

SPENCER MUSEUM of ART

In the fall of 2022 the Spencer Museum of Art hosted four community forums to gather input from the Indigenous community, the Black community, the Disability community, and general audiences in Lawrence. This document provides a summary of the priorities expressed by those communities, followed by commitments that the Spencer Museum is making, informed by community feedback, to improve access, inclusion, and belonging for visitors of all identities and backgrounds.

Summary of concerns and needs gathered during community forums in fall 2022

Indigenous community

- NAGPRA/Repatriation
- More opportunities for Native involvement at the Museum including internship programs, hiring consultants, and hosting exhibitions and events featuring Native artists, especially local ones
- Indigenize the museum by including Indigenous perspectives instead of westernized views in exhibition content, language, social media, and collections

Black community

- Increased representation of BIPOC art and artists
- More context about how artworks got into collection, particularly works by Black people, ethics of how works were collected, etc.
- Museum as a resource for people of color; make the Museum feel more welcoming and accessible to them

Disability community

- Improve accessible parking (even for people who don't qualify for accessible placards)
- Better and more information about available accommodations in advance of their visit
- Highlight artwork and artists with mental illness; intersectional presentation of disability
- Do more out in community to build trust and comfort levels

General audiences

- Interactive ways of navigating the galleries for all ages
- Engagement with local artists; opportunities to see their work and interact with them
- Satellite programming; ways to engage with the Spencer out in the community
- Better understanding of what is going on at Museum, what is available to see and do

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Community Commitments for improving diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging

- **Increase transparency around the history of the Spencer Museum's collection and how we continue to acquire work**
 - Organize a public discussion series exploring topics such as the history of the Museum's collection, how we decide what artists and art to add to the collection, how we determine themes and artists to feature in exhibitions and programs
 - Implement changes to gallery labels to make the history of objects clearer
 - Provide a summary of our Collections Plan on our website; this plan includes a commitment of acquiring work by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC artists during the next 5 years
 - Improve the availability of information related to artist identities
- **Facilitate ongoing two-way conversations with communities**
 - Hold additional community forums; reach out to additional communities we did not hear from in our 2022 forums
 - Create community input stations at the Museum and other places to gather anonymous feedback on ways to continue improving
 - Align programming for exhibitions to encourage dialogue with frequently under-represented audiences
- **Improve accessibility of physical and digital spaces**
 - Beginning in the summer of 2023, the Museum will provide visitors free parking on the first floor of the Mississippi Street Garage; we will continue to seek improvements for accessible parking
 - Provide accessibility aids, including sensory kits and an accessibility map, to promote independent exploration
 - Consistently offer ASL interpretation for public programs
 - Continue to improve exhibition designs and gallery layouts for easier navigation
 - Improve language about accessibility and accommodations on the Museum's website
 - Write alternative text for images in the Museum's online collection and virtual exhibitions
- **Offer programs that reach more/new audiences**
 - Be mindful about offering events for all age groups
 - Host more events that feel welcoming and accessible to audiences who have not visited the Spencer before
 - Meet people where they are with off-site programs; build relationships so they are comfortable coming to Museum
 - Build additional partnerships in the community
- **Expand community awareness of the Spencer Museum**
 - Extend the reach of our communications and advertising; prioritize our budget to send more city-wide mailings, find communication networks outside mainstream channels to reach more diverse audiences
 - Launch new website with improved navigation and search capabilities (planned for summer 2024)