

As South Carolina launches the International African American Museum, we add yet another iconic cultural institution our state's credit – an institution that will attract and drive interest from audiences in Charleston, across the state, regionally, and nationally. This living monument to untold stories of American history – both tragic and victorious – is a South Carolina educational and cultural treasure offering a narrative that, until now, was often silenced.

The International African American Museum – which includes galleries, gardens, and a world-class genealogy center – has been built upon the shores of Charleston at the site of Gadsden's Wharf, the main entryway to North America for the transatlantic slave trade. Thus, this site fueled the economic engine that built America. In this space, **the International African American Museum will pay tribute to the millions whose stories deserve to be told as only South Carolina can tell them.**

**On behalf of the International African American Museum (IAAM), I respectfully request \$5 million in funding to support statewide and regional marketing that will build upon the excitement about the museum, drive visitation and increase our regional tourism impact.** With this support, IAAM will be able to broaden and deepen our marketing reach to not only showcase the work of this great museum, but also to position our institution as a cultural heritage gem of the south and encourage visitation from across the region.

In just two years of marketing and advertising promotion, IAAM has gained more than 46,000 charter members. A third of our membership is from across the state of South Carolina and 20% is from our regional target markets in North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. Our membership base is an extraordinary indicator of the robust interest in this museum and – with support from the state – we transform this “interest” into “visitation.”

As our local and statewide economy continues to rebound from the downward economic weight of the global COVID-19 pandemic, **South Carolina's multi-billion-dollar tourism industry continues to be a critical component in the mix of recovery strategies.** The most current market research shows that demand for travel continues to rise, and that regional tourism – in one's own state and neighboring states – has risen to the top of preferred options for tourists and travelers. As Charleston continues to secure #1 ratings and top billings for tourist destinations, **IAAM's emergence as an engaging cultural site, unlike any other in the country, will attract visitors. The museum is poised to support the Lowcountry's role as a thriving gateway to South Carolina cultural and heritage tourism.**

We are seeking support for a marketing campaign that will reach beyond Charleston's local community to the entire state – **from Lowcountry to Upstate, from Midlands to Pee Dee – as well as to our neighbors in connected target North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee markets.** We intend to include a particular emphasis on cultural heritage tourism and African-American cultural heritage tourism and will create interest and recognition in communities

with significant African-American populations, such as the metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Chattanooga, and Jacksonville, as well as our own Columbia, Greenville-Anderson, and Charleston-North Charleston communities.

Now is the time – as we open our doors for our inaugural year – to spread the word about South Carolina’s newest cultural and educational treasure across the region. This support will give IAAM the capacity to build the kind of excitement, anticipation, and “wish list trip” planning that drives tourism and the businesses supported by such tourism for our state.