

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Equity Action Plan

January 20, 2022

Overview of Agency Mission

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust. The Museum's primary mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

How the Museum Serves the American Public

The Museum strives to broaden public understanding of the history of the Holocaust through multifaceted programs: exhibitions; research and publication; collecting and preserving material evidence, art and artifacts related to the Holocaust; annual Holocaust commemorations known as Days of Remembrance; distribution of education materials and teacher resources; and a variety of public programming designed to enhance understanding of the Holocaust and related issues, including those of contemporary significance.

The Museum is devoted to:

- *Rescuing the Evidence:* carefully preserve objects that survived the Holocaust and make our collections available to the public at the Museum and online.
- *Advancing Awareness and Understanding of the Holocaust:* global leaders in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and in generating new knowledge and understanding about what made it possible.
- *Preventing Genocide:* monitor and raise awareness of areas at risk for genocide and influence international policy to prevent mass atrocities.
- *Educating a 21st-Century Global Audience:* a leader in fostering greater awareness of the Holocaust and its lessons for a complex world.

Summary of Action Plan

The Museum has selected three priority actions to focus on:

1. *Providing Equal Access to Procurement Opportunities:* The Museum is committed to leveraging its capacity as a purchaser to advance its DEAI values, and partner with companies/vendors designated as Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB) by the U.S. Small Business Administration.
2. *Reaching Underserved Student Populations:* The Museum has created a partnership to provide eligible educators quality books and resources about the Holocaust. Eligible educators include those who work in a Title I or Title I eligible schools or teach in a

school or after school program where at least 70% of students come from low-income families.

3. *Expanding Access for Educators*: The Museum has modified its annual professional development conference for educators to remove barriers to access (e.g. providing ASL interpretation), expanding participation by moving the conference to a virtual platform, and eliminating travel costs that were prohibitive for some educators.

Summary of Early Accomplishments

A key accomplishment in 2021 was the continued transformation of the Annual Belfer National Conference for Educators. Prior to 2020, this had been an in-person, professional development conference for educators with less than 5 years of experience teaching the Holocaust. In 2020, the Museum shifted the conference to a virtual format due to COVID-19 safety precautions. This change allowed more educators from across the country to attend, and participation rose from 200 in 2019, to 1,000 in 2020. The Museum recognized the shift to a virtual format as a key opportunity to reach underserved populations. The Museum piloted new marketing approaches, using social media, to reach teachers who were not familiar with the Museum's professional development opportunities. The Museum also expanded accessibility options for participants by including captioning and ASL interpretation. These changes led to a 157% increase in the number of educators able to attend the 2021 conference - a total of 2,600 educators. For the first time, participants from all 50 states were able to attend.

In addition to the priority actions, key accomplishments include:

- *Developing a guide to support employees as they plan programmatic events*. This guide is being drafted by a cross-functional team of employees and is designed to provide targeted and tangible guidance for considering DEAI best practices at the beginning of any project. This will support Museum programs as they strive to reach more diverse audiences. This will also help us ensure that our programs are accessible and inclusive and meet the needs of the American public.
- *Expanding our outreach through key new hires*. The Museum recently hired two new program coordinators who will help increase our capacity to further engage with key organizations and stakeholders to create accessible and relevant resources for students in a variety of disciplines and grade levels in states across the country. These new members of the Museum's staff bring years of experience teaching the Holocaust to diverse and under resourced students. They also have taught a range of disciplines and expertise, including Special Education and African American studies.

Priority Action 1 - Providing Equal Access to Procurement Opportunities

Barrier to Equitable Outcomes

The Museum is committed to leveraging its capacity as a purchaser to advance its DEAI values, and partner with companies/vendors designated as Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB) by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Museum recognizes the importance of ensuring that the competitive process for contracts with the Museum reflects the merits of all competitors.

In addition, the Museum recognizes that barriers such as locating contracting opportunities, and lack of knowledge of federal acquisition rules and processes may hamper Small Disadvantaged Businesses' participation in the procurement process.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

The Museum will review its procurement process to ensure that outreach engages Small Disadvantaged Businesses (including 8 (a) program certified small businesses, HUBZone certified small businesses, Women-owned small businesses and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small businesses), closely examining existing advertising channels for missed opportunities to reach Small Disadvantaged Businesses, while also pursuing more direct outreach where appropriate and necessary. The Museum will also review FY2021 Requests for Proposals to identify and address any barriers present in their content and will update RFP templates and training as necessary to reflect any changes. Language will also be added to RFP templates that communicate the Museum's interest in contracting with Small Disadvantaged Businesses.

The Museum will also review and refine its competitive contracting process, by assessing historical data, to identify points of friction in the process unique to a majority of Small Disadvantaged Businesses. In addition, the Museum will develop and distribute a post review survey for SDBs as part of the post-award debriefing of offerors to identify challenges they may have faced in their pursuit of a Museum contract. This data may in turn inform additional adjustments to the Museum's procurement process.

The Museum will initiate a process to categorize vendors by socio-economic type including Small Disadvantaged Businesses in order to better track engagement with and awards to SDBs in the future.

In order to expand its supplier base and increase participation by SDBs, the Museum will explore creating a 'Doing Business with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum' webpage. This will include an online vendor profile database to enable prospective Small Disadvantaged Businesses to market their interest in receiving future contracting opportunities. This page will also provide information to SDBs about how to register in the System for Award Management (SAM).

The Museum chose to prioritize the above actions in order to quantify current Small Disadvantaged Business participation in the procurement process and to identify potential barriers embedded in the contracting / procurement process. The Museum will pursue more direct outreach where appropriate and necessary in order to address potential lack of knowledge of the acquisition rules and processes.

Tracking Progress

In the next 2-4 years (post-implementation of the process to categorize vendors by socio-economic type referenced above), the Museum will track participation by SDBs in the Federal procurement process as both offerors and awardees on a quarterly basis. This review will also include an analysis of historical Federal awards to SDBs. The Museum will also track on a quarterly basis the number of SDBs that receive notification of a RFQ opportunity via the GSA eBuy system. In the mid-term (2023-2024), tracking will expand to include non-appropriated procurement. The Museum will then compare the results on an annual basis to identify the baseline and then ensure progress to achieve awards from a diverse community.

In the long term (5-8 years), success will be measured against the baseline established above for vendor participation and awards.

Accountability

This priority action item is being overseen by the Museum's Chief Financial Officer. This project will also report up through the Museum's DEAI Oversight Group which includes the Museum Director, Deputy Director, Chief Museum Operations Officer, EEO Manager, and other senior leaders. This level of oversight will ensure that the project is proceeding as planned and that it has sufficient resources in order to make a tangible and positive impact. Contract data will be reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis to ensure that our actions to address this problem are measured.

As noted above, the Museum will quantify and track vendor participation in the procurement process. This data will be reviewed by senior Museum leadership. If goals are not being met, the Museum will consider appointing a liaison to the SDB community to investigate the missed goals and to communicate directly with the SDB community and the Museum's Chief Financial Officer to increase opportunities for small disadvantaged vendors.

Priority Action 2 - Reaching Underserved Student Populations

It is part of the Museum's mission to increase the number of educators teaching about the Holocaust. In furtherance of this goal, the Museum is working with First Book, a national, nonprofit social enterprise, to reach their network of over 525,000 U.S. based educators who exclusively serve students in Title 1 and Title 1 eligible schools. The goals of this joint work are to increase access to quality books and resources about the Holocaust, as well as professional development about how to teach about the Holocaust.

Barrier to Equitable Outcomes

Every student in the United States currently does not have access to quality Holocaust education. While the Museum has numerous lessons and resources that have proven valuable to many partners, teachers and students, the resources are not readily accessible to all educators and their students. In a survey of First Book educators, 51% of respondents indicated that students have limited internet access at home, 47% indicated that they do not have access to full classroom sets of books, and 13% indicated that their school does not have a library. These barriers are particularly noticeable in Title 1 and Title 1 eligible schools.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

A partnership with First Book provides the Museum with access to a network of 525,000 U.S. based educators. Most of First Book's eligible educators work in a Title I or Title I eligible schools or teach in a school or after school program where at least 70% of students come from low-income families. These requirements ensure that the books and resources reach students in need and allow them to gain access to quality Holocaust books and resources.

First Book also has relationships with multiple book publishers who enable First Book to make books available to educators working with children in need at significantly reduced rates (\$4.50/book on average). In Fall 2021, the Museum and First Book distributed 366 classroom sets (totaling approximately 11,000 books distributed) of two foundational books for teaching about the Holocaust: Eli Wiesel's *Night* and Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. These classroom sets were made available for free on the First Book Marketplace and distributed to educators across the country. This initial effort targeted educators in under-resourced areas, specifically those without local or regional Holocaust centers. Educators from 30 states received full classroom sets, including educators in our target states of Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and West Virginia.

We are working with First Book to purchase 17,500 additional copies of *Night* and *The Diary of a Young Girl* that will be made available to educators for free on the First Book Marketplace in early 2022.

The recent distribution of resources will be followed with a series of follow-up steps to engage Title 1 and Title 1 eligible districts. Teachers who receive a class set of books will also be invited to attend a free virtual professional development training about the Museum's foundational resources, as well as strategies and techniques for integrating *The Diary of a Young Girl* and *Night* into a variety of classrooms and disciplines.

Tracking Progress

As a foundation for the Museum's efforts to understand the needs of these audiences, First Book and the Museum led a focus group with teachers in their network (Title 1 and Title 1 eligible schools) to learn more about the challenges they face and resources they need. First Book will also conduct a survey of over 1400 educators to learn more about resource requirements, issues regarding relevance, accessibility of resources, and professional development needs.

Future distribution efforts will continue to target under-resourced regions and educators outside the Museum's existing network. As educators request classroom sets, First Book will collect data on the age, primary language, and secondary languages of student's served, as well as the disciplines taught and the state/district of the school. The Museum will use this data to ensure our resources are reaching classrooms in need.

In FY2022 the Museum will assess the results of this initial pilot project and establish key metrics to track progress. The Museum will work with its partner to set targets for expansion based on what was learned from the pilot. The Museum will also assess the success of the program by sending a survey to educators who receive the classroom sets to gather additional data about how those resources are being used and what additional support the teachers may require.

Accountability

This priority action item is being overseen by the Museum's Deputy Director. This project will also report up through the Museum's DEAI Oversight Group which includes the Museum's Director, the EEO Manager, and its Executive Team. This level of oversight will ensure that the project is proceeding as planned and that it has sufficient resources in order to make a tangible and positive impact. Data will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that our actions to address this priority area are measured.

Priority Action 3 - Expanding Access for Educators

It is part of the Museum's mission to engage and support educators in order to broaden the public understanding of the history of the Holocaust among students enrolled in secondary education. The professional development opportunities and teaching resources that the Museum provides for teachers support innovative classroom experiences for secondary school students. When these educational experiences are held exclusively on site in Washington, DC they are out of reach for some school districts, teachers, and the students they serve.

Each year, USHMM has traditionally hosted the Belfer Conference - a professional development conferences for educators with less than 5 years of experience teaching the Holocaust. This conference was held at the Museum with an attendance cap of 200 educators due to the size and capacity of program space. A limited number of travel expense scholarships were available for some teachers, but many educators were unable to attend due to their inability to travel to Washington, D.C. for a multiple-day event. Additionally, due to the attendance cap, the conference would reach capacity with a substantial waitlist of educators who wanted to attend.

Barrier to Equitable Outcomes

USHMM identified the following barriers that were preventing teachers from accessing this important development opportunity:

- Funding
- The ability to travel for multiple days
- The limited scheduling options due to the in-person nature of the events
- Limited accessibility options for those with hearing or visual impairments

School districts that lack the funding necessary to fully leverage the Museum's professional development opportunities for teachers are among the most challenging populations for the Museum to reach through standard channels. Schools may lack the resources necessary to fully support the innovative approaches to teaching the Holocaust that teachers learn in the Museum programing – frustrating early adopters and limiting the likelihood of word-of-mouth engagement within these districts. In some cases, traveling to a distant professional development conference can be out of reach for districts with limited funding and limited access to qualified substitutes. These challenges are particularly acute for Title 1 and Title 1 eligible school districts.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

Due to the travel restrictions required by the pandemic, the Museum piloted a virtual Belfer conference in 2020 that was attended by 1,000 educators and received very positive feedback. An outcome of the virtual format was the increase in both the number of participants and the diversity of those participants. In 2021, we continued the pilot with a greater emphasis on DEAI to reach educators from across the country. By removing the travel requirement and providing expanded accessibility options, the total number of participants more than doubled to 2,600 educators. This growth represented geographic, racial, disability, and socio-economic diversity.

The growth in numbers also is evidence of the Museum's marketing this opportunity in accessible places using social media and targeted email campaigns so more teachers were aware of the conference. We made sure educators knew that it was free to all those who were able to join, and that it was available on a desktop or mobile platform.

In addition to alleviating the financial, physical, and time-related barriers by moving to a virtual format, the Museum also ensured that all of the Belfer Conference's recorded videos were fully captioned and all live sessions had an ASL interpreter, allowing hearing impaired participants to feel fully integrated into the event.

We received substantial feedback that the virtual format opened up the opportunity for educators to participate by removing the travel barrier and recording all sessions, which removed the requirement to participate in real time. One participant noted “*If this had not been virtual so many people would not have been able to participate. This was a wonderful way to make sure everyone who wanted to participate could participate.*”

Tracking Progress

Due to the flexible nature of the virtual conferences, the Museum was able to reach thousands of educators who could not otherwise attend in-person events. For the first time in Belfer history, attendees represented all 50 states, including those from rural, underserved communities, and educators from 29 countries. In FY22, the focus will be on continuing to expand the number of attendees.

Statistics on attendance and demographics of attendees serve as the primary evidence that the Museum has eliminated key barriers for educators. We will use attendance, engagement at the conference, and engagement in the educator community after the conference to determine whether there are additional steps the Museum can take to increase the diversity of educators in its professional development programs in the future.

The virtual format allows the Museum to recruit diverse teachers to attend the conference. This is a priority for the conference. We will expand our efforts to reach educators who represent a diverse teacher population that includes the following types of diversity: age, cultural, disability, geographic, racial, religious, sex/gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic. We will also focus on recruiting teachers who serve diverse and historically under-resourced student populations.

In FY22, we are focusing on increasing the number of participants specifically from under resourced communities by conducting targeted outreach to those educators. In addition, a critical part of this conference are the videos on pedagogy and methodology that are produced and made available first to attendees and then to teachers who visit the Museum's website. In FY 22, we will focus on expanding the diverse voices featured in these educational videos and live conference sessions to ensure diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and ethnicity.

In the long term, our goal is to create a robust educator community, rich with diversity, that continues to interact barrier-free with the Museum and rely on its resources to teach about the Holocaust in their classrooms. We are working to develop goals in FY2022.

Accountability

This priority action item is being overseen by the Museum's Deputy Director and the Deputy Chief Program Officer. This project will also report up through the Museum's DEAI Oversight Group which includes the Museum's Director and its Executive Team. This level of oversight

will ensure that the project is proceeding as planned and that it has sufficient resources in order to make a tangible and positive impact. Data will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that our actions to address this priority area are measured.