

| THE WALTERS |  
| ART MUSEUM |

# Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Goals

*Updated March 2021*



# Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Goals

The Walters Art Museum is among America's most distinctive museums, forging connections between people and art from cultures around the world and spanning seven millennia. Through its collections, exhibitions, and education programs, the Walters engages the City of Baltimore, Maryland, and communities across the globe.

In December 2020, the Walters Art Museum finalized a set of multiyear diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) goals in alignment with the museum's Strategic Plan.

## Background and Purpose of DEAI Goals

In November 2015, the Walters Art Museum launched a new Strategic Plan as a 10-year roadmap for the institution. In the Plan, the Board and staff made a commitment to a new vision for the Walters—to be a force for transformation in the Baltimore region. The Plan calls for the institution to “situate itself more firmly in Baltimore—a diverse city that is majority African American—and the region by investing in its citizens.”

The DEAI goals outlined in this document are a direct outcome of this Strategic Plan. While the institution has made progress since 2015 toward this vision of transformation and service, we recognize the urgent need to do more. The history of racism in this country demands action from us, both as individuals and as a museum. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacts Black, Latinx, and lower-income communities and reduces access to art and educational opportunities, requiring us to reconsider how the Walters serves the public.

To accelerate and embed diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion throughout the Walters' work and culture, the museum created a Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group in Summer 2020 and a standing Board DEAI Committee in September 2020. The Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group will ensure that the lens of DEAI is applied to the annual and multiyear operational and programmatic goals of the museum in line with the museum's stated Mission and Vision. More immediately, the charge of the Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group is to develop short- and medium-term actions and goals, now captured in this document, that will continue to advance the museum's DEAI work for its staff and communities.

To create these DEAI goals, the Working Group reviewed the institution's progress against the Strategic Plan; consolidated and reviewed staff- and department-driven goals for DEAI (which were developed July to August 2020); and identified key priorities for the institution moving forward. Over 90 staff members (of approximately 150 staff) participated in optional feedback sessions about the goals and priorities, and the Board DEAI Committee and full Board of Trustees reviewed and supported the plan.



For the purposes of this document, please consider the definitions of DEAI set forth by the American Alliance of Museums.<sup>1</sup> The definitions from the American Alliance of Museums are as follows:

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

The Walters also draws on the Cleveland Museum of Art's framing of diversity in their DEAI plan. Throughout, when the term diversity is used, it reflects the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, educational status, marital status, language, age, and mental or physical ability, as well as the interactions among individuals that shape ideas, perspectives, and values.<sup>2</sup>

## Walters Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Goals

This document is organized around the five strategic priorities outlined in the current Walters Strategic Plan: Activate the Collections; Engage through Personal Experiences; Create Innovative Partnerships; Strengthen Accountability and Sustainability; and Build a Dynamic Team. Under each priority are lists of key DEAI initiatives since 2015 and multiyear (two- to three-year) DEAI commitments for the institution.

In the discussions to develop the DEAI goals, three overarching imperatives emerged. These essential commitments for the Walters Art Museum are the following:

*Expand the histories the museum examines and shares.*

*Partner with our communities.*

*Center equity, inclusion, and accountability in our culture and decision-making.*

1 American Alliance of Museums. "Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion." <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change-definitions/>

2 Cleveland Museum of Art. "The CMA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan." <https://www.clevelandart.org/sites/default/files/documents/other/Diversity%2C%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan.pdf>

## Expand the histories the museum examines and shares

The Walters Art Museum is committed to making accessible the histories of its origins and the art that it stewards in order to ensure an environment of anti-racism, inclusivity, collaboration, and welcome for visitors, volunteers, and staff. The Walters will continue to make this research and these histories accessible onsite and online.

## Partner with our communities

In order to be of service to our communities, we embrace our role as educators, as storytellers, and as a resource for the community, using the collection as a vehicle of knowledge and cultural expression to support learning, dialogue, and engagement. We also appreciate that this is a continuously evolving process that requires reflection, input, and listening, and we are committed to doing this important work with our local arts communities. The Walters must create a partnership of trust, open dialogue, and accountability with our communities and develop and institutionalize mechanisms for representation and feedback throughout our work.

## Center equity, inclusion, and accountability in our culture and decision-making

The museum's commitment to DEAI must begin with our own teams and workplace culture. This includes improving pay equity and developing a new compensation strategy, providing platforms for staff input and accountability for responsiveness, and creating more clarity into processes and decision-making.

## Accountability and Resources for DEAI Goals

These programmatic and operational goals will be shared publicly and with all staff to create accountability for the Walters commitment to DEAI and to ensure effectiveness in all aspects of the museum's work.

The multiyear goals include work already underway and budgeted for in FY 2021 (July 2020 to June 2021) and will continue in FY 2022 and FY 2023. The museum will identify specific action steps and milestones to achieve each of these DEAI goals, and this next level of planning will be completed in spring FY 2021, in alignment with the institution's annual budgeting cycle, to ensure that adequate resources are available and budgeted in FY 2022. The full action plan will be reviewed by the Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group and shared with the staff and Board.

The museum recognizes the need to create new approaches to providing visibility into the progress and status of its work for all stakeholders. Annually the Board of Trustees will review progress against the goals, and an annual update will be provided publicly on the website.

## Conclusion

The Walters Art Museum believes in the fundamental role art and history play in shaping a better future. This moment challenges us to listen, learn, and take action to build a better and more just future for Baltimore and the region.

The work that we must do is not possible without the partnership of our staff, Board, supporters, and communities. We commit to continue this work with you—and with urgency and courage.

# I. Activate the Collections

## Key DEAI initiatives to date

- A. Expanded access to the Walters Art Museum and its collections.** Eliminated special exhibition fees, making the Walters Art Museum the only museum in Baltimore where entry is completely free, and added hours to Thursday evenings to increase access to local audiences. Increased free digital public programs and resources for adults, families, preK–12 students and teachers, and members. Deepened our commitment to open access to collection resources. Now, due to increased digitization, more than 40% of all collections are digitized and online, and what started as free scholarly use has moved to free unrestricted use for any purpose.
- B. Reopened Hackerman House at One West Mount Vernon Place and began to share new histories about the enslaved people who lived and worked there, in particular Sybby Grant, a cook.**
- C. Partnered with contemporary artists to explore new perspectives on the Walters collections,** including ceramicists Roberto Lugo and Herb Massie as well as Jay Gould and Antonio McAfee. Their work was featured in temporary exhibitions and installations in Hackerman House at One West Mount Vernon Place and focused on the themes of slavery, labor, and identity relating to the history of the house. Expanded our collaborations with local artists through public programs and performances, including Nicoletta de la Brown and WombWork Productions.
- D. Created a five-year exhibitions and installations plan to increase access to collections not currently on view and reinterpret other areas of the collection through non-Eurocentric lenses.**

## Multiyear DEAI commitments

- A. Update and expand the biographies of the museum's founders in order to acknowledge publicly William T. Walters' and Henry Walters' support of the Confederate cause,** and to interrogate the ways in which William's and Henry's views informed the development of their collection.
- B. Commence a thorough study of the economic, political, and social histories of William and Henry Walters and their historical legacies,** including research by both internal staff and external historians. This study will both look at the history of the Walters as well as explore and highlight the wider role that art, art museums, and philanthropy have played in systems of oppression in the United States. The museum will share findings through programs, in the galleries, in on-site and online materials, and in staff, volunteer, and docent trainings.
- C. Create an institutional land acknowledgment statement** to be posted onsite and online that recognizes the original stewards of the land on which the City of Baltimore and subsequently the museum was created, and states that the Walters Art Museum exists on the unceded ancestral lands of the Susquehannock and Piscataway Nations, as well as the home territory of the Lumbee and Cherokee peoples. The museum will share the statement with local organizations and partners, and compensate partners for their time and expertise. The museum will also develop new programming featuring Indigenous voices and partners, conduct a census of museum labels, create new online content, and support staff, volunteer, and docent trainings.
- D. Continue to conduct thorough investigations of the provenance of the Walters collections** and to convey the issues surrounding colonialism and its implicit support for the spoliation and theft of works from other cultures, especially those of people of color.

- E. **Review existing installations, works online, and works on view** to both ensure that the histories of and points of view embedded in the objects are explored and conveyed, and to increase access to the collection and information about the collection. The museum will also reassess current cataloging practices and collection classification and categorization.
- F. **Diversify and contextualize the stories the museum tells** through programs, loans, acquisitions, installations, exhibitions, **collaborations with contemporary artists**, and partnerships in order to be more inclusive of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) art, perspectives, and stories, as well as those of other underrepresented people and cultures.
- G. **Create a partnership of trust, open dialogue, and accountability with our communities** by centering audiences and communities, and their feedback, in the Walters decision-making. The museum will develop mechanisms for representation and feedback throughout the Walters, including a strategy and structure for community engagement and advisory boards for exhibitions, installations, and programs; strengthened evaluation for exhibitions, installations, and programs; and continued visitor survey and targeted surveys to test key initiatives. The museum will also commit to understanding more deeply what the Walters Art Museum represents to the community today and in the future.
- H. Develop new and inclusive **processes for selecting and developing exhibitions and installations, and for collections content**, including feedback from staff, volunteers, and community participation.

## II. Engage through Personal Experiences

### Key DEAI initiatives to date

- A. Invested in **creating a welcoming experience for visitors to our Mount Vernon campus**. Created a Visitor Services department, and expanded and diversified the Visitor Services volunteer group. Established the Walters Visitor Promise to support visitors and staff to have a welcoming experience free of discrimination, with input from visitors and staff.
- B. Created and launched **new education programs to address barriers to access and engagement as well as to build trust with the community**, including new school tour and family programs that served students and families across the digital divide; distributing 2,000 Art Kits in partnership with Baltimore City and Baltimore County; new programs to serve families with children with autism and sensory processing disorders (Sensory Morning and Evening), in partnership with Kennedy Krieger Institute; and community programs to provide space for Baltimore communities, support local business, and create opportunities for communities to see themselves reflected in our collection, such as Día de los Muertos and Lunar New Year. Created the Adult & Community Programs team.
- C. Committed to **understanding our audiences and those who we are not serving**. Developed and launched first visitor survey since 2007 to create a shared understanding of visitors.
- D. Shifted marketing strategy to **invest in local awareness and engagement in Baltimore and Maryland**, including through billboards, bus shelters, publications, and social media.
- E. As a result of these sustained strategies and investments, the museum is now engaging a younger audience of visitors today relative to 15 years ago.

## Multiyear DEAI commitments

- A. Develop a **comprehensive plan to increase accessibility to the museum and museum resources**, including the physical museum space as well as programs, onsite and potential off-site experiences, collection resources, and digital engagement, in partnership with local accessibility partners and communities.
- B. As the museum continues to expand its digital programming and resources, continue to invest in resources and programs that **serve audiences across the digital divide**.
- C. Establish **new vision for the Walters' school and teacher programs to deepen impact in Baltimore City** and develop a scalable statewide strategy to reach all of Maryland.
- D. **Continue to roll out the Walters' Visitor Promise** and extend it throughout the museum.
- E. **Continue to commit to audience assessment and evaluation**, as part of a broader and strengthened approach to audience and community feedback.
- F. **With relevant and impactful projects and an understanding of what audiences want, continue to strengthen and build awareness of the Walters.**

## III. Create Innovative Partnerships

### Key DEAI initiatives to date

- A. **Established strategic partnerships with University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), Morgan State University, Kennedy Krieger Institute, and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)**. Established the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported Summer Research Program in Baltimore at the Interface between Science and Art initiative (Baltimore SCIART), and established programmatic relationship with Morgan State.
- B. **Participated in and funded the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance Urban Arts Leadership Program (UALP) fellowship.**
- C. **Participated in the Bloomberg Arts Internship with Young Audiences** to support rising high school seniors from Baltimore City Public Schools.

## Multiyear DEAI commitments

- A. **Create partnership of trust, open dialogue, and accountability with our communities, and embrace partnership as a central imperative of our DEAI goals.** As a result, partnership is embedded throughout all of these goals and plans, including in how the Walters will activate the collections, expand accessibility to the museum, strengthen local businesses, and partner with staff and volunteers.
- B. **Continue to develop reciprocal partnerships** with school districts, local artists, community leaders, accessibility partners, and organizations, in alignment with the Strategic Plan and in support of these DEAI goals.
- C. **Develop new models with our strategic partners to promote workforce development in Baltimore and Maryland and to support ladders of opportunity to museum careers.**

## IV. Strengthen Accountability and Sustainability

### Key DEAI initiatives to date

- A. Established a **field-leading initiative to invest the endowment with minority- and women-owned investment funds**. Twenty-one percent of the museum's current portfolio is invested in minority- and women-owned investment funds.
- B. Created a **Socially Responsible Investing sub-committee of the Investment Committee**.
- C. Created a **Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group and Board DEAI Committee** to create a collaborative model to support lasting change at the Walters Art Museum.

### Multiyear DEAI commitments

- A. **Create institutional alignment around the museum's vision and commitment to DEAI.**  
The museum will align on Walters Art Museum definitions of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. The museum will also create a DEAI statement for the museum, and provide ongoing professional development for staff on anti-bias, anti-racism, racial justice, and equity, within the museum field generally and at the Walters specifically.
- B. **Create action steps and accountability for the museum to achieve the DEAI goals.** In order to move from the commitments reflected in this document to action and impact, specific action steps and milestones will be developed and reviewed by the Joint Staff & Board DEAI Working Group and shared with the staff and Board. Annually, the Board of Trustees will review progress against the goals and an update will be provided publicly on the website.
- C. **Continue the Walters commitment to investing in minority- and women-owned funds.**
- D. **Support and strengthen local businesses economically** by expanding relationships with new vendors, with a focus on female-owned, Black-owned, and Baltimore City businesses.
- E. **Create more staff awareness of Walters fundraising strategies and the overall state of philanthropy.** The museum will also continue to review and revise fundraising communications and grants to ensure the use of inclusive language and fundraising strategies.
- F. **Underpin all of the museum's efforts with ongoing review of data, metrics, and results** in order to promote understanding and accountability.

## V. Build and Support a Dynamic Team

### Key DEAI initiatives to date

- A. Launched an **internal staff DEAI initiative in 2019**, including an all-staff engagement survey.
- B. **Increased the diversity of the Board of Trustees**, with more female, BIPOC, and younger Trustees in FY 2021 than in FY 2014.
- C. **Eliminated unpaid internships.**



- D. Made sustained progress toward increasing employee compensation.** Funded seven consecutive years of staff pay increases, including steady pay adjustments to Maintenance and Security. Restarted and increased 457(b)-plan employer-matching contributions. In January 2021, the museum announced that it is raising its minimum wage for all full-time hourly positions to \$15 per hour, and bringing part-time hourly positions to a \$13 per hour minimum, effective the date of the museum's reopening (currently scheduled for mid-March 2021).
- E. Increased benefits for full-time staff.** Introduced PTO program allowing for time-off flexibility. Introduced Short-Term Disability plan. Restarted Employee Assistance Program (pre-existed with city). Provided parking and public transportation subsidy on pre-tax basis and free investment advisor services.
- F. Strengthened professional development** for all staff. Established annual performance reviews, and increased training and professional development, including LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) sensitivity training.
- G. Continued to evaluate and update the holiday schedule.** Established Juneteenth as an annual holiday in FY 2020 and eliminated Columbus Day in FY 2014.

## Multiyear DEAI commitments

- A. Support a Walters team culture based on clarity, inclusivity, and accountability.**  
Throughout the Walters' staff discussions on DEAI priorities, strengthening our culture was a focus. The museum commits in the both immediate- and longer-term to the following:
  - Strengthening open and clear internal communication.
  - Increasing visibility into goals and progress at every level of the institution.
  - Creating clarity around the museum's decisions and decision-making processes.
  - Empowering team members across the institution to provide input by providing spaces for listening, feedback, and dialogue.
  - Promoting cross-departmental collaboration through team-based projects and workflow.
- B. Create and share a new compensation strategy that is understood by staff and promotes pay equity.** Over the next two years (FY 2022–2023), the museum will develop and share a new compensation strategy that addresses full- and part-time staff. The museum also commits to taking immediate action to provide increased transparency into wages, including posting salary ranges on all job postings, effective immediately, and providing staff sessions on the museum's current compensation strategy (including direct and indirect compensation, and how that compares to the market).
- C. Develop new professional development, leadership development, and mentorship programs** to establish career advancement opportunities. The museum recognizes that this support, including training, must be ongoing in order to promote skill building and include new team members.
- D. Continue to diversify the staff and support diverse staff and perspectives** through policies and procedures that ensure success in hiring, onboarding, retaining, and promoting museum professionals at all levels and in all areas of the museum.
- E. In alignment with the museum field, evaluate the museum's internship, fellowship, and volunteer models** in order to develop a long-term sustainable and equitable staffing model and promote new ladders of opportunity in all areas of the museum.