



KING MANOR MUSEUM

---

**2021-2024  
STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

---

DECEMBER 2020



## WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

While the COVID-19 pandemic situation has been beyond terrible on both human and economic levels, the state-mandated closure gave us the opportunity to step back from our day-to-day operations and reflect on our organizational future. What is our role in our community and where would we like to see this in the future? Writing a strategic plan to set down the answers to these questions and articulate our values was long overdue. While we daily embody the vision and values set herein in our museum practice at King Manor (which is why we revised our mission statement in November 2019), setting them down in ink not only allows us to show clearly our values to others, but adds clarity and specificity: namely action steps to achieve our goals of being a meaningful community member and a sustainable institution.

It's perhaps a bit ironic to be writing a strategic plan in a year full of uncertainty and lacking in precedence, but being flexible and seeing the long view of things is what we as small museum professionals and historians do best.

We had to cancel or move online many of the events we had scheduled this year in celebration of the 120th anniversary of King Manor's opening as a museum to the public in 1900. As it turns out, writing a strategic plan that shows our values in the world and gives direction for the next 120 years turned out to be the best way for celebrating after all.

Thank you so much to everyone involved in the process of creating this strategic plan, from volunteers and community stakeholders who gave their time and input to make sure we heard a wide range of voices; to the Board of Directors for their thoughtful consideration and many years of guidance of this institution; to the staff for their passion, creativity, knowledge, and dedication; to Fox, our beloved caretaker of over 30 years, whose passion for seeing momentum at the museum keeps us going, even when times are tough. And of course to our facilitator Jamila Jordan, for making the writing process enjoyable thanks to her organization and thoroughness.

**KELSEY BROW**

*Executive Director*

# ABOUT KING MANOR MUSEUM

## Mission

King Manor Museum interprets founding father Rufus King's political legacy and antislavery history to teach critical thinking for a healthier democracy.

## Values

### Education

We believe in the power of education. We educate on, and are inspired by, antislavery activist Rufus King and his contemporaries to promote social change in today's world.

### Research

We believe in the importance of researching and preserving the past in order to inform the present and future. We act to preserve and promote the legacy of Rufus King and his contemporaries, and to encourage the use of our resources in all aspects of learning, including in academia, by artists, young students, activists, etc.

## Vision

We envision a world where people are inspired by past change-makers to constantly seek ways to enact social change today.

### Community

We recognize that we are part of a group of key places in the Queens community. We understand the importance of collaborating with organizations in the community, and in listening to feedback from members of the community to better serve them.

### Inclusion

We recognize the importance of acknowledging all voices, past and present. We are dedicated to connecting the principles of Rufus King to issues today, while simultaneously amplifying the voices of King's contemporaries who have historically been silenced.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITMENT

At King Manor, we envision a world where people are inspired by past change-makers to constantly seek ways to enact social change today. A crucial step to accomplishing a healthy democracy is ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the community, and that no one is excluded based on age, race, identity, disability, ethnicity, religion, or gender. We are committed to be intentional in our efforts to include people of all backgrounds by advancing diversity in leadership and staff, and to making sure all feel welcome.

## **Equity-focused**

Raising awareness of systemic inequities and how they affect organizations and society as a whole is a first step to overcoming them. But being aware is often not enough - organizations must actively work towards being equitable.

## **Diverse and Inclusive**

Any organization is made stronger by having a diversity of viewpoints and experiences. We work to ensure all voices are heard and respected.

## **Actions speak louder than words. We commit to the following:**

- Continuously evaluate who we are serving in our community and how we can best do so by actively soliciting community feedback, and tracking and analyzing visitor, programming, and outreach metrics.
- Recruit board members from within the community to form a board reflective of the community.
- Create and maintain an advisory board to allow others in the community to contribute at an organizational level.
- Educate internally on systemic inequities through regular informative sessions with board and staff on different aspects and narratives of systemic inequities.
- Combat inequity by promoting equity in hiring practices, programming, and board service and recruitment.
- Provide opportunities for local artists to participate in ongoing exhibitions, with a focus on connecting our mission to contemporary issues and globalization.
- Invite community input in exhibition planning and programming, including meetings with the board about these exhibitions and programs.
- Recruit interns from the community to provide local students with work experience in the cultural/nonprofit sector.

# HISTORY



Rufus King (1755 - 1827) bought King Manor in 1805, intending to retire from politics after a distinguished career: American Revolution veteran, framer and signer of the United States Constitution, U.S. Senator, Ambassador to England, and vocal anti-slavery advocate. He lived there with his wife, Mary Alsop King, their five children, and hired help. They enlarged the house in 1810 and expanded the property to 150 acres. A devoted scholar of agricultural science, Rufus improved the land, turning it into a successful working farm. Cornelia King (1824 - 1896), was the last family member to live at King Manor. After her death in 1896, the Village of Jamaica purchased the house and the remaining 11.5 acres which make up Rufus King Park today.

Opened as a museum in 1900 as the only historic house museum in Southeast Queens, King Manor engages its audiences through historic site tours, school programming, interactive exhibits, workshops, the arts, and community events. These programs help achieve our vision of serving as a cultural bridge for our neighbors and make the museum experience accessible to the area's residents who may not have the means or awareness to take advantage of the city's major cultural attractions.

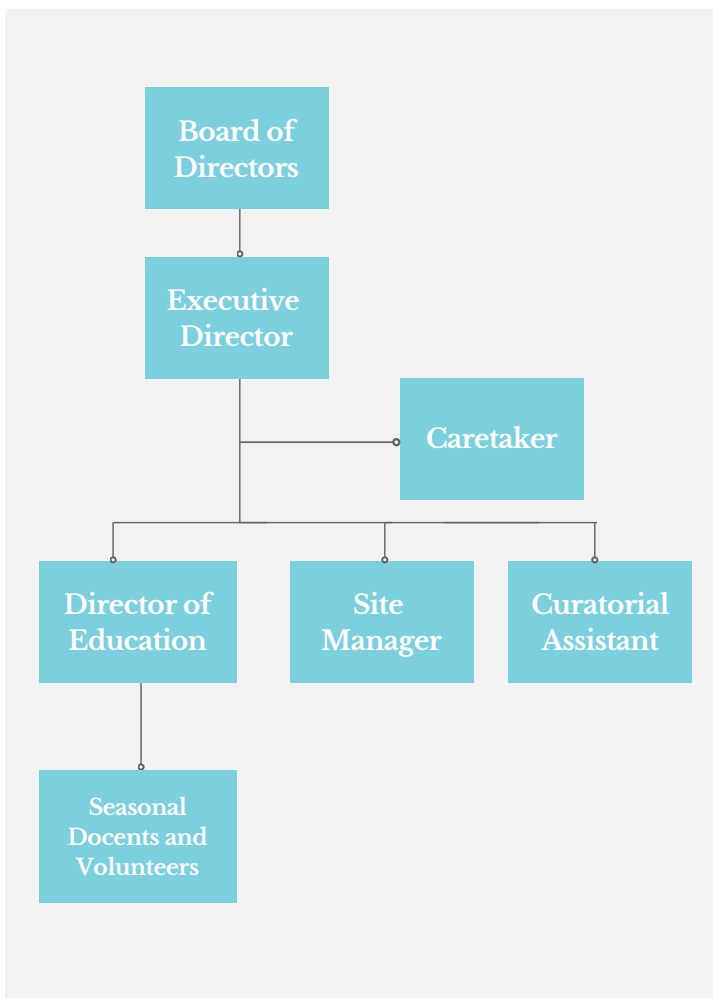
As a community-minded institution, King Manor also regularly collaborates with other local organizations and businesses and participates in initiatives that benefit the people in our neighborhood of Jamaica and our wider New York City community. Every program at King Manor is designed to encourage critical thinking in learners of all skills and experiences, creating spaces for our visitors to mindfully engage with history in order to promote a healthier democracy as a whole.

# PRESENT SITUATION

## Core Services

- Historic site tours
  - School programming
  - Interactive exhibits
  - Hands-on experiences
  - Workshops
  - Community events
- 

## Operating Structure



## Staff

Executive director [Kelsey Brow](#)  
Director of Education [Brittany Lester](#)  
Site Manager [Michael Colon](#)  
Curatorial Assistant [Hannah Winiker](#)  
Caretaker [Roy Fox](#)  
Seasonal docents and volunteers

---

## Staffing Goals

- Hire one more cross trained, full time mid-level staff member
  - Increase front line staffing:
    - Per-diem educators
    - Event facilitators
-



# FUTURE PLAN

We see King Manor in the future as a nationally recognized cornerstone of the Jamaica, Queens community. We will be utilized by our immediate community of Jamaica in particular as a center for engagement with social justice issues and critical thinking through history. We will also be diverse, both internally and in terms of the audience we serve. Finally, recent events that have precipitated a global trend toward organizations operating online have made us realize the importance of technology. A King Manor in the future will have secured its relevance through the strategic incorporation of technology. This three year plan outlines methods that will advance us toward this future vision of the museum.

A photograph of a staircase with a green wall and a decorative light fixture. The staircase has dark wood railings and a white balustrade. A window with a white frame is visible in the background. A decorative light fixture with a glass globe and hanging crystals is mounted on the wall above the staircase. The overall scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window and the light fixture.

# GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION STEPS



# GOAL 1:

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

### **15% Increase in engagement of young people ages 13 to 20**

- Restart TeenThursdays with middle-schools that are within walking distance of King Manor or close by transit. Hold at least 1 session per month for each semester.
- Collaborate with professors from local colleges and universities to host teacher trainings to show them what we have to offer for both their classes and individual students.

### **Develop an audience that proportionally reflects the community**

- Reach out to senior centers. By the end of 2021 should have been in communication with all senior centers within a 2 mile radius of King Manor.
- Reach out to community groups and places of worship in Queens through outreach presentations at least once a quarter.
- Pilot a gift shop that features local vendors; collaborate with vendors and allow them to use the space, KM will retain a 5% commission of sales.
- Within the next two years create a Young Professional's Board made up of people from high schools, universities, and the Queens community.
- More advertising within the community:
  - Leverage the King Manor's location, right next to a main street, to advertise the space to those in the community.
  - Leverage board member connections
  - Partner with local organizations to post flyers, hand out event calendars, and distribute information on King Manor events

## Expand community connections

- Host at least 1 (aim for 2) partnered community events per quarter.
- Further promote King Manor as a community space for artists and historians to be able to go to collaborate, hold lectures/discussions, concerts, and as a resource center for engagement with social justice issues.
- Host neighborhood walking tours at least twice a year.
- Host a creative engagement by a local artist at King Manor at least once a year.
- Develop at least two travelling programs by the end of the 3 year period.
- Commit to hosting one outdoor summer social per month during the summer.
- Organize a yearly kids art contest. The winning design will be printed on totes and sold at the gift shop.
- Work to address the language barrier with some members of the community.
  - Partner with Queens College interpretation program and local ELL programs
  - Print flyers in English, Spanish, and Bangla
  - Offer regular weekly tours in Bangla and Spanish, as well as English
  - Meet with the South Queens Muslim collective to recruit volunteers and docents

## Use social media more consistently

- Every quarter create a social media communications calendar with one post a week for social media channels (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).



# GOAL 2: INCREASE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN OPERATIONS

## Develop a more racially and culturally diverse board

- Revitalize committees and advisory boards that form committees. By the end of the 3 year strategic plan, bring in at least five candidates from the immediate community based on interest and expertise to serve on these boards.

## Diversify staff

- Aim to reach and maintain at least 30% diversity of staff at all times.
- Recruit from BIPOC groups and communities for new-hires. Consider applicants with transferable skills who may not be museum professionals.

## Convert regular student volunteer base to a paid per diem educator base

- Find at least two paid per diem educators each semester funded through partnership with other organizations or city programs.



# GOAL 3:

## INCREASE RESILIENCY

### Expand the museum experience beyond the physical walls of the space and into the virtual realm

- Develop at least two online education materials per year, such as modules, virtual tours, and recordings.
- Create a minimum of four online workshops by the end of the three year period.
- Reach out to libraries, organizations, community non-profits, and community centers in and outside of New York City to promote King Manor's free and low-cost materials and live online programs. Contact at least 6 organizations per year.
- Digitize the King family collection by creating a designated page on the King Manor site with photos and information about the collection, to be completed by the end of 2021.

### Increase earned revenue

- Promote King Manor as a rental space.
- Partner with the Performing Arts Center to produce at least one ticketed season of a performance in the summer.





# THE PLANNING PROCESS



# OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic plan is the result of a seven-month-long planning process. Other, larger organizations can take longer to develop a plan, but as a small historic house with a lean staff, we were comfortable with a shortened timeline. Our process was facilitated by our grad school intern from the Arts Management program at Carnegie Mellon University.

We began the process by meeting with museum staff and leadership to get their input on where they perceived opportunities for improvement were at the museum regarding operations and programming. We continued to solicit staff and volunteer feedback throughout the process by holding staff meetings and sending response forms for staff and volunteers to complete.

To gather information on community perception and expectations for the museum, we distributed community surveys. In order to reach various groups in Queens we translated this survey into English, Haitian Kreyol, Spanish, Bangla, and Hindi.

The museum director and facilitator met regularly to synthesize feedback. The resulting plan represents a combination of the director's vision and staff, volunteer, and community input. It includes a revised mission statement, a new set of values and vision statements, a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a new set of strategic goals to launch us toward our future vision of King Manor.

# EVALUATION

## **Track and measure continuously**

Once the plan is in place and formally approved, track and measure its progress on a regular basis. On a semi-monthly basis, the director's report to the board may be formatted to include each strategic goal and a summarized version of each action plan template that corresponds to the goals.

## **Review and update as needed**

The staff should also review the plan two to three times per year and make adjustments to the regular work plan if needed. At year-end, modify tasks not completed with a new deadline and justification for the change. This flexibility is essential for a small staff with funding limitations.

# REFERENCES

American Alliance of Museums. "Developing a Strategic Institutional Plan." AAM-US.org. 2018. <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Developing-a-Strategic-Institutional-Plan-2018.pdf>

Catlin-Legutko, Cinnamon. *History News: DIY Strategic Planning for Small Museums*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, Spring 2008.

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. "Welcome." CDM.com. [https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/ASTC/a6c0f3de-e0b1-4198-8ab7-01cee4a55b00/UploadedImages/Welcome\\_Statement.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/ASTC/a6c0f3de-e0b1-4198-8ab7-01cee4a55b00/UploadedImages/Welcome_Statement.pdf)

Kelly, Rob. "10 Examples of Awesome Diversity Statements." onGig.com. July 26, 2018. <https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/10-examples-of-the-best-diversity-statements/>

La Piana, David. *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution: Second Edition*. Nashville: 2018.

TopNonprofits. "Guide to Creating Mission and Vision Statements." TopNonprofits.com. September 4, 2012. <https://topnonprofits.com/vision-mission/>

Walker, Vernetta. "Beyond Political Correctness: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Board." *BoardSource.org*. April 5, 2017. <https://boardsource.org/resources/building-diverse-inclusive-board/>



