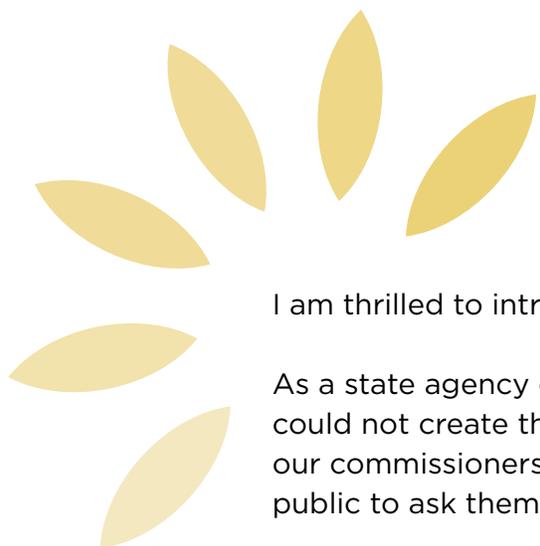




Strategic Plan 2021-2024



Pennsylvania
Historical & Museum
Commission



I am thrilled to introduce PHMC's new strategic plan.

As a state agency devoted to public history and public service, we knew we could not create this plan in a vacuum. We reached out not only to our staff and our commissioners but to our partners, stakeholders and members of the general public to ask them what was important to them in the development of this plan.

We heard from nearly 450 stakeholders about what they think PHMC should focus on over the next three years. Of course, both internal and external stakeholders saw the need for PHMC to continue its mission-related work, but there was also wide agreement that engaging new audiences and offering relevant and dynamic interpretation and programs are key to agency success. Communications, online access, physical improvements to buildings and exhibits, and increased community outreach were also recurring themes among both internal and external stakeholders.

Based on that input, we developed our vision for the agency that will guide all that we do: Pennsylvanians see history as relevant to their lives. In order to support that vision, we developed a plan that will preserve and share our state's dynamic and diverse history with a focus on accessibility, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Of course, strategic plans are only effective when they can be readily understood and practically implemented. Our new strategic plan, while ambitious, meets both criteria. The agency and each bureau have defined initiatives that support those goals. We will be tracking our progress to ensure that we continue to make meaningful progress.

We thank everyone who helped shape this plan and look forward to sharing our progress with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Lowery". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Lowery
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission



Our Strategic Vision



Preserving and Sharing History of and for All Pennsylvanians

Pennsylvania is known as the Keystone state—and for good reason. The commonwealth is the crossroads of so many important events and ideas: the nation’s founding, a primary gateway and corridor for America’s diverse population, the rise of industrialization, the intersection of a variety of natural ecosystems, and much more. With 2,450 individual municipalities, Pennsylvania is a complex fabric enriched by its varied threads. At the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), we embrace this complexity and the fullness it brings, and we value all voices in remembering and using our shared past to plan for our future.

Our Mission

As the state’s history agency, it is our mission to discover, protect and share Pennsylvania’s past, inspiring others to value and use our history in meaningful ways.

Our Values

We are committed to:

- Connecting Pennsylvanians to their history and each other.
- Helping Pennsylvanians discover the relevance of their history and culture.
- Sharing Pennsylvania history to educate, inspire and provide context for decision-making.
- Being inclusive in everything we do and treating everyone with dignity, kindness and respect.
- Doing our best always to provide Pennsylvanians with the service they deserve.

Our Vision

Pennsylvanians see history as relevant to their lives.



Our Strategic Priorities

Meaningful and Inclusive History

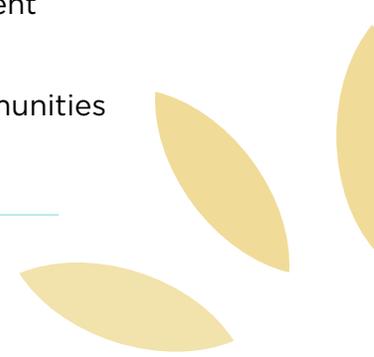
Our work is ultimately about people. Although we are stewards of Pennsylvania's natural and cultural history, it is not enough to preserve historic sites, artifacts and documents. We must ensure that what we preserve reflects the history of all Pennsylvanians and share this history in meaningful ways.

WE WILL:

- Ensure that the history preserved and shared represents the breadth of Pennsylvanians and their stories.
- Engage with communities and partners to preserve and share history that is meaningful to them.
- Enhance offerings on topics with contemporary relevance.
- Share history in engaging, innovative and relatable ways.

Work in Progress:

- Increased emphasis on diverse exhibits and programs, including a new State Museum civil rights exhibit and a Juneteenth celebration at Pennsbury Manor.
- Online Community History Dialog to encourage documentation and preservation of underrepresented communities' history.
- Broadening the collection of museum artifacts to better represent all Pennsylvanians.
- Development of the Statewide Preservation Plan to assist communities in preserving historic resources that are meaningful to them.





Accessible History

We serve all Pennsylvanians by preserving their history. For people to be able to use history for their purposes, they must be able to find, access and retrieve it.

WE WILL:

- Increase the diversity represented in PHMC's collections, including its sites, facilities, collections, exhibits and data.
- Ensure that collections, artifacts and documents are findable and retrievable.
- Make PHMC sites and content accessible, both physically and virtually.

Work in Progress:

- Implementation of a statewide historic property survey to document underrepresented resources that illustrate the state's ethnic, cultural and historical diversity within Pennsylvania's Historic Places Inventory.
- Digitization of microfilm records that were previously available only on site and making them accessible online.
- Deployment of a publicly accessible online database of museum collections.
- Virtual history programs shared through social media, online presentations, live-streamed programs and online webinars.



Participatory History

We do not accomplish our work alone. We partner and collaborate with communities and organizations across the state to preserve, share and promote Pennsylvania history.

WE WILL:

- Assist communities in preserving history that is meaningful to them.
- Connect history practitioners, resource providers and strategic partners.
- Support strategic initiatives and partnerships that produce mutually beneficial results.

Work in Progress:

- Development of a statewide directory of historical and cultural institutions.
- Development of procedures for other state agencies to clarify their responsibilities under the History Code.
- Collaboration with state agencies, such as our work with PennDOT to preserve metal truss bridges, a signature Pennsylvania historic resource.



Public History

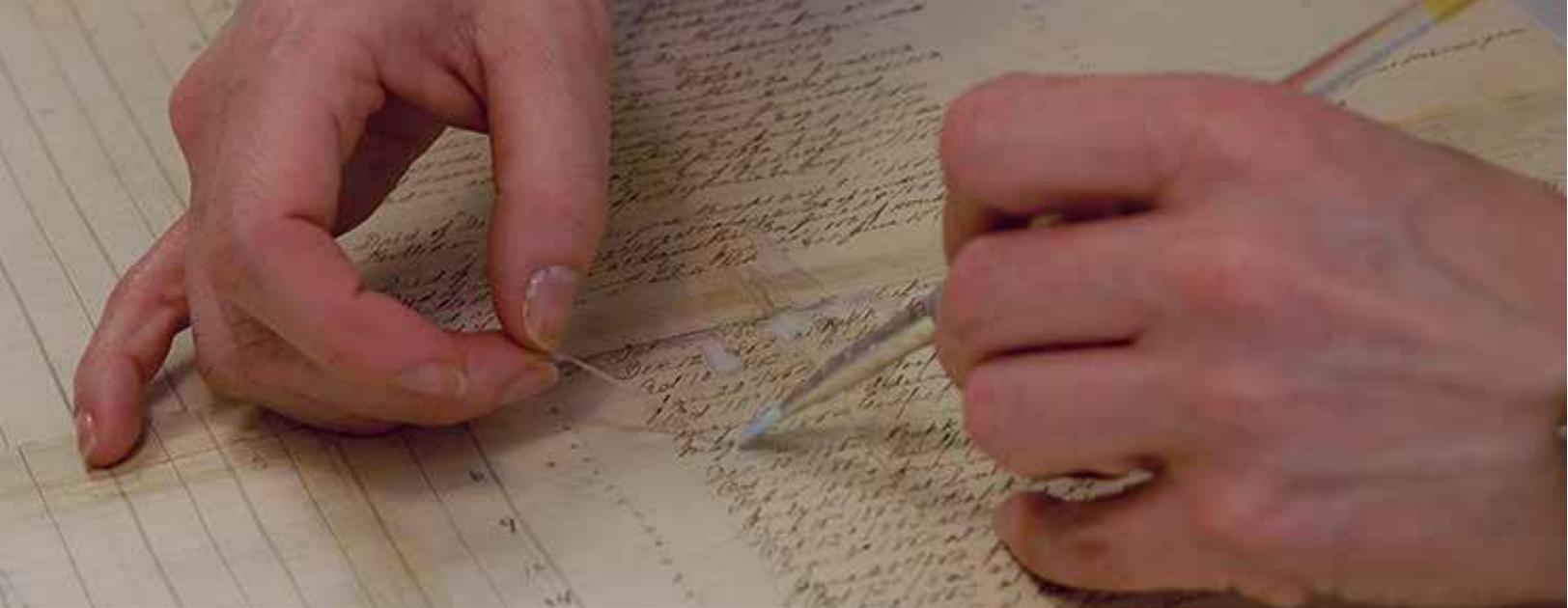
We are a public service agency, and our focus will remain on the public and on service. We strive to provide value to the commonwealth's people in return for their financial investment in us.

WE WILL:

- Keep service to Pennsylvanians at the heart of everything we do.
- Continuously improve efficiency and prioritize mission-driven and strategic work.
- Follow best practices, preserving historical collections and stories for present and future generations of Pennsylvanians.

Work in Progress:

- Regular evaluation of initiatives and programs for effectiveness and alignment with strategic priorities.
- Creation of a digital archives to serve the public by preserving the electronic records that protect their financial interests and legal rights.
- Development of a historic preservation data management system to streamline the environmental review processes.



Sustainable History

Our collections are forever. We only collect artifacts and documents that must be preserved permanently, so it is essential that agency operations remain supported and viable.

WE WILL:

- Care for collections in accordance with best practices.
- Align mission-critical and strategic priorities with resources.
- Provide professional growth and support opportunities to retain and attract motivated, well-qualified and diverse staff.

Work in Progress:

- Construction of a new State Archives building.
- Relocation of collections currently held at Harrisburg State Hospital.
- Reorganization of PHMC's digital assets.



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