

BACKGROUND



WHAT

The National Museum of the American People will be a significant institution devoted to the study of, and telling the story about, the American People. At its core is the museum's permanent exhibition which will tell its story in the manner of our two greatest storytelling institutions: the **National Museum of African American History and Culture** and the **US Holocaust Memorial Museum**. Titled *The Making of the American People*, the gripping narrative will unfold along a dramatic chronological path through four chapters:

CHAPTER I — THE FIRST PEOPLES COME

20,000 years before present (est.)-1607: migration of humans to and throughout the Western Hemisphere; creation of tribal groups and civilizations throughout the hemisphere; earliest European explorers and settlements, predominantly Spanish. Extinction of natives begins after European contact. *Chapter midpoint is 1492.*

CHAPTER II — THE NATION TAKES FORM

1607-1820: the geography of the story contracts from the Western Hemisphere to what is now the United States and its territories; extinction of natives continues; English, Dutch, French, Spanish and other Western European settlement and colonization; the trade in enslaved Africans expands; the United States is established as the Constitution provides the nation's basis, including slave and free states; immigrants begin coming to the new nation; the nation begins its expansion Westward with the Louisiana Purchase from France taking in new peoples. *Chapter midpoint is 1776.*

CHAPTER III — THE GREAT IN-GATHERING

1820-1924: the major century of immigration; ancestors of most of today's Americans arrive from throughout Europe, at first predominantly from Western Europe and then from Southern and Eastern Europe. The African slave trade winds down and ends, but legal racial apartheid continues after the Civil War cleaves the nation. As the Industrial Revolution gains strength, immigration from Asia begins; the US expands through wars and purchases taking in people and land to the Pacific Ocean, Caribbean islands, Pacific islands, and Alaska, places that had been controlled primarily by Spain, Mexico, England and Russia. Westward migration takes place throughout this period and formerly enslaved people from the South begin moving north. Native tribal groups are forced onto reservations. Most immigrants in the chapter's second half move to cities

throughout the nation, especially in the upper Midwest and Northeast. *Chapter midpoint is 1865.*

CHAPTER IV — AND STILL THEY COME

1924-2024: the captivating story of American immigration and migration continues. Immigration slows through the first part of this chapter and many leave the US to go back to their home countries during the Great Depression of the 1930s. After World War II and during the Cold War, refugees and asylum seekers began arriving here and migrant workers were brought in to harvest the nation's rich farmlands. Starting in the 1970s, immigrants began coming from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas in large numbers through 2016. During this chapter, migration westward, southward, and then to suburban areas takes place as well as African American migration northward. The nation's story of opening and closing doors to immigrants continues. *Chapter midpoint is 1965.*

How the Story Will Be Told

Encompassing a timeline of some 20 millennia, the story of the American People will be presented as if the visitor were immersed in an engaging and dramatic documentary film. With force and clarity, the museum will celebrate the American experience at the same time as it examines unpleasant truths and avoids mythology.

In telling its story of the making of the American People, the museum will tell who these people were, where they came from, why they left their homeland, how they got here, when they arrived, where they first settled, who was already here, what they encountered, where they moved after they arrived, how they became Americans, what they contributed and how they transformed our nation.

Like the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the NMAP will present its story using a variety of media including ancient and modern artifacts, video, photographs, art, dioramas, graphics, text, computer technology and models. Unlike most museums, the artifacts aren't presented for their own sake, but rather to help tell the overall narrative of the museum. This interactive framework will engage visitors and leave an indelible impression as they take in their own story and come to know the full story about the making of all the American People.

The NMAP Will Tell Every Group's Story

While focusing on all of the large groups that are here, the NMAP will tell the story of every ethnic, nationality and minority group. The nine largest groups in the nation according to the 2010 Census are:

- German Americans 49.2 million
- Black/African Americans 41.3 million
- Irish Americans 35.5 million
- Mexican Americans 31.8 million

- English Americans 26.9 million
- Americans* 19.9 million
- Italian Americans 17.6 million
- Polish Americans 9.7 million
- French Americans 9.1 million

*People who mark "American" are generally those whose ancestors came in the second chapter whose ancestors were predominantly English, Scottish, Irish, German and others and who intermingled over the centuries and now identify only as American. Geographically, this group is predominant in the South and through Appalachia.

Groups numbering 2-6 million starting with the most numerous include:

- Scottish Americans
- First Peoples (American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians)
- Scots-Irish Americans
- Dutch Americans
- Puerto Ricans
- Norwegian Americans
- Swedish Americans
- Chinese Americans
- Jewish Americans*
- Russian Americans
- Asian Indian Americans
- West Indian Americans (non-Hispanic)
- Filipino Americans
- French Canadian Americans

Other large groups in the 2010 Census from 1.3 to 2 million include:

- Welsh Americans
- Cuban Americans
- Salvadoran Americans
- Arab Americans
- Vietnamese Americans
- Czech Americans
- Hungarian Americans
- Portuguese Americans
- Korean Americans
- Danish Americans
- Dominican Americans (Dominican Republic)
- Greek Americans

Together, these groups constituted more than 95 percent of the population in 2010; there are many dozens of other nationalities whose story will be told.

*Non-census source

Museum Components

Some of the museum's components could include:

- Museum Collections -- obtaining objects for permanent, special and traveling exhibitions and scholarly study.

- Special Exhibitions -- developing ideas expanding on topics in the permanent exhibition, contemporary issues and other subject areas.
- Traveling Exhibitions – developing traveling exhibitions on museum themes.
- Museum Bookstore and Gift Shop -- selling books and gift items related to the museum's subject matter.
- Museum Food Venues -- exploring an international food court and a higher end restaurant.

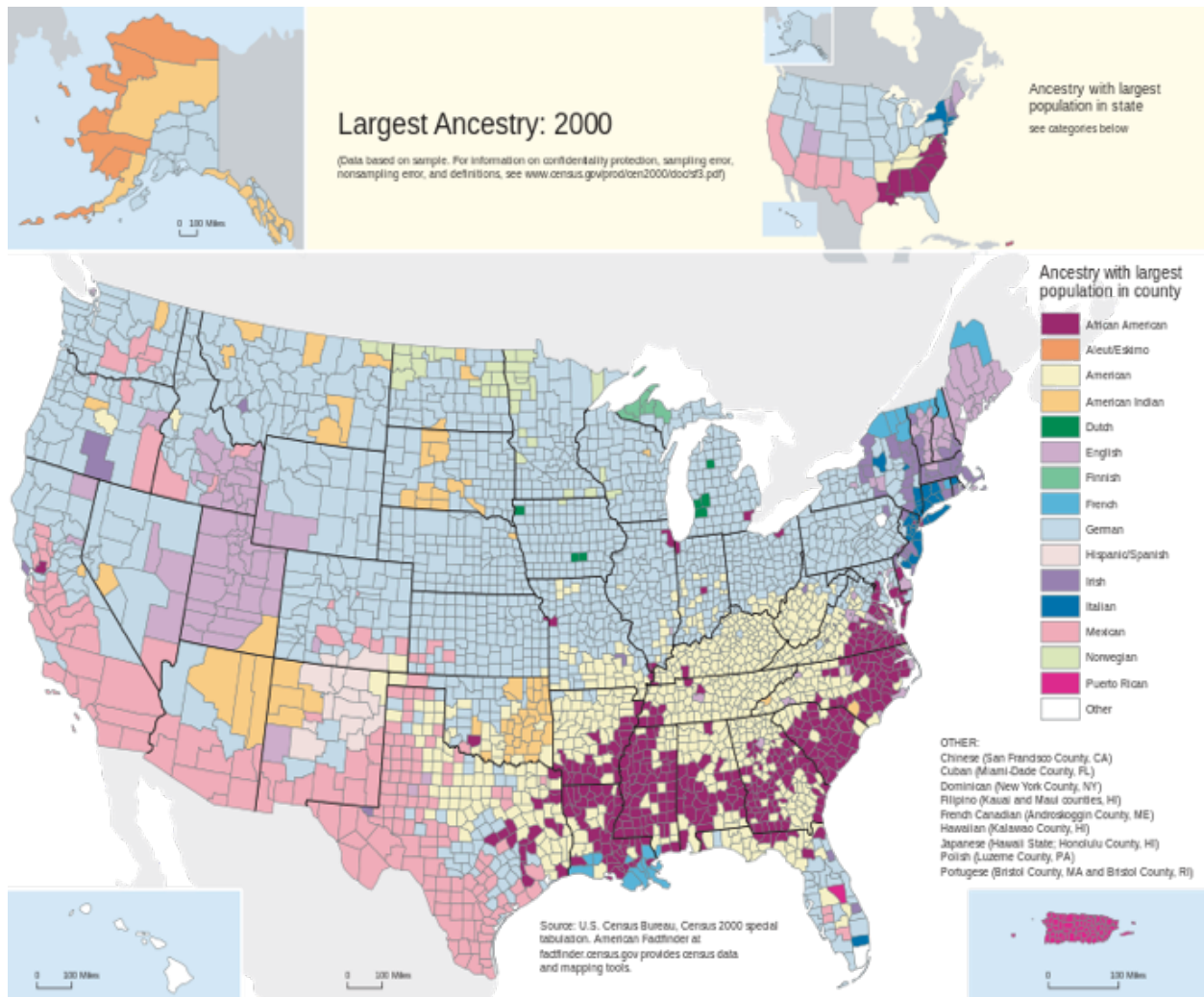
Scholarly and Education Components

In addition to the museum, there would be other significant components devoted to the study and better understanding of the American People. There would be a focus on civics and bringing Americans together through the telling of every group's stories.

- Center for the Advanced Study of the American People -- a major institution with in-house scholars and scholarly connections around the US and the world.
- National Ancestry Center -- providing genealogy and genome ancestry research and data in conjunction with other institutions.
- Archive and Library of American Immigration and Migration
- Education Resource Center -- serving students at the museum and teachers and students throughout the nation with curriculum materials from the museum, providing an encyclopedic range of American People information for students and the public, preparing students for museum visits.
- Public Programs -- lectures, films, ethnic cultural events and national celebrations.
- American People Film Center - a collection of documentary and feature films relating to the subject matter of the museum for showing onsite and also available online.

- Peopling of America Center -- in conjunction with the National Park Service identifying, designating and marking U.S. sites where historic immigration and migration events occurred; explore working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to provide grants for American ethnic, nationality and minority museums and cultural centers.

An Ancestry Map of the U.S.



WHERE

Favored Site

The favored site for the National Museum of the American People is the Banneker Overlook site. It is an eight-acre green slope at the end of L'Enfant Plaza, an extension of 10th Street, S.W. The site is on a direct axis with the iconic Smithsonian Castle Building and reaches down to Maine Avenue and Washington, DC's booming waterfront along Washington Channel, an inlet of the Potomac River. It is adjacent to I-395.



The site is a short walk from the L'Enfant Metro stop, the only Metro stop that serves five of the system's six lines. Washington's Spy Museum has relocated to L'Enfant Promenade. There would be auto and bus access and parking nearby.

The large site affords an opportunity for the design of an architecturally significant building along with an inviting landscape. It is already one of the major sites in Washington designated as a location for a future national museum by three federal agencies that oversee the capital's central federal area and the look it presents to the

world: The National Park Service, National Capital Planning Commission and U.S. Commission on Fine Arts. The Overlook site is now under NPS jurisdiction. The site also sits at the nexus of a major municipal project, The Wharf, that has invigorated the Southwest DC waterfront adjacent to the city's bustling fish market. It opened in 2017 and includes condos, shops, restaurants, a concert venue, a river walk and other amenities to draw visitors from the National Mall to the waterfront.

The Museum's Design Could Be Striking

We would expect a world class architect to be commissioned to design the National Museum of the American People.



One example of the museum's design at the Banneker Overlook site at the end of L'Enfant Plaza features four soaring structures arising from the grass covered roof of the central building. It evokes aspects of the NMMP's story: flags of nations; books opened to reveal the four chapters of the story of the American People; and sails over a landscape of waves recalling the vessels that brought so many to this land.

The maritime aesthetic also relates to the nearby marina where an extension of the museum could berth boats like those used by local natives and ships used to bring early European settlers, enslaved Africans and others here. This design was conceived by MTF Architecture of Arlington, VA on a pro bono basis. It entails a green building that would serve as a model for the Southwest Washington, DC Ecodistrict. Being off of the National Mall opens the door for innovative architecture design.

WHEN

An NMAP Timeline to Opening Day

2023

Bipartisan NMAP Presidential Commission announced and chair named. The Commission begins its work with a six-month deadline. The Commission completes its report and submits it to the President and Congress; museum legislation drafted and introduced. Congress passes an act establishing the National Museum of the American People and transferring a federal site to the museum. Governing board for museum named; fundraising begins; museum's staff formation begins.

2024-28

Initial museum plan is announced; scholars develop detailed story line; museum building designed; groundbreaking ceremony takes place; museum construction begins; museum exhibition designed; artifacts obtained; exhibitions fabricated and installed; museum components and programs are designed and implemented; permanent artworks are commissioned, executed and installed; construction completed.

2026-28

Museum opening plan developed.

2028

Museum opens with national and world leaders in attendance. Associated ceremonies, concerts and celebrations are held in Washington at the Kennedy Center, Arlington Cemetery, the National Cathedral, Smithsonian museums, the White House, US Capitol, and on the National Mall. Other commemoration events marking the NMAP opening take place at schools, sports venues, religious institutions and public spaces in cities and communities throughout the nation.

WHO (stakeholders)

Ethnic, Nationality and Minority Support

As the museum gains traction, we will work to gain broad bipartisan public support for this effort from every segment of the nation: political, business, cultural, religious, educational, diplomatic, and from every American.

The NMAP already has broad support from 291 ethnic, nationality and minority organizations representing more than 75 groups of hyphenated Americans, including the following:

African American	Filipino American	Native Hawaiian
Albanian American	Finnish American	Nigerian American
American Indian	French American	Norwegian American
Arab American	Georgian American	Polish American
Armenian American	German American	Portuguese American
Asian Pacific American	Greek American	Puerto Rican
Azerbaijani American	Hispanic American	Russian American
Baltic American	Hmong American	Salvadoran American
Basque American	Hungarian American	Scandinavian American
Belarusian American	Icelandic American	Scots Irish American
Bolivian American	Indian American	Scottish American
Bosnian American	Iranian American	Sikh American
Bulgarian American	Irish American	Slovak American
Caribbean American	Italian American	South Asian American
Carpatho Rusyn American	Japanese American	Southeast Asian American
Chinese American	Jewish American	Swedish American
Creole American	Korean American	Swiss American
Cuban American	Laotian American	Taiwanese American
Czech American	Latino American	Thai American
Danish American	Latvian American	Tunisian American
Dominican American	Liberian American	Turkish American
Dutch American	Lithuanian American	Ugandan American
Early European American	Macedonian American	Ukrainian American
English American	Mexican American	Vietnamese American
Estonian American	Moroccan American	Welsh American

Every group of Americans wants its story told in a national museum near the heart of our nation's capital.

Scholarly Support for the NMAP

The museum's story will be scholarly driven as it focuses on the mosaic of people that contribute to our national identity. Eminent scholars will provide the intellectual bedrock upon which this institution would be built.

More than 140 scholars from around the globe specializing in the migration and immigration of various peoples already support the NMAP. These scholars represent a range of disciplines, including historians, anthropologists and sociologists. The museum will ensure the highest standards of scholarship. Historians, anthropologists,

archeologists, ethnologists, human geographers, demographers, geneticists, linguists and others will be called on to help develop and flesh out the story.

The museum's story will be built around a consensus of their views, and significant evidence-based historic and scientific alternative views could also be included. As scientific and historic consensus changes, appropriate changes could be made in the museum.

Refugees, Migration and Immigration Support for the NMAP

There are 19 organizations that focus on immigration, migration and refugee policies supporting the NMAP. They include:

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church
- Church World Service
- National Association of Evangelicals
- HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- National Council of Churches
- Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
- National Immigration Forum
- American Immigration Lawyers Association
- American Immigration Council
- International Rescue Committee
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- New York Immigration Coalition
- Welcome.US
- America's Voice
- Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
- Center for the Integration & Advancement of New Americans

NOTE: A complete list of organizations and scholars supporting the NMAP is available at buildNMAP.com.

Past Bipartisan Congressional Support for the NMAP

In the 113th Congress, 48 bipartisan House members signed on to H. Con. Res. 27 supporting the NMAP. They included 16 members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Together, these members were chairs or co-chairs of 35 ethnic, nationality and minority caucuses as well as the Humanities, Refugee and History caucuses. Rep Jim Moran of Virginia was the lead in this effort.

Bipartisan past supporters of the NMAP who will be in the 218th Congress include:

Tom Cole, R-OK
Ken Calvert, R-CA
Gerald Connolly, D-VA
Steve Cohen, D-TN
Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-DC
Robert Scott, D-VA
David Cicilline, D-RI
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, D-MP
Marcy Kaptur, D-OH
Bill Pascrell, D-NJ
Betty McCollum, D-MN
Sheila Jackson Lee, D-TX
Yvette Clarke, D-NY
Barbara Lee, D-CA
Earl Blumenauer, D-OR
Donald M. Payne, Jr., D-NJ
Marc Veasey, D-TX
Sanford Bishop, D-GA
Chellie Pingree, D-ME
Emanuel Cleaver, D-MO

Sen. Brian Schatz, D-HI, has been championing the NMAP in recent years in the Senate and he has been joined by Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-CA.

HOW

Plan to Establish the Museum

The plan to establish the National Museum of the American People first calls for a Presidential Commission to study the feasibility of the museum. Following the final feasibility study report, we would seek legislation to create an entity to plan and build the museum and to raise the necessary funds to plan and build the museum.

The commission's Final Report will serve as a resource and guide to build broad public support for the museum, obtain substantial bipartisan support in Congress, open the door to major funders, including corporations, foundations and selected individuals, and to stimulate a variety of museum constituency organizations to sustain the museum over time.

Funding

It could cost \$1 billion to plan and build the proposed NMAP telling the story of every group.

The NMAP plans to follow the model of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and not use federal tax dollars to create the museum. All of the money to plan and build the USHMM came from private donations. The National Museum of African American History and Culture had a 50-50 split with half of it funded through federal appropriations and the other half raised by the Smithsonian from private sources. The federal government did provide the land for both museums. The NMAP will also seek to have a plot of federal land in Washington transferred to it.

We envision raising the necessary funds the following ways:

- Obtain gifts from foreign governments, but with a cap of \$20 million so that no one nation is giving an inordinate amount. Donating nations would be honored on a wall in the museum. Accepting gifts from foreign governments will require a provision in the museum's authorizing legislation to permit this. The Kennedy Center was allowed to accept gifts from foreign governments.
- Obtain large gifts of \$1 million and up from corporations, foundations and wealthy individuals.
- Open fundraising to the general public for gifts of any size.

The museum will also raise a large endowment to help defray operating expenses. Additional income would come from museum components and programs such as its bookstore and gift shop, restaurants, special events and other programs. It could rent space for special occasions, have an energetic membership and subscription program, obtain grants from foundations and agencies and maintain a vigorous ongoing fundraising effort.

COMPETING CONCERNS

Other Museums

When presented with the idea of the NMAP, people sometimes ask about other museums as though they might already tell some of the story about the making of the American People. These museums include:

National Museum of African American History and Culture – This is the only national museum now that tells a part of the NMAP's story. It tells the 500-year history of slavery and its aftermath in America.

NOTE: That story is told in the context of African American history and the NMAP would tell that same story in the context of every group's history. No other group has its story about becoming Americans told in a national museum in Washington or about coming to this land and nation and becoming Americans, not any group from Europe, Asia or the Americas.

National Museum of the American Indian – It is a great museum exploring many facets of Native American history and culture through a range of special exhibitions.

NOTE: NMAI doesn't tell the grand sweep of history of first peoples coming to this land and how the great tribal cultures and civilizations were established throughout the Western Hemisphere prior to first significant European contact in 1492. This seldom told and little understood story about peoples that prevailed in the Western Hemisphere and throughout North America before 1492 is an integral part of the history of the American people.

Contemporary research indicates that there were probably more people living in the Americas than in Europe when Columbus landed. The people living here had transformed the land so completely that when Europeans arrived in the hemisphere, it had already been massively 'landscaped' by humans. Using the latest findings from the fields of archeology, genetics, history, linguistics, demography, geography, anthropology, and others, the NMAP would portray the long history of human settlement and accomplishment before 1607 through today.

National Museum of American History – This museum has the greatest collection of Americana anywhere. When people speak of the Smithsonian being America's attic, they are essentially talking about this museum. It is a collections-based institution with trucks and busses in its basement and collections that include first-ladies' gowns, pop culture, industrial and technological accomplishments, and it has special exhibitions that touch on a wide variety of American history and culture.

NOTE: Because of its name, many visitors to this museum believe they will get that broad story of American history, but it simply isn't there and visitors enjoy the array of

fascinating artifacts it contains. The NMAH is not a story-telling museum like the USHMM or the NMAAHC and doesn't present the history of the nation or of the American People in a chronological fashion.

Ellis Island Immigration Museum – Located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, the primary focal point of late 19th and early 20th Century immigration to the United States from Europe, the museum is, at its core, an historic place museum. It houses exhibitions on the subject of immigration from 1550 to 1890 called the Peopling of America Center, and another exhibition about post-1954 immigration.

NOTE: The exhibitions focus is more on the pedantic approach to immigration with themes such as leaving, transportation modes, arriving. It doesn't incorporate the dramatic story-telling techniques of the NMAAHC and the USHMM.

State and Local Ethnic, Nationality and Minority History Museums -- Part of the Museum's mission would be to encourage and assist communities throughout the nation to develop cultural institutions that tell the stories of all the people who founded and built their cities, counties, states and regions. The NMAP is expected to be a resource for museums throughout the nation focused on different elements of the NMAP's story about the making of the American People. That assistance could be in the form of expertise in a variety of fields, collections, travelling exhibitions, educational materials and curricula, public programs and, possibly, a grants program.

Smithsonian Institution – The Smithsonian has faced significant financial challenges, primarily with a \$1 billion unexpected cost replacing the entire façade of its Air and Space Museum. The overwhelming success of its NMAAHC has also led to unexpected expenses. Now, with two new museums to build, the perception may exist that the Smithsonian does not have the bandwidth to incorporate a third new museum.

NOTE: The NMAP Commission will work with the Smithsonian to review the role and relationship between the NMAP and the Smithsonian. While the NMAP will be built without federal appropriations for its planning and construction, the governance relationship between the two could be revisited after the NMAP opens.

Congress last year approved two new national museums in Washington to be built and operated by the Smithsonian Institution. They include:

National Women's History Museum – The legislation creating this museum calls for Congress to provide half the cost of building it and for the Smithsonian and NWHM supporters to raise the other half from private donations.

NOTE: As the NMAP story tells the history of the making of the American People it will fully incorporate women into the story. The Smithsonian, meanwhile, has been expanding its women's history emphasis at several of its museums.

National Museum of the American Latino – In the same legislation creating the NWHM, Congress also created the National Museum of the American Latino. This museum will depict the history, culture and accomplishments of Latinos. Like the Women’s History Museum, the Latino Museum will have a 50-50 cost sharing with half of the cost to plan and build the museum coming from federal appropriations and half raised by the Smithsonian and NMAL supporters from private donors.

NOTE: The NMAP will tell the long history of Hispanics and Latinos in the United States. In fact, that is the only story that stretches through all four chapters of the NMAP’s story in a significant way. The Smithsonian is currently constructing a permanent Latino exhibition in the NMAH scheduled to open next year. There are 25 Hispanic/Latino organizations supporting the NMAP and 23 eminent scholars who focus on the study of Latino and Hispanic history and culture who support the NMAP.

In June, 2022, a commission was approved for the study of one more museum:

National Museum of Asian Pacific American History – This museum will depict the history and culture of Americans who came from throughout Asia and Pacific islands.

NOTE: With approval of this museum, Americans whose ancestors, or who themselves, came from Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and the Americas, will have their histories and cultures depicted in a national museum in Washington and there is also a museum dedicated to American Indians. The only groups whose stories are not yet scheduled for telling are Americans who came from throughout Europe. The NMAP will tell the story of every group bringing *all* Americans together.

Funding

The NMAP anticipates approaching many of the same corporations, foundations and wealthy individuals for gifts as do other museums. As the nation’s economy expands in coming years, we believe that there will be sufficient funding available to fund worthy and excellent projects with which funders will want to be associated at all of these institutions.

PRECEDENTS

Other Story-telling Museums Like the NMAP

The NMAP's story, starting some 20,000 years ago, would be told in the manner of our nation's two greatest story-telling museums: The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Walking through the NMAP's permanent exhibition will be like walking through a dynamic documentary of U.S. history where every American will see their own story told at least once along the way.

By most accounts, the NMAAHC and the USHMM are two of the most impactful museums in the nation. The demand to see both requires timed tickets and schools place a high premium on taking their students to both. Visitors to both museums spend considerably more time on their visits than they do at other museums as they take in the story being told. We expect the same at the NMAP.

In other nations, story-telling museums about their people are among the most visited museums in those countries:

Mexico's Museum of Anthropology – In Mexico City, it is the largest and most visited museum in Mexico. It tells the story of the Mexican People from First Peoples and the pre-Columbian period through the colonial period in Mexican history.

Canadian Museum of History – In Quebec, one hall of this museum focuses on First Peoples through the last 500 years of Aboriginal history after European contact and another hall focuses on overall Canadian history. It is the most visited museum in Canada's capital city.

National Museum of Vietnam -- In Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), this museum presents the history of the Vietnamese People from the stone age through 1945.

National Museum of Finland – In Helsinki, this museum tells the story about the Finnish People from the stone age through today.

Museum of the Jewish People – In Tel Aviv, this museum tells the story of the Jewish People from ancient times to the present.

There's no story-telling museum in the United States that tells the full story about the making of the American People from first peoples through today.