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American Women's History Museum // News

More than \$55m raised toward Smithsonian's planned American Women's History Museum

The museum, one of two new Smithsonian museums in advanced planning stages, garnered major support from Walmart heiress Alice Walton, fashion designer Tory Burch and others

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The Smithsonian's planned American Women's History Museum will be sited on or near the National Mall in Washington, DC, though selection of an exact location is still pending Congressional approval

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By way of kicking off Women's History Month (March), the Smithsonian Institution revealed on 27 February that it has raised upwards of \$55m towards the development of the American Women's History Museum (AWHM), a forthcoming institution in Washington, DC that was formally [approved by Congress](#) in December 2020. Donors who have contributed more than \$1m to the project include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bank of America, retail giant Target and fashion designer Tory Burch. Walmart heiress Alice Walton's foundation alone contributed \$10m.

“The stories we tell about our country’s history so often overlook the contributions of the women in every generation whose efforts and ideas helped make us who we are today,” Melinda French Gates said in [a statement](#). “By paying tribute to the women who shaped our past, the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum empowers and inspires the ones who will shape our future.”

The AWHM is one of two new Smithsonian museums in advanced planning stages to be constructed in Washington, DC. Last June, the institution said it had narrowed the list of possible sites for the AWHM and the National Museum of the American Latino to [four locations](#) on or near the National Mall. A final decision regarding which museum would be built at which location was expected by the end of 2022, but has not yet been announced and is reportedly pending Congressional approval.

According to [The New York Times](#), while the AWHM is still without a site, it is up and running with a staff of 14 and an annual operating budget of \$2m. “Together, we will create a museum that celebrates the women who have helped build this country,” Lisa Sasaki, AWHM’s interim director, said in a statement. “These donations are pivotal in the realisation of this vision.”

The AWHM had previously received gifts from corporate services giant [Deloitte](#) and insurance company [Swiss Re](#) of \$1m each.

The most recently inaugurated Smithsonian museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, [decades to develop](#) and \$540m to build. It finally opened in September 2016, around 15 years after the bill formally establishing it was signed into law.

Washington, DC is already home to a major museum devoted in part to women’s history: the [National Museum of Women in the Arts](#), which was established in 1987 and is in the final stretch of a two-year, \$67.5m renovation and expansion, will reopen on 21 October.