



THE
ROCKWELL
MUSEUM ^{AT} 50
A SMITHSONIAN AFFILIATE

FRAMING THE FUTURE: The Rockwell at 50 and Beyond

2026-2030 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on Dec. 10, 2025

FRAMING THE FUTURE: The Rockwell at 50 and Beyond

From its iconic home in Corning's historic city hall building, The Rockwell Museum is a cultural anchor for its community and a recognized Smithsonian Affiliate of distinction. Over the course of nearly 50 years, it has grown into a welcoming, community-centered institution with a broad collection of American art and growing strength in works by contemporary Indigenous artists.

As the Museum prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026 and enter its next chapter, it faces both challenges and extraordinary opportunities. The Rockwell's name continues to create confusion for those who assume the Museum represents the work of Norman Rockwell; it is significantly limited by the physical limitations of its current galleries and infrastructure; and it acknowledges the need to broaden its base of support beyond its principal source of funding. At the same time, The Rockwell is energized by visionary executive and board leadership, a talented staff, and a clear, forward-looking strategic plan that is the result of months of dialogue between the Museum's board and staff.

The Rockwell serves a distinctive role in Corning and the Southern Tier. It is committed to fostering intergenerational family engagement, creating opportunities for lifelong learning, and ensuring that children and youth in the region encounter original works of art. In a small city where cultural resources are limited, the Museum provides experiences typically found only in much larger urban areas.

Through its collection and programs, The Rockwell frames the American story through art, emphasizing inclusivity and elevating underrepresented voices. Its growing strength in contemporary Indigenous art and its tradition of thematic, story-driven exhibitions distinguish it among its regional peers. Through its Smithsonian Affiliation, accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums, partnership with Art Bridges, and other important relationships, the Museum carries national credibility and brings world-class resources to its community.

Building on these strengths, over the coming years The Rockwell will pursue an ambitious agenda that reflects both its heritage and its aspirations. It will sharpen and clarify its identity, addressing the longstanding confusion around its name while embracing renewed mission and vision statements that articulate the Museum's distinctive role at this landmark moment in its history. It will deepen the ways visitors engage with art, broadening interpretation to reflect diverse voices and investing in digital tools that enhance access and storytelling. The Museum will expand its role as a civic and cultural partner, strengthening collaborations with schools, nonprofits, and community networks while creating new spaces for dialogue and connection. It will address critical space and facility needs, from gallery expansion to education areas and visitor amenities, ensuring that its physical environment matches the caliber of its programs. The Museum will also broaden and diversify its revenue streams, cultivating philanthropy and earned income that will sustain its mission for decades to come.

A focused strategic vision and path forward for The Rockwell's future is framed and set forth in the pages that follow. This framework begins with revised mission, vision, and values statements and is organized around five priority goals, each supported by defined strategies to accomplish them. These statements, goals, and strategies respond directly to the challenges and opportunities identified through a collaborative planning process shaped by the active partnership of trustees and staff. Together, they form a roadmap for the next several years and a living document that will guide decisions, measure progress, and ensure accountability.

The Rockwell Museum is poised to enter its next half-century with renewed momentum and clarity of purpose. Guided by this strategic plan, the Museum will embrace its role as both exceptional and essential, advancing scholarship and creativity, strengthening community, and inspiring today's visitors and future generations through meaningful experiences with visual art.

2026-2030 Strategic Plan Task Force

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Refreshed Mission, Vision & Values



Mission

The Rockwell Museum engages people with American art through diverse perspectives and illuminating experiences that foster curiosity, dialogue, and connection.

Vision

We envision a museum where art, ideas, and experiences connect and enlighten, inspire creativity, and strengthen community.

Values

Our values guide how we work, what we share, and the impact we seek to make. We serve as a welcoming hub that reflects and strengthens the people and places of Corning and our region. We ensure that our programs, spaces, and collections are open and meaningful to people of all backgrounds, perspectives, and abilities. We foster learning across generations, sparking curiosity and reflection through art and storytelling. We embrace experimentation, new ideas, and diverse voices to keep the Museum dynamic and relevant. We build authentic partnerships and believe that shared effort creates greater impact. We honor our history and collections and manage our resources responsibly to sustain the Museum for future generations.

Core Values

- Community and Collaboration
- Inclusion and Accessibility
- Education and Curiosity
- Innovation and Experimentation
- Stewardship and Sustainability

Goals and Strategies

The following five goals will define the Museum's strategic priorities over the coming years. Each reflects a central area of focus identified through the planning process, grounded in the Museum's mission and values and shaped by the insights of both staff and trustees.

Together, they present a framework for advancing the Museum's role, strengthening its identity, deepening its relevance, and sustaining its future. The strategies that accompany each goal establish clear directions, define priorities, and provide benchmarks against which progress can be measured. They are designed to be both realistic and achievable, ensuring that accountability is maintained and resources are aligned with the Museum's capacity.

Over the years ahead, these strategies will be further developed and integrated into annual work plans and departmental priorities, guiding staff activity and informing decisions about programming, facilities, and financial investment. In this way, the strategic plan will remain a living document that not only articulates vision but also brings this vision to life.

2026-2030 Strategic Goals

1. Clarify Institutional Identity

The Rockwell Museum will define and communicate a cohesive identity that reflects its unique role locally and among regional and national art museums.

2. Strengthen Interpretation and Digital Capacity

The Rockwell Museum will deepen visitors' engagement with the Museum by refining how its collections and exhibitions are interpreted, both in the galleries and online.

3. Deepen Community Relationships

The Rockwell Museum will deepen and expand its role as a cultural anchor in Corning and a trusted regional partner by strengthening its relationships with local communities and broadening its geographic reach. The Museum will serve as a vibrant community hub that functions as a physical gathering place for dialogue, creativity, and connection.

4. Expand Space and Facilities

The Rockwell Museum will address current space limitations through strategic infrastructure investments that reflect its mission, values, and long-term aspirations, phased in alignment with its financial and operational capacities.

5. *Broaden Revenue Streams*

The Rockwell Museum will strengthen its financial sustainability by diversifying its revenue sources while maintaining its strong relationship with its key institutional funder, building a disciplined, systematic development program that emphasizes sustainable growth over short-term fundraising.

Implementing the Plan

Following the final adoption of this plan, the Museum's senior leadership team will lead a process to involve the full staff, organized by work area, in developing specific actions to accomplish each of the 38 strategies outlined above. This process will define the annual and ongoing activities that will be required over the coming years and beyond, identify the positions or teams responsible for the work, and prepare budgets for one-time or ongoing resources as needed. Through this effort, the Museum will translate these strategic priorities into operational practice. The resulting action plans will clarify responsibilities, create benchmarks for measuring progress, and ensure that accountability is shared across the institution. Progress on these actions will be reviewed regularly by the Executive Director and senior management team and reported to the Board of Trustees, providing oversight, transparency, and the flexibility to adjust specific strategies and actions as circumstances evolve.

Funding

Implementation of this plan will require thoughtful investment and additional funding. While many strategies will be carried out through the reallocation of existing resources and the alignment of ongoing operations, others will require significant one-time or sustained financial commitments. Addressing the physical limitations of the current facility, expanding digital infrastructure, advancing interpretive planning, and deepening community engagement will all involve new costs, as will building the internal capacity to support a more comprehensive development program. Since the launch of this planning process, the Museum has received a commitment for the largest private gift from an individual in its history, a transformational, unrestricted contribution. This gift may be used, in whole or in part, to help fund key initiatives outlined in the strategic plan or to provide ongoing support for new operational needs over time. Additional investment from public and private sources will also be essential to achieve the full ambition of the plan. As priorities are phased over time, funding strategies will be developed alongside action plans to ensure that aspirations are matched by realistic, sustainable means of support.

Framing the Future

Developed through months of collaboration between Board and staff leadership, the strategic plan outlined above reflects The Rockwell's heritage and its aspirations for the years ahead, acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that exist and setting forth clear priorities and strategies to address them. It frames a future in which the Museum's clarified role will strategically guide its direction and its influence will endure. Through the fulfillment of this plan, the coming years will mark one of the most transformative moments in its history, as The Rockwell enters its second half century with confidence and optimism, poised for success and impact.