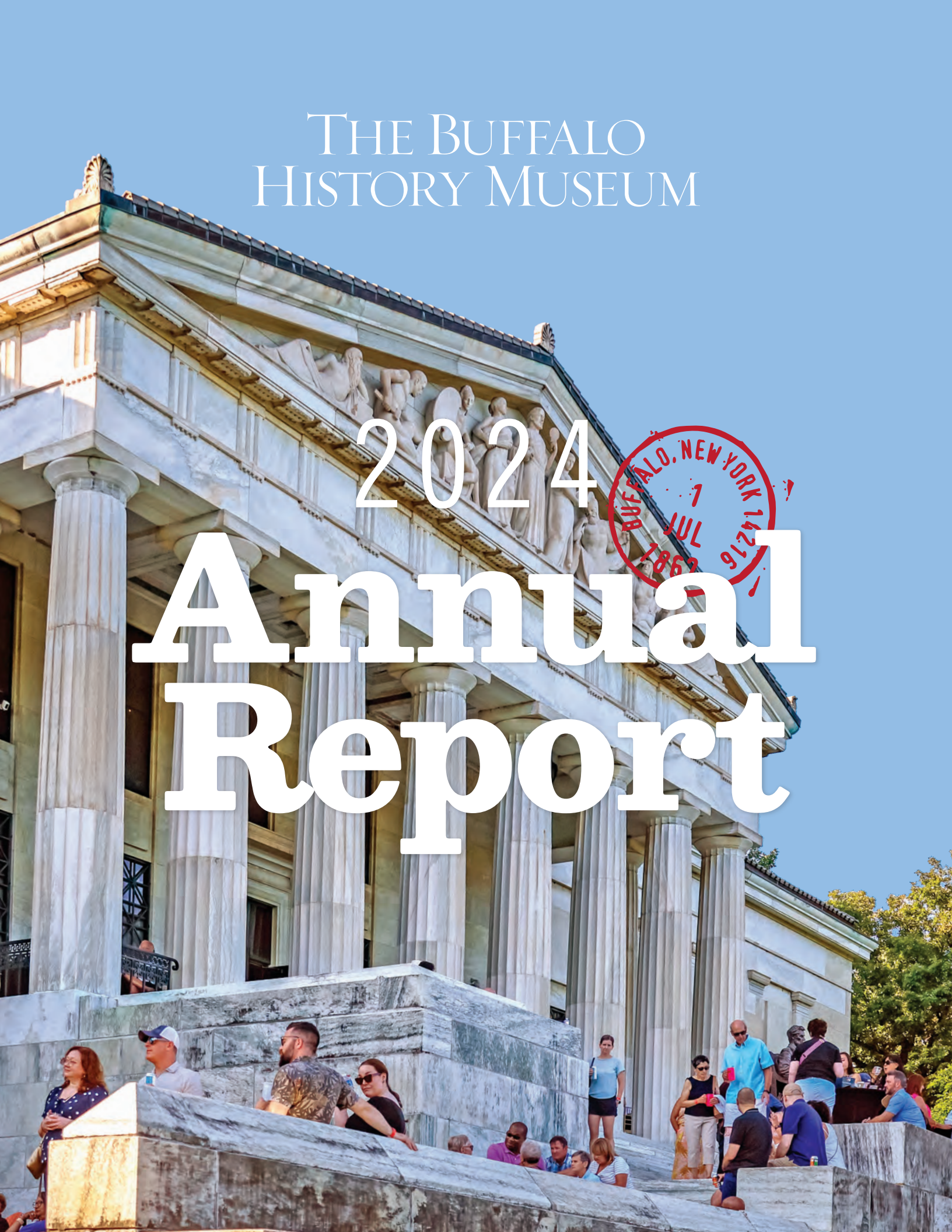


# THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

2024

# Annual Report







## Our Mission

Experiencing history with you, by safekeeping, remembering, discovering, and sharing our stories; learning and exploring together; sparking emotional and social connections within our unique community.

## Dear Members and Friends,

As we mark the midpoint of our ten-year Master Plan, I find myself filled with both gratitude and wonder. Gratitude for all that we've accomplished together over the past five years — and wonder at the possibilities that lie ahead.

When we first launched the Master Plan in 2019, none of us could have predicted how soon the world would shift beneath our feet. A global pandemic tested institutions everywhere, and The Buffalo History Museum was no exception. Yet through it all, your unwavering support, generosity, and belief in our mission carried us forward. Because of you, we not only endured — we found new ways to serve, to connect, and to imagine what a history museum can be.

Even amid profound uncertainty, we fulfilled the ambitious goals that felt bold then — and feel even more meaningful now. Together, we restored beloved spaces in our historic building, broadened our educational and digital offerings to reach more learners of every age, and deepened our commitment to sharing the full, diverse story of our region. Our exhibitions and programs invited reflection, dialogue, and joy — all at a time when connection felt more essential than ever.

These milestones aren't just checkboxes on a plan — they are love letters in their own right: tributes to your resilience, your vision, and the heart you bring to this Museum.

As we look to the next five years, our vision grows bolder still. We are preparing to reimagine more of our campus, elevate the visitor experience, and continue to center the stories that have historically been excluded. We're grounding ourselves in the belief that history is not just about what was, but about what's possible.

This next chapter is about deepening our roots and broadening our reach — creating a Museum that reflects the richness of our shared heritage and stands ready to welcome the generations to come.

Thank you for walking with us — through the challenges, the changes, and the moments of joy. Your belief in this Museum, and in the power of history to bring people together, is what makes all of this possible. Because of you, we've done more than we imagined. And with you beside us, the best is still ahead.

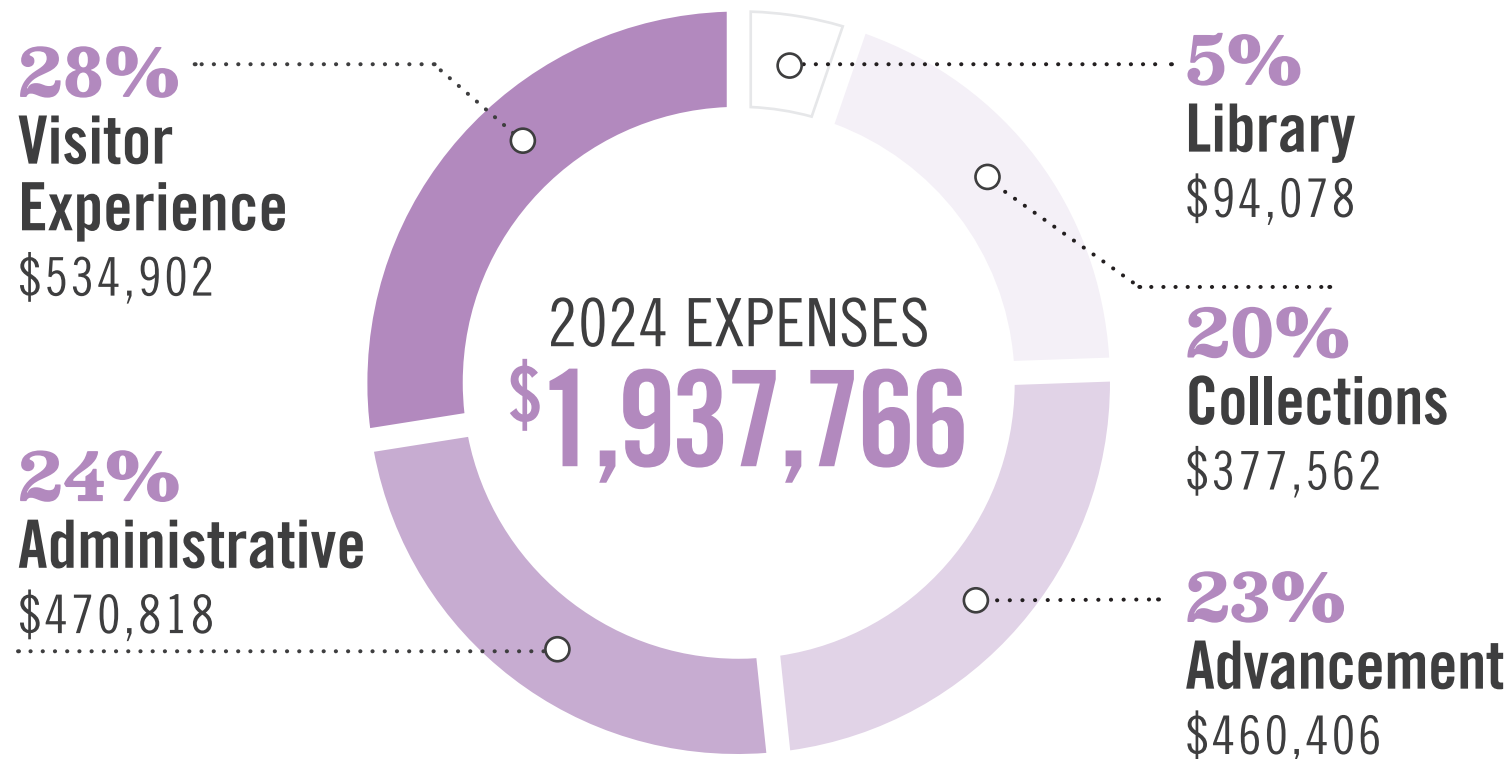
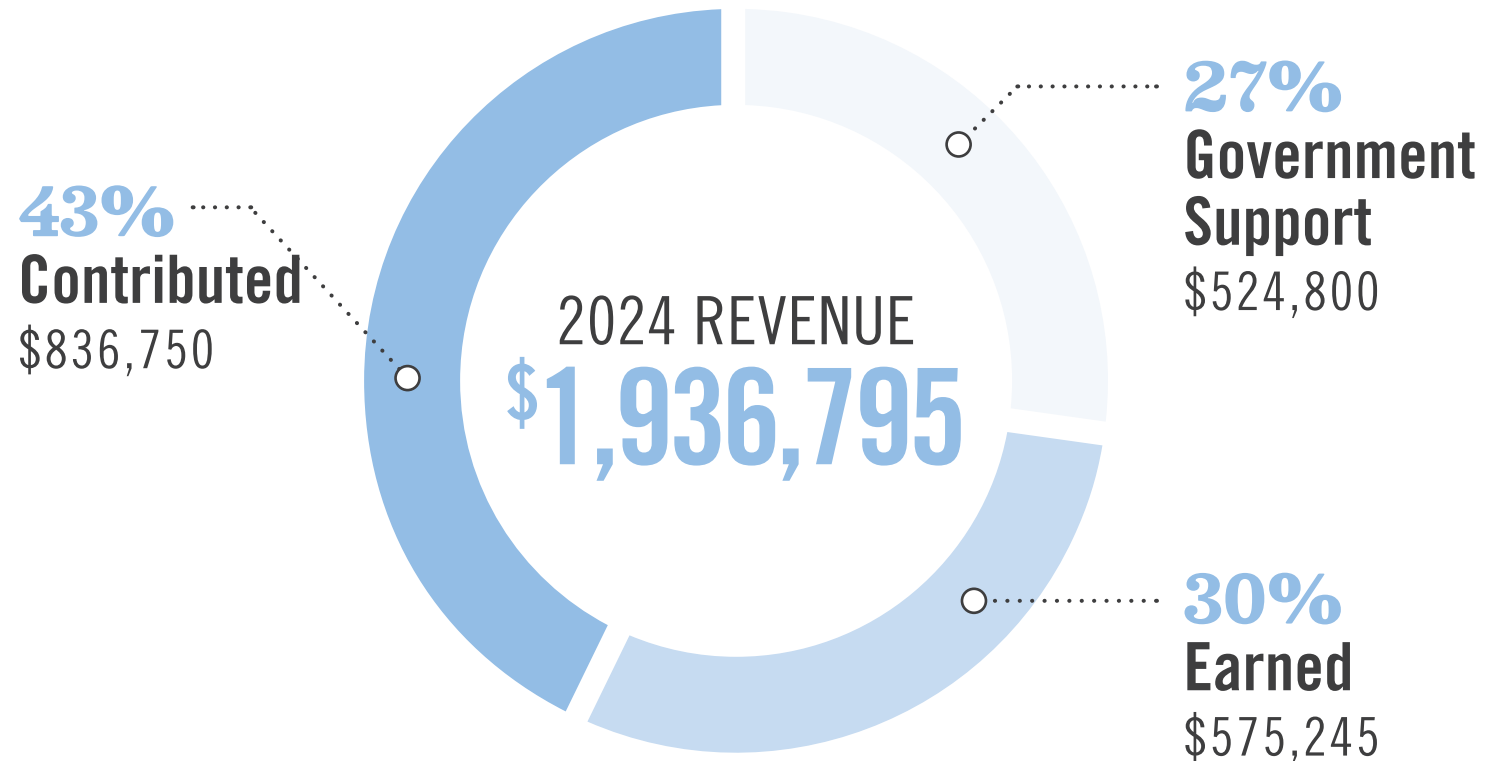


Warmly,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, The Buffalo History Museum



# Financials



# By the Numbers

**162**  
years in operation

**917**  
members

**500,000+**  
items in our collection

**40,000**  
guests annually

**64**  
Co-sponsored partner programs and events

**65,000+**  
Buffalo History Museum Podcast downloads



**2,085**  
students in 2024 visited us on field trips



**3,019**  
people in 2024 experienced our programming



**34**  
local merchants available in our gift shop



# Community Impact & Partnerships

## Deepening Roots and Expanding our Reach

In 2024 the Museum welcomed nearly double the number of events with local community partners and mission-aligned organizations.

We look forward to continuing to be a welcoming venue for the community to gather, being a resource for our partners, increasing our outreach and visibility, and utilizing the Museum in new and exciting ways.

### Hosted Community Partners Include:

- Buffalo African American Museum
- Colored Musicians Club
- Asian Pacific American Public Affairs (APAPA)
- Erie County
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Trailblazing Women
- Smithsonian Institution
- Partnership for the Public Good



- Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Empire State Development
- 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition
- Journey's End
- Buffalo Music Hall of Fame
- Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy
- Native American Community Services
- Visit Buffalo Niagara
- The Martin House
- New York Immigration Coalition
- Say Yes Buffalo
- FeedMore WNY
- Junior League of Buffalo
- Candles in the S.U.N.

## 5/14 Massacre Community Memory Coalition

In the aftermath of the 5/14 massacre, the 5/14 Massacre Community Memory Coalition has become a vital force for remembrance, healing, and transformation. With guidance from Rose Jade Consulting Cooperative, the coalition has co-created a mission, vision, and values that center the voices of victims' families and the broader community.

Through quarterly retreats, affinity group dialogues, and intentional relationship-building, the coalition is confronting the legacies of white supremacist violence while advancing long-term strategies for cultural and systemic change.

A key initiative has been the development of a shared stewardship model for memory work—an approach informed by national best practices and rooted in community input. It began with the respectful gathering of items from the spontaneous memorial at Tops in November 2022. Students from the Patricia H. and Richard E. Garman Art Conservation Department, in collaboration with Museum collections staff, are now focused on the archival care of those materials. The work is expanding to include the collection of oral histories and community-driven objects that speak to lived experiences and the broader context of racial injustice in Buffalo.

As we look ahead, the coalition will deepen its presence in the community this summer—gathering stories, building partnerships, and expanding inclusive pathways for participation in this ongoing work of remembrance and repair.



# Collections

## Building a More Inclusive Record

Through thoughtful acquisitions and contemporary collecting, we are shaping a collection that reflects all of Buffalo—past and present.

### Preserving Buffalo's Stories: A Year in Collections & Archives

#### Connecting with the Past—Digitally

More than 8,300 objects from our collection are now available to explore online through our PastPerfect database. From everyday items to rare artifacts, we're opening our archives to the world. We partnered with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library to expand access to over 170 local newspapers dating back to 1811, now fully searchable online through Newspapers.com.

#### Collecting Today's History

This year, we continued building collections that reflect our community's diverse stories and lived experiences. New and ongoing initiatives include:

- Chronicling COVID-19
- 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition
- The Newlywed Project – the first of its kind in the U.S. to gather memorabilia from legally wed same-sex couples
- Blizzard of 2022, Remembering the Old Pink, and the new Celebrations and Cultural Traditions collection

### New Acquisitions

Recent additions to our collection reflect Buffalo's cultural richness and evolving history:

- Local cookbooks, including Gourmet the Kosher Way and a 1951 Polish-American recipe book now online at Archive.org
- A rare St. Patrick's Day photo, ca. 1900
- That Brown Bag Directory, a listing of minority-owned local businesses
- Sojourners and Settlers, chronicling the Yemeni immigrant experience
- 60 Years of Friendship, celebrating Buffalo's bond with Kanazawa, Japan
- Imperial Court of Buffalo Protocol Manual, documenting the local drag community
- Anniversary materials from Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Afro-American Historical Association

# Resource Center

With 16 decades of collecting, over 500,000 objects in our collection, and 33% of our total budget dedicated to their care, the Resource Center is at the heart of preserving Buffalo's rich history and complex history. Currently, only a fraction of our collection is on view. This transformation will change that—opening up access to the treasures within and making them more discoverable, usable, and visible to the public.

Located at 459 Forest Avenue, the Resource Center is the cornerstone of our long-range vision—an ambitious, future-facing investment in access, preservation, and public impact. As the most significant project of our Master Plan, this effort will:

- Preserve and Share the Full Scope of Our Region's History
- Create Flexible, Multi-Use Spaces for Community Gathering and Engagement
- Expand Community-Centered and Next-Generation Collecting

- Meet the Growing Demand for Interactive, Inclusive Visitor Experiences
- Strengthen Signature Heritage Events and Cultural Tourism

This transformation also deepens our role as stewards. Caring for this extraordinary volume of material—on behalf of the community and for generations to come—requires not only space, but resources and a lasting commitment to sustainable collections care.

**This project is a vital step in revitalizing Buffalo's heritage and ensuring our history continues to inspire. Together, we can transform the Resource Center into a vibrant, accessible hub for exploration and connection—shaping the future of our shared story.**

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Transforming the Resource Center

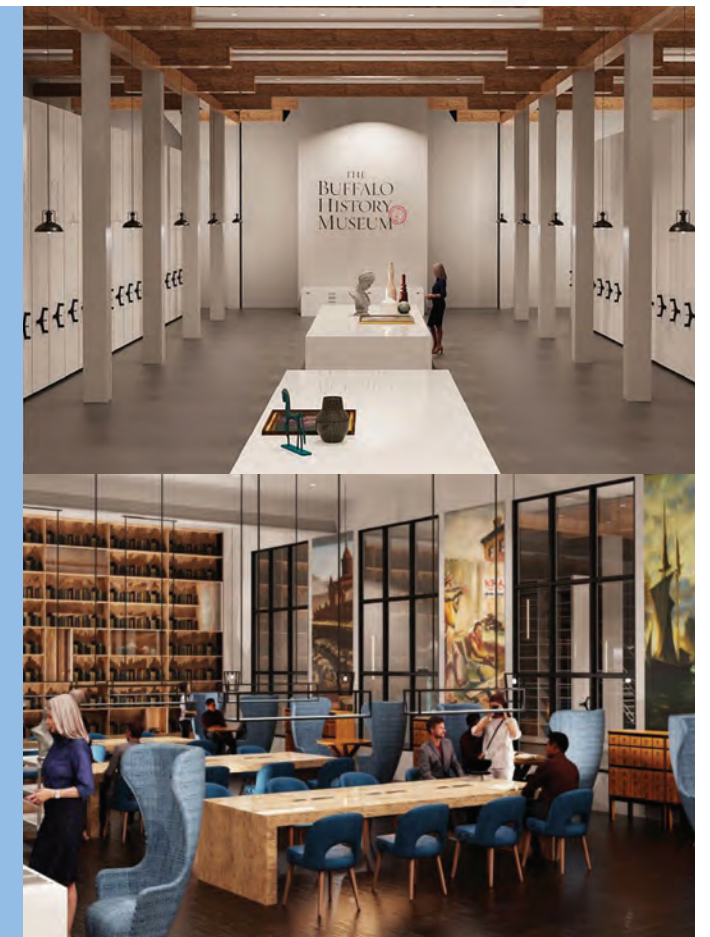
A \$12 million investment to expand access, care, and connection.

#### Project Scope

- 40,000 sq. ft. facility redesigned for collections, research, and public use
- Compact shelving and modern storage for increased capacity and preservation
- Upgraded HVAC, fire suppression, and security systems

#### Public Features

- Community Research Lounge for exploration and inquiry
- New exhibition space highlighting rarely seen collections
- Scheduled behind-the-scenes tours
- Flexible spaces for programs, workshops, and gatherings





# Community Support

# A Fresh Stage for History and Community

This year, with the incredible support of our donors and partners, our historic auditorium got the spotlight it deserves. Thanks to **Empire State Development**, the **Perry Memorial Fund**, the **Cummings Foundation**, **DASNY** and **Senator Sean Ryan**, and a special gift from **Donald Ferguson**, we raised over \$730,000 to reimagine and refresh this beloved space.

Carmina Wood Design brought a thoughtful architectural vision to life, while RP OakHill kept the project moving as general contractor and project manager. Danforth added something the auditorium had never known before—air conditioning! (And much better heat, too.) With new AV systems by Diversified and updated lighting and electrical from Frey Electric, the space now shines brighter and sounds better than ever. Fresh, welcoming furniture from Millington-Lockwood ties it all together, creating a space as comfortable as it is beautiful.

And the results speak for themselves: not only have we created a more dynamic experience for lectures, performances, and museum events, but the newly renovated auditorium has opened new doors—greatly increasing rental income through partnerships with organizations across the community.

**Because of you, our auditorium is more than restored—it's alive, thriving, and ready for whatever stories come next.**



## Because of You

History isn't confined to a building—or to the past. It lives in the stories we uncover together, the windows we open to new understanding, and the connections we build across generations.

As a member and supporter, you help make the Museum a space of discovery—in our galleries, in classrooms, in neighborhoods, and in hearts and minds across Western New York.

**Thank you for sharing in this work and for believing in the power of history to shape a better future. Together, we're building something meaningful.**

### Government and Foundation Support

- The County of Erie
- County Executive Mark Poloncarz
- Senator Sean Ryan
- Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Assemblyman William Conrad
- Children's Foundation of Erie County
- Legislator Michael Kooshoian
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
- The Baird Foundation
- The City of Buffalo
- New York State Council on the Arts
- Foundation 214
- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
- The Conable Family Foundation
- Humanities New York
- J. Warren Perry and Charles Donald Perry Memorial Fund
- James H. Cummings Foundation
- Linton Foundation
- Give 716
- M&T Bank Charitable Foundation
- Joseph R. Takats Foundation
- Marjorie and John Buyers Foundation Inc.
- Nicholas D. Patterson Perpetual Fund
- Phyllis W. Pierce Family Fund
- The Joseph and Anna Gartner Foundation
- The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation
- The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI)
- The Research Foundation for The State University of New York
- Tower Family Fund, Inc.
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
- Vogt Family Foundation
- The Western New York Foundation
- Insero & Co. CPAs, LLP
- Julie Muscato Interiors
- Keenan Communications Group
- Kohler Awning
- Lawley Service, Inc.
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC
- Phillips Lytle LLP
- Roswell Park Cancer Institute
- RP Oak Hill
- Schneider Development, LLC
- Stanley Steel Service Co.
- Thermo Fisher Scientific
- Walsh Duffield Companies, Inc.
- Wegmans Food Markets
- West Herr Automotive Group

### Corporate Support

- 26 Shirts
- Clinton Brown FAIA
- CCMA, LLC
- Community Beer Works
- Frey Electric Construction Co.
- Hadley Exhibits, Inc.
- Hodgson Russ LLP
- HSBC Bank

We count on hundreds of individual donors that support the Museum through membership and personal philanthropy. To view the full list of our members and donors, please visit our website at:

[buffalohistory.org](http://buffalohistory.org)

If you would like to learn more, please contact Katie McIntyre, our Director of Advancement, at:

[kmcintyre@buffalohistory.org](mailto:kmcintyre@buffalohistory.org)



# Capital Improvements

## Reinstein Center: A New Chapter Ahead



“A historic home reimagined for a vibrant future—where conversation, connection, and reflection come together in the heart of our campus.

We're preparing to turn the page on one of the most ambitious chapters in our Master Plan: the restoration and reactivation of the Reinstein Center. With construction expected to begin in 2025, this \$5 million+ project will breathe new life into a long-overlooked part of our campus—transforming it into a vibrant public space that strengthens community ties, expands educational opportunities, and supports long-term financial sustainability.

The Reinstein Center has long been part of our campus story—quietly serving behind the scenes since the early 1990s. Originally built in 1920 as the private home and music studio of Leonard Adams, the building has seen decades of change. A 2016 facility study funded by The John R. Oishei Foundation revealed the growing urgency: though just 6,000 square feet, the Reinstein Center accounted for over a quarter of our critical capital needs.

This transformation will preserve the historic Adams House to State Historic Preservation Office standards, while introducing a new, accessible addition that triples usable space. Together, they'll host programs, workshops, and events for up to 100 guests, with expanded capacity for youth education, intergenerational engagement, and community gatherings. A new catering kitchen and support space will also enhance hospitality offerings campus-wide.

Upgraded pathways, lighting, and signage will connect the Reinstein Center to Delaware Park and the Jesse Kregel Bike Trail—redefining how people experience the Museum, inside and out.

### Community Impact:

- A flexible indoor venue for field trips, summer camps, and public programming
- Expanded initiatives like the Memory Café for individuals with memory loss and their caregivers
- Strengthened signature events including the Cherry Blossom Festival and Maker's Market
- Meaningful revenue growth through increased visitation, rentals, and hospitality

**Already, we project at least a 15% increase in visitation, along with a doubling of both catering and programming revenue streams. This entrepreneurial project represents a bold step forward—combining historic preservation with a sustainable, community driven future.**



### The Future of the Reinstein Center

PROJECTED GROUNDBREAKING:  
SUMMER 2025

**15%**  
increase in visitation projected

**\$75,000**  
new annual programming revenue

**\$100,000**  
new annual catering revenue

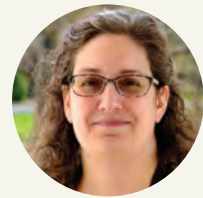


# Museum Staff



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**Melissa Brown**

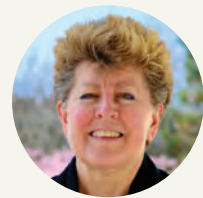
## Collections



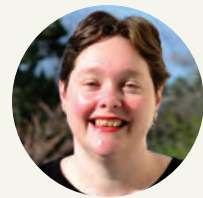
COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT  
**Sue Cutrona**



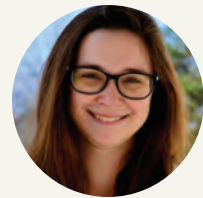
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF  
MUSEUM STUDIES  
**Michelle Harris**



DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY  
AND ARCHIVES  
**Cynthia Van Ness**



REGISTRAR AND GRANTS  
COORDINATOR  
**Rebecca Justinger**



GREG D. TRANTER  
COLLECTION MANAGER  
**Kristin Glaspy**

## Operations and Facilities



DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS  
**Robin Foley**



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS  
& EXECUTIVE MANAGER  
**Desiree Peacock**



GUEST SERVICES  
& RETAIL MANAGER  
**Kelsey Reed**



CANALSIDE GUEST SERVICE  
& RETAIL MANAGER  
**Monica Pearson**



FACILITY SPECIALIST  
& RESIDENT ARTIST  
**John J. Salmeri III**

GUEST SERVICES ASSOCIATES  
**Danielle Panaro**  
**Marissa Guercio-Apolito**  
**Corina Carr**

FACILITIES  
**Ethan Pedone**  
**Gavin Pedone**

## Programs and Education



DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITS  
AND INTERPRETIVE PLANNING  
**Anthony Greco**



DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC  
PROGRAMMING  
**Lauren Kausner**



EDUCATION COORDINATOR  
AT CANALSIDE  
**Megan DeJoe**

## Advancement and Communications



DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT  
**Katie McIntyre**



MEMBERSHIP AND  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
**Kara Purpura**



DEVELOPMENT OFFICER  
**Heather Bailey**



COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR  
**Kameron Wood**

## Board of Managers

### OFFICERS

#### President

Kevin Brady

#### Treasurer

Brian Dempsey

#### Secretary

Sandra Starks

#### Vice Presidents

Dr. Lisa Marie  
Anselmi

Melissa Leonard

Julian Looney

Anne Conable

Alex Schimert

Christopher  
Copeland

Jeff Stravino

### MANAGERS

Rosario Chetta

Stuart Rockefeller

Rema Hanash

Dr. Barbara  
Seals Nevergold

Noel Emerling

Mark Peszko

Penny Wolfgang

Michael Quinniey

Lisa Yaeger

### LIFE TRUSTEES

Hon. Carl Bucki

Hon. Henry Nowak

Shonnie Finnegan

Richard Penfold

Kenneth Friedman

David Rumsey

Sue S. Gardner

Catherine  
Schweitzer

Sally Gioia

Greg D. Tranter

Ellen Grant

Richard Wiesen

Philip Kadet

Allie Loesch





# Connect with us on social media!



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



THE BUFFALO  
HISTORY MUSEUM  
PODCAST



X/TWITTER



TIKTOK



THE BUFFALO  
HISTORY MUSEUM

ONE MUSEUM COURT, BUFFALO, NY 14216  
716.873.9644 | [information@buffalohistory.org](mailto:information@buffalohistory.org)

[buffalohistory.org](http://buffalohistory.org)