



## Museums for America

Sample Application MA-251963-OMS-22  
Project Category: Community Engagement

### Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$150,545
Amount of cost share:	\$150,886

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis will conduct audience engagement research and evaluation to provide insights to experiment with new ways of engaging visitors and the broader St. Louis community. The museum will work with three consultants with expertise in audience research, program evaluation, and strategic planning. The consultants will engage internal and external audiences and stakeholders in focus groups and surveys to gather information about the museum's current strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in audience engagement. Based on research findings, the consultants will produce recommendations for operational and programmatic change at the museum and produce an actionable, publicly available plan to ensure the museum best serves its diverse audiences in the future.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

## Project Abstract

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis's (CAM)'s *The Audience-Centered Museum: Measuring Success in a Time of Transformation*, is a two-year, multi-phase, multi-method audience engagement research and evaluation project. The goal of the project is to provide the museum with insights to boldly experiment with new ways of engaging the St. Louis community and its visitors—including non-traditional museumgoers and those who may not yet feel that the museum is “for” them.

CAM will engage three consultants in a series of interrelated projects related to audience research, program evaluation, and organizational planning. The partnering consultants will engage internal and external audiences and stakeholders in focus groups and surveys to gather information about the museum's current strengths and weaknesses and gaps in audience engagement and make recommendations for operational and programmatic change at the museum. Research findings will be integrated into an actionable, publicly-available, strategic plan, to ensure the museum best serves diverse art audiences of today and the future. The project will serve as a timely national case study for audience-centric museum planning.

The project builds upon recommendations and findings from LaPlaca Cohen's *Culture Track: Culture + Community*<sup>1</sup>, a national research initiative for the cultural sector working to address the needs of communities and audiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Now in its second wave, the study has evolved to provide the cultural institutions with actionable insights toward becoming more equitable, inclusive spaces and more active participants within movements for social and racial justice.

## Project Justification

### Which program goal/project category and associated objective(s) of Museums for America will your project address?

While this project addresses relevancy issues cultural institutions are facing across the nation and is a critical next step in CAM's programmatic planning, our small, full-time staff of 18 does not currently have the resources or capacity to undertake such an extensive project in-house. By collaborating with field-wide audience research experts at Slover Linett (lead contributors to the *Culture Track* research initiative) and St. Louis-based evaluation professional Leslie Scheuler to better understand, engage, expand, and diversify the Museum's audiences, this project aligns closely with Museums for America Goal 2, Community Engagement: maximize the use of museum resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations. It directly aligns with Objective 2.1: Support audience research, evaluation, and outreach, as these three key areas make up the central scope of the project.

Resultant findings will provide data directly from our current audiences and members of the community we do not yet reach. This will allow CAM to make data-informed operational adjustments, thus enabling us to present exhibitions and programs truly relevant to the diverse communities in which we operate (Objective 2.2: Support community-driven exhibitions and programs). It will also allow us to build our next strategic plan driven by audience opinion and feedback at its center, instead of relying on institutional conjecture (Objective 2.3: Support community-focused planning and civic engagement.) CAM's programs and admission are free, with meaningful and inclusive engagement for the broadest range of audiences at the heart of our mission, further aligning our work with IMLS agency-wide Goal 2: To Strengthen Community Engagement; Objective 2.1: Promote inclusive engagement across diverse audiences.

### How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?

CAM's ambitious, five-year FY2016–2020 Strategic Plan was developed through a research-based process with board, staff, and community stakeholders. The plan was developed with the intention to create the best organization possible: ensuring that the Museum grows its influence and impact, becomes ever-more financially sustainable, and attracts and retains the very best staff, board, and volunteers. The first priority of CAM's FY2016-2020 plan was “to broaden and diversify audiences with whom we engage—and, in doing so, reach heretofore untapped communities—by building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones; providing a welcoming environment in which visitors wish to spend time; creating programmatic activity in direct response to communities; strategically employing online platforms; and taking

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<sup>1</sup> “Culture Track Reports.” *Culture Track*, LaPlaca Cohen and Slover Linett Audience Research, 6 July 2020, <https://culturetrack.com/research/reports/>.

our programming beyond the museum’s walls.” CAM met its benchmark of this goal, increasing audience numbers over 50% by 2019, reaching over 40,000 visitors in a single year. It additionally created the “systematic and focused engagement program that both identifies and prioritizes the communities/groups/neighborhoods with which CAM works, along with a mechanism by which this is reassessed and adjusted on an annual basis,” it set out to achieve. This program, *Collective Impact*, established in 2021 with partners Creative Reaction Lab, invites BIPOC community stakeholder participation in the development of exhibitions for our Learning & Engagement galleries. It has been recognized as a model of community-centered arts engagement programming with a 2022 IMLS American Rescue Plan grant (ARPML-250647-OMLS-22).

As CAM’s Strategic Plan was coming to a close in 2019, CAM’s Executive Director and Director of PR, Marketing, & Visitor Experience had identified in-depth, external audience research as a critical next step to inform the subsequent strategic plan and the Board extended the plan through 2021. As CAM was ready to embark on this phase of audience survey, the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. CAM’s audiences diminished to less than 50% average attendance and in-person intercept survey was no longer possible under social-distancing protocols. As the nation faced overlapping crises related to the pandemic, health and wellbeing, social and racial justice, CAM looked inward along with museums to embark on an 108-hour Board and Staff-led Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion planning process using the MASS Action Readiness Assessment and Toolkit for racial equity in the museum field<sup>2</sup>, to help inform operations, programs, and policy during the nation’s recovery.

The proposed project will allow us to continue the in-depth audience research, evaluation, and planning component that was originally planned in 2019. By understanding our community’s interests and needs, this project will enable us to develop a new, data-informed, audience- and DEAI-centered strategic plan which will allow the museum to grow sustainably while remaining truly responsive to those it serves and seeks to serve.

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

**Research & Data:** Recommendations and findings of the Culture Track studies *Culture + Community in a Time of Crisis: A Special Edition of Culture Track (Wave 1)* and previews of the forthcoming *Culture + Community in a Time of Transformation (Wave 2)* have been the main point of inspiration for the development of this project.

Of this expansive survey of over 650 cultural organizations and their constituencies, Wave 1 respondents indicated a variety of ways cultural organizations could change to be better in the future. Response patterns were grouped into themes using factor analysis, and 72% identified changes in one or more of the following areas 1. Inclusivity and Community; 2. Enjoyment and 3. Reflection and Innovation. The study ultimately confirmed that the “COVID-19 pandemic now coincides with the crisis of racial injustice,” the pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on people of color, and that “people today want and expect cultural organizations to play an active and inclusive role in their community, providing spaces for enjoyment, connection, and reflection.”

While the Wave 2 *Culture Track: Culture and Community in a Time of Transformation* survey is not yet released to the public, study previews from Culture Track’s Twitter page cite local collaboration and equitable representation as major concerns of arts participants. 61% of respondents want to see Arts & Culture Organizations collaborating with their communities and “Having an arts and culture venue reflective of one’s own cultural identity” was rated important or highly important by the majority (57%) of Black/African American survey participants. And during times of uncertainty and change, Americans want arts and cultural organizations to be serving as: an emotional outlet (83%), a provider of connection and learning (77%), and an institution giving practical help (54%)<sup>3</sup>. In this post-pandemic update, “affordable entry”, “more frequent and new programs”, “being less formal”, “treating employees fairly”, “engaging/including young adults”, “supporting local artists and organizations”, and “working with other nonprofits,” were cited frequently as ways cultural organizations could change to be better in the future.

CAM is free and open to the public, offering over 100 free tours and programs each year. We are embarking on this project to better understand if our work is truly resonating to new, non-traditional arts audiences and those outside our immediate circle of active visitors and program participants. As we look at the St. Louis city (56.4% BIPOC residents<sup>4</sup>)

<sup>2</sup> “Resources.” MASS Action. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://www.museumaction.org/resources>.

<sup>3</sup> Twitter. Culture Track, October 23, 2021. <https://twitter.com/CultureTrack>.

<sup>4</sup> “US Census Bureau QuickFacts: St. Louis, MO.” US Census Bureau. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/stlouiscitymissouri>

we strive to be a place where our audience and programmatic activity mirrors the diverse demographics of the place we live. We recognize the toll of the pandemic on our local communities, in particular the St. Louis communities in which the museum is situated, disproportionately impacting our Black and African American neighbors<sup>5</sup>. We also recognize the need for museums to urgently address our field's growing empathy gap<sup>6</sup> and to serve as sites for wellbeing and broad-based inclusive experience.

**Our Work to Date:** Over the past ten years, CAM has made attempts to survey audiences, conduct market research, evaluate programs, and develop responsive programming by and for the community. We have seen success in many ways, but in each case we have not had the bandwidth or resources to do the exhaustive, methodologically consistent, larger-scale inquiry and survey that this project outlines to get a larger sample size required to understand those we aren't yet reaching.

Rigorous staff- and Board-driven strategic initiatives around the topics of equitable audience development and evaluation have taken place in recent years, inclusive of participation in Forward through Ferguson's 2021 Racial Equity Roundtable<sup>7</sup>, DeVos Institute's *The Cycle* 2020-2022 St. Louis cohort<sup>8</sup>, 2021-2022 PNC Design Thinking Workshops<sup>9</sup>, 2018 and 2021 AAM Museum Assessment Program & Follow Up Visit on the topic of Community & Audience Engagement (Supporting Document 2, pp. 62-80), 2021-22 COVES survey implementation (#ARPML-250647-OMLS-22), the 2019 development of logic models for the ArtReach K-12 programming (#MA-10-19-0554-19-0). This work has been built on a longstanding commitment to the neighborhoods within 1 mile of the museum, including our 1-mile radius survey in partnership with the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University (Supporting Document 2, pp.12-61).

**Research questions:** As CAM is on the precipice of strategic planning for the museum's next 3-5 years, we seek to answer the following questions through this audience research and evaluation project (see **Performance Measurement Plan** for activities aligned with questions):

1. Who are CAM's core and potential audiences? What does meaningful audience engagement mean for these audiences?
2. How can we use audience data to ensure our operations, facility, and programs reflect and engage the diverse community in which we exist?
3. How do we measure museum success and hold ourselves accountable to our community, particularly after COVID-19 has upended the old models of audience engagement and evaluation? Are we using both financial and human resources in the best way to best serve program participants, particularly youth?
4. In our new reality, how can CAM create a strategic plan centered in a truly audience-centered experience for our community?
5. How can our project play a role in the ecosystem of social change, serve as a model for the field, particularly for our peer cohort of mid-sized, non-collecting, contemporary art museums?

### Our unique role

In this time of crisis when community needs from museums have changed, CAM is perfectly poised to be responsive, in the perfect moment to be responsive. We have the potential to make data-informed changes in real time, allowing us to serve as a national model for equitable and inclusive visitor experience, audience engagement, and programmatic representation. Because of the inherent relevance and timeliness of the many topics and media contemporary art addresses, we have the potential appeal to much broader audiences. Due to the relatively small staff size and scale of the Museum we can remain nimble and use Design Thinking methods of low cost, rapid prototyping to find solutions to feedback much faster than larger peer museums. Not having a permanent collection allows us to show a far more racially, ethnically, and geographically diverse range of artists and be more centered in the community through robust programming. While we are trying to rebuild post-COVID-19, this project will allow CAM to get data to build strategies

<sup>5</sup> "The Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Black and African American Communities in the St. Louis Region." (Missouri Hospital Association, 2020), <https://www.mhanet.com/mhaimages/COVID-19/COVIDDisparitiesSTL.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Murawsky, Mike. "The Urgency of Empathy and Social Impact in Museums. (Art Museum Teaching, July 7, 2016), <https://artmuseumteaching.com/2016/07/11/the-urgency-of-empathy-social-impact-in-museums/>

<sup>7</sup> "2021 Racial Equity Capacity Offerings." Forward Through Ferguson. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://forwardthroughferguson.org/racialequitycapacity/>

<sup>8</sup> "Capacity Building St. Louis." Regional Arts Commission. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://racstl.org/programs/capacity-building-st-louis/>

<sup>9</sup> Karyn Ostrom, "St. Louis Arts Organizations Share \$250,000 in PNC Arts Alive Grant Funding and Support," PNC Media Room (PNC Financial Services, June 15, 2021), <https://pnc.mediaroom.com/2021-06-15-St-Louis-Arts-Organizations-Share-250000-In-PNC-Arts-Alive-Grant-Funding-and-Support>.

to engage audiences of today. As we have learned from our DEAI work, museums can't go back to business as usual and the field needs data and information. If we truly believe we are responsive, we need to first know what people in our community want and need to equitably plan for the future.

Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

The target group for this project is CAM's 18 full-time staff and its 27 Board of Directors. An extensive (108 hour total) Board and staff-led DEAI audit using the MASS Action framework has united our team around the strategic priority to apply a DEAI lens to all levels of museum operations and programming. The key project personnel, including Executive Director Lisa Melandri, Director of Learning and Engagement Michelle Dezember, and Institutional Giving Manager Lauren Pelletier as well as former Director of PR, Marketing & Visitor Experience Unitey Kull (position to be hired in 2021) have led, and been closest involved in the aforementioned initiatives.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

The beneficiaries of the project are CAM's diverse audience of visitors and program participants. Located in the Grand Center Arts District, CAM receives general foot traffic as well as diverse populations of students, artists, designers, creatives, architects, art and museum aficionados, and families with children in our youth programs. CAM focuses on serving a hyper-local audience while cultivating a regional, national, and international visitorship. It is our intent that this project will help us identify audiences we should engage and develop, and enhance visibility for the museum among the St. Louis community. CAM serves an estimated 38,500 annually in person (60% local, 40% out of state; currently at 50% capacity due to COVID-19) and over 210,000 online.

CAM's current visitors identify as 22% Black, 57% White, 8% Latinx, and 9% Asian. 58% identify as female, 38% as male, and 4% as non-binary. Ages range from younger adults 25-40 (48%), adults 41-64 (30%), youth under 18 (12%), and older adults 65+ (10%)<sup>10</sup>. 96% of adult visitors hold an Associates degree or higher. Over 50% have an annual household income of less than \$50K per year, consistent with average household incomes ranging between \$21,195-\$41,475 in neighborhoods within one mile of CAM. CAM's youth program recruitment is typically conducted through St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS), an underserved district where 100% of students are eligible to receive free lunch (cf. 50% statewide in MO), 25% are in transition or experiencing homelessness (cf. 4% in MO). SLPS students identify as 83% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Asian (cf. 29% MO BIPOC student average) and 11% White (cf. 71% in MO)<sup>11</sup>. CAM strives to present diverse voices in its exhibitions. Over the past three years, 82% of artists shown in our galleries have identified as BIPOC, 18% as white, with a balanced representation of gender identities reflected. While our audience reflects greater diversity than many peers, further diversity of representation reflecting the makeup of the St. Louis community is a continuing goal of the Museum.

Through this project, we are particularly interested in reaching diverse and culturally engaged populations, particularly non-traditional museumgoers, in the region that we do not yet reach or have the tools, tactics, to understand their motivations, awareness, and perceptions of the museum.

## Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

The two-year project will include four distinct phases: 1. Baseline Audience Research and 2. Youth Program Evaluation in Year 1; and 3. Results Analysis and 4. Strategic Planning in Year 2. See **Schedule of Completion** for detailed timeline.

### Year 1 (September 2022-August 2023)

- **Baseline Audience Research & Survey (September-October 2022):** Using CAM's existing datasets (Mailchimp and Patron Manager CRM data) **Jen Benoit-Bryan, PhD, Vice President & Co-Director of Research, Slover Linett**, will conduct a baseline quantitative assessment of current and potential visitors with deep exploration of desired experiential elements, how perceptions and motivations align with experiences, and an assessment of what parts of the community are under- and over-represented among visitors. Using a mix of quantitative surveys, qualitative exploration, and database analysis, they will paint a detailed picture of current and potential participants, including underrepresented communities.
- **Goal Setting & Audience Prioritization Workshop (September 2022-February 2023)** The survey will inform a workshop led by **Slover Linett** with a cross-departmental, multilevel group of stakeholders within the institution

<sup>10</sup> 2019 audience survey conducted by CAM

<sup>11</sup> "School Data," School Data | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://dese.mo.gov/school-data>.

focused on identifying the highest-priority audiences of focus for deepened engagement. CAM will engage in a series of phone calls and an in-person workshop to set 3 key priority audiences to engage further, by location, racial or ethnic identity, demographic or experiential profiles; and set overall goals for audience engagement.

- **Audience Research: Focus Groups (March-August 2023)** Two members of the Slover Linett team will return to St. Louis to conduct a series of focus groups with CAM's 3 priority audiences. Participants will be paid.
- **Evaluation of Current Youth Programs (September 2022-August 2023)** *What's working? What's not?* CAM will engage the services of Leslie Scheuler, PhD, LS Associates to provide insights on our current youth programs at the same time we analyze our audiences. Building on her three years of evaluative work for CAM's ArtReach K-12 programs (Supporting Document 3), Scheuler will do a year-long deep-dive into all youth and teen engagement programs, currently comprising a significant portion of Learning & Engagement staff resources. Scheuler will implement a mixed-methods evaluation approach and furnish a report to CAM staff on the impact of each program. Activities will include planning and review meetings; review of current logic models, program goals, outcomes, and impact; discussion of evaluation requirements of program funders; revision of current evaluation tools. A series of focus groups with teens, parents, and schools; collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data will lead to the delivery of a one-year report to CAM staff with recommendations for Year 2.

### **Year 2 (September 2023 - August 2024)**

- **Reflection and Refining of Youth Program Evaluation (September 2023-August 2024)** Thorough review of and reflection on the evaluation data collected in Year 1; discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations; fine-tuning and updating (as needed) to program logic models, plans, and tools; continuation of data collection. A final report which will include subgroup analysis and recommendations for the future will be presented to CAM staff (July 2024) with strategic directions suggested by the evaluation process and results.
- **Strategic Planning and Dissemination (November 2023-August 2024)** A consultant will work with CAM Staff and Board to develop a strategic plan (November 2023-March 2024) integrating Year 1 findings from Slover Linett and LS Associates. CAM will identify a strategic planning consultant with guidance from Slover Linett, who often works with LaPlaca Cohen.<sup>12</sup> Results will be shared with peer networks (July-August 2024).

### **What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?**

**New Director of PR, Marketing & Visitor Experience:** Since many of the activities will inform CAM's marketing and visitor experience efforts, one risk will be having a new staff member serving in the role of senior-level position of Director of PR, Marketing, and Visitor Experience, who will play a key role in working with Slover Linett on audience research. With candidates for the position under consideration, we anticipate this position will be filled before the project start period. All of the senior staff will play a role in the initial meetings with the Slover Linett team, who bring years of facilitation experience in the museum field to guide and orient CAM's staff.

**No dedicated data management or evaluation position:** Additionally, since CAM's staff size is relatively small, we do not have a single position managing evaluation, data collection, and analysis for the Museum. Project Director Michelle Dezember brings a wealth of experience to this role, having served as Project Director for CAM's current IMLS grant (#MA-10-19-0554-19-0), where she managed the evaluation work for CAM's ArtReach programs by returning consultant Leslie Scheuler (Supporting Document 3). CAM's Institutional Giving Manager (Project Coordinator) has experience working across departments to compile data for grant reporting. In concert with the core project team, she will help coordinate the team and compile project documentation and reports for all staff to reference as they continue their evaluation efforts.

**Strategic Plan coming to a close:** Since our current strategic plan is set to expire prior to the project period, CAM is actively developing a Strategic "Bridge Plan" prior to the project period. CAM's senior leadership meets weekly to define shared values that guide CAM's work; set overall goals and strategies for 3 stages of COVID recovery (COVID, Coming out of COVID, Normal/Goal). On December 1-2, 2021, CAM will meet with Sarah Jesse, Executive Director of the

<sup>12</sup> "Strategy and Marketing Solutions for Arts and Culture." (LaPlaca Cohen, April, 26 2021), <https://www.laplacacohen.com/>

Academy Museum of Art, CAM's original peer reviewer for its engagement in the 2018 AAM Museum Assessment Program (Supporting Document 2, pp. 62-80). Through meetings with various departments, Jesse will review the Museum's progress since her last site visit and report in 2018 to help guide the leadership team in goal setting for audience engagement in preparation for this project.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

**Michelle Dezember, Director of Learning & Engagement** (Project Director, Evaluation Lead) will work with evaluation consultant **Leslie Scheuler, LS Associates** to implement the evaluation of CAM's Learning & Engagement Programs. She will oversee project management and documentation for the team. **CAM Director of PR, Marketing & Visitor Experience** (Audience Engagement Lead) will work with Slover Linett to lead the audience development activities and provide CAM data for survey implementation. They will also join Slover Linett in offsite focus groups. **Lisa Melandri, Executive Director** (Authorizing Official) will play a key role in activating the Board and Sr. Staff engagement in the meetings and facilitating the Strategic Planning process in concert with **Jen Benoit-Bryan, PhD, Slover Linett** and selected **Strategic Planning Consultant** (TBD). Benoit-Bryan was selected for this project for her contributions to Culture Track and extensive experience working with cultural organizations in the St. Louis region. Slover Linett often works with LaPlaca Cohen on strategic planning, identified as a potential consultant for this project. **Lauren Pelletier, Institutional Giving Manager** (Project Administrator) will coordinate the scheduling of onsite staff meetings and stakeholder engagement activities and assist Dezember with project management and documentation.

While not within the core implementation staff, CAM's **Chief Curator Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Director of Development, Sarah Palermo, Director of Finance and Administration, Michael Albrecht** and select members of CAM's Executive Committee will join the core team in initial workshops to ensure all senior leadership is represented at the goal setting and audience identification phase.

How is the project team organized and structured to support engagement of all participants?

Since the project is centered in program engagement and visitor experience, our two project co-leaders are department directors for those key areas of CAM's work. We will invite broader senior staff input at the outset of the project to ensure buy-in from all departments. CAM fosters an open and transparent staff culture, hosting weekly staff meetings where members of the core team may update the remaining full-time staff members on the project progress. The core team will meet on a monthly basis to ensure coordination of tasks between the various components of the project. Additional staff from CAM's PR, Marketing & Visitor Experience team will assist with survey implementation and staff from the Learning & Engagement department will be consulted for the development of program evaluation tools.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

CAM respectfully requests \$150,545 to support *The Audience-Centered Museum: Measuring Success in a Time of Transformation*. Grant funds would partially underwrite audience research (Slover Linett) and evaluation (Leslie Scheuler) consultant fees; community focus group liaison fees; consultant travel; a portion of strategic planning costs; and less than 10% (De Minimis) indirect costs for administration. The total project budget is \$301,431 and CAM is committed to providing a match for the project of \$150,886, inclusive of all staff salary and benefits, supplies for stakeholder meetings and focus groups, and a portion of consultant time. Please see **Budget** and **Budget Justification** for a detailed breakdown of expenditures.

How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The core project team will hold monthly meetings to benchmark progress on project-related activities against the project **Schedule of Completion**. With oversight from Project Director Michelle Dezember and support from Project Administrator Lauren Pelletier, task assignments, timeline, and deliverables will be tracked and shared among the project team using Asana, a cloud-based project management application, and document sharing will occur in CAM's Google Workspace for Nonprofits. See attached **Performance Measurement Plan** for additional detail.

**Project Results**

What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?

Museums across the country are grappling with a shift to qualitatively and equitably measure social impact and integrate Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion into their strategic and operations planning during a time when everything

feels so uncertain. We can no longer solely rely on quantitative measures of success and need to take a nuanced approach to meet the needs of our communities and serve as places for well-being.

We have found our organization-wide evaluation has not been cohesive, or necessarily linked to strategic and DEAI goals. To better serve and expand our audiences, we need a new, equitable evaluation model focused on social impact, to understand how our programs and exhibitions are best serving the needs of our community. According to The Measurement of Museum Social Impact (MOMSI), an initiative of Utah Division of Arts and Museums, “measuring social impact helps museums better understand and serve their audiences and communities. When museums can articulate their social impact, they can improve internal practices and leverage funding to continue this kind of socially strengthening work.”<sup>13</sup> As John H. Falk’s publication *The Value of Museums: Enhancing Societal Well-Being*, states we are “painfully aware, what worked yesterday for museums may not work in the future as recessions and pandemics rapidly alter the landscape.”<sup>14</sup> Countless articles<sup>15</sup> and initiatives like OF/BY/FOR/ALL<sup>16</sup> continue to emerge to address the gap in tools, methodologies, and for measuring social impact. This process will help us to create engaging, relevant, and transformative experiences for the diverse audiences we serve and aspire to serve. Through this project, CAM strives to generate a strategic plan that will serve as a leading model of equitable community engagement for peer institutions across the United States, particularly in this unique time of pandemic recovery.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?

It is CAM’s mission to promote meaningful engagement with contemporary art. Instead of merely speculating about the desires and wishes of our audiences, CAM staff will be equipped with actual data and feedback directly from our community to inform the development of programs. We will be able to design a strategic plan and use design thinking strategies to conduct responsive rapid-prototyping and make data-informed changes operationally and at the facility to enhance our visitor experience for the audiences of today. With external evaluation assistance, we will gain objective knowledge about where our Learning & Engagement staff time may be best spent, to make room for enhancing public engagement opportunities as they arise.

What products will result from your project?

The project will result in an actionable, written strategic plan for CAM informed by audience survey and data analysis. Survey data gathered by Slover Linett staff involves SPSS (IBM’s industry-leading statistical analysis software), Wincross, and Excel. Data and work-products will be stored on Box.com using Slover Linett’s professional/business accounts, with industry-standard security protocols in place. The strategic plan will be made publicly available on CAM’s website (Wordpress), and will integrate CAM’s DEAI-related goals and outline cohesive interdepartmental goals for audience development and organizational sustainability. Four internal reports with recommendations related to CAM’s audience engagement and programmatic impact will be produced by Slover Linett and LS Associates.

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The resulting strategic plan will guide the Museum’s activities for the subsequent 3-5 years. Executive Director Lisa Melandri serves as member of the American Alliance of Museums, Association of Art Museum Directors, and the “CAM-D” peer list-serv for directors of contemporary, non-collecting institutions including ICA Philadelphia, ICA Los Angeles, CAM Houston, MCA Denver, ICA San Jose, and MOCA Cleveland, among others. Since there are not as many institutions of our size and scale, findings from this project could prove valuable for this peer cohort. The strategic plan and general case study summarizing this two-year project and its findings will be shared by Melandri through the aforementioned professional membership association websites and list-servs, and with interested funders and colleagues. Furthermore, CAM staff will be equipped with the evaluative tools and training necessary to continue assessing its programs and exhibitions for audience relevance on an ongoing basis.

<sup>13</sup> “Museum Impact Study.” Museum Social Impact. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://museumsocialimpact.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Falk, John. *The Value of Museums Enhancing Societal Wellbeing* (Roman & Littlefield, October 2021) <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538149201/The-Value-of-Museums-Enhancing-Societal-Well-Being>

<sup>15</sup> Schoenberger, Elisa. “How can you measure the social impact of museums and celebrate the success of programs and initiatives?” (Museum Next, April 5, 2019) <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-to-measure-the-social-impact-of-museums/>

<sup>16</sup> OF/BY/FOR/ALL. Accessed November 15, 2021. <https://www.ofbyforall.org/>



## Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis | Schedule of Completion

Activity Type	Project Activities	2022					2023										2024								
		Year 1					Year 2																		
		S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Staff Collaboration	Monthly meeting of project team to share updates and tasks.																								
Audience Research	Slover Linett implements baseline Audience Survey.																								
	Slover Linett orientation calls and meeting with leadership staff and core project team at CAM to prioritize audience groups for study.																								
	Slover Linett conducts offsite audience focus groups in St. Louis.																								
	Slover Linett synthesis and presentation of findings to CAM staff and Board.																								
Program Evaluation	Leslie Scheuler Planning and review meetings with CAM; content review of current logic models and other statements of program goals, outcomes, and impact.																								
	Leslie Scheuler Development/revisions of logic models for targeted programs.																								
	Testing of instruments continues; collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data (teen/parent/administrator focus groups April-August); completion of evaluation plans; preparation of Year 1 report with recommendations for Year 2.																								
	Leslie Scheuler revision of evaluation tools, continuation of data collection.																								
	Leslie Scheuler reports evaluation findings and recommendations to CAM staff.																								
Strategic Planning	CAM, in consultation with Slover Linett, selects strategic planning consultant.																								
	Facilitated Strategic Planning sessions with Staff and Board.																								
	Strategic Plan draft review by staff and Board.																								
	Strategic Plan completed and added to CAM website.																								
	Slover Linett to review Strategic Plan with CAM staff, provide recommendations.																								
Dissemination of Results	Case study added to Slover Linett and/or Culture Track website.																								
	Strategic Plan and case study shared with American Alliance of Museums, Contemporary Art Museum Directors, and Association of Art Museum Directors.																								

- Slover Linett: Audience Research Activities
- Leslie Scheuler: Program Evaluation Activities
- CAM Strategic Planning Consultant (TBD)
- Staff Activity