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The Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased to submit an annual report for the work we are doing with the generous appropriation of \$1.3 million for fiscal years 2020-2021 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment. This report details accomplishments in FY21 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) related to the following statutes: M.S. 3.303, Subd. 10, and M.S. 129D.17, Subd.2 (d). We are grateful for your support of our programs.

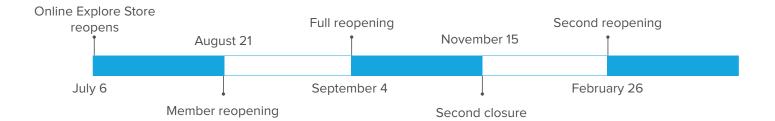
Statewide School and Community Initiative | July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

FY21 Report, 4.10 FTE

The Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM) began the 2021 fiscal year eager to return to work, despite an extended shutdown, and committed to delivering on our stated project goals of furthering engagement with family and school audiences. Like the prior year, Science Museum staff were forced to continually adapt to changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the details of which are shared in this report.

Following a March 2020 shutdown, which saw the furlough of nearly 90% of SMM staff, a core group of program and education staff returned to work In July 2020 to begin planning for the upcoming school year. Beginning in September 2020, additional staff and instructors returned to work and overall fiscal year staffing levels reached 398 employees, a 29% decrease relative to our pre-pandemic workforce. Due to school and museum closures, staff shifted program development and implementation to distance based models and online resources. The development of new digital content was begun in the Fall of 2020 with a phased rollout of these educational resources occurring from January to June 2021.

This period continued to be an unprecedented time of change and disruption for the museum and our family, community and school audiences. Throughout this past year we remained steadfast in our commitment to expanding access to high quality, standards aligned, and culturally responsive programs and resources. We engaged with audiences, stakeholders and partners in respectful and collaborative ways to support STEM learning, improve lives, and increase access to objects that tell the story of Minnesota's cultural heritage. Science, Education and Equity are at the core of the museum's mission, values, and programs. This year more than ever, Legacy funding provided critical investments that allowed the Museum to continue our work and meet the changing needs of our school, family and community audiences.



Progress made towards project goals includes:

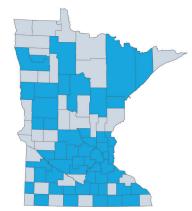
1. Increase access to museum programming and resources for schools throughout Minnesota.

Due to the pandemic, The Science Museum was not able to offer field trips and in person outreach programs for school audiences in accordance with MDE guidelines and our internal safety considerations. In response to the needs of schools and teachers, starting in the fall a returning, smaller team of educators and staff pivoted from in person programming to developing, piloting and producing multiple on-line experiences for schools. While we were not able to reach our goal of serving all 87 counties, we are proud of the accomplishment of serving the needs of schools, teachers and students in 52 counties across Minnesota.

Legacy funds supported the development of a range of virtual program models and products. The programs were designed to provide teachers and caregivers flexibility in how and when learners were able to engage in STEM learning experiences across remote, hybrid and in person school settings. The team modified existing programs to produce online, synchronous programming that brought SMM instructors into the classroom virtually. They developed multiple student self paced - asynchronous programs to allow learners to participate individually as part of a class activity. In addition, we piloted physical kits that extended the virtual learning with a hands-on engineering challenge.

To support the broadest reach possible and reduce barriers to program participation, SMM offered all of our virtual programs **free of charge**. This strategy has continued into the 2021-22 school year, with grateful recognition of the Legacy support that underwrote program development and additional private donor funding that made this content available for all Minnesotans.

This past year created new challenges for tracking students and school participation across multiple online offerings, formats and software platforms. 38,300 engagement opportunities were tracked for students and educators engaged in the FY21 program offerings. Approximately 37,400 of the engagement opportunities were with students and roughly 900 were with educators.



FY21 Counties Reached

- Achieved proposed outcomes (Achieved 100% of outcomes)
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2. Invest in SMM systems to track and analyze school participation statewide

As part of our planning for FY22, SMM committed staff and financial resources to build out capacities with our school database system. The goal is to connect SMM school registration records with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) school data. This will build our capacity to analyze participation and attendance by school district, schools, grade levels, geographical location, free and reduced lunch and student demographics. The integration of this data will increase our understanding of who we currently serve and more importantly the schools we are not reaching.

The cross departmental project team was convened in spring of 2021 to define project deliverables and timelines. This project will be completed in FY22 funded with carry forward and hold back funds from the FY21 budget.

Proposed Outcome Achievement

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3. Build capacity of school districts, leaders, and teachers to develop and implement plans to address systems of oppression and educational inequities.

Given COVID-19 health and safety concerns, the K-12 District Leadership program known as PAGE was successfully redesigned for a fully virtual format. Moreover, with 36 participants, the program had the largest cohort in its 11-year history. This highly regarded professional development program, created originally through funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), is designed for school-based teams of educators who are committed to making their schools and classrooms more just and equitable places to learn.

Context

The museum's IDEAL (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Leadership) Center staff returned from a 10-week furlough on June 15th, 2020 to complete recruitment, restart program planning, and shift to a distance learning format. The PAGE Institute planned for June was rescheduled to late July 2020; dates for the three 2-day colloquia did not need to be adjusted. Much to the surprise of the team, 36 participants applied and were selected for participation in the 2020-2021 program — it was anticipated that we would have a cohort of 24 participants. The final Colloquium of 2019-2020 had been originally scheduled for May of 2020 and the IDEAL team was able to reschedule it for May of 2021 for veteran participants. Interestingly, virtual programming increased accessibility of participation for those with disabilities or whom travel time was prohibitive. Events constituting 18 program days / 117 program hours were as follows:

July 27–31, 2020 Institute
 Oct 22–23, 2020 Colloquium 1
 Feb 18–19, 2021 Colloquium 2
 April 8–9, 2021 Colloquium 3

May 10–11 & May 13–14, 2021
 Veterans Colloquium 3 (rescheduled from May of 2020; offered twice to accommodate schedules)

Cohort Events and Composition

From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, there were a total of 97 PAGE participants:

60 from K–12 districts in Minnesota; 3 from Minnesota service cooperatives; 7 from MN DoE with 3 from their testing contractors, and an additional 24 from K–12 districts and organizations outside Minnesota. Minnesota counties included Anoka, Becker, Clay, Dakota, Douglas, Grant, Hennepin, Mower, Nobles, Otter Tail, Pope, Ramsey, Sherburne, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin. The cost of the 2021-2022 PAGE Foundations program was \$2,450 per person. This fee included 11 days of professional development, labor, and materials. For teams based in Minnesota, funds provided by Minnesota's Legacy Amendment helped support the program, bringing the cost of the 2021-2022 PAGE Foundations program down to \$1450 per person.

Conversion of Curriculum and Techniques from Face-to-Face format to Virtual Format

Throughout the year and especially over the summer of 2020, IDEAL facilitators worked intensely to revise the curriculum, develop new technology skills and protocols required to deliver a professional learning experience virtually. The bulk of iPAGE professional development modules were redesigned for virtual programming and field-tested through the work that the IDEAL Center does in the following sectors: K-12, Higher Education, and Informal STEM Education institutions. Thus, funds were leveraged for this extensive redesign across sources including state (Legacy), federal (NSF) and private (Howard Hughes Medical Institute grants to colleges and universities). Adjustments to virtual programming in 2020 included modifying, resequencing, and/or creating 11 days of content to be responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uprising following George Floyd's murder. In the process, IDEAL also (1) created substantive behind-the-scenes systems for remote communication and coordination during live sessions; and (2) using NSF funds, acquired computers capable of increased processing and uploading demands, supplemental monitors for multiple documents and spreadsheets, semi-professional microphones for enhanced sound quality, and software to support virtual presentation functions.

Concerning our virtual programming, a veteran (returning) PAGE participant wrote:

"I appreciate your team's dedication and organization. I was cautiously optimistic about participating virtually, and you managed to distill a lot of what makes PAGE so powerful and meaningful into a very different format. Thank you!"

A new participant wrote:

"This has been an exceptional learning experience. Content, structure, technology, and balance between large/small group and asynchronous time are absolutely delightful. Breaks are well timed. Giving a gal a new moleskine notebook guarantees engagement, at least where this trainee is concerned."

Impact

Overall, the end-of-day written reflections evidenced that the quality of virtual programming was strong and that statements were very similar to face-to-face reflections. Participants frequently noted the quality of IDEAL programming in a virtual space and that it was extremely helpful modeling for them to see how virtual learning could be effectively conducted.

- One participant wrote, "I very much appreciate what I have learned from each of you, not only about the intended outcomes of PAGE, but also about creating a virtual space intimate enough to foster trust, nurture relationships, support and empower change agents across the educational sphere."
- Regarding explicit content, another wrote, "PAGE has given me the opportunity to learn, engage and share
 with humans I might not ordinarily have the chance to talk to. I have a greater understanding of structures
 of conversation, systems and systems theory, and the idea of objectivity."
- Another participant summed up their PAGE experience as follows: "Thank you for investing your collective knowledge and leadership in the 'belly of your brother's and sisters' in this cohort. My own personal growth has been tremendous over the 11 days we have learned together. In some ways, this training on the 'how', the process of co-laboring to a better place, has saved me in my day job, allowing me to temper urgency with patience, the patience needed for well designed, carefully managed group processes to become enculculterized which is the way to manage ongoing urgent improvement. That you have pulled off this immense work in the shadow of George Floyd's murder and during a global pandemic is another quiet miracle."

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4. Develop shared understanding of opportunities, barriers, and potential roles of SMM family-focused programming to increase access to STEM learning experiences in multiple settings, in collaboration with community partners

Museum staff made efforts to communicate with existing museum partner organizations in order to develop a better understanding of opportunities, barriers, and potential roles of family-focused programming to increase access to STEM learning experiences. This was particularly challenging due to the museum being closed for two separate periods during the year. In Fall 2020 a community engagement staff member held re-opening conversations with staff from nine of our Great Partner organizations. Great Partners are social service or educational institutions that serve families with low or limited incomes. The museum provides a Great Tix rate for these individuals and families. We learned the following from these Great Partner contacts:

Feedback

- Our Great Tix coupon & voucher program is easy and appreciated by users.
- People enjoy visiting SMM because it is interactive, programming for all ages, and people are able to be curious and excited.
- BIPOC representation is very important at all levels of the organization from educational content programming and events to staffing. Reflecting BIPOC representation in science, cultural-based programming, and inclusion of issues that are relevant to community
- There is a need for disability-inclusive and sensory friendly programming.
- Planning group visits can be difficult
- Events (especially culturally-based) are a draw
- Transportation and parking are physical barriers to SMM access

Areas of interest

- · People are interested in seeing BIPOC scientific contributions (historical & current).
- Culturally-based programming including focuses on Africa & African culture and Indigenous knowledge (night sky, sustenance) are desired.
- Exhibits and programming that focus on the following topics are also requested: Mental health, disease & vaccines (COVID-19), food & agriculture, environment & outdoors.
- People are also learning about internships, training and job opportunities.

We leveraged funding from the National Science Foundation to host a series of six family nights in May and June 2021. This was the first on-site programming we hosted since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through these six events, fifty-six families participated representing a total of 236 participants. We partnered with the following organizations to host these events: American Indian Family Center, Hmong American Partnership, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, and Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood. Here is some of what we learned through our work with these organizations:

- The project started with the assumption that community partners would want us to come to them. All four partners wanted the events to be at SMM.
- Hosting the events while the museum was closed to the public, mask requirements and other precautions were appreciated by partners.
- All partners requested transportation assistance for their participants (parking vouchers, gas cards).
- · Some partners requested translated materials while others preferred having interpreters available.

Museum staff continued to develop relationships with Red Lake Nation community members. Specifically, we leveraged Legacy funds to develop two new grant proposals with a non-profit organization named Native Sun Community Power Development. Native Sun is committed to the use of culture and language in the training and deployment of a Native solar/renewable energy workforce, so as to help foster a just transition to energy sovereignty for Minnesota's Indigenous communities. Legacy funds allowed the museum to bring our educational resources to the table to develop a National Science Foundation project proposal in collaboration with Native Sun. This project, which did not receive funding, was focused on designing community convenings around Indigenous knowledge systems and informal science for addressing the climate crisis. We also wrote and received a small grant from the Rising Voices Center for

Indigenous and Earth Sciences. This grant will allow us to continue working together to support the development of a more culturally reflective and responsive school curriculum focusing on climate change and energy issues. Through another challenging year we are pleased to say that we were able to work with community partners to begin documenting opportunities, barriers, and potential roles of SMM family-focused programming to increase access to STEM learning experiences in multiple settings.

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5. Provide SMM programs and resources that support high quality STEM learning experiences aligned to Minnesota Science Standards (existing and adopted) for both in-person and distance learning environments

This past year, the museum focused our work to develop a new set of virtual and distance learning program offerings for schools and communities. Legacy funds were a critical support for the development of standards aligned, virtual programs that were accessible to all schools across Minnesota.

Overall, two instructor-led online assembly programs, seven student-paced asynchronous programs, two kit offerings, five online lessons and resources were developed for a total of sixteen new program options.

Online Assemblies (Synchronous)

- Water is Life
- Engineering Introduction

Student Paced Programs (Asynchronous)

- · Dino Discovery
- Dino Dentist
- Engineer It: Solving Problems Together
- · Turn the Crank!
- Sources of Energy
- Personal Energy Use
- · What's in Your Stream

Kits

- Engineer It: Get Moving
- · Automata: Be a Storyteller

Online Lessons and Resources

- · Big River: Plant for the Future Story Map
- Race and Identity Showcase
- · Mystery Objects Mini Lesson
- Engineer It Lesson Plan
- Automata Lesson Plan

Our work continued to be guided by our research and evaluation efforts. A summary of the national literature on the impact of COVID 19 on families and schools, *Walking the Walk: Responding to COVID-19-related and Persistent Inequities in K-12 Education - Practices of Promise for the Science Museum of Minnesota*, which was updated in the fall of 2021, guided our program development philosophy. Throughout the year the evaluation team used multiple strategies to collect program evaluation data from teachers and students. The software used for the asynchronous Nearpod programs allowed us to add and collect evaluation data from students directly at the end of each session while teachers were asked for feedback on nearpod and kit offerings via a separate survey form.

Evaluation Findings

- Half of students rated their Nearpod experience as either Really Good (26%) or Awesome (31%) (based on a rating question with age-appropriate response options: Terrible, Not very good, Good, Really good, and Awesome).
- A majority of teachers who provided feedback agreed or strongly agreed that for their students the experience was enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, and had a relevant topic.
- Teachers felt that having the content accessible at any time (a feature that distinguishes an asynchronous program from a traditional face-to-face program) was useful in supporting their experience -- 91% (n=21) rated that feature "Very useful" -- and nearly all (88%, n=16) agreed the Nearpod content supported their teaching goals.
- Teachers generally gave high ratings when asked how well Nearpods worked as a distance learning program with 60% (n=22) rating it "Excellent" or "Outstanding" (The top two ratings).
- When asked about their overall experience with the asynchronous program software platform (not just how well it worked for distance learning) responses were similar in that about two-thirds reported "Excellent" or "Outstanding", however a smaller proportion of respondents (27%) said "Outstanding" compared to "Excellent" (36%).
- All teachers who responded (n=21) expressed some interest in using similar programs in the future. The majority (62%) gave the top rating of "Very interested."

"Through this pandemic, it has been great to see SMM create and offer virtual offerings for distance learners and for school districts that would never have the opportunity to have access like this! Please continue to offer virtual components or even programs for rural schools districts in greater MN!!"

In addition to the program development listed above, Legacy funds have helped to build the capacity of SMM staff and infrastructure to develop and deliver distance-based learning programs throughout Minnesota. The pandemic accelerated museum plans to expand distance learning. SMM is committed to continued development and implementation of virtual programs to increase access and extend learning opportunities for school audiences.

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6. Communicate effectively with Minnesota teachers, schools, and districts about museum programs, resources, and professional development opportunities.

We focus on meaningful communication and engagement with Minnesota teachers through print, email, web, in-person contacts, conferences, museum events, and other meetings.

In FY21, we relied heavily on social media and email to share the resources available on <u>smm.org/educators</u>. Given the nature of social media, online, and email interaction, we are sometimes able to report specific educator engagement, and other times report total engagement with educational products, some portion of which are educators.

Only a percentage of the hundreds of thousands of people we reached via social media are educators. 138,000 people visited the educator-specific landing page, engaged with (clicked, liked, or shared) one of our posts, clicked on a link, or started a conversation based on FY21 social media outreach. Highlights include:

- 3,675 unique Education landing page visits.
- 27,149 email communications designed for educators opened.
- 125,250 individuals reached through <u>smm.org/educators</u> or #STEMeducation posts highlighting resources.
- 1,416,281 individuals reached through all social media posts related to STEM education

The Statewide School Initiative Team measures outcomes through the following methods:

- Surveys sent to schools after a virtual learning or kit experience.
- Survey questions about student experience embedded in Nearpod lessons.
- · Tracked registrations for virtual learning opportunities (nearpods and lessons) and kits.
- Analysis of education web traffic and open rates of emails sent monthly to a distribution list of 11,000 educators in Minnesota.

Given the constant evolution of engagements, our FY21 learnings will continue to inform and refine our communications strategies in FY22 and beyond.

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7. Increase visits (in person and virtual) to SMM collections through accessible on-line portal leading to new partnerships

SMM staff are leading the development of the online portal. This planned work was not completed FY21 due to the pandemic, loss of staff, and a shift in the museum's priorities to build necessary infrastructure to engage more of our audiences online. Prior to the pandemic, SMM's website focused on logistical and transactional information. After the pandemic started, we added more mission related content to the website, changing the focus. This gives us a place to highlight our work, share content with audiences, and set the site up for being a place to learn about science, research and collections. Potential partners and the interested public can find this content in the Online Science Resources section of the website. This section will eventually link users to the collection online portal, opening up many opportunities to connect to the Minnesota-based anthropology objects in the collection.

Some of these resources already connect to the Museum's MN Anthropology-related collections. Examples include:

- <u>Science snapshots: Searching for stories</u> describes the work of SMM archaeologists during the summer of 2021 as they learn more about the people who lived in what we now call Minnesota up to 10,000 years ago.
- <u>Minnesota culture</u>, <u>past and present</u>, <u>through three local artifacts</u> shows how artifacts found in Minnesota help our understanding of how people once lived and continue to live today.
- An article about <u>repatriation of collections</u> gives insight into some of the cultural significance of the museum's collections and our work with communities.
- In this post, <u>History at home: Preserve your treasures for generations to come</u>, we discuss caring for collections in the museum and what Minnesotans can do to preserve their own collections.

Work is underway and a new collections viewer will be available for the public by the end of FY22. This viewer will make the collections more accessible leading to more partnerships and engagement in the collection.

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8. Gain knowledge about objects in the anthropology collection with ties to Minnesota cultures

During FY21, SMM Anthropology staff digitized 3323 records in the MN Anthropology collections. This includes taking photos of objects and connecting them to the digital catalog record, renaming photos and connecting them to the proper catalog records, uploading information to the museum's database, and/or updating records with information about the object. Once the new viewer is fully developed and secure (in FY22), these records will be shared on the museum's website in an accessible and user-friendly way.

With the continued pandemic, most of our professional and outreach communications are still virtual with minimal visits to the collection in person.

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9. Keep staff employed during uncertain economic times

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Minnesota, and the rest of the world, into a public-health crisis the likes of which we have not seen in over a century. The financial impacts of the crisis have been far-reaching and severe. Following the Governor's Executive Order in March 2020, the Museum shut down public-facing operations and worked collectively to redefine organizational priorities and find alternate ways to fulfill our mission. In order to ensure the long-term viability of the institution, the Museum placed 89% of SMM staff on temporary layoff in April 2020. As the effects of the pandemic wore on, these layoffs resulted in the permanent layoff of 39% of SMM staff, impacting 158 individuals, in June 2020. In FY21 we slowly grew back to a workforce of 398 employees; 70% of our pre-pandemic staffing.

Program leaders pivoted from our hallmark hands-on STEM learning experiences to developing and implementing distance based learning and online resources to meet the needs of remote learners, both in virtual classrooms and in households across Minnesota. The pandemic closure also highlighted the urgent need to add more of the museum's research and collections online and to amplify our work making it more accessible. To this end, this project allowed for:

- · Partially covering the salaries of anthropology staff in FY21, many of whom are project funded
- Partially covering the salaries of Museum Access & Equity staff in FY21
- During the summer, Legacy funds supported the work of the STEM Education Director and core planning staff to maintain communication with schools and develop program plans and scenarios for the 2020-21 school year
- IDEAL Center staff returned to work in June 2020 to develop new curriculum and the technical capacity required to deliver a virtual teacher institute in July 2020, with additional programing throughout FY21
- Several Evaluation and Research staff were partially covered by Legacy funds to support their early return in late
 FY20 and early FY21

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In this unprecedented period in our State's history, we are grateful for what we have achieved and proud of our ability to respond to the needs of Minnesota educators, students and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As of June 30, 2021, the year two direct expenses for this project are \$401,946.11. The administrative costs are \$56,403.29. Additional funding supporting the Statewide School and Community Initiative project includes gifts from private donors totaling \$859,466.00. The support provided by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund has given us the critical financial underpinnings to respond to the changing needs of our schools, communities and families. Your support increases access to the museum's collections, helps build relationships with communities throughout the state, creates professional development for education leaders, and expands the capacity of SMM to develop and deliver high quality distance learning programs for caregivers and schools.

We are grateful for the support from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to realize this project.

Information | July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

The Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased to submit this report on the work supported by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Legacy Amendment. We are proud of our work on these projects and look forward to continuing the important initiatives that these funds make possible. We would be thrilled to provide a tour of the museum, our school services, our RACE exhibit, or our collections vault, which is being brought directly to the public through our digitization and access program! We would also be happy to answer any additional questions. Please contact Jon Severson for additional information at jseverson@smm.org or 651-221-9499.

Legacy project information is accessible online at: https://www.legacy.mn.gov/funds/arts-cultural-heritage-fund/reports/science-museum-minnesota

ADDENDUM: Science Museum of Minnesota - Board of Trustees 2021

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Sofi Stadium/Hollywood Park

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA

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