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**Media Web site:** <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

## Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum

### Fact Sheet

**Director:** Camille Giraud Akeju

**Total Full-time Employees:** 17

**Annual Budget (federal and trust) FY 2008:** \$2.5 million

**Approximate Number of Artifacts:** 3,500

**Archival Material:** 1,400 linear feet

**Visitors (2007):** 37,000

### Background

The Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum documents and interprets the effect of historical and contemporary social and cultural issues on communities. Established in 1967 as the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, it served first as a Smithsonian outreach museum situated in one of the District of Columbia's largely African American neighborhoods and later evolved into a museum documenting, preserving and interpreting African American history from local and community history perspectives. In 2006, the name of the institution was changed to the Anacostia Community Museum to reflect the expansion from ethnic themes and issues to broader cultural issues that resonate within communities worldwide.

### Research

The museum's Community Documentation Project records the history and ongoing changes in communities found east of the Anacostia River. Subjects of interest include gentrification, displacement and loss of families and social groups, the effect of globalization and technological change on community life, the loss of traditional means of employment and income and the paradox of economic disparity. This research is the basis for the broader national and international issues addressed in exhibitions and programs under the museum's expanded direction.

### Exhibitions

Museum exhibition themes include community, identity and modernization; the urban community as a global village; community, cultural encounters and mediation; and changing demographics and legacy preservation. Upcoming exhibitions based on the legacy collection and focusing on African American history and culture (on view through mid-2010) include "Jubilee: African American Celebration" and "The African Presence in Mexico." Exhibitions reflecting the museum's expanded direction begin in fall 2010 with "Across the Counter: The Changing Face of Urban Neighborhood Merchants."

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## **Collections**

The museum documents and collects objects and archival material in three areas. The neighborhood collections focus primarily on artifacts relevant to the history, community life and ongoing issues of Washington, D.C., neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River. Comprised largely of folk art, the arts collections explore national and international themes of community such as creativity and non-conformity. The legacy collection is composed of significant African American historical and cultural artifacts and materials.

## **Education**

The museum has created a first-of-its-kind public education initiative designed to teach the fundamentals of collection and preservation to individuals and special interest communities such as churches, universities and social organizations. In a related effort, the museum offers workshops and instructional materials on genealogical research and recording oral histories. Additionally, the museum provides an array of programs and other resources for educators, students and researchers, including on- and off-site workshops, lectures and field trips, and its “On-Line Academy,” a section of the museum’s Web site.

The Museum Academy Program is a three-tiered program that includes an after-school program for elementary students, a career awareness program for middle school students and an internship program for high school youth. Instituted in June 2001, this program is designed to foster positive development through discovery, documentation, and creative expression based on knowledge of community history. The Museum Academy Program enables the museum to offer continuous age- and interest-appropriate opportunities in arts and culture, museum careers and specialized training for children and youth.

## **About the Museum**

In 2001, the museum completed an award-winning \$8.5 million renovation providing enhanced physical space and technology to sustain a dynamic program in object-based education and creating a state-of-the-art environment for collections and exhibitions. The facility includes a branch of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries featuring more than 5,000 volumes emphasizing community and family history and African American studies. The library is open to the public by appointment.

The Anacostia Community Museum is recognized worldwide for creating acclaimed exhibitions, engaging public programs and establishing innovative community documentation initiatives that focus on historical and contemporary social and cultural issues. Located at 1901 Fort Place S.E. in Washington, D.C., the museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Information: (202) 633-1000; tours: (202) 633-4870; library: (202) 633-4862; Web site: <http://anacostia.si.edu>.

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