

[https://www.postandcourier.com/news/opening-of-charlestons-international-african-american-museum-delayed/article\\_357f3f7c-7d9b-11ed-a991-e748b071bded.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/news/opening-of-charlestons-international-african-american-museum-delayed/article_357f3f7c-7d9b-11ed-a991-e748b071bded.html)

# Opening of Charleston's International African American Museum delayed

BY ALI ROCKETT AROCKETT@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

DEC 16, 2022



The International African American Museum in downtown Charleston. File/Gavin McIntyre/Staff

**The International African American Museum will not open in January, as planned.**

Humidity and temperature problems are to blame for the delay to the long-awaited museum in downtown Charleston, according to information released late Dec. 16. Environmental fluctuations could damage the art and artifacts planned for the space located at the edge of the Cooper River, museum officials said in the statement.

“Museums require extremely stringent humidity controls in order to display the most sensitive of items for extended periods of time,” according to the statement. “This delay is necessary to ensure that the museum building achieves the conditions necessary to preserve and protect our most sensitive objects, artifacts, and art. In the meantime, we are monitoring humidity controls, which are suitable for all objects currently installed.”

The museum at 14 Wharfside St. had been slated to open the weekend of Jan. 21 — the week following Martin Luther King Jr. Day and a date almost exactly 23 years after former Mayor Joe Riley publicly committed to building the educational and cultural attraction.

Museum officials said they still “expect to welcome visitors in the first half of 2023,” and that a revised schedule — as well as several outreach initiatives — would be announced in early 2023.

Questions from The Post and Courier about the decision to delay the opening went unanswered by deadline.

“We appreciate your understanding, value your continued support and partnership, and will persevere to ensure that this museum upholds its mission to honor the untold stories of the African American journey, paying tribute to the African American labor, resilience, and ingenuity that shaped our country and our world,” the organization’s statement read in closing.

After raising more \$100 million in public and private funds, organizers broke ground in mid-2019 at the waterfront site where tens of thousands of African men, women and children set foot on American soil in chains and were sold into slavery. But the museum’s planning and construction has been marred by setbacks.

Last year, the institution’s former director of planning and operations wrote a lengthy memorandum warning its board members about staff turnover leading to a lack of diversity, low morale and a “toxic” and “siloeed” work environment.

Despite the setbacks, work continued. In Friday's statement, museum officials noted they were working the city and "third-party advisors" to fix the humidity and temperature issues.

Faith leaders, including Bishop Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, the Archbishop of the Church of the Province of West Africa, in November gathered to bless the museum grounds, which are located just below the South Carolina Aquarium.

National Geographic included the museum on its "Best of the World 2023" list, saying the IAAM will address "a grimmer aspect" of the history of Charleston and South Carolina.

---

Reach Ali Rockett at 843-901-1708. Follow her on Twitter @AliRockettPC.

MORE INFORMATION

Charleston's International African American Museum is 'must-see' in '23

Faith leaders bless ground of Charleston's soon-to-open International African American Museum

---

**ALI ROCKETT**

Ali Rockett covers crime and public safety in the Charleston area. She previously worked at papers in Virginia and her home state of North Carolina.