



POLISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN  
2020-2025

# Message to the Community

**With this, the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan,** the Polish American Association (PAA) embarks on a new journey that will lead us through the next five years, past our centennial anniversary, and into our second century of service.

In developing this plan, we've reflected on the strengths and challenges we face as an organization. We've reached out to many stakeholders: donors, clients, employees, funders, grantors, sister organizations, agencies, former board members, and hundreds of individuals who provided feedback through our community survey. We reached out to American, Polish, Latino and other cultures we serve. We reached out to the elder community and young professionals. We interviewed those in corporate, as well as those in small businesses. *All were welcome.*

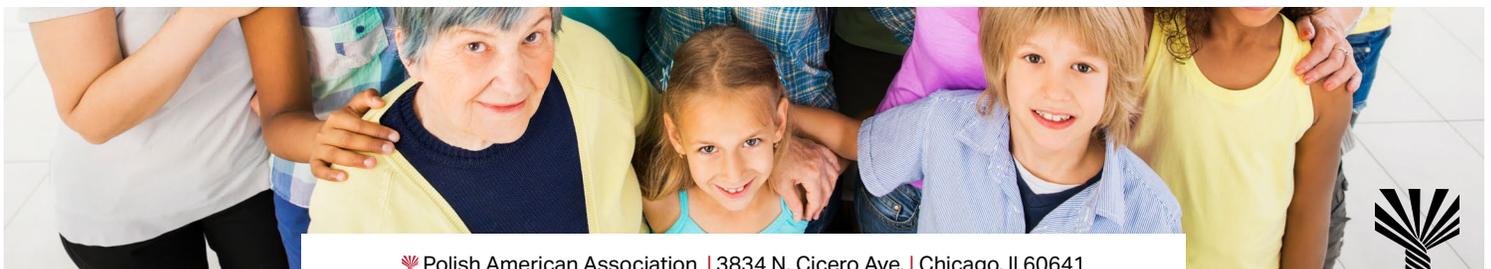
We examined the history of the PAA, its successes and failures recounted through

the voices we heard. We challenged ourselves to view the work from as many experiences and perspectives as possible to ensure that we would be thoroughly informed and unambiguously honest in our reflections on the efficacy of the PAA over so many decades.

In that self-reflection, in the trends and materials we collected, in the countless interviews we conducted, we found many things of which to be proud.

We also sought out those ideas and opinions which we knew would be difficult to hear, but nonetheless critical for us to address in order to continue our work. This strategic plan leverages our strengths to address our shortcomings so that we are better prepared to serve in the future, and although that most certainly includes those we know, we also recognize that it will include populations we have yet to meet and programs we have yet to deliver.

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MISSION OF THE  
POLISH AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION:

Rooted in Polish heritage for nearly a century, the PAA advances today's diverse immigrant communities.

**OUR MISSION**

Our mission, like the people who pass through our doors, changes with the times and the demands of those who need it most. It is a snapshot we hold in our hearts to give purpose to our work - at the time we serve.

Since the founding of the PAA almost 100 years ago, much has changed - locally, nationally, and globally. Presidents have come and gone. Wars have started and ended. Staggering events like Pearl Harbor and 9/11 have left their marks on our collective character. With our proud history of service, and a profound commitment to address the challenges we face today, our values have not changed, but the language we use to describe our mission must reflect our roots, and call out to new generations.

We are proud to restate our mission with the launch of the new Strategic Plan. It pays homage to who we have been and who we are to the community. But it also ushers in a future that has bigger goals and broader support. With collective pride, and standing on the shoulders of all who came before us, of all who contributed, and for all those yet to enter our doors, we restate the mission of the Polish American Association.



**WE HAVE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

The PAA spent the past eight months asking its clients, supporters, staff, neighbors, and partners three important questions: what do we do well, what can we do better, and who else needs our help? We asked, you generously answered, and now we're implementing changes that will bring new programming, new opportunities and new friends to our table. We are opening our doors and our hearts to everyone looking for a hand up, friendship, community, and acceptance.

It is a big job and one we cannot do alone. While no one can do everything, everyone can do something. We hope you, our friends old and new, will join us on this exciting journey by signing on to do your special "something."

The choices are many and the rewards are greater, so choose from the list below, or tell us what else you can do to help. We all benefit from your support of our Mission.

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# Eight Foundational Pillars of the PAA

Over the life of the Strategic Plan and beyond, **Eight Foundational Pillars** will guide the work of the PAA.

1

**Financial Stability:** The PAA will seek new activities, relationships, and resources to stabilize the financial health of the organization, balance its work as an agency with charitable programming and fundraising, and continue accepting governmental funds for programming, while managing those programs to reflect the changing and unpredictable nature of that funding.

2

**Stewardship of Our Donations and Their Growth:** The PAA will maintain and develop relationships and activities for current and future donors that reflect their interests and report regularly to its donors on its performance, the application and use of donor funds, and the impact of their donations.

3

**Security, Safety, Service – 21st Century Technology:** The PAA will assess and invest in the technology necessary to maintain the security of the data it collects and apply technology to improve services and efficiencies.

4

**Programming Standards That Reach Meaningful Outcomes:** The PAA will develop internal metrics to measure program impact on its clients and the community, track and analyze the long-term impact of programs, assess the launch of new program initiatives in order to wisely use its funds on behalf of its funders and clients, and regularly survey the community it serves to obtain direct input on evolving needs.

5

**Determining Purpose First and Then, Facilities That Match:** The PAA facility investment will be driven by the mission-oriented service needs of its community members, clients, and donors, and will establish a facilities planning process that responds to the demands of community programming needs.

6

**Retooling the Corporate Organizational Structure to Serve the Future With Flexibility:** The PAA will form a committee to examine the corporate activities and successful transformations undergone by similar organizations of its age, pursue new instruments developed for non-profit corporate flexibility, efficiency, and communications, and modernize its bylaws and governance to reflect the expectations of the organization for its Board of Directors and other volunteers.

7

**Reflecting the Changing Demographics of Those We Serve and Those We Need:** The PAA will regularly survey its community to determine programming needs based on demographic changes occurring among respondents, and will reflect hiring practices and seek skill sets needed to meet the need of those seeking the assistance of the organization.

8

**Developing a Strategic Vision for Leadership and Board Development:** The PAA will grow its board with intention, including an inventory of current board talent and vacancies. With descriptions for what it seeks among its ranks, it will recruit individuals based on the needs of the organization and the changing profile of the community it serves.

**Other ways of giving**



**Give monthly:** Your credit card or bank account can be automatically charged each month. Enroll online at [www.polish.org/donate](http://www.polish.org/donate).



**Give through your donor advised fund:** Make a one time or monthly gift from your donor-advised fund. Our tax ID # is 36-2240816.



**Make an IRA Charitable Distribution:** If you are 70½ years or older, you may satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution with a gift to Polish American Association.



**Donate stock and securities.**

**amazon.com**

**Select the PAA when you shop at Amazon:**  
<https://www.polish.org/amazonsmile>.



**Name the PAA as a life insurance or trust beneficiary.**

**SELECT THE WAYS YOU CAN GIVE**

# Get Involved!

**Joinus@polish.org**

- Attend our events
- Be a volunteer
- Serve on an Event Committee
- Serve on our Centennial Celebration Committee
- Volunteer your professional expertise and services
- Share your knowledge and be an advocate

## Be a Sponsor

- Underwrite a program or event that reflects your interests and values

## Donate

- Online [www.polish.org/donate](http://www.polish.org/donate)
- Phone us at 773-282-8206 (ask for Advancement)
- Contact us at [joinus@polish.org](mailto:joinus@polish.org)
- Mail a Check to:

**Polish American Association  
3834 N. Cicero Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60641**

