global pandemic, an overdue focus on racial equality and justice, assaults on our democratic institutions, and the growing threat of climate change compelled us to reflect on how we can be even more intentional in doing work that leads to “a more perfect union.”

The Smithsonian has a unique role in the country’s cultural life. SITES | SA in turn has a responsibility to share the Smithsonian’s knowledge, resources, and expertise with museums and cultural and educational organizations—who in turn reach their audiences and communities.

This plan realizes the potential of aligning SITES’ and Affiliations’ exhibitions and programs to reach broader audiences than we could reach individually. Through this plan, we commit to more flexible, more affordable, and equally impactful ways to deliver content and to support collaborators in reaching broader and more diverse audiences. We commit to investigating and experimenting with more intentional ways for engaging organizations as they serve their communities, while focusing on their potential to be agents and allies in effecting change that builds stronger and more equitable communities.

You, reading this, are a stakeholder in this venture. Our job, working together, is to inspire a deeper understanding of our world and how it can be changed for the better.

We invite and welcome your feedback, now and always. We look forward to doing the work together.



Brenda J. Gaines
Board Chair



Myriam Springuel
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda J. Gaines".

Brenda J. Gaines
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Myriam Springuel".

Myriam Springuel
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Smithsonian Affiliations (SITES | Affiliations) **makes connections**, creating **mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships** among and between the Smithsonian and museums and other organizations across the country and beyond. We **expand the reach and impact** of the Smithsonian and our network of collaborators, widely sharing **knowledge, resources, and expertise**. And we facilitate strong connections and relationships across the network as our staff, our partners, and our collaborators all learn from each other.

Below: *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.* is an immersive experience—exhibition as installation art. Shown here at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center, a Smithsonian Affiliate in Cincinnati, OH, the exhibition heralds the achievements of notable African American men from across the decades. [photo: SITES]



We are facing what Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III describes as a “dual pandemic” of the coronavirus and racism. SITES | Affiliations recognizes the enormous financial and community disruptions our colleagues across the country are experiencing. Confronted by this new reality, museums are reinventing both what they offer to the public and how they work. These innovations are vital to their future and, in some cases, survival. SITES | Affiliations will find more flexible, more affordable, and equally impactful ways to deliver content and support the important work of museums and cultural and educational organizations to reach a broader and more diverse audience. We will investigate and experiment with new mechanisms for engaging organizations, reaching audiences, and serving communities. At the same time, there is heightened focus on museums’ potential to be agents and allies in effecting change that builds stronger, more equitable communities. This strategic plan expands on SITES | Affiliations’ longstanding commitment to providing the museum and cultural field with exhibitions and projects that explore the complexity of the American experience. The plan also reinforces SITES | Affiliations’ commitment to sharpen its focus on Smithsonian priorities.

OUR WORK

The **programs, exhibitions, and services** of Smithsonian Affiliations and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, including its Museum on Main Street program

- Underscore the importance of **local stories in understanding national stories**
- Contribute **local perspectives on national and global issues**
- Inspire **lifelong learning**
- Connect and strengthen the **nation's rich and diverse museums and cultural organizations**
- Promote **innovative and best practices** for museum professionals

The **reputation and excellence of the Smithsonian** attracts audiences, builds internal capacity, and expands stakeholder support at collaborating museums and cultural and educational organizations.

Collaborating with a robust network of organizations, our work has a **cumulative and sustained impact on audiences and communities**, enabling people to see the relevance of the Smithsonian in their daily lives.

- We increase our collective capacity **to foster conversations on questions that matter to communities.**
- We inspire audiences of all ages to **broaden their perspective, deepen their understanding of critical issues, and become more informed and curious learners.**



We advance dialogue on important, timely issues that are **priorities for the Smithsonian**, including

- **the quest for social justice and equity**
- **the nature of the multifaceted American experience**
- **the importance of responsible stewardship of the planet.**

We think of a **“community”** as the people who live together in a city, town, or neighborhood. But we also define communities as those who share commonalities of background, interest, or life experience. We recognize that these communities of identity or thought can be more significant to organizations and audiences than geographical boundaries. We also realize that there are significant differences of perspective across communities and support organizations bridging these divisions and promoting dialogue among diverse audiences.

We are **market driven**. We listen to our collaborators to understand their priorities and the needs and interests of their communities and audiences.

Above: Our work inspires curiosity, exploration, discovery, and lifelong learning. [photo: SITES]

Left: *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, shown here at the National Civil Rights Museum, an Affiliate in Memphis, offers a look at the reality of travel for African Americans in mid-20th century America. The exhibition also served as the basis for a virtual program offered exclusively to Affiliates and their communities. [photo: SITES]

Right: SITES | SA projects allow visitors to explore both the extraordinary and the ordinary. Here, a visitor learns about the history of work in Grinnell, Iowa. [photo: Grinnell College]



OUR VISION

SITES | Affiliations strengthens connections between the Smithsonian and museums and cultural organizations—and their communities and audiences everywhere—inspiring a deeper understanding of our world and how it can be changed for the better.

OUR MISSION

SITES | Affiliations catalyzes public engagement and sparks curiosity and learning by connecting the knowledge, resources, and expertise of the Smithsonian with a vital network of cultural and educational organizations.

OUR GOALS

We have articulated six goals, detailed below, in support of our mission.

GOAL ONE: Magnify Reach

Extend and deepen the Smithsonian's impact by producing or adapting content and services, delivered across a range of platforms, responsive to the needs and priorities of our collaborators and their audiences.

GOAL TWO: Advance Inclusion

Commit to inclusivity by revisiting and expanding the narratives we share, elevating and celebrating diverse experiences, voices, and perspectives across all of our work and the work of our partners and collaborators.

GOAL THREE: Encourage Innovation

Support innovation in interpretation, development processes, delivery mechanisms, and professional and operational practices.

GOAL FOUR: Capture Impact

Develop tools and capacities that enable us to demonstrate the reach, engagement, and impact of our own work and that of our Smithsonian partners and external collaborators.

GOAL FIVE: Communicate Accomplishments

Consistently communicate with all stakeholders the significance and impact of our own work and that of our Smithsonian partners and external collaborators.

GOAL SIX: Foster Adaptive Change

Maximize our financial and human resources to adapt to the evolving needs of the museum and cultural landscape.



OUR PLAN

Reimagining our Work in the Context of the Events of 2020

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and **Smithsonian Affiliations** became a single unit (SITES | Affiliations) in 2018. In 2019, at the outset of strategic planning, the goal for the new, unified strategic plan was to realize the potential of the combined units to achieve more than they could individually. Drawing on our deep experience and successes, we identified possibilities for collaborators to work with the Smithsonian and new opportunities to develop and deliver programs. We thought about how to strengthen the collaboration of SITES (including its Museum on Main Street program) and Affiliations with better coordination and intentionality. Then the world changed in two critical ways, which put the need for reimagining our work into sharper focus.

The first was the shutdown of the nation's museums in response to the coronavirus pandemic, which upended professional practices in the field and disrupted all of our programming. As the crisis unfolded, the imperative for museums to reinvent both what they offered to the public and how they worked became urgent. Museums are facing a new landscape, including significant financial challenges. An open question remains: will the new ways of reaching audiences—on digital platforms, in other spaces—remain an essential part of museums' work? Our assessment is a resounding yes: many of the experiments and innovations introduced since March 2020 are vital to their future and, in some cases, survival.

SITES | Affiliations will continue to investigate and experiment with new mechanisms for engaging organizations, reaching audiences, and serving communities. Responding to these challenges will require finding new approaches for working across the unit, recognizing the wealth of talent and expertise in our staff and harnessing it in the process of reinvention. We need to rethink not only all the ways we currently deliver content and services, but also develop new strategies—including, but not limited to, an expanded digital presence—to reach a broader and increasingly diverse audience with our collaborators.



Left: The Smithsonian's Evan Keeling leads a comic book workshop at Affiliate, the Springfield Museums in Springfield, MA, in conjunction with *Pop! Icons of American Culture from the Smithsonian*, an exhibition of artifacts borrowed from Smithsonian collections. The workshop helped visitors extend their exploration of the exhibition's themes through the creation of their own illustrated stories. [photo: Kateri Quirk]



Left: SITES | SA works with host venues to adapt projects to meet their needs and to tell local stories in a national context. For example, our colleagues at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum adapted *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.* for an outdoor installation in Washington, D.C. [photo: SITES]

Below: Digital programs and interactive elements allow audiences to engage with our content in new ways. [photo: SITES]



The second change is best summarized by Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III's observation that the United States is confronted by a "dual pandemic" of the coronavirus and racism. There is heightened focus on museums' complicity in sustaining systemic racism but also on the potential for them to be agents and allies in effecting change. Speaking to the members of the American Alliance of Museums in June 2020, Secretary Bunch observed that it is not enough to be a good museum, as defined by our professional standards and practices. He called on museums to make communities and the nation better, putting public service first and foremost. "This is our moment to be that place that matters." He implored museums to reimagine their purpose and to marshal their considerable resources for the greater good.

Secretary Bunch's challenge to the museum field was followed by the announcement of a new Smithsonian initiative *Our Shared Future: Reckoning with our Racial Past*. "The Smithsonian's expertise, scholarship, and collections will help our nation to better understand the challenges that arise from racism, to confront our difficult history, and to unite to bring healing and hope for our future." **This strategic plan expands on SITES | Affiliations' longstanding commitment to providing the museum and cultural field with exhibitions and projects that explore the complexity of the American experience.**

These imperatives for reinvention have shaped this plan in ways we could not envision when we began our discussions of the future in late 2019. We recognize the enormous financial and community disruptions our colleagues across the country are experiencing. **It is our responsibility to find more flexible, more affordable, and equally impactful ways to deliver content and support the important work of museums and other cultural and educational organizations.** Some of our long-standing and cherished ways of working may not be as viable as they once were. We see this strategic plan as laying the groundwork for change that supports exploration of how the Smithsonian and colleague organizations can be "places that matter," and of how SITES | Affiliations can best be of service.

OUR NETWORK



Throughout this plan we refer to our **Smithsonian partners**: the staff in the museums and zoo, research centers, cultural centers, and educational programs.

Our **external collaborators** and colleagues are all the places and people we work with, including Affiliates, venues that host traveling exhibitions, state humanities councils, and other community-based cultural and educational organizations.

Our **partners and collaborators** form an incomparable, trusted, and growing **network**.

The collective expertise, community connections, and collections and other resources of this network are essential to our success and impact. This plan envisions strengthening not only the bonds between our collaborators and the Smithsonian but also among those organizations, building the capacity of the **network** to achieve our shared goals.



Through professional learning opportunities, we work with Affiliate organizations and Smithsonian colleagues to build capacity across our network. Here, Affiliate participants in the Visiting Professionals Program learn about the development of the Hirshhorn Eye digital platform from the Smithsonian's Kevin Hull. [photo credit: Smithsonian Affiliations]

OUR PROGRAMS

As we work towards greater alignment and integration of this unit, we will maintain our **three recognized and trusted brands** while exploring ways they can reinforce and inform each other. Each allows the Smithsonian to collaborate with different types of organizations, reaching different audiences and collectively increasing our impact.



Above: Through our exhibitions and programming, SITES | SA shares the stories of diverse and often underrepresented people and communities. Dolores Huerta: *Revolution in the Fields / Revolución en los Campos* tells the compelling story of legendary activist Dolores Huerta, who visited the exhibition when it traveled to the Haggin Museum in Stockton, CA. [photo: Haggin Museum]

200+

Affiliates

46

States

30m

Visitors

Smithsonian Affiliations forges long-term relationships with a network of museums and cultural and educational organizations, extending the reach of the Smithsonian and sharing resources, expertise, and ideas. Affiliates, selected in a rigorous application process, demonstrate high standards and a commitment to collaborate and to bring Smithsonian resources to their community.

Through more than 200 Affiliates in 46 states, Panama, and Puerto Rico, we reach an estimated 30 million visitors each year—equivalent to the number who visit the Smithsonian's National Mall museums annually—and work with our Affiliates to create hundreds of public programs, host dozens of Smithsonian exhibitions, and display thousands of Smithsonian artifacts.



Right: Collaborators that host our exhibitions offer hands-on programming to further ignite curiosity in visitors. Here, families visiting *Things Come Apart* at the Birthplace of Country Museum, an Affiliate in Bristol, VA, learn more about engineering and how things work. [photo: SITES]

Below: MoMS' work is centered on catalyzing conversations in and about life in small-town America. We foster dialogue, build excitement, and open doors to the history, culture, and people of the communities in which we work. [photo: MoMS]



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), a leader in traveling exhibition services, supports learning and engagement with exhibitions for organizations large and small, supported by resources to engage lifelong learners and teachers in their community. SITES has expanded its portfolio of traditional exhibitions to include new, more flexible, and responsive options to engage a growing number of organizations.

SITES' traditional exhibitions, along with Build-It-Yourself and poster exhibitions, draw 4.5 million visitors each year in communities across the nation and beyond. Poster exhibitions are offered at no cost for educational purposes in classrooms, government office buildings, libraries, archives, community centers, historical societies, and museums.

SITES'
exhibitions
draw

4.5m
visitors
each year



Museum on Main Street (MoMS), a SITES program, works with state humanities councils to bring traveling exhibitions, educational resources, and programming to small towns across America through local museums and other community venues. MoMS exhibitions and programs are designed to start dialogues, facilitate connections, and open doors to a community's history, culture, people, and sense of local pride.

Since its founding in 1994, MoMS exhibitions have traveled to approximately 1,700 communities in all 50 states and Guam.

1,700 communities
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LOGIC MODEL

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark grey hoodie, is focused on a large, vertical digital display. He is using hand gestures to interact with the screen, which shows a complex diagram or map. The background is blurred, showing other people and more displays, suggesting a museum or educational environment. The lighting is warm and focused on the boy and the display.

Left: Working with our partners and collaborators, SITES | SA stimulates new ideas, fosters important conversations, inspires deeper curiosity, and empowers communities to make change. [photo: James Kegley]

Right: SITES | SA brings the research and scholarship of the Smithsonian to communities across the country—and beyond—and helps audiences experience history, art, culture, and science in their own communities. [photo: James Kegley]



Inputs and Activities

Together, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Smithsonian Affiliations (SITES | Affiliations) draw on the knowledge, resources, and expertise of our staff, our partners across the Smithsonian, and our extensive network of colleague organizations to:

- Forge close connections and collaborations between the Smithsonian and museums and other educational and cultural organizations as well as community-based organizations
- Work with others to produce and disseminate high quality projects and resources, utilizing a range of traditional and digital platforms
- Reach new and increasingly diverse audiences by working with a widening network of collaborators

- Stimulate new ideas and conversations, inspiring and empowering the Smithsonian and its collaborators to reach broad audiences they could not reach without each other
- Anchor our collaborative work under major themes, exploring an issue or idea in different ways, across multiple platforms, with diverse collaborators, multiplying the impact of our work
- Foster and support mutually beneficial connections among museums and other cultural and educational organizations

Our work is market driven and informed by our network of collaborators and Smithsonian partners. We listen to understand their priorities and the needs and interests of their communities and audiences. We look for opportunities to broaden the impact of the work of our Smithsonian partners.

LOGIC MODEL

Continued

Outputs

We disseminate knowledge, resources, and expertise, working in partnership with colleagues across the Smithsonian. We identify promising practices and initiatives and share them across our national network of collaborators.

We produce responsive and timely products and services, distributed across a spectrum of museums, cultural, and educational organizations, such as:

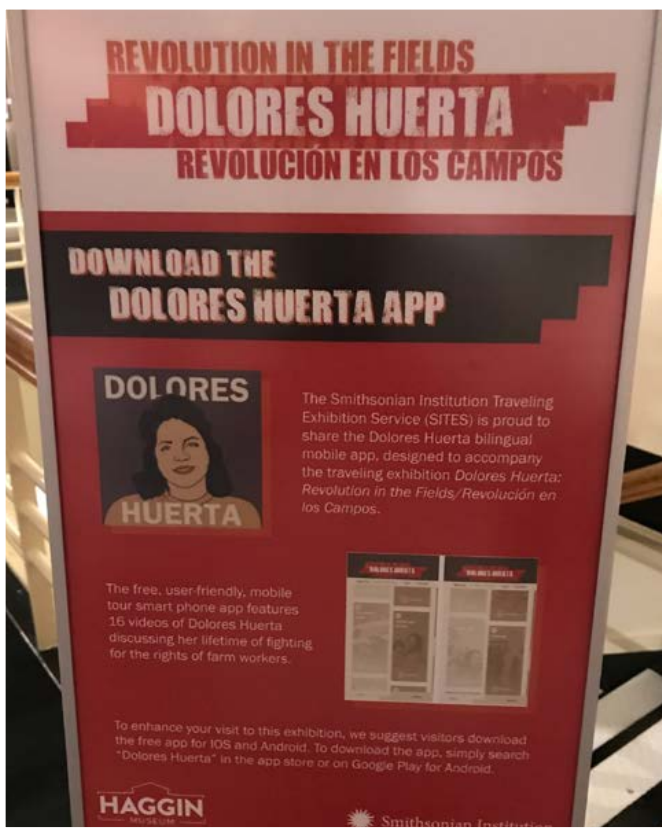
- Exhibitions of various scale for a wide range of settings and venues
- Educational programs that encourage and facilitate lifelong learning, community engagement, and dialogue
- Access to tools and materials that connect teachers and students to Smithsonian and collaborators' resources

We bolster the work of colleagues in museums and other educational and cultural organizations and help create a foundation for engagement with broader audiences through:

- Support to explore essential, and sometimes difficult, topics and questions
- Convenings to collectively advance the field
- Professional development and mentoring

Our work results in:

- An accessible and consistent Smithsonian presence beyond the National Mall and other Smithsonian facilities
- Engagement with a broad range of museums and other educational and cultural organizations, in every U.S. state and territory and in other countries, reaching millions of people
- Robust and long-term relationships with Affiliates and state humanities councils, and meaningful engagement with SITES host venues, as we work together to reach communities and audiences
- The perspective, insights, and expertise of our collaborating organizations and their audiences informing the work and initiatives of the Smithsonian
- Productive partnerships among our collaborators and with the Smithsonian's museums and educational, cultural, and research centers



Left: Digital tools like the Dolores Huerta app help SITES | SA reach audiences beyond those who visit our exhibitions and extend the learning and engagement for those who do. [photo: SITES]

Right: Smithsonian Acting Under Secretary for Education, Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar (right), presents a Certificate of Affiliation to Dr. Raynard S. Kington, then-President of Grinnell College. Grinnell joined the Affiliate network in 2020, the same year they produced the *Grinnell Works* exhibition using MoMS' *WORK* Starter Kit. [photo: Grinnell College]

Outcomes

Our programs, exhibitions and services:

- Underscore the importance of local stories in understanding national stories
- Contribute local perspectives on national and global issues
- Inspire and support lifelong learning in and out of school
- Connect and strengthen the nation's rich and diverse museums and cultural organizations
- Promote innovative and best practices for museum professionals

The reputation and excellence of the Smithsonian attracts audiences, builds internal capacity, and expands stakeholder support at collaborating museums and cultural and educational organizations.



Collaborating with a robust network of organizations, our work has a cumulative and sustained impact on audiences and communities, enabling people to see the relevance of the Smithsonian in their daily lives.

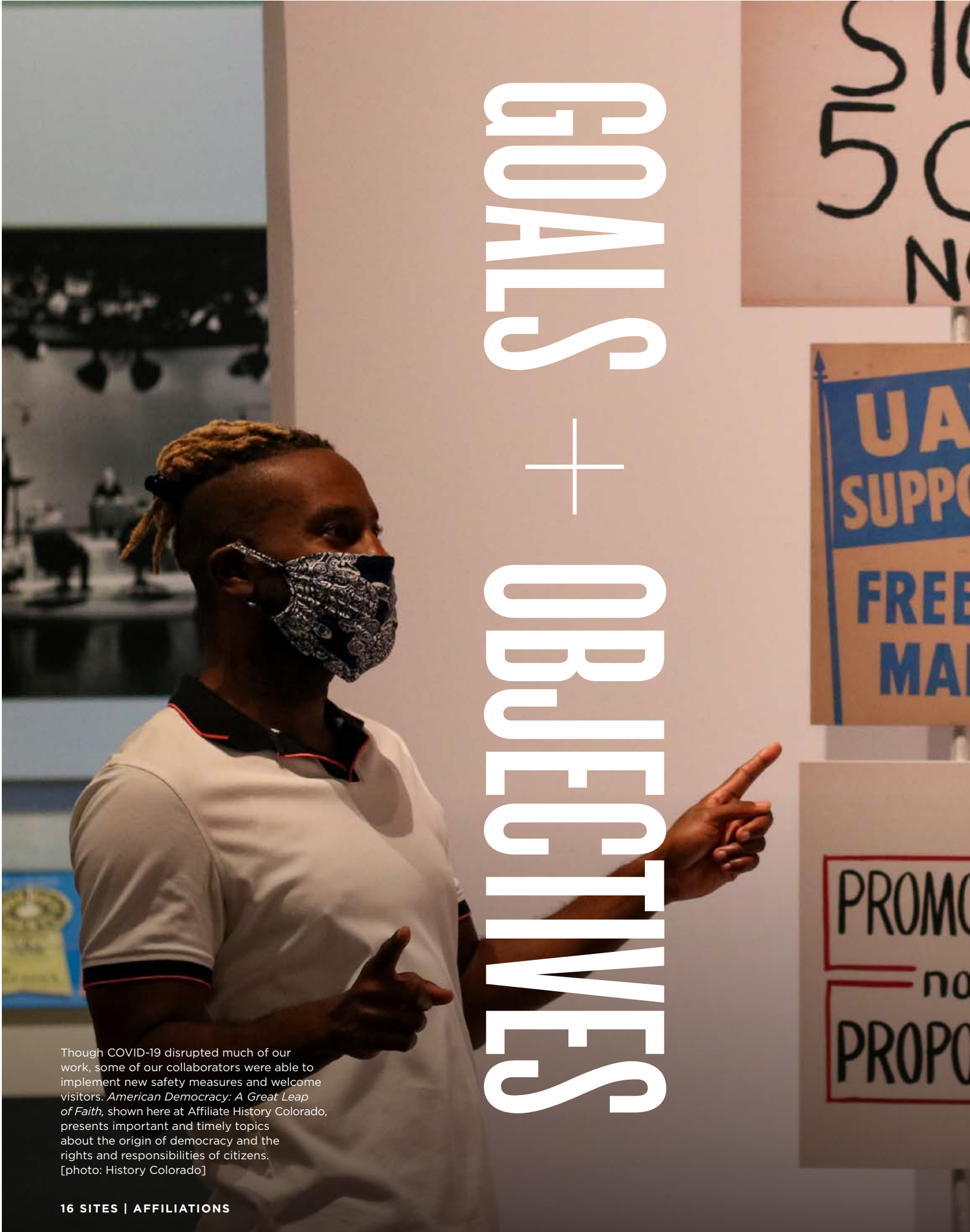
- We increase our collective capacity to foster conversations on questions that matter to communities.
- We inspire audiences of all ages to broaden their perspective, deepen their understanding of critical issues, and become more informed and curious learners.

We advance dialogue on important, timely issues that are priorities for the Smithsonian including

- the quest for social justice and equity
- the nature of the multifaceted American experience
- the importance of responsible stewardship of the planet.



Left: Our exhibitions, programs, and resources serve as a launch pad for our collaborators to dive into deeper discussion and exploration with those they serve. [photo: SITES]

A man with short dreadlocks and a patterned face mask is pointing towards historical posters on a wall. The posters include phrases like "SIC NO", "U A SUPPO", "FREE MA", and "PROMO no PROPO".

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

Though COVID-19 disrupted much of our work, some of our collaborators were able to implement new safety measures and welcome visitors. *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith*, shown here at Affiliate History Colorado, presents important and timely topics about the origin of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. [photo: History Colorado]

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I AM
A MAN

MORE YEARS
NOT ONE
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GIVE ME
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OR GIVE ME
DEBT!

STOP
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DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
HOMOSEXUALS IS AS IMMORAL
AS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
NEGROES & JEWS

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER



GOAL 1

MAGNIFY REACH

Extend and deepen the Smithsonian's and our collaborators' collective impact by producing or adapting content and services, delivered across a range of platforms, responsive to the needs and priorities of our collaborators and their audiences.

Above: SITES | SA works with our partners and collaborators to extend the reach and impact of the Smithsonian far beyond the National Mall. [photo credit: Lindsey Yery]

OBJECTIVES

- **Encourage** and **support** essential, and sometimes difficult, conversations that bridge and connect communities and strengthen connections between people
- **Develop** new platforms and delivery mechanisms that are adaptable to changing and emerging needs and priorities, recognizing both the potential and limitations of digital engagement and distribution
- **Build** the capability to share content across multiple platforms into every project
- **Expand** and diversify the members of our network of collaborators, along with the network of community-based organizations who help the Smithsonian and its collaborators collectively reach a broader audience
- **Facilitate** and **support** opportunities for organizations in our network to work collaboratively
- **Encourage** and **support** external collaborators' access to Smithsonian resources for teachers and students
- **Expand** the accessibility of our work, including universal physical and digital accessibility and multi-lingual resources
- **Continue** to identify and assess opportunities for offering projects and services internationally



Commit to inclusivity by revisiting and expanding the narratives we share, elevating and celebrating diverse experiences, voices, and perspectives across all of our work and the work of our partners and collaborators.

Above: SITES | SA showcases diverse narratives, as in *Billie Holiday at Sugar Hill: Photographs by Jerry Dantzie*, on display here at the Irving Arts Center, an Affiliate in Irving, TX, and together with our partners and collaborators, we tell more inclusive stories. [photo: SITES]

OBJECTIVES

- **Advance** diversity, equity, and inclusion in our products and services, in the stories we tell, and in facilitating conversations on topics of importance
- **Embody** diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our policies and practices
- **Seek out** and **amplify** untold or neglected perspectives, experiences, and stories of people and communities, underscoring commonalities and understanding differences
- **Develop** tools and services that enhance the efforts of our network of collaborators to advance racial equity and social justice
- **Engage** a wider and more diverse group of experts and organizations to enhance our decision-making and increase our capacity to advance inclusion and accessibility in museums and cultural organizations
- **Train** and support a more diverse museum workforce nationally



GOAL 3

ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

Support innovation in interpretation, development processes, delivery mechanisms, and professional and operational practices.

OBJECTIVES

- **Develop** a holistic, impact-focused process and criteria to assess opportunities and ideas
- **Cultivate** a culture of informed risk-taking and organizational learning and create structures to support innovative and/or risky ideas with follow-up assessment
- **Listen** to the issues and challenges raised by our network of collaborators and create or adapt materials and resources to support their work
- **Use** cross-functional, issue- or project-based teams to support new directions and foster innovation and change
- **Ensure** a good balance between projects initiated with Smithsonian partners and ideas originated by external collaborators and others
- **Pilot** and **assess** new project planning models (e.g. Backwards Design, Design Thinking, Tiger Teams) that align intended impacts with program and product design
- **Identify** and **assess** the applicability of innovative and emergent museum and business practices
- **Identify** innovative ways of funding projects by encouraging collaborations between donors or potential donors and our network of collaborators

Above: Through innovative programs like MoMS' *Stories: YES*, we engage youth and help them build 21st century skills, while they also document and share the stories of their communities. [photo: MoMS]



GOAL 4

CAPTURE IMPACT

Develop tools and capacities that enable us to demonstrate the reach, engagement and impact of our own work and that of our Smithsonian partners and external collaborators.

OBJECTIVES

- **Define** and prioritize the intended impacts for our collaborators and their communities and audiences for each project, throughout its duration
- **Strengthen** our ability to gather and analyze data and use it to inform future work with our collaborators
- **Implement** consistent data collection strategies across the unit, including qualitative and quantitative indicators of impact in collaborating organizations and among their audiences, and their communities
- **Work** with Board members and Smithsonian advancement staff to better understand the impact sought by donors and potential donors

Above: SITES | SA strives to have positive and meaningful impact on those we serve—from the youngest to the oldest audiences. [photo: SITES]



GOAL 5

COMMUNICATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Consistently communicate with all stakeholders the significance and impact of our own work and that of our Smithsonian partners and external collaborators.

OBJECTIVES

- **Develop** a new unit name to replace “Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service and Smithsonian Affiliations,” along with clear and consistent messaging, while retaining our three valuable brands (Affiliations, MoMS, and SITES)
- **Increase** opportunities for Advisory Board members to open doors for funding opportunities, as well as to represent the Smithsonian at collaborating organizations in our network
- **Consistently** gather and share stories and data about our presence and impact across the Smithsonian and externally, including current and potential donors
- **Strengthen** relationships and timely, reciprocal communication with our external collaborators, learning about their work, soliciting advice and ideas, and gathering feedback
- **Share** best professional practices across our network

Above: SITES | SA listens intentionally to our partners, collaborators, and their audiences to help us understand—and communicate—the results of our work.
[photo: James Kegley]



Maximize our financial and human resources to adapt to the evolving needs of the museum and cultural landscape.

Above: At SITES | SA we value the diverse backgrounds, experience, and perspectives of our staff, partners, and collaborators as we learn from each other and develop our respective skills and expertise. [photo: Smithsonian Affiliations]

OBJECTIVES

- **Develop** mechanisms to monitor the evolving needs of our network of collaborators and share information about critical trends
- **Create** a unified budget and business plan that support financial and administrative processes and systems
- **Create** a unified fundraising strategy that supports working across the unit and partnering with Smithsonian units
- **Create** a unified values statement after the Smithsonian's Values Statement is finalized
- **Identify** and utilize critical skills, competencies, and expertise of our staff, collaborators, and partners to advance shared goals
- **Create** opportunities for employees to build on their existing skills and/or develop new skills, improving our collective capacity to work in an organization that will continue to change and evolve
- **Increase** the diversity of the Advisory Board and its capacity to support fundraising
- **Participate** in the Smithsonian's major fundraising initiatives, identifying programs and activities that align with broader Smithsonian goals and projects, as well as explore opportunities for endowment funding

OUR PANDEMIC MOTTO: BE FLEXIBLE

During the pandemic, SITES | SA adapted exhibitions to accommodate new health and safety protocols. [photo: History Colorado]

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged us and required us to work in new ways, to innovate, and to be resilient.

At SITES | SA, we adopted new policies and processes, developed new programs, and above all, remained flexible—not only in the way we approached our work, but in how we worked with our partners and collaborators. As we reflect on the pandemic year, we celebrate successes and acknowledge challenges and, most importantly, look to the future.

In the information that follows, “Pre-pandemic” refers to the period of March 2019–February 2020, while “Pandemic” refers to March 2020–February 2021.

We continued to build support for our work

Despite the pandemic, SITES | SA added two new Board members and doubled the number of Board meetings.

- **Pre-pandemic:** # of new Board members = 0
- **Pandemic:** # of new Board members = 2
- **Pre-pandemic:** # of Board meetings = 2
- **Pandemic:** # of Board meetings = 4

We continued to raise vital funding to support exhibition, education, and community engagement activities in host venue and Affiliate communities.

- **Pre-pandemic:** 22 gifts
- **Pandemic:** 42 gifts

We also received funding from the Smithsonian to support a wide range of educational and exhibition projects aligned with Institution-wide priorities.

- **Pre-pandemic:** 9 grants
- **Pandemic:** 13 grants

We worked in innovative ways

We launched a robust series of digital programs to serve Affiliates and their communities, reaching more than twice as many people with Smithsonian content and expertise as we had the year before.

- **Pre-pandemic:** # of in-person Smithsonian speakers at Affiliates: 72
 - Estimated attendance: 5,400
- **Pandemic:** # of Smithsonian speakers in digital programs offered by Affiliates to their audiences: 95
 - Estimated attendance: 9,500

Affiliations also replaced its annual in-person conference with a virtual conference series which reached more Affiliate and Smithsonian staff members. While the in-person conference drew primarily executive leadership from Affiliates, the virtual conference served staff of all levels at both the Smithsonian and Affiliates.

■ 2019 Smithsonian Affiliations National Conference

- Total # of attendees: 193
- # of Affiliate speakers: 34
- # of Smithsonian speakers: 49
- # of sessions: 20
- # of SI units: 22
- # of Affiliate organizations: 77

■ 2020 Smithsonian Affiliations Virtual Conference Series

- Total # of attendees: 267
- # of Affiliate speakers: 31
- # of Smithsonian speakers: 34
- # of sessions: 28
- # of SI units: 34
- # of Affiliate organizations: 81

We supported our collaborators

SITES | SA recognized the challenges faced by our collaborators across the country. We continued to award Affiliate organizations funding to support their participation in Smithsonian educational initiatives and, in hardship cases, to defray their annual Affiliations fee.

■ **Pre-pandemic:** \$214,661 awarded to 31 Affiliates

■ **Pandemic:** \$222,037 awarded to 54 Affiliates

We worked closely with host venues to reschedule exhibitions during the pandemic and to accommodate their rapidly changing needs.

■ **Pre-pandemic:** # of venues that rescheduled an exhibition: 0

■ **Pandemic:** # of venues that rescheduled an exhibition: 10

■ **Pre-pandemic:** # of venues that cancelled an exhibition: 0

■ **Pandemic:** # of venues that cancelled an exhibition: 16

While many exhibitions remained behind closed doors, we supported some host venues in creating virtual exhibition tours of their SITES and MoMS exhibitions and providing other ways for communities to access exhibition content. And as venues reopened, we helped to promote the exhibitions.

■ **Pre-pandemic:** Exhibitions on display at SITES and MoMS venues: 25

■ **Pandemic:** Exhibitions on display at SITES and MoMS venues: 31

■ **Pre-pandemic:** Exhibitions at SITES and MoMS venues closed to the public: 0

■ **Pandemic:** Exhibitions at SITES and MoMS venues closed to the public: 26

We looked toward the future

During the pandemic year, SITES | SA listened, asked, questioned, and learned with and from our partners and collaborators. While this has always been part of our practice, we did it more intentionally, more strategically, and more regularly than ever before. We will use what we learned to inform our work and to help us serve our partners and collaborators.

During the pandemic year, SITES | SA:

■ Initiated online “Office Hours” sessions with Affiliate organizations to help us more fully understand the pressures and realities of the pandemic year and to identify ways to support them

■ Led listening sessions with leaders from the Smithsonian, Affiliates, MoMS collaborators, and host venues to ensure our strategic plan reflected their needs and interests

■ Started a staff-led Advance Inclusion reading group to help us better understand DEI issues and how we can address and reflect them in our work

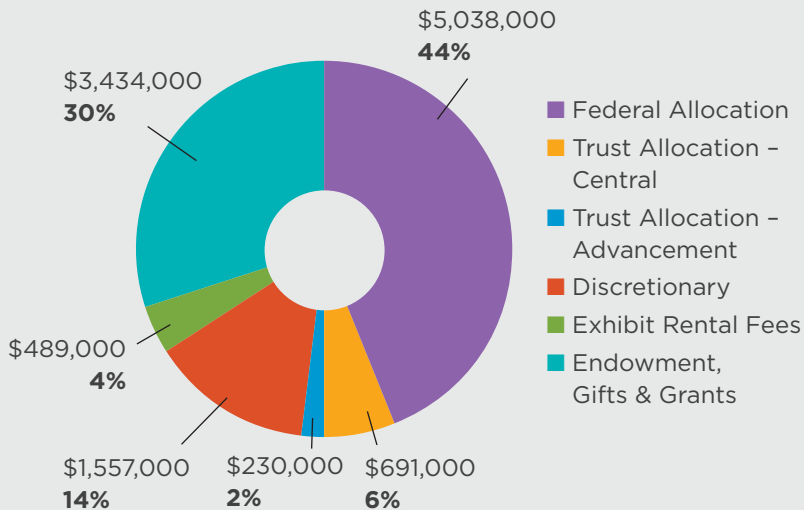


The pandemic pushed us to explore new ways of interacting with our collaborators. We pivoted to provide new digital offerings, such as Virtual Scholar Talks for Affiliates and their communities.

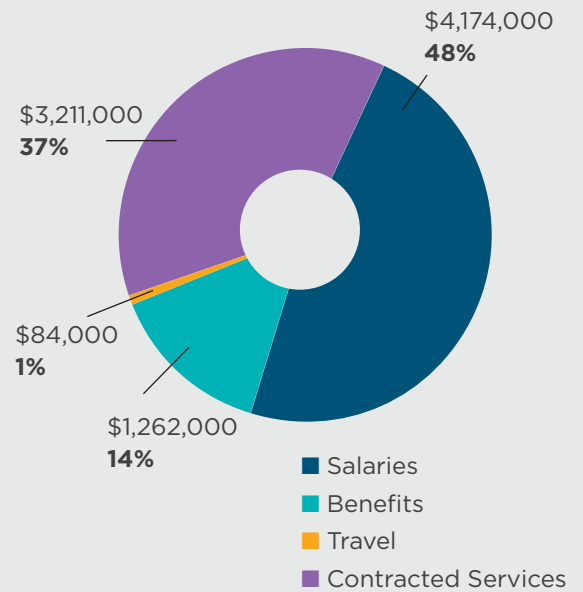
FINANCIAL REPORT

SITES FY20 Ending Sept. 30, 2020

Resources: \$11,439,000

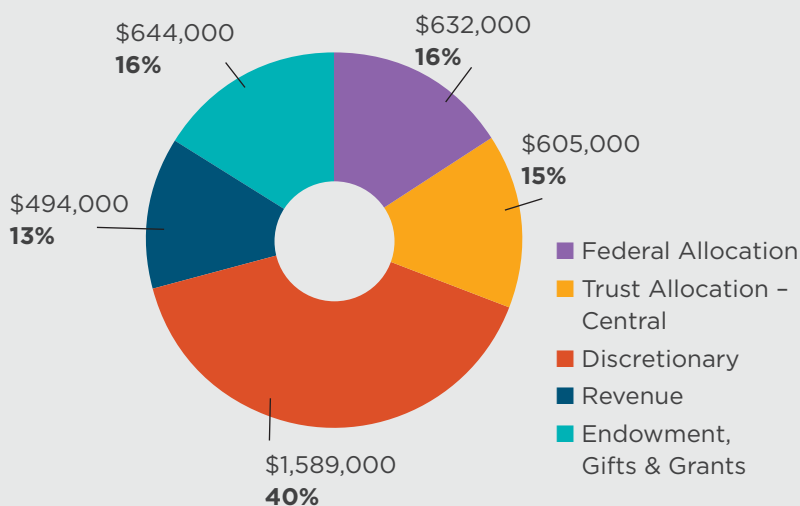


Expenses: \$8,731,000

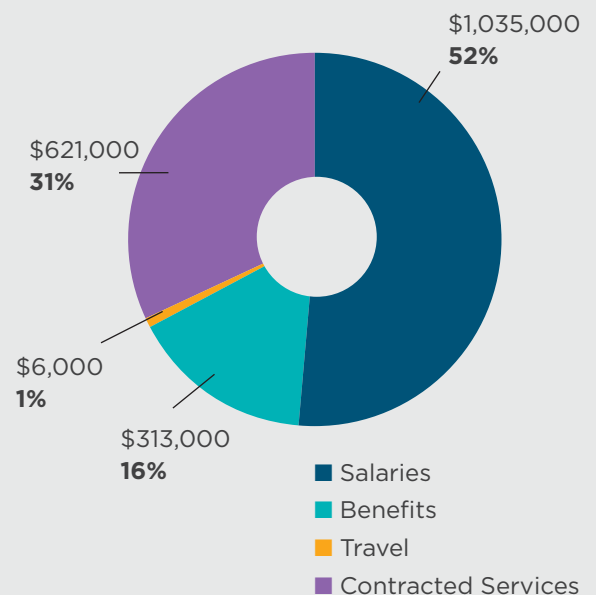


AFFILIATIONS FY20 Ending Sept. 30, 2020

Resources: \$3,966,000



Expenses: \$1,975,000



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March 2021



Above: In February 2018, the Board held its meeting at Affiliate, Space Center Houston in Texas. The Board toured the exhibitions *Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission* and *A New Moon Rises* as well as NASA's Johnson Space Center. [photo: SITES]



Above: Dr. Christine C. Jenkins, Board Vice Chair, presents a certificate to Ms. Gerri Horn, Chair, Board of Trustees, Morris Museum and Dr. Cleveland Johnson, Executive Director, Morris Museum at the Morris Museum's Affiliate induction ceremony on October 3, 2019 in Morristown, New Jersey. [photo: Ava Valentino]

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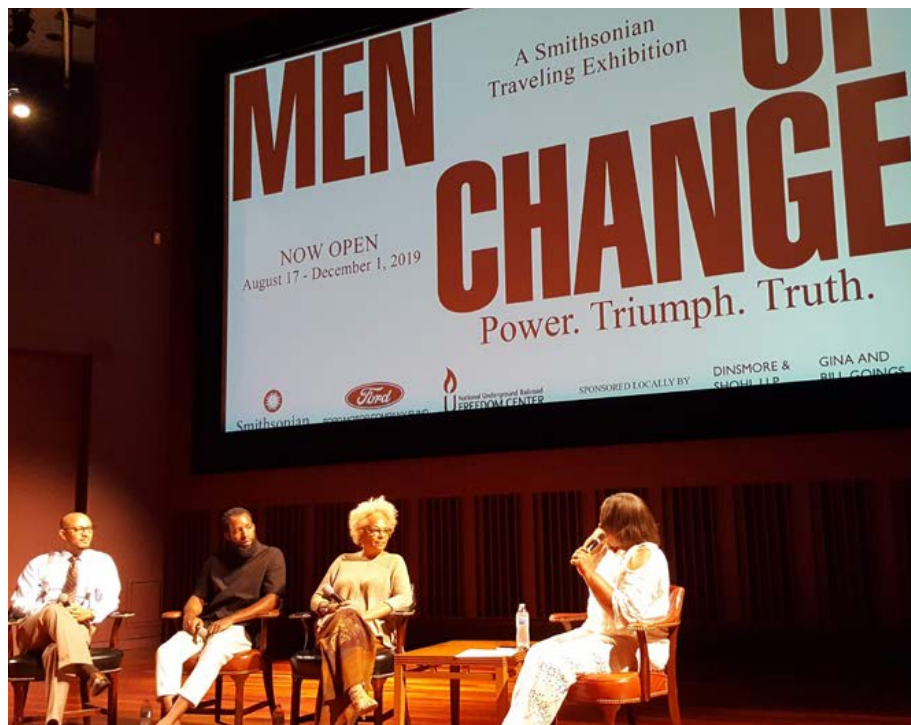
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Total Philanthropic Donations

\$ 1,164,000	FY17
\$ 113,000	FY18
\$1,529,000	FY19
\$ 2,211,000	FY20

Smithsonian Support (FY17-FY20)

Youth Access Grants	\$938,000
Smithsonian Women's Committee	\$ 136,000
Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool	\$ 66,500
Latino Initiatives Pool	\$ 194,000
Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative	\$ 81,000



Left: Thanks to our donors, we bring innovative and thought-provoking content and experiences, like *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.*, generously supported by the Ford Motor Company Fund, to audiences across the nation. [photo:SITES]



bias | The inside us



Smithsonian



The Bias Inside Us, SITES' newest community engagement initiative, is generously supported by the Otto Bremer Trust and many additional donors. It features a traveling exhibition and educational programs and resources, designed to raise awareness about the science and history of bias and what people can do about it. [photo: SITES]



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