

MEDIA RELEASE:

September 15, 2021

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### **Association Of African American Museums Is Awarded \$500,000 From the Lilly Endowment to Advance the Visibility, Power, And Impact of Black museums**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - The Association of African American Museums (“AAAM”) is pleased to announce that a new grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. will help advance large-scale projects that support Black museums in adapting and preparing for a stronger future. The \$500,000 grant to AAAM will support the expansion of national operations and help build capacity across the field of museums in the elevation and preservation of African American art, history, and culture. “Our institutions need support in various capacities. As, the principal voice for African American museums, this collaboration allows us to continue our mission of providing support to the field,” says, Executive Director, Vedet Coleman-Robinson.

The current landscape of social, economic, political, and environmental challenges has resulted in a high demand for AAAM’s mission-driven services across its diverse constituency. Leadership development, training, and organizational capacity building are essential for the hundreds of institutions that makeup AAAM’s international constituency of organizations. AAAM member institutions are responding to an increase in demand for specialized support and educational programming services with the goal of effectively facilitating civil discourse, racial justice education, and historical literacy initiatives benefiting children and adults. AAAM recognizes the importance of consistently ensuring

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its members and staff have ease of access to professional development and skill-building training in relevant, in-demand areas.

The AAAM provides tools that empower member institutions to make impactful change. Lilly Endowment's grant will strengthen AAAM members' ability to reopen as pandemic restrictions ease and sustain community-focused cultural institutions while remaining responsive to the dynamic challenges presented by the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn. "We cannot underestimate the lasting impact of Lilly Endowment's support for the Black Museum field," said AAAM President, LaNesha DeBardelaben.

Lilly Endowment's support will be essential in equipping AAAM to provide the high-quality training and technical support it is widely recognized for delivering to a richly diverse organizational constituency. The historic grant to AAAM comes at an ideal time and will bolster AAAM's capacity to empower cultural practitioners and the communities they serve.

### **About the Association of African American Museums ("AAAM")**

[AAAM](#) is a non-profit member organization established to support African and African American focused museums nationally and internationally, as well as the professionals who protect, preserve, and interpret African and African American art, history and culture. Established as the single representative and principal voice of the African American museum movement, the Association seeks to strengthen and advocate for the interests of institutions and individuals committed to the preservation of African-derived cultures. The services provided by AAAM enhance the ability of those museums to serve

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the needs and interests of persons of African ancestry and those who wish to know more about the art, history and culture of African-derived cultures.

### **About Lilly Endowment Inc.**

[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.