

Toledo
Museum
of Art

The Belonging Plan

Fall
2025
Update

Introduction

A vibrant outdoor scene in a park. In the foreground, several people are sitting on the grass, including a group of women in the center-right and a man pointing towards a tree on the left. The background features a large, white, multi-story building, possibly a library or town hall, with a green roof. The area is filled with trees and people, suggesting a sunny day at a public event or festival.

**The Toledo Museum of Art
seeks to become the model art
museum in the United States for
its commitment to quality and its
culture of belonging.**

The Belonging Plan at the Toledo Museum of Art is a living document that conveys the values, goals, strategies, and guiding principles our institution uses to nurture an authentic culture of belonging among our staff, visitors, and volunteers. Our plan is rooted in action, and the transparency with which we share it serves as a way to hold ourselves accountable.

Letter from the Director

Much has changed since the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) first published its Belonging Plan, but the plan itself remains as important and uncontroversial as ever.

Adam Levine

Edward Drummond and Florence Scott Libbey President, Director, and CEO

October 2025

TMA's vision is to become the model museum in the United States for our commitment to quality and our culture of belonging. If we deliver on this vision, people will not visit TMA only once for a program or an event. Visitors will return again and again, engaging deeply with our collection and fulfilling our mission, which calls on us "to integrate art into the lives of people." To generate repeat visitation, a museum—like any space or attraction—needs to create both compelling content and a sense of comfort. That is the goal of our Belonging Plan: to outline a road map that ensures anyone can walk into the Toledo Museum of Art, see great art from across time and space, and want to come back.

We have made huge strides and broadened our vendor base, investing considerably more in our regional economy. We have expanded the geographic and cultural boundaries of our collecting and exhibition development without any diminution of quality. To the contrary, last year two exhibitions at TMA—*Ethiopia at the Crossroads* and *Marisol: A Retrospective*—were short-listed by *Apollo* magazine as among the five best exhibitions in the world; TMA was the only institution in the world to have two such exhibitions, and the former show was crowned the world's best.

Most compellingly, the effects of our outreach efforts have exceeded expectations. We focused our outreach programming

on the two-mile radius around the museum, which encompasses both the lowest-income neighborhoods in the Toledo area and the zip codes that were most underindexed in our visitation. Twenty-two percent of Toledo lived within this two-mile radius in 2020, but visitors from that same area represented only 6 percent of TMA's total visitation; today, nearly 22 percent of our visitors come from within two miles. Over the same period, TMA's total visitation has grown by more than 50 percent, indicating that TMA is creating a place where new or infrequent visitors feel welcome and that our frequent visitors continue to love. There is no better manifestation of this than the museum's recent acknowledgment by *USA Today* as the top art museum in the United States.

The plan below has not just helped TMA become a space that is more comfortable for more people—it has made us a better museum. We are proud of our success, but there is still much more work to do. We plan to expand our outreach efforts, to further institutionalize our commitment to access, and to engage our internal and external stakeholders as partners and consultants in our decision-making.

Simply put, we plan to pursue our strategy, of which this Belonging Plan is a part, and to continue to demonstrate that the combination of quality and comfort is what everyone wants and what our society needs.

Land and Labor Acknowledgments

The museum's land and labor acknowledgments and additional resources can be found online.

To view the full land acknowledgment, please visit
toledomuseum.org/about/land-acknowledgment [↗]

As an organization committed to a true and inclusive presentation of history, it is important to acknowledge the prior inhabitants of the land on which the museum stands as well as the labor provided to build the institution. The Toledo Museum of Art created a land acknowledgment both to honor the Indigenous peoples who resided on the land before the founding of the physical campus in the early 1900s and to demonstrate support for Indigenous communities of Ohio, celebrate their cultures, and recognize their forced removal from their lands in previous centuries.

Likewise, we engaged in a collaborative and reflective process to develop the labor acknowledgment that honors those whose work made the TMA possible. For both acknowledgments, we grounded our work in historical research, community dialogue, and institutional self-examination. Through discussions and feedback from diverse voices, we sought to create acknowledgments that are both meaningful and action oriented. This process underscores our commitment to honoring the past, fostering a culture of belonging, and integrating these values into our present and future work.



Progress
Made

Report on progress made since launching the Belonging Plan in 2021.

Since the launch of The Belonging Plan in 2021, the Toledo Museum of Art has made significant strides toward creating a more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible environment. These efforts span exhibitions, events, staffing, community engagement, and operations, reflecting a comprehensive approach to embedding equity and belonging into the fabric of the institution. The following highlights the progress made in key areas as the museum continues to move toward its vision of belonging for all.

Progress Made



MAKING ART MORE ACCESSIBLE

All 16 exhibitions in 2023 and all 9 exhibitions in 2024 featured accessible installation and interpretation, achieving full accessibility for both visual and interpretive components. All exhibitions and installations opening in 2025 will also be fully accessible. Examples of accessibility components include:

- **Audio descriptions** and **tactile elements** to aid visitors with low vision or sight impairments.
- **Large-print labels**, **Braille**, and **Spanish-language labels** for major exhibitions, ensuring a more inclusive experience.
- Addressing barriers around artwork and ensuring fully accessible installations, including **wheelchair-accessible interactive stations** and clear sight lines for all visitors.



CERTIFIED AUTISM CENTER

In 2023, the Toledo Museum of Art became a Certified Autism Center through IBCCES, with **over 80 percent of our staff and volunteers** trained on how to be more welcoming and inclusive when interacting with visitors who are neurodivergent and those on the autism spectrum. Staff began their recertification process in January 2025.

- **Sensory kits** and **sensory-friendly areas** were provided at key events such as the Block Party, ensuring accessibility for individuals with sensory sensitivities.

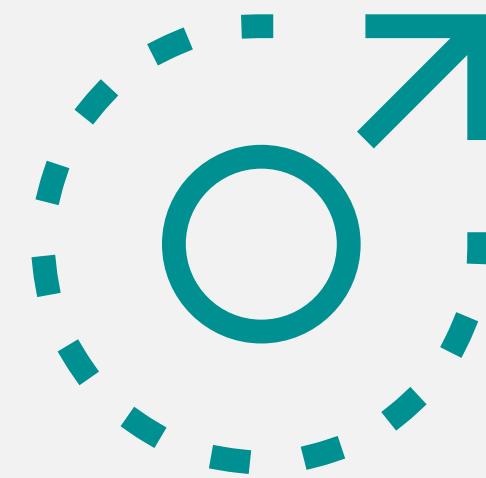


ACCESS-ORIENTED EVENT PLANNING

Since implementing new initiatives in 2022, we strive to ensure captioning is available as an accommodation at all of our events through the year 2025. Additionally, all events are planned to accommodate guests with mobility needs, with accessible seating, clear directions to elevators, and appropriate accommodations for guests in wheelchairs.

- Captioning has been made available at **all events facilitated by the Access Initiatives department**, like Disabled Women Make History (and Art).

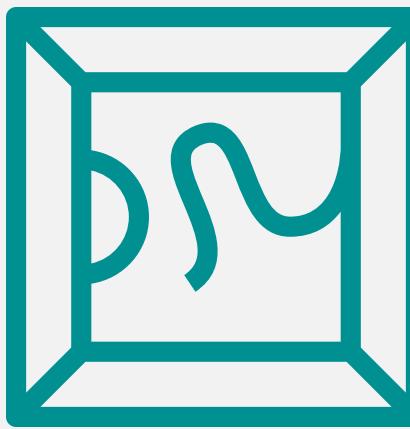
Progress Made



BROADENING THE NARRATIVE

Exhibitions planned at TMA represent every time period, continent, and medium over a rolling five-year time period. Examples of key exhibitions include:

- *Living Legacies: Art of the African American South, Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg—Machine Auguries: Toledo and Marisol: A Retrospective*, **highlighting female and underrepresented artists.**
- *Africa Unmasked, Black Orpheus: Jacob Lawrence and the Mbari Club, Expanding Horizons: The Evolving Character of a Nation, Strategic Interplay: African Art and Imagery in Black and White and Ethiopia at the Crossroads*, which explore **diverse cultural histories and perspectives.**



SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS

The Robert C. and Susan Savage Community Gallery provided a platform for local artists, resulting in **98 pieces of artwork sold** in its inaugural year and generating \$17,590 in sales, with **\$10,554 directly benefiting the artists**. This initiative supports local economic development and has produced **766 documented visits** to Community Gallery events such as guided tours and workshops, fostering stronger connections between artists and the public.



COMMUNITY VOICE

The museum has developed the Community Engagement Toolkit, which includes four programming models:

- Community Council
- Listening Sessions
- Community Conversations
- Surveys

These efforts have engaged **over 1,000 community members** across various demographics, ensuring that community feedback directly shapes programming. For instance, the Community Council, a diverse group of around 30 members, meets regularly to provide insights, influencing key museum decisions and initiatives.

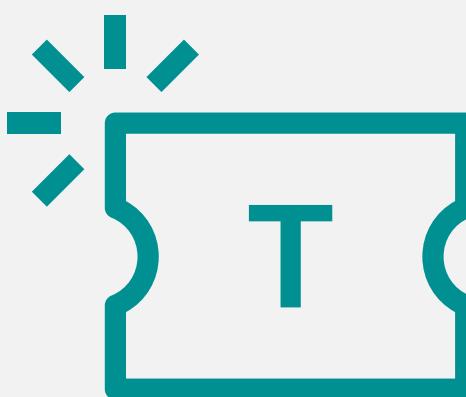
Progress Made



OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The museum has strengthened relationships with community partners, leading to a notable increase in activity attendance, demonstrating the success of tailored programming and consistent engagement.

- Attendance at [Kent Branch Library](#) and [Wayman D. Palmer YMCA](#) has grown from minimal participation to an average of [20-25 attendees per session](#).
- Outreach efforts have expanded to include several new locations like, [Toledo Public Schools](#) and [The Lucas County Juvenile Justice Center](#).
- The introduction of a [STEAM program](#) for middle school students reflects a commitment to providing creative and educational opportunities while addressing community needs through flexible scheduling and local partnerships.



COST-FREE PROGRAMMING

The museum has maintained its commitment to cost-free programming, striving to offer community events that are accessible without financial barriers. This commitment to accessibility is also evident in TMA's commitment to providing free admittance for all visitors and, now, free parking, thanks to the generosity of the Taylor family.

- [Admittance is free](#) for all who visit the museum.
- [Parking at TMA is free to all visitors](#) thanks to a generous donation from the Taylor Automotive Family, honoring the late Julie Taylor.



VENDOR DIVERSITY

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) expenditures have increased more than [1,000 percent](#). The Toledo Museum of Art has successfully engaged [Boyd & Associates Consulting, LLC](#), [A.C.E.S. Services](#), and [C Bates interior Finishes LLC](#)—all minority-owned businesses—in various projects across the curatorial area, director's office, and several exhibitions, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusive vendor selection and supporting economic inclusivity.

- The museum plans to expand its pool of diverse vendors by inviting minority-owned businesses to participate in future project bids, ensuring equitable representation across its operations.

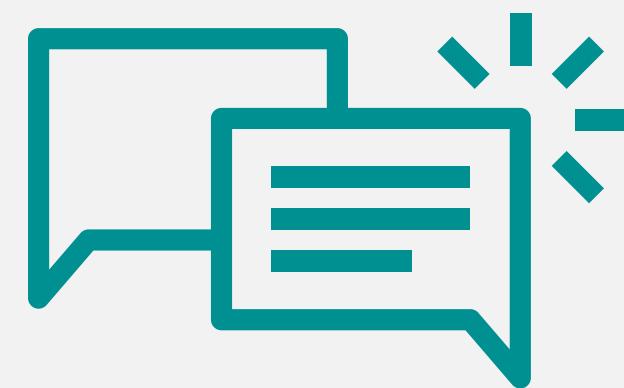
Progress Made



MEANINGFUL WORK AND MISSION ALIGNMENT

TMA continues to foster a workplace where staff connect deeply with our mission and see value in their contributions. This strong sense of purpose is a key driver of employee engagement and long-term retention.

- **92 percent** of staff say their work is meaningful—above the national average of 87 percent and up from 86 percent in 2022.
- Only 29 percent say they've considered leaving for another museum, **a drop from 40 percent in 2022**.
- Our net-promoter score—the percentage of staff who would recommend TMA as a workplace to friends and family—is 76 percent, up from 71 percent in 2022 and **significantly higher** than the national average of 56 percent.



SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP AND POSITIVE CULTURE

Strong leadership and healthy interpersonal dynamics are central to an engaged, high-performing staff. TMA's culture of support and collegiality continues to strengthen across departments.

- **90 percent feel supported** by their direct manager, up from 63 percent in 2022 and well above the national benchmark of 81 percent.
- 97 percent report developing **positive relationships** with coworkers, surpassing the national average of 93 percent.



GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND PERFORMANCE

TMA is committed to investing in its people by nurturing a culture of learning, growth, and high performance. Staff are increasingly seeing opportunities to advance their skills and careers.

- 80 percent believe they can grow professionally at TMA, a **22-point rise from 2022** and above the national average of 75 percent.
- 52 percent say performance reviews **support their career development**, up from 32 percent in 2022 and significantly higher than the national benchmark of 35 percent.



Vision, Mission, Values, and Belonging Definitions

The Toledo Museum of Art's values are our true north.

While tactics and strategies may be debatable, TMA is accountable to ourselves and to our community so that each action we take reflects the values noted below. We believe our mission, undertaken holistically and refracted through these values, will help us achieve our vision. By authentically connecting quality with belonging, TMA can become one of the museums in this country from which others learn and that surrounding communities trust. Defining the terms that will shape this work is important to establishing a shared language. For the purposes of this document, key definitions are also included in this section.

Vision, Mission, Values, and Belonging Definitions

Our Vision

TMA will become the model art museum in the United States for its commitment to quality and its culture of belonging.

Our Mission

Through our collection and programs, we strive to integrate art into the lives of people.

Our Values

COMMUNITY

We strive to reflect our community at all levels of the organization, to treat our community as a partner in our programming, and to serve our audiences broadly and intentionally through art of the highest quality.

DIVERSITY

Diverse ideas emerge from a diverse team and engage diverse audiences. We create space for different voices and are accountable for listening, learning, and acting.

INNOVATION

We seek to innovate for our community and for our field. Museums need big solutions for historical challenges in the twenty-first century, and we will not be afraid to take calculated risks or to leverage paradigm shifts.

TRUST

We steward our collection in the public trust and must guard the confidence placed in us. We also trust each other and commit to empowering our teammates.

Belonging Definitions

DIVERSITY

Diversity describes the variance in humanity that is present in any given environment; this includes identities, perspectives, skills, experiences, talents, and more. Diversity can be observed within organizations, communities, and other populations and is a strength wherever it is present. Diversity directly contributes to the individual well-being of community members as well as to the productivity, security, peace, and well-being of the community.

EQUITY

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

Accessibility is ensuring all people have equal opportunity to partake in the same services, visit the same places, acquire the same information, and engage in the same interactions.

INCLUSION

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 community.

Belonging Definitions

BELONGING

Belonging is the experience of security and support within an environment where individuals feel accepted, included, and able to express their authentic identities as part of a community or group. Belonging happens when all are accepted, respected, represented, and included.

REPRESENTATION

A group is considered representative when it reflects the community (as defined on the right) that TMA intends to serve.

COMMUNITY

Community is often defined by its relationships and shared factors, such as—but not limited to—values, norms, religion, customs, goals, shared resources, and governance. A community can, and often does, change over time as members, society, and the world change. Examples of a community can be a town, a neighborhood, or a workplace. As a baseline, TMA seeks to serve and build trust with the Toledo Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; however, TMA additionally seeks to foster a feeling of community in visitors from outside the Toledo MSA. We want all visitors to feel a sense of well-being and be in community on our campus.

Commitments in Our Strategy



DEAI Outcomes and Commitments in Our Strategy

OUR FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **Active Outreach and Engagement**
- **Broaden the Narrative of Art History**
- ◆ **Become an Employer of Choice**
- ▲ **Create a Platform for Operational Excellence**

The Toledo Museum of Art's efforts to operationalize our commitment to quality and our culture of belonging will be supported by the four strategic objectives in the museum's 2021-2026 strategic plan.

At TMA, we believe that belonging emerges out of the integration of DEAI into each of these four objectives—in other words, a holistic and measurable commitment to DEAI as part of our strategy (rather than as an addition to our strategy) will result in the culture of belonging that we seek to create.

Active Outreach and Engagement



● Active Outreach and Engagement ●

TMA seeks to continue its involvement and engagement with our stakeholders, especially neighborhoods within a two-mile radius of the museum.

These neighborhoods, which comprise low-income census tracts, are historically underindexed in TMA's visitation. Outreach that honors diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion requires us to build different relationships with constituents, develop an understanding of people's priorities, and create communications and programs that reflect these interests. The museum's focus will shift to include programs beyond its walls, but our success in creating a sense of comfort will be measurable by changes in the demographics of our visitation.

● Active Outreach and Engagement ●

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME

TMA will receive increasing visitation from current non-visitor cohorts.

DIVERSITY

Participants in outreach activities will reflect the population of Toledo.

EQUITY

The needs of neighborhood partners and outreach participants are met through relevant outreach and engagement programs.

ACCESSIBILITY

Programs and pathways to visitation are accessible (through location, language, transportation, timing, etc.).

INCLUSION

Neighborhood partners and outreach participants are valued as respected members of the organization and community and are included in decision-making.

● Active Outreach and Engagement ●

Commitments

TMA WILL ensure its campus is an accessible, safe, and welcoming environment for all visitors, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) attendees, other diverse communities, and individuals with disabilities.

TMA WILL equip staff and volunteers with education and training that promote the understanding of the art and material culture of BIPOC and other diverse communities.

TMA WILL build meaningful and sustained partnerships with local artists as well as with civic, cultural, educational, and artistic organizations from BIPOC and other diverse communities. Through these partnerships, we will expand our audience and build programs that address issues of equity and inclusion in the arts.



Broaden the
Narrative of Art
History

■ Broaden the Narrative of Art History ■

TMA seeks to broaden the narratives we tell to foster inclusive and global art histories.

Through our collecting and exhibition programming, we aim to represent the breadth and depth of creativity across societies, cultures, and time periods. We also seek to represent the multifaceted communities comprising Toledo, as well as to cultivate a sense of belonging in our visitors when engaging with the museum's galleries. Representation through the collection is defined in this objective as representing the demographics of the United States as reported in the 2020 census.

■ Broaden the Narrative of Art History ■

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME

The collection on display will better represent the US population.

DIVERSITY

Exhibitions and displays within the collection better reflect the US population.

EQUITY

Expanded curatorial coverage drives artistic representation in the collection that better reflects the US population.

ACCESSIBILITY

Gallery installations and interpretation—including digital displays—are accessible.

INCLUSION

Community is consulted and community voices are included in interpretation.

■ Broaden the Narrative of Art History ■

Commitments

TMA WILL continue stewarding, displaying, and interpreting the museum's collection in a manner that reflects TMA's commitment to DEAL initiatives.

TMA WILL continue growing and diversifying the collection and works on view, with an increased focus on the sustained presence and prominence of works by underrepresented artists, cultures, regions, and media.

TMA WILL continue identifying innovative ways to tell stories about its collection and institutional history that build lifelong connections.

TMA WILL continue developing new and inclusive processes for selecting and developing exhibitions and installations, displaying the collection, and including feedback from staff, visitors, volunteers, and diverse community participants.

TMA WILL continue considering the accessibility of the physical layout of galleries as well as the accessibility of all text, audio and visual content, and hands-on activities during planning and exhibition design.



Become an Employer of Choice

Wheelchair
Viewing Area

TMA is committed to establishing itself as an employer of choice.

We seek employees who believe in our vision, mission, and values and who bring a diverse set of skills, perspectives, and experiences to their work. We seek to hire the best employees without bias, which will result in a diverse workforce that embodies, celebrates, and promotes DEAI. Such a staff and culture will strengthen our ability to serve our community, drive innovation and growth, and help us attract and retain the best talent.

◆ Become an Employer of Choice ◆

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME

TMA will strive to cultivate a skilled, high-performing, diverse, and engaged staff that reflects our community and supports our mission.

DIVERSITY

Internal and external stakeholders reflect the diverse community in which we live and operate.

EQUITY

Leadership will ensure that all employees are treated fairly and justly and have the opportunity for advancement as indicated in museum policies.

ACCESSIBILITY

Leadership will ensure all employees can participate in any museum programs and avail themselves of all museum services.

INCLUSION

TMA will intentionally maintain a safe space for everyone to feel valued, respected, and encouraged to bring their authentic self to work and fully participate to achieve job satisfaction.

◆ Become an Employer of Choice ◆

Commitments

TMA WILL use a performance management system and talent development strategies that support opportunities for equitable advancement through the organization.

TMA WILL support and invest in career pathways through fellowships for students and professionals locally, regionally, and internationally.

TMA WILL continue its commitment to hiring, promoting, and retaining candidates from diverse communities throughout the organization—including leadership, management, and professional positions—to ensure TMA emerges as the model museum in the United States.

Create a Platform for Operational Excellence



Workforce diversity is critical to growing the business of the museum.

We have invested in training and hiring a staff position focused on diversity efforts, transitioned to an agile operating model that empowers staff as leaders regardless of their position in the organizational chart, diversified our candidate pools, and activated our anchor institution status to support Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), and Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs). To achieve operational excellence, we must now enhance our use of data, technology, financial sustainability, and brand positioning. By embedding these principles into our operations, we ensure that belonging is not only a cultural value but also a strategic advantage that drives measurable impact.

▲ Create a Platform for Operational Excellence ▲

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME

TMA will optimize team effectiveness through data-informed decision-making and foster inclusive vendor relationships that reflect the museum's commitment to equity and belonging.

DIVERSITY

Project teams represent all levels and relevant departments of the organization.

EQUITY

Ensure equitable access to digital resources.

ACCESSIBILITY

Place greater emphasis on universal design and usability for diverse audiences.

INCLUSION

Ensure visitors and staff understand how their data is collected, stored, and used.

▲ Create a Platform for Operational Excellence ▲

Commitments

TMA WILL continue to identify, recruit, and develop well-qualified and diverse volunteers, staff, and board members.

TMA WILL engage with a wide range of vendors representing various demographics, such as minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, and small businesses.

TMA WILL continue researching, piloting, and implementing new approaches to visitor engagement in the galleries, considering the roles of protective services, visitor services, and volunteers.

