

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Strategic Plan for FY 2019-2023



January 2018

About the Plan

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine Strategic Plan is a tool to guide the organization's work over the next 3-5 years. It is bold and visionary, as well as practical and realistic.

The plan articulates the museum's reason for existing and desired impact on the audiences and communities it serves. It provides a framework for decision making and includes a blueprint for action. The plan is intended to be a working document to be consulted on a regular basis by the board of directors and staff — with updates as the need arises.

Creation of this strategic plan, the museum's fourth since 1995, was prompted by the American Alliance for Museums re-accreditation report that identified several areas of concern related to the organization's long-term health and sustainability.

The museum, with generous support from the Ausherman Family Foundation, engaged Dean Krimmel of Creative Museum Services/Qm² to facilitate the planning process and help produce the plan. Krimmel worked with a Strategic Planning Task Force that included Laura E. "Betsy" Estilow, board president; Dr. Jonathan O'Neal; board vice president; Craig Lebo; board member; Col. Laura Ruse Brosch, USA (ret), board member; David Price, executive director; Jake Wynn, program coordinator; and, Joanna Jennings, office manager. The planning process ran from June 2017 through January 2018, and included regular Task Force meetings, outreach to the museum staff and board, as well as others for input and feedback.

Institutional History

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1990 by a group of dedicated Civil War medicine aficionados. The museum has evolved from a single exemplary collection assembled by Dr. and Mrs. Gordon E. Dammann, DDS, to a community-based organization with three locations and an international reach and reputation.

The museum has gone through two major phases: Establishment (1990-2000) and Expansion (2000-2017). During the first phase, board and staff worked to secure a physical location with permanent exhibitions, and organized an annual conference that is going into its 26th year. Their efforts culminated in 2000 with the opening of the newly-renovated Carty building in partnership with the City of Frederick.

The board's vision and the museum's physical presence expanded in subsequent years as it sought to reach new audiences and forge new partnerships. A press was launched in 2001 to publish scholarly and popular works. A year later, the museum earned accreditation from AAM. Museum staff began operating the Pry House Field Hospital Museum in 2005 following a partnership agreement with the National Park Service. In 2008, the museum unveiled the Letterman Institute, a leadership, training, service, and awards program inspired by the groundbreaking work of Major Jonathan Letterman. The museum added a third site in 2014 when it entered into a partnership with the General Services Administration to operate the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum in downtown Washington, D.C.

Facing the Future

The museum has, over the past year, made progress in a number of areas, as follows.

Staffing

With an increase in part-time employees and free lance contractors, the museum staff now includes nine full-time staff, six part-time staff, and two contractors.

Budgeting

The museum now budgets three years out, and proudly presented balanced budgets beginning in FY2018-2019.

Collections

Museum staff completed work on organizing and cataloguing of the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum collection. Staff successfully migrated the museum's archive database from Past Perfect to Proficio, a collections management system developed by Re:discovery Software, inc. thus providing staff with complete virtual access. The museum is reviewing three options presented by a contract designer to increase efficiency and improve space utilization in its current collections room. A task force, headed by a board member, began exploring options for a second off-site collections storage facility.

Lease Situation

The Carty Building (Frederick) is in the second year of a 10-year lease. The Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum (Washington, D.C.) is in a five-year auto-renewing lease through 2022. The museum is in talks with the National Park Service regarding a three-year agreement on the Pry House Museum (Antietam).

Professional Development and Peer-to-Peer Learning

The museum enhanced its staff professional development efforts with in-depth visits to the Mutter Museum (Philadelphia), Seminary Ridge Museum (Gettysburg), United States Naval Museum (Annapolis), among other regional museums. Museum staff has hosted colleagues from the National Building Museum (Washington, D.C.), the United States Army War College (Carlisle, PA) for similar peer-to-peer learning. These exchanges have led to partnerships and opportunities for material and intellectual assistance.

Strategic Plan for FY 2019-2023

VISION

We understand the meaning of vision to be two-fold: one, to describe what the National Museum of Civil War Medicine aspires to be, however audacious that sounds; and, two, what the communities we serve will look like as a result of our work.

- ❖ ***Our Envisioned Future*** To be the best museum in our field at providing access, value, transformative experiences, and world-class service.
- ❖ ***Our Community Impact*** The communities we serve are empathetic, engaged, and empowered. Community members value the preservation of life, learn from the past, and use historical thinking to solve problems, address issues, and improve the quality of life.

PURPOSE

We understand purpose to be the museum's fundamental reason for existing — beyond serving the public. All nonprofits are expected to change lives. Our statement of purpose describes how we do that. Our statement of purpose is something we believe in and know is right. It is something we want to be remembered for.

*To inspire current and future generations to learn from the past
to solve problems that improve the future.*

MISSION

Our mission statement describes what we do, for whom, and why. It guides our decisions, provides us focus, and serves as a benchmark against which to evaluate our performance.

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine is the premier center for the preservation and research of the legacy of Civil War medical innovation and humanitarianism. As a living institution, we utilize artifacts, storytelling and historical lessons from the Civil War to reveal the conflict's impact and relevance on today's society, and inspire action.

VALUES

Our values are essential and enduring tenets, timeless guiding principles that have intrinsic value and importance to everyone involved with the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. We understand our values as statements of commitment to our audiences and stakeholders, the community, and each other.

- ❖ ***Respect***
We believe in the dignity of every person and treat each other with unconditional respect. We value each person, recognizing that others hold views and beliefs that may differ from our own.

- ❖ *Empathy*
We emotionally connect with other people — past and present — and acknowledge and value their feelings, thoughts, and experiences.
- ❖ *Integrity*
We adhere to a code of moral principles and scholarly rigor. We are honest, truthful, authentic, consistent, and transparent. We are ethical and incorruptible. We strive to get things right and tell the whole story.
- ❖ *Commitment*
We honor our pledges and promises, doing what we say and always staying the course. We are dedicated and faithful to our vision, purpose, values, and mission.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our work and our relationships with the public and each other are shaped by a set of principles, beliefs, and convictions that express our obligations and responsibilities to the public.

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| <i>Serve the Public</i> | We work on behalf of the public and the communities we serve. |
| <i>Make Connections</i> | We build bridges that link past to present and bring people together. |
| <i>Seek Relevance</i> | We find ways to forge connections between our audiences and our rich and diverse subject matter, sites, and collections. |
| <i>Evoke a Response</i> | We encourage people to respond and take action. |
| <i>Be Hopeful</i> | We are motivated by the idea that things can get better when there is motivation for change and a plan of action. |
| <i>Be Accountable</i> | We are respectful, responsible, and accountable in our pursuit of historical understanding and handling of historical misconceptions. |
| <i>Ongoing Learning</i> | We embrace new ideas, knowledge, and methods that will improve our work and help us provide better public service. |
| <i>Make a Contribution</i> | We take individual responsibility for supporting and furthering the museum’s vision, purpose, and mission by participating fully in the work of the museum. |

STRATEGIES

Strategies are the means by which we pursue our envisioned future to be the best museum in the world. Strategies are not goals or tactics; rather, they are vehicles for organizing our work, communicating our purpose, and delivering services. Further, strategies are not mutually exclusive. We will utilize all three strategies at the same time, albeit to varying degrees depending on our goals, priorities, and annual work plans.

Letterman Institute

Providing leadership, training, services, sense of community

Current Issues Agenda

Programming that uses the past to inform present & improve future

Civil War Medicine Hub

Resource for scholars, museums & historic sites, medical pros, the public

Letterman Institute

Through the Letterman Institute, the museum provides leadership training, programs, services, and resources, in partnership with other stakeholders, for the benefit of professionals in military and civilian medicine, disaster preparedness, and corporate management. The Institute draws on the lessons of the past to create better leaders in the present. Participants hone their leadership skills by examining the challenges, problem solving, and innovations of Civil War medical leaders.

Activities are designed to strengthen relationships among military medical professionals, between military and civilian medical professionals, and between medical professionals and civilians. The museum also provides informal opportunities for gathering, socializing, learning, even healing. Through the Letterman Institute, the museum is a welcoming place and home away from home for medical professionals and leaders in healthcare.

Current Issues Agenda

Through programming, including exhibitions, digital platforms, conferences, and outreach, the museum uses lessons from the past to acknowledge and explore current issues and inspire action. The Current Issues Agenda positions the museum and its partners as leaders in helping communities address crisis and ongoing issues. The museum works with its partners and communities to set the agenda rather than waiting for others to do so.

Civil War Medicine Hub

As a hub for Civil War medicine, the museum is a resource for scholars, specialists, museums and historic sites (notably those that interpret the Civil War), military and civilian medical professionals, policy makers, the media, and the public.

The museum takes a leadership role among Civil War museums and historic sites as an advocate for telling the “whole story” (putting a human face on war), and as a supporter of innovative and collaborative scholarship. The museum acts as facilitator and community builder by organizing conferences, workshops, and public forums that bring together scholars, students, specialists, and the general public, and encourage innovative scholarship.

GOALS & PRIORITIES: FY2019-FY2023

We will pursue these goals as part of our overall strategies over the next five years

- 1. Culture of Philanthropy:** The museum's Development Programs (membership, annual fund, corporate gifts, grants, major gifts, planned giving) raise money from a broad range of sources to support the growth and expansion of services and ensure long term financial health. Board and staff embrace a new culture of philanthropy, supported by ongoing training and the leadership of the Board Development Committee, Executive Director and staff development manager. The membership program engages a large and diverse audience through a variety of programs tailored to needs and interests identified through audience research.
- 2. Interpretative Impact:** Museum visitors enjoy a wide range of compelling experiences (onsite, offsite and virtual) that include upgraded long-term installations and changing exhibits at the Carty Building, Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office, and Pry House and Field Hospital; innovative programming; and, digital offerings.
- 3. Revamped Letterman Institute:** Military and civilian medical leaders, along with a committed community of medical practitioners, scholars, and policy makers consider the Letterman Institute to be indispensable in carrying out their work.
- 4. Technology Upgrade:** Museum staff and board are equipped with tools to ensure greater productivity, efficiency, good stewardship, and the capacity to be more nimble, responsive, and creative in serving the public.
- 5. Accessible Collections:** The museum's collections are fully accessible on line (aligned with museum's digital strategy), and a new collections storage facility ensures a high standard of stewardship, as well as room for growth in collecting.

We will use the following tools as part of our work on the above goals:

- **Documentation:** Museum staff, board, and volunteers regularly document all activities and update policy and procedures manuals to ensure efficiency, productivity and institutional memory.
- **Learning Agenda:** Museum staff and board are active learners with access to professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences, workshops, training, and webinars) and regular internal information exchanges (e.g., brown bag talks, in-house seminars, board discussions).
- **Audience Research:** The museum integrates audience research into daily operations, from program planning, interpretation, and training to membership and development.
- **Evaluation:** The museum uses performance measures to track and understand progress, share lessons, and use results to improve our work.

USING THE FRAMEWORK

Our major activities will be measured against this framework. We will ask these questions when we create annual work plans to achieve our goals.

How will the activity...

- Inspire people?
- Encourage empathy and engagement, and empower people to act?
- Help make us the best museum in our field at providing incredible access, value, experiences, and service?
- Help us build or deepen relationships and broaden our base of support?
- Model the use of historical thinking to solve problems, address issues, and improve the quality of life?
- Position the museum as a resource for other museums, scholars, specialists, and the public?
- Make us more productive, efficient, responsive, creative, and nimble?
- Enhance the museum's brand reputation?