



Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino Inaugural Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029

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Letter from the Director

A Cultural Experience. A Profound Journey.

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters:

Approximately four years ago, Congress entrusted the Smithsonian with the monumental task of bringing to life the distinct tapestry of Latino experiences and contributions within the fabric of American history. Today, I am proud to unveil our inaugural strategic plan for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino—a pivotal milestone on this profound journey and the spark for many more firsts.

Over the next decade, you will witness significant milestones, such as unveiling the museum's brand marketing strategy and premier logo, kicking off awareness and advancement campaigns, acquiring seminal objects for the collection, and breaking ground for the museum building. We have already achieved many firsts, such as forming the museum's founding board, hiring staff and leadership, launching our first website, and inaugurating the Molina Family Latino Gallery with its first exhibition. Each of these milestones represents a step forward in our mission to honor the aspirations and achievements of U.S. Latinos, foster a deeper understanding of American history and culture, and connect communities nationwide.

Grounded in our core values—collective caring, authenticity, accessibility, innovation, and collaboration—our strategic plan will guide us in establishing a transformative institution that will inform and shape the narrative of Latino identity and culture in the United States. This plan is no ordinary roadmap; it embodies our collective vision for the American Latino Museum as a beacon of understanding, connection and empowerment.

As we navigate uncharted ground, we recognize the importance of planning for the unknown, ensuring that our museum remains agile, resilient, and responsive to our communities' evolving needs. This plan will serve as a guiding compass as we forge meaningful connections with the diverse communities we represent, enrich our nation's cultural landscape, amplify voices that are often under-recognized, and celebrate the intricacies of Latino heritage.

I invite you to engage with the museum's mission, champion its initiatives, and celebrate and preserve the stories of American Latinos for generations to come. Whether you attend events, volunteer, donate, or spread awareness, your involvement will be instrumental in shaping the future of our museum. Together, we will transform challenges into opportunities for growth and ensure that the National Museum of the American Latino inspires future generations to connect with their heritage and contribute to our nation's cultural experience.

Finally, I sincerely thank the U.S. Congress, the Smithsonian Board of Regents, our esteemed board, and generous donors for their unwavering support. I also want to acknowledge our dedicated staff and extend my deepest gratitude. Your commitment and contributions to the museum's vision and mission have propelled us to this momentous occasion.

With sincere appreciation and optimism,

Jorge Zamanillo
Founding Director
National Museum of the American Latino



Executive Summary

The National Museum of the American Latino (NMAL) brings together the experiences of all Latino communities in the United States to foster a deeper appreciation of their contributions to national history and culture.

As part of the Smithsonian Institution, NMAL will be more than an iconic destination in Washington, DC. It will be a place where stories unfold, understanding prospers, and cultures converge—connecting communities across the nation to recognize the American Latino’s role in what it means to be American.

To implement this vision, the NMAL’s core strategic priorities for the next five years include:

- Assembling a world-class collection of objects that speak powerfully about the Latino experience;
- Establishing and enabling a core team of dedicated professionals whose expertise, skills, and attitudes are fully attuned to the museum’s purpose, vision, mission, and priorities;
- Building an innovative community-centered national museum and network;
- Leading a national educational campaign about Latinos’ contributions to American society and culture; and
- Establishing a global brand to secure the financial resources for future construction and operations.

NMAL’s strategic plan grounds its aspiration to become the national authority on the immensely varied impact that Latinos have had — and will continue to have — in American society.



Core Values

At the National Museum of the American Latino, we value:

- **Collective Caring:** We encourage and enable Latino communities to embrace and value their cultural heritage as an integral part of their health and well-being. We invite them to unlock their agency, invest in belonging, and understand and celebrate their community connections.
- **Authenticity:** We are committed to producing content that is inclusive, factual, trustworthy, and authentic. We speak with the people involved in the stories we tell and value multiple voices, perspectives and experiences. Our content is meticulously researched, documented, and rigorously evaluated, earning the trust of our audiences.
- **Accessibility:** We embrace the value of access, ensuring that information, resources, and experiences are available to a wide and diverse audience. Our exhibits, collections and programs seek to address historical disparities and reflect thoughtful representation.
- **Innovation:** We cultivate innovation by being receptive to new ideas, different perspectives, and unconventional approaches. We value a realistic approach to experimentation to learn from both successes and failures. We understand the need to be adaptable and responsive to change and to embrace challenges as opportunities to seek creative solutions.
- **Collaboration:** We strive to establish and maintain close and harmonious relationships with our internal and external teams, collaborators, and partners to understand each other and communicate well. We recognize that good working relationships are built on empathy, respect, and trust among all team members. We have confidence in each other's abilities and communicate with openness, goodwill, and courtesy.



Mission Statement

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Latino honors the dreams, challenges, and triumphs of U.S. Latinos, elevating diverse stories within the nation’s narrative. We create transformative experiences, foster a deeper understanding of American history and culture, and connect communities nationwide.

Vision Statement

We envision a future where Latino communities belong, stories unfold, and cultures connect.

The aspirations and accomplishments of the American Latino are woven into the fabric of our national story, and they must be recognized, appreciated and valued. The National Museum of the American Latino brings together and shares those diverse stories—our intertwined and collective experiences, ancestries, geographies, languages, and communities.

The lived experience of American Latinos transcends geographic and cultural stereotypes. Celebrating it calls for a deeper and richer understanding of what matters and makes a difference in a distinctly American story. Latino stories are threads in America’s story of strength, resilience, endurance, belonging, hope, and a shared future.

As part of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of the American Latino must be more than an iconic destination in the nation’s capital. We envision a museum where Latino communities belong, stories unfold, and cultures converge—connecting people across the nation to recognize the American Latino’s role in what it means to be American.



Core Strategic Priorities

1. Build and Enable an Inaugural Core Team

We will form a core staff team capable of envisioning, constructing, and actualizing NMAL. A formal organizational chart and staffing plan are necessary to rapidly create capacity, grow expertise, and realize the museum's strategic plan objectives. Ensure professional workspaces for all staff members, establish supportive and effective internal communication, administrative support, and performance management systems, and develop a robust and continuous staff development program.

2. Create an Innovative and Community-Centered National Museum

We center community in everything we do. We actively collaborate in meaningful ways with organizations to support and amplify their existing impact. Working together, NMAL and its collaborators create and cultivate a national network, inspiring Latino communities. Our community focus will be reflected in the new museum's exhibition design, architectural program, and interpretive programming.

3. Raise Financial Support

Position NMAL to attract the necessary funding to build a national community-centered museum in the nation's capital. NMAL is raising significant leadership and principal gifts towards its historic campaign and elevating Latino philanthropy. Ample funds are essential to establishing NMAL as a transformative destination, sustaining awareness campaigns, demonstrating the impact and values of Latinos on American history and culture, and inspiring future generations.

4. Enhance and Strengthen the Museum's Brand and Reputation

NMAL solidifies its reputation as the authoritative source for narratives and content embodying the American Latino identity. As a result, NMAL will build a loyal fan base and become a trusted source for those seeking insights and knowledge into the profound impact of Latinos on American history and culture.

5. Advance National Awareness, Value and Understanding of Latino Contributions to the United States

NMAL builds awareness and brings the story of Latino contributions to homes, schools and communities across the country. Central to this are NMAL's efforts in creating educational curricula, programs, and resources to expand the understanding of U.S. history and the foundational contributions of Latinos shaping American identity.



6. Build a National Collection Representative of U.S. Latinos

We recognize that objects have power. They encourage memories and storytelling. They can be physical or digital, but all help to create unique, immersive learning experiences. Through the deliberate recovery of stories, care of collections, and partnerships with communities, NMAL actively demonstrates the profound impact of Latinos on American history and culture.