



Facing Change

Insights from the
American Alliance of Museums'
Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion
Working Group



**American
Alliance of
Museums**

“Diversity work does not simply generate knowledge about institutions... it generates knowledge of institutions in the process of attempting to transform them.”

— **SARA AHMED,**
*feminist scholar and
anti-harassment advocate*

From the President of AAM



As the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) developed its 2016–20 strategic plan, the board of directors and leadership team started by listening—learning what museum professionals believe are the issues most vital to the field’s viability, relevance, and sustainability. At the top of many priority lists were issues of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of museums’ structure and programming. These issues, abbreviated as DEAI, became our first focus area.

Prioritizing DEAI was undoubtedly compelled by Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole’s landmark keynote delivered at AAM’s 2015 Annual Meeting. She called for museums to “be of social value by not only inspiring but creating change around one of the most critical issues of our time—the issue of diversity.”

The Alliance has not always been as diverse and just as it must be. We are now on a path toward improvement, along with our community of museums, museum professionals, and other museum service organizations. We are working hard to ask ourselves the questions posed in this report and to follow the suggestions provided, both internally and in the service we provide to the field.

In setting her vision for our work, Dr. Cole reminded us of what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the “beloved community.” She said, “Fundamental to the concept of the beloved community is inclusiveness, both economic and social. The notion that all can share in earth’s bounty describes a society in which the social product is shared far more equally than it is in today’s world. The beloved community also describes a society in which all are embraced and none discriminated against.”

While just one tiny step in a decades-long journey, this report lays out a framework for the Alliance’s next set of priorities and programs aimed toward achieving the “beloved community” throughout our field.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Lott". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Laura L. Lott
President and CEO
American Alliance of Museums

Introduction



Today, the country’s museums are increasingly taking up the charge to be more inclusive. Museum workers, directors, and trustees are reflecting on the historical inequalities that have shaped the field. Employment pipeline programs and leadership development initiatives are helping to address long-standing barriers to entry.

This ongoing effort to increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in museums isn’t new, but it does reflect what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described in 1963 as the “fierce urgency of now.” The work doesn’t begin “out there,” in some space external to museum staffs, directors, and boards. Nor does it hinge solely on outreach to underserved populations. Effective inclusion work begins inside the structures of our museums and within each of us.

In spring 2017, following its strategic plan, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) convened the Working Group on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI). Twenty museum professionals, representing a variety of disciplines, organizational sizes and types, and perspectives, came together monthly at the Alliance’s offices in Arlington, Virginia, and once at the 2017 AAM Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. For six months, this group examined the characteristics of effective museum inclusion practices and considered what steps the field could take to promote DEAI.

Cochaired by Alliance President and CEO Laura Lott and lifelong DEAI leader Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole, the working group’s charge was to:

- identify current DEAI activities in the field
- understand key challenges, issues, and opportunities related to promoting DEAI
- learn from how other sectors have successfully overcome DEAI challenges
- identify steps that museum professionals can take to advance DEAI
- outline opportunities for collaboration and further work

Through our work, we reaffirmed the relevance of DEAI within the entire museum field. We believe that those who have historically been relegated to the margins of society due to legacies of racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and all other forms of injustice must be fully included in museum workplaces and communities. The insights shared in this report apply to museums across the spectrum. Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion are as important for large institutions with scores of people on staff as they are for small museums run by volunteers.

At the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting, Laura Lott asked audiences, “How will history judge our efforts—both as individuals and museums? Will we be urgent and proactive players to correct our society’s inequities?” To these timely inquiries, the working group adds others: Whose perspectives are missing? How do we move from focusing on DEAI to removing oppression and reducing harm? How do we ensure that museums remain financially sustainable while working to become welcoming and safe for all?

As you read the sections that follow and continue the conversation in your own museum, I hope that you will let these prompts guide your reflections. No one person has all the answers, but the future of museums depends on our collective willingness to address the questions.

Sincerely,

Nicole Ivy, PhD
Director of Inclusion
American Alliance of Museums

How to Use This Report

This document presents a shared vocabulary and a set of basic principles to guide museum professionals toward incorporating DEAI into the heart of our work. It is meant to be a starting place, not an endpoint. The working group’s findings are presented here as food for thought to jump-start the long-term processes that effective DEAI work requires.

Our five insights summarize key takeaways from the working group’s conversations about big-picture ideas and specific examples from members’ experiences. Selected responses to questions the group posed at the 2017 AAM Annual Meeting and on social media are meant to highlight feedback and inspire action. Several ideas reappear across sections, since many of the issues we discussed are interconnected. The report also outlines the working group’s process to model

how museum staffs, leadership, boards, and other stakeholders can launch similar convenings.

Overall, the report explores challenges faced and lessons learned by a few of those who have taken on the effort to expand DEAI in museums. We invite you to take note of which insights resonate with you and share those notes with others. Continue to visit the Alliance website to join the conversation through blog posts and other interactive opportunities.

Working Group Participants

AAM enthusiastically thanks the members of the Working Group on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion for their generosity and wisdom:

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Smithsonian Institution
Accessibility Programs

What We Learned

Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion are essential, sustainable values for museums to pursue. These principles are not only bedrocks of ethical and morally courageous museum work, but they also signal how the field can remain relevant to an ever-diversifying US population.

Inclusive leadership requires a careful and continuous examination of our implicit biases, which are the often-unexamined tendencies and preferences that we all harbor. When museum professionals use phrases like “our audiences” and “our staff,” and pronouns like “we,” “us,” and “them,” we express ideas about belonging. This is not inherently bad. After all, enriching communities and fostering shared learning experiences are at the heart of what museums do. However, failing to recognize how these terms affect organizational approaches can lead to excluding voices not considered part of a museum’s core audience or leadership.

Practicing inclusion also demands continuous assessment and eradication of explicit inequalities. Unconscious bias training and cultural competence building are only valuable if they inform museums’ approaches to structural change.

The working group’s learnings can be summed up into **five insights** about the key components of effective museum DEAI work. With this report, we collectively assert the following:

- 1. Every museum professional must do personal work to face their unconscious bias**
- 2. Debate on definitions must not hinder progress**
- 3. Inclusion is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of museums**
- 4. Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress**
- 5. Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization**

Importantly, this list is not exhaustive. Our observations also do not provide definitive metrics for success. Indicators such as retention rates for historically underrepresented employees, reports of

discrimination, organizational inclusion plans, and accurate demographic information about staff and trustees all help hold museums accountable.

History of the Alliance’s Efforts

The progress in our field to date reflects the brave and diligent work of many people over many years. When AAM launched its 2016–20 strategic plan with DEAI as a focus area, part of our initial work involved identifying and assessing the Alliance’s past efforts. An internal survey of our records revealed a sustained commitment to DEAI over the past three decades, starting with the AAM board’s adoption of the *Excellence & Equity*¹ report as a policy statement in 1991. Since then, AAM has:

- included diversity and inclusion in several of its strategic plans
- convened external task forces to develop action plans for the field
- created internal inclusion teams
- hired staff members devoted to addressing DEAI
- issued a national diversity statement with affiliate organizations
- worked to integrate DEAI into museum excellence programs
- published numerous related articles, fact sheets, toolkits, and other resources

While we acknowledge and respect our predecessors’ efforts, reviewing AAM’s history around DEAI led to several questions, particularly as we discovered that multiple past plans had featured similar sets of recommendations. The biggest of our questions: Why haven’t we seen more change?

Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch III, director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, powerfully expressed this concern in his article “Flies in the Buttermilk: Museums, Diversity, and the Will to Change” (*Museum News*, 2000). He confessed

¹ That report listed “specific actions AAM and the field could take to increase diversity in museum audiences and leadership within the museum community.”

that he was worried because, after more than 20 years in the field, he was “still hearing some of the same debates and conversations.” The fact that Bunch’s words reflecting on the previous 20 years were written nearly two decades ago is not lost on us. It’s true that some progress has been made, but in many ways we are still having those same debates and conversations.

In the working group meetings, we committed to a process of self-reflection, learning from past efforts, recognizing the barriers that have hindered the field’s progress, and breaking down those barriers in specific ways. We also agreed that no person or organization can do this work alone. Every museum service organization, museum, and individual has work to do. If we make progress, it is because we have all played a part.

The Process

For this study, the Alliance convened museum professionals who have demonstrated commitment to DEAI. The working group was composed of passionate, talented professionals with a broad base of experience and expertise. It included museum educators, directors, independent professionals, and diversity and inclusion leaders. Still, the group was less a representative sample than a task force. As thought leaders and committed practitioners of DEAI, the members gathered to share strategies and outline practical ways to carry the work forward. Dr. Nicole Ivy, Brooke Leonard, and Kathy Dwyer Southern rounded out the team of Alliance staff that supported the project.

For six months, the working group discussed critical issues around DEAI, including **why** DEAI is relevant to museums, **what** current trends affect museums’ approaches to equity, and **who** bears responsibility for implementing inclusive practices in museums (short answer: everybody). We also focused on **how**—the importance of developing ways to apply the principles of DEAI across functional areas. Although the working group has formally disbanded, the Alliance continues to consider what future groups could look like.

One of our fundamental working assumptions was that this process would be iterative. Each group member brought their own skill set and priorities to this work. From the outset, the cochairs encouraged the group to be flexible and collaborative. This learn-

as-you-go approach meant that we had to be willing to compromise, revise, and restart on more than one occasion. We stressed the importance of trusting both the process and one another. We remained open. We dug into difficult conversations even when they felt uncomfortable. But this, too, is the work of inclusion.

The group decided early on to set its sights on the tough questions. We learned through our initial discussions that, although there are many excellent, sustainable DEAI-related initiatives at US museums and museum organizations, any inventory that we could offer would lack clear insight into the critical issues of inclusive museum practice. So, we decided to assess our challenges and our visions of success. We surveyed ourselves and posed the same questions to museum professionals on social media using the hashtag *#museuminclusion* and on talk-back walls at the 2017 AAM Annual Meeting in St. Louis. We asked the following questions:

- What are you most proud of in your work on diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion?
- What are your greatest obstacles to this work?
- What resources do you need?
- What does success look like for the field?

Museum professionals responded enthusiastically, generating over 485,000 impressions on Twitter. Respondents were proudest of their museums’ progress in accessibility, openness to dialogue around inclusion, and steps toward raising awareness about the value of DEAI. The greatest obstacles were predominantly echoed in people’s statements of their needs, which were overwhelmingly “money” and staff capacity or time. Respondents also identified a desire for more practical tools, such as professional development resources, training, examples, templates, and case studies. The visions for success called for living wages across the field, more diverse visitorship, connected communities, and “collaboration over consultation” as a model of engagement.

The working group agreed that money and time are immense barriers to inclusion. We took these challenges into account as we concretized our five key insights, ensuring that they are applicable to museums of all sizes, types, and budgets.

Five Insights



Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias

We all have a stake in DEAI. As people who love and support museums, we are called to honor our common humanity—all the ways that we are different and the same. This spectrum of human possibility is what we mean when we use the term “diversity.” While institutions help us organize our interests, what we do individually demonstrates the institutional commitment to our audiences.

Recognizing our unconscious biases is a meaningful first step. Unconscious bias refers to our automatic, often-unspoken beliefs about various social groups. These hidden assumptions—also referred to as implicit or unintentional bias—influence how we judge others’ competency. They shape our expectations for human interaction and form the basis of prejudicial actions.

We *all* have unconscious biases. The urge to evaluate is an innate human response. Social and behavioral scientists note that the “ability to distinguish friend from foe helped early humans survive.”² Even those of us who are experienced DEAI professionals must routinely check our biases.

Unconscious bias matters to museums because it affects our decisions about who belongs in museum leadership and how we reach out to audiences. It influences how we set salaries, craft job descriptions, promote employees, and design interior and exterior spaces. Learning to identify our biases can help us intentionally think again: even if our first impulses are prejudicial, our next thoughts and steps don’t have to be.

This internal, personal work is *work*. It calls for study, skill-building, and practice. As working group member Chris Taylor has noted, “Inclusion requires knowledge, skills, and abilities that are not wholly taught to museum professionals through training programs...We cannot expect our field to do this work through osmosis.”³ Once museum professionals identify our biases, we can move toward managing them through empathy and action-oriented strategies. Recommended steps for developing these skills include:

- unconscious bias training
- implicit bias association tests
- intercultural competence assessments
- cultural competency training
- self-awareness work (e.g., personality and leadership style surveys)

These skills can be built at the individual or organizational level; the steps are the same. Self-work strengthens the foundation for institutional work.

CALL TO ACTION

You and your team can identify **available practitioners** who can facilitate this work. You can also take the **Harvard Implicit Association Test** for free online to help identify your own unconscious biases. You can then host a brown-bag **discussion** around your experiences or agree to share your results in a safe and respectful conversation.

² Source: www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias

³ Source: <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2016/02/do-ing-diversity-in-museums.html>

“If your museum is large or small, old or young, famous or not yet famous, the need for seeking and sustaining diversity in your museums...has never been greater. If we are to be relevant in this ever-changing world, to stay artistically and financially viable, all of our museums must boldly—indeed, bodaciously—commit to rethinking about what takes place in our museums, to whom our museums belong and who the colleagues are who have the privilege of telling important stories through the power of science, history, culture and art.”

— DR. JOHNETTA BETSCH COLE



Debate on definitions must not hinder progress

The proliferation of diversity and inclusion initiatives across sectors virtually guarantees that there will be debate about the terms of engagement. Clear definitions keep us on the same page and allow us to move forward. Although there are many definitions of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, the working group agreed upon a set that best capture our beliefs.

Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

WHY THIS DEFINITION?

Our definition of diversity moves toward opportunities for groups to continually question whether they have adequate representation to make equitable programmatic, hiring, governance, financial, and other decisions. Any individual will have multiple identities and experiences. What it means to be diverse, in practice, will vary depending on the organization.

Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.⁴

WHY THIS DEFINITION?

Equity is the goal of our work. It requires deliberate attention to more than matters of recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotion, and retention. Equity includes governance, representation, and other indicators of power. It is, collectively, a step toward recognizing past exclusion and achieving genuine inclusion.

Equity is not the natural state of things. We must deliberately apply time, resources, and consideration to achieve this goal. In addition, our museums must develop relationships of trust and understanding.

Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

WHY THIS DEFINITION?

The definition of accessibility is broadening beyond public accommodations and job opportunities. It's not just about the physical environment: it's about access to and representation in content for all.

We must integrate those concerns into the definitions. Our understandings of accessibility include the legal definitions and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but we're striving for inclusive design.⁵ We want to go beyond compliance.

Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community. While a truly "inclusive" group is necessarily diverse, a "diverse" group may or may not be "inclusive."⁶

WHY THIS DEFINITION?

We need museums in which diverse participants are truly integrated and valued as respected members of the organization and/or community, beyond token participation and authority. The measure and success of inclusion must include the perspectives of the disenfranchised.

CALL TO ACTION

You can **cite these definitions** in your appeals to grant makers, your evaluation work, and your own inclusion planning. Share how you have used or revised them with AAM via social media or the Alliance Labs site.

⁴ Source: <http://institutionaldiversityblog.com>

⁵ Our definition is guided by the principle of inclusive design, which aims to address barriers typically overlooked in the design process.

⁶ Source: www.d5coalition.org

Inclusion is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of museums

Our institutions' viability and financial sustainability depends largely on our ability to be relevant, magnetic, and inclusive. Museums will need to cultivate effective practices for managing change to continue to do our work. The working group agreed that the purpose of discussing DEAI in the context of organizational sustainability is not to justify museum equity efforts—at base, equity is the right thing to do. Rather, we wanted to frame the discussion for those seeking to express the financial implications of DEAI in addition to the social and moral imperatives.

Through their exhibitions and programs, museums provide spaces for reflection, community-building, and inspiration. They offer resources that help visitors learn and grow. They also bolster local and national economies—to the tune of \$50 billion in GDP in the United States in 2016, according to recent research by AAM and Oxford Economics.⁷ But, despite this wide reach, museums' workforces and audiences continue to be plagued by inequalities. Although non-white people make up 23 percent of the overall US population,⁸ they comprise only 9 percent of museum visitorship.⁹ African Americans hold only 4 percent of the leadership positions in US art museums; Latinx professionals hold only 3 percent of total leadership jobs in the sector.¹⁰ The *2017 Museum Board Leadership* report, published by AAM in partnership with nonprofit leadership organization BoardSource, revealed that 46 percent of museum boards are all white. Compare these statistics to national trends: demographic data indicate an increasingly broadening spectrum of ability, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity in the United States. If museums want to continue to receive the trust and economic support of the public, they will need to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Research emphasizing the value of inclusion abounds. Across industries, diverse teams have been shown to be more profitable than homogenous ones. Writing

for *Harvard Business Review*, Stony Brook University Professor of Technology and Society Todd L. Pittinsky explained that organizations in which difference is not merely tolerated but embraced are more likely to demonstrate “open communication, feelings of inclusion, mentoring across genders and ethnicity, and ‘bringing one’s whole self to work.’” He asserted that organizational culture “plays a key role in sustained innovation.”¹¹

Working group cochair Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole compellingly expressed the business case for diversity and inclusion in her keynote address at the 2015 AAM Annual Meeting. Speaking on the theme of “The Social Value of Museums: Inspiring Change,” Dr. Cole asserted that “if businesses are to compete effectively in this global economy, they must have within their company employees of diverse backgrounds who will bring different and innovative ideas to the table.” Drawing on US Census data and demographic trends, she stressed that “in the next 30 years, the US will become a majority minority country with white folks no longer in the majority.” Dr. Cole also reminded readers that the future of philanthropy will be influenced by increasing racial and ethnic diversity, with funders prioritizing efforts that positively affect historically underrepresented populations.¹² Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion make both moral and financial sense for museums in today’s climate of rapid social and demographic change.

CALL TO ACTION

While research on inclusion and sustainability abounds in the private sector, there is a great need for accurate **benchmarking information and research** about DEAI in the museum field. You can take steps to fill in this picture by **highlighting successes** in your museum to demonstrate that everyone is enriched by this work.

⁷ *Museums as Economic Engines: A National Study*, commissioned by AAM and conducted by Oxford Economics, 2017

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. *QuickFacts*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

⁹ *Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums*, The AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010

¹⁰ *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey*, 2015

¹¹ *Harvard Business Review*, 2016

¹² Keynote address by Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole, 2015 AAM Annual Meeting

Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress

Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion are part of a wider discussion about power and privilege. Not only can museums encourage diversity, they can stop discouraging diversity. This focus on what museums can actively and intentionally do—or avoid doing—is at the heart of systemic change.

Inclusion requires an institutional orientation toward listening. It requires a willingness to invest in equity just as enthusiastically as we invest in our operations. Although personal work is a crucial part of the process, museum equity is ultimately sustained through change at the structural level. By prioritizing inclusion in their core operations, museums can ensure that progress is not just cosmetic or temporary but embedded into the systems that make them function.

The most effective tools for creating systemic change will vary according to each museum's size, budget, mission, and collections. However, addressing issues of power and unequal access within the workplace is critical. A diverse board and staff is a logical output of becoming more accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

Museum boards, directors, and staff should ask the following questions across functions and areas of practice:

- Does the museum have an institution-wide diversity plan?
- How do collections, exhibitions, and research reflect marginalized communities?
- Who does the museum partner with?
- Does the museum partner with vendors who are members of underrepresented groups?
- How do we reach those who aren't supportive of equity?

Broadening the pathways to employment helps create systemic change in the museum workplace. If unpaid internships are a prerequisite for gaining the experience and connections needed to secure a museum job, then people who can afford to work for free will rise to the top of the candidate pool. Financial support, including paid internships and housing and living

The **AAM LGBTQ Welcoming Guidelines for Museums** exemplify how museums can effect systemic change to promote the equitable inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities in all facets of museum operations. Modeled on the AAM Standards of Excellence, these guidelines outline strategies for museums to support LGBTQ inclusion at the structural level. They provide a “resource to effect change at institutions that serve LGBTQ persons and families and employ LGBTQ staff and contractors.”¹³ The guidelines' checklists and assessment tools detail practical plans for making museums accountable to LGBTQ staff, board members, volunteers, and visitors.

stipends, helps ensure that people without adequate funds have an equal shot at entering the hiring pipeline. Likewise, targeted recruiting efforts—toward historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and underrepresented student organizations at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), for example—can raise awareness of museums as a career option for those who might not have considered it.

Systemic change cannot occur without an accountability framework, whereby museum leadership, staff, boards, and communities hold each other responsible for promoting inclusion. Museums with the resources to do so can hire people in leadership positions to drive DEAI work. Internal inclusion teams and committees in museum service organizations can also help maintain accountability.

CALL TO ACTION

You can discuss the questions listed above in your staff and board retreats or in team meetings. If you don't do so already, you can **collect demographic information** about your board, staff, and visitors to benchmark inclusion in your museum and measure change over time.

¹³ Source: https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/lgbtq_welcome_guide.pdf

Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization

In a 2014 paper evaluating leadership trends, the multinational management firm Deloitte advocated the importance of cultivating leaders at every level of an organization. Its authors explain:

Today's market environment places a premium on speed, flexibility, and the ability to lead in uncertain situations. At the same time, the flattening of organizations has created an explosion in demand for leadership skills at every level.¹⁴

Museums have a stake in this expanded leadership. When a museum empowers its staff, executives, and trustees to prioritize inclusive practices, it generates a culture of inclusion that radiates through the institution and into the community.

For inclusion to become part of a museum's culture, it is essential for paid, volunteer, and executive staff to develop the skills for authentic, inclusive leadership. To accomplish this goal, museums can:

- highlight successes and reward team members for outstanding inclusion efforts
- provide training for emerging professionals
- establish employee resource groups
- build staff and community coalitions to address barriers

Inclusive leadership does not mean simply creating a position and expecting that one person will do all the work. It does not mean allowing those professionals who are already doing the work to continue to do so in isolation. It does not mean expecting members of marginalized and historically underrepresented groups to perform the emotional labor of teaching their colleagues how to be inclusive. It does not mean simply managing diversity. It does not mean designating the responsibility for inclusion work to younger, seasonal, or contract workers.



Photo courtesy of Topwell

Inclusive leadership means respectfully listening to opinions that challenge the norm. It means trusting the wisdom of less senior, less well-paid, or temporary staff. It means setting inclusive design—and not just ADA compliance—as a benchmark. It means making inclusion the business of all involved in the museum's operations, from the board of trustees to the director and the staff.

CALL TO ACTION

Museum boards and leadership can **prioritize inclusion in the strategic planning process** or through a separate inclusion plan. Museum professionals across functions can share **next practices and best-known actions** related to DEAI with colleagues.

¹⁴ *Global Human Capital Trends 2014: Engaging the 21st Century Workplace*, Deloitte Consulting LLP and Bersin by Deloitte, 2014



Conclusion

Museums hold a unique and trusted place in society. They reveal the power of ecological, artistic, and human diversity. In our current moment of rapid political and social change, museums remind us that beauty and justice are both fragile and resilient. The struggle for equity in our field—and in our society at large—precedes the working group's convenings by many, many decades and will demand our vigilance in the decades to come.

There is much to be done, and the markers of success will not necessarily be the traditional ones. Measuring numbers of employees or ticking off visible signs of human difference is simply not sufficient. Expanding diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion requires a constant evaluation of whose voices are being represented or silenced. As the introduction to this report emphasizes, inclusion is a process. But the insights shared here point us to a path forward.

“Not everything that is
faced can be changed,
but nothing can be
changed until it is faced.”

—**JAMES BALDWIN,**
writer and social critic

Resources

For a full list of additional tools to help you and your museum plan for and support diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion initiatives, please check out the resource library on the Alliance website.

