

Strategic Plan

2015-2020

Be relevant. Become essential. Aim high. Celebrate life.

STRATEGIC FOCUS: In the next five years, the NCSML will intensify its embeddedness and social impact. Every person we touch will have an experience that promotes an understanding of their connection to the world and to each other.

Strategic Priority I: Celebrate History and Culture

Immerse people in the richness of Czech and Slovak culture.



Strategic Priority II: Connect to Stories of Freedom and Human Dignity

Make a lasting impact on the education of global citizens by connecting to the lessons of Czech and Slovak history.



Strategic Priority III: Become Embedded in Community

Meet real needs that reflect authentic community priorities, and increase our social impact.



Strategic Priority IV: Engage Families

Position the NCSML as a family friendly destination in Cedar Rapids.



Strategic Priority V: Enhance Performance

Adopt a high-performance operational and business model.



Our vision for the future is big.

It's sure to raise some questions. Read below to find out more.

Why is a new strategic plan needed?

Our society is changing rapidly. The NCSML is addressing this fact to ensure our stories, themes, and lessons stay relevant. Museums nationwide are being charged to be more ambitious in their role in society to support positive social change and achieve greater impact. Today, challenges to civil society and democratic principles affect us here at home and abroad. The focus of public education has increasingly moved to basic skills, reducing the emphasis and time devoted to teaching history, social sciences and civics. In response, we believe the NCSML can play an important role in human rights education and impact the future by helping create better informed Americans and better global citizens.

How are you going to do that?

We are going to increase our focus on providing children and young adults with meaningful ways to learn about human rights issues. We are creating K-12 lesson plans and formulating a variety of age-appropriate activities, programs, and events. Human rights education is a life-long effort that must begin when you are young.

This push will be felt in everything we do. Exhibits, music, art, drama, film, adult programs, children's programs and the day-to-day visitor experience already include facets of human rights in the simplest and even more complex forms by sharing the stories of Czechs and Slovaks. Even an event like the Root Beer Festival can incorporate global themes and human rights awareness in subtle yet impactful ways. Education is not just one experience but is the layering of many experiences to reach awareness and action.

Why the focus on human rights?

This isn't new to us. We recognize this topic is one of our strengths. Part of what the NCSML has been doing all along has addressed human rights through exhibits and programs, such as *The Tragedy of Slovak Jews*, the national Oral History Project, *Faces of Freedom* permanent exhibit and the *Artists Caught Behind the Iron Curtain* exhibit. Within the great spectrum of human rights stories, the Czech and Slovak story gives us a platform to discuss issues today in America and the world.

At the same time, we intend to strengthen our position as the national center for the preservation of Czech and Slovak history and culture. By continuing to expand connections with Czech and Slovak-American individuals, communities, and organizations we'll keep them engaged and involved with their cultural heritage, personal stories, and the lessons of history.

What will you achieve?

By connecting past and present, we will help form a more engaged public in order to shape a more just and humane future. We will uplift and inspire the next generation of families, students, artists, scholars, folklorists, and anyone looking to connect to their own personal story of freedom, dignity, expression and responsibility as global citizens. These strategic priorities will transform the NCSML into a true community partner, making our resources available to people when and where they need them – at the museum, on digital devices, and in their own cities and towns.

What's in it for the local audience?

Simply put: the NCSML wouldn't be here if it weren't for the Cedar Rapids community. The generosity and passion of the citizens of Cedar Rapids have been huge factors in our growth and success before, during, and after the flood of 2008. We want to strengthen this relationship by becoming a friendlier and more accessible space for individuals and families to learn, play, and be inspired.

