



The Polish Canadian Museum and Archives

Capital Campaign Strategy

February-March 2025

Prepared by: Ogniwo Polish Museum Expansion Project Advisory Committee - Fundraising Subcommittee

Vision

The Polish Canadian Museum and Archives (PCMA) will honour the historic and contemporary contributions of Polish Canadians to the fabric of Canadian society. Through exhibits, educational programs, and cultural initiatives, the PCMA will collect, preserve, and share artefacts and archival records that tell the stories of Polish immigrants and their descendants, highlighting their resilience, creativity, and the values they have brought to Canada.

Mission

A national museum dedicated to documenting and contextualizing the Polish Canadian experiences and fostering greater understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures that shape Canada's identity.

Strategic Capital Campaign Objectives

1. Fundraising Goal

Target: \$10 million CAD to cover land acquisition, building construction, initial exhibitions, and operational endowment.

2. Community Engagement

- Mobilize the Polish Canadian community and allies as campaign ambassadors.
- Build relationships with governments, corporations, and philanthropic organizations.

3. Promote Long-Term Benefits

Demonstrate how the PCMA will serve as a hub for cultural exchange, education, and tourism, benefiting all Canadians.

4. Raise Awareness of Polish Contributions

- Highlight the historical and contemporary role of Polish Canadians in nation-building, arts, science, and civic life.
- Promote the importance of preserving and showcasing this heritage for future generations.

Case for Support

Polish Canadians have contributed to Canada for over 150 years:

- **Historical Contributions:** Polish immigrants helped build railways, settle the Prairies, and contribute to the natural resource and industrial growth of Canada. Many served bravely in World Wars I and II within Canada's and its allies' armed forces.
- **Cultural Impact:** The rich traditions of Polish music, art, literature, and cuisine have enriched Canada's cultural landscape.
- **Social Impact:** Poland has one of the world's oldest democracies and has defended its independence many times throughout history. Democratic freedom is integral to Polish cultural and social identity and Polish Canadians bring these values to Canadian society.
- **Contemporary Achievements:** Today, Polish Canadians excel in various fields, including academia, science, arts, music, business, and politics.

Contributions of Polish People in Canada

- **Early Arrivals (19th Century)**
 - Kazimierz Gzowski (engineer) helped design and build canals, ports, and railways, including the International Railway Bridge (1873).
 - His great-great-grandson, Peter Gzowski, became a well-known Canadian broadcaster.
- **First Large Wave (1858)**
 - Polish Kashubs settled between Ottawa and Opeongo, establishing a Polish community in Canada.

- **Early 1900s Settlements**
 - Many Polish immigrants moved to the prairies, working in mines, forestry, and railway expansion to fund land purchases.
- **World War I Contributions**
 - A Polish recruitment camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake trained 20,000 recruits, including 200 from Canada.
- **World War II Contributions**
 - Andrew Mynarski (Royal Canadian Air Force) was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery.
- **Post-WWII Immigration**
 - Canada welcomed ~55,000 Polish persons displaced by the war, who provided heavy labour in areas such as forestry, farming, and mining. This wave included Janusz Zurakowski, a test pilot and the first in Canada to break the sound barrier.
- **1980s Immigration Wave**
 - Another large wave of Polish immigrants arrived in Canada, escaping the economic and political oppression of communist Poland. Over 115,000 refugees found a new home in Canada, many of whom went on to become successful professionals, contributing to the country's growth in various fields.
- **Canada-Poland Relations & Notable Figures**
 - Poland joined NATO in 1999, strengthening ties with Canada.
 - General Walter Natynczyk (Chief of Defence Staff 2008-2012) and his father, a WWII veteran, had Polish roots.
 - Prominent Polish-Canadians include politicians (Gary Filmon, Stanley Haidasz, Wladyslaw Lizon), artists (Ewa Tarsia, Janina Fialkowska), and journalists (Mark Starowicz, Alexandra Szacka).

Why a Polish Canadian Museum and Archives is Important

Preservation of Heritage: With each generation, there is a risk of losing valuable artefacts, archival records, and local publications – and with them, stories and traditions that hold intangible cultural value. A museum ensures these are preserved and shared within the Polish Canadian cultural community and with other cultural communities, preserving the uniqueness of the Polish Canadian cultural identity while building human connection, as well as cross-cultural and cross-generational exchange.

1. **Passing on knowledge and understanding to the next generations:** First-, second- and third-generation Polish Canadians are seeking a way to connect to their cultural roots. The PCMA will provide this connection through English-language programming, using an approach that is inclusive of people of all ages and backgrounds.

2. **Education:** The PCMA will provide an engaging learning environment for schools and the public to understand the contributions of Polish Canadians.
3. **Community Connections:** By showcasing how Polish Canadians have contributed to Canada's multicultural identity, the PCMA will promote diversity, inclusivity, and mutual respect.

Benefits to Polish Canadians and All Canadians

Cultural Pride: Polish Canadians will have a dedicated space to preserve and honour their heritage and share it with others.

- **Economic Boost:** The PCMA will attract tourists, benefiting local economies. The PCMA will bring a boost to its local neighbourhood.
- **Educational Impact:** The PCMA will offer programs highlighting values such as resilience, community-building, and innovation.
- **Strengthened Multiculturalism:** By fostering understanding and appreciation of Polish heritage, the PCMA will encourage dialogue and connections among diverse communities.
- **Attract scholars and researchers from abroad:** The unique archival, library, and artefact holdings of the PCMA will attract researchers locally and from abroad. The PCMA will serve as a research hub for Polish and Polish-Canadian history.

Campaign Components

1. **Foundational Phase** (Duration: 6–12 months):
 - Establish a Campaign Leadership Committee comprising prominent Polish Canadians and supporters.
 - Conduct site selection and feasibility studies.
 - Develop branding and communication materials, including a campaign website and video.
2. **Silent Phase** (Duration: 12–18 months):
 - Approach major donors (individuals, corporations, and foundations) for leadership gifts.
 - Seek government grants and cultural funding.
 - Secure 50–60% of the fundraising goal before public launch.
3. **Public Phase** (Duration: 18–24 months):
 - Launch a national awareness campaign through media and community events.
 - Engage grassroots donors through crowdfunding, events, and social media campaigns.

- Promote naming opportunities for donors (e.g., galleries, exhibits, and plaques, donor board).
- 4. **Construction and Launch Phase** (Duration: 24–36 months):
 - Break ground on the PCMA's construction.
 - Host a capital campaign celebration to thank donors and showcase progress.
 - Open the PCMA with a grand opening ceremony and inaugural exhibition.

Key Partnerships

The Government of Poland

Approach the Government of Poland to be a founding donor.

1. Polish Canadian Organizations

Engage with Polish cultural associations, churches, and heritage groups across Canada to amplify the campaign.

2. Canadian Governments

Pursue funding and partnerships with municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

3. Corporations

Seek sponsorships from businesses with Polish Canadian ties or interests in cultural preservation.

4. Media and Influencers

Partner with Polish Canadian influencers, historians, and media outlets to spread the campaign's message.

Stewardship and Legacy

Recognition: Honour donors through plaques, donor walls, and naming opportunities.

- **Updates:** Provide regular campaign progress reports and updates on PCMA milestones.
- **Endowment Fund:** Establish an endowment to ensure the PCMA's sustainability.

By creating the PCMA, we preserve a vital thread of Canada's multicultural heritage, fostering pride, understanding, and unity for generations to come.

Why the PCMA Should Be Located in Winnipeg

1. Build Upon Existing Polish Museum Already Located in Winnipeg

- The PCMA will expand the mandate and leverage the existing collections and community relationships built by Ogniwo Polish Museum, located in the Winnipeg's historic North End. Ogniwo was incorporated in 1985 and celebrates its 40th anniversary in March 2025.
- Ogniwo Polish Museum is the only one of its kind in Canada, holding artefacts, archives, and library collections that are processed, preserved, and made accessible to the public according to professional museum best practices and standards.
- Ogniwo Polish Museum's mandate is regional in focus. Ogniwo regularly receives offers of artefact and archival donations from across the country, indicating a community need for a national-scale repository dedicated to preserving Polish Canadian history. The PCMA would expand Ogniwo's regional mandate to encompass the collection, preservation, and sharing of Polish Canadian histories on a national scale.

2. Historic Connection to Polish Canadians

- **Early Settlement:** Polish immigrants began settling in Manitoba in the late 19th century, making Winnipeg a historic hub for Polish Canadian life and a gateway to the settlement of Western Canada.
- **Community Legacy:** Winnipeg is home to longstanding Polish organizations, including churches, cultural associations, and schools, reflecting the deep-rooted presence of Polish heritage in the city.
- **Significant Events:** Winnipeg has hosted numerous Polish cultural events and celebrations, cementing its reputation as a focal point for the community.
- **Regional History:** There is a strong and thriving Polish-Canadian presence in the larger Winnipeg region, including in the Cook's Creek and Bird's Hill area of Manitoba.

3. Centrally Located Hub

- Winnipeg's central location in Canada makes it accessible to Polish Canadians across the country, from coast to coast to coast.
- It is well-connected through road, rail, and air travel, allowing for easy access for visitors, researchers, and collaborators.

4. Cultural Vibrancy

- Winnipeg has a thriving arts and culture scene, with established institutions such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Manitoba Museum, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (Archives of Manitoba).
- The addition of the PCMA would complement this cultural ecosystem, enriching the city's identity as a center of learning and heritage.

5. Large and Active Polish Canadian Community

- Winnipeg has one of the most significant Polish Canadian populations in Western Canada (5% of the population, or ~60,000 people, have Polish roots).
- Winnipeg's Polish community organizations are some of the oldest in Canada and are well-established, each with their own support networks and members. They include local, still active groups like:
 - The Holy Ghost Fraternal Aid Society (est. 1902)
 - The Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol (est. 1906)
 - The Sokol Polish Folk Ensemble (est. 1914)
 - The Fraternal Aid Society of St. John Cantius (est. 1917)
 - The Polish Canadian Congress Manitoba Division (est. 1944)
 - The Polish Combatants Association Branch #13 (est. 1946)
 - The Polish Canadian Women's Federation Branch #7 (est. 1963)
 - SPK Iskry (est. 1967)
 - The Sokol Polish Dance Ensemble
 - Polish School of Dance Sokol (1972)

and other Polish community centres and businesses that provide a very strong foundation for collaboration, fundraising, and engagement.

6. Educational Opportunities

- The PCMA can partner with Manitoba's universities and colleges to offer research opportunities, co-op placements, educational programs, and cultural studies related to Polish Canadian history and heritage.
- Offer scholarships, grants, or research access for Polish, Polish-Canadian or museum studies.
- School groups from across Manitoba and neighboring provinces could visit as part of their curricula on immigration, multiculturalism, and Canadian history.

7. Tourism Potential

- Winnipeg attracts thousands of tourists annually to its museums, festivals, and historical landmarks.
- The PCMA would add a unique draw, appealing to both Polish Canadians and international visitors interested in Polish heritage.

8. Commitment to Multiculturalism

- Winnipeg's cultural diversity and history of embracing immigrant communities align with the values of the PCMA.
- The PCMA would highlight the contributions of Polish Canadians to Winnipeg's development and foster greater appreciation of Polish culture within the city's multicultural fabric.

9. Cost-Effectiveness and Community Support

- Winnipeg offers lower real estate and operational costs compared to larger cities like Toronto or Vancouver, making it a financially prudent choice for establishing a national museum.
- The city's supportive Polish community and wider network of allies are likely to rally behind the PCMA's fundraising efforts.

Impact of Locating the PCMA in Winnipeg

- **National Reach:** Positioned centrally, the PCMA would serve as a national institution accessible to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.
- **Community Pride:** The establishment of the PCMA in Winnipeg would honour the contributions of the local Polish community and serve as a source of pride for the city.
- **Economic Boost:** The PCMA would contribute to the local economy through job creation, tourism, and cultural events.

By choosing Winnipeg as its home, the PCMA would not only honour the city's rich Polish heritage but also serve as a beacon of cultural preservation and education for all Canadians.

How will the PCMA Support Truth and Reconciliation?

The PCMA can play a meaningful role in supporting Truth and Reconciliation by recognizing the interconnectedness of all communities within Canada's history, acknowledging historical injustices, and fostering cross-cultural understanding. While its primary focus is on preserving and sharing Polish Canadian heritage, the PCMA can actively contribute to reconciliation efforts by incorporating the following approaches:

- Recognize Polish settlers' role in colonization and its impact on Indigenous communities.
- Acknowledge traditional lands and treaties, promoting understanding of Treaty history and responsibilities.
- Educate the Polish Canadian community on colonization, residential schools, and Reconciliation responsibilities.
- Integrate Indigenous perspectives into exhibits, programming, and governance.
- Collaborate with Indigenous artists, storytellers, and organizations on cultural and educational projects.
- Incorporate decolonizing approaches in collections, archives, and programming.
- Address the TRC's Calls to Action by facilitating cultural exchanges between Polish and Indigenous communities.

- Call attention to the benefits of sharing diverse ways of knowing, experiencing the world, preserving culture and histories, and connecting with each other.
- Collaborate with Indigenous organizations on joint projects, such as oral history collection, cultural festivals, or shared educational resources.
- Highlight parallels between Polish and Indigenous efforts to preserve language, culture, and identity.
- Celebrate both communities' contributions to Canada's diversity and shared understanding.
- Begin events with meaningful, action-oriented land acknowledgments.
- Support Indigenous students in relevant fields and facilitate ongoing cultural exchange.
- Regularly assess and strengthen Reconciliation initiatives.

Conclusion

The PCMA can build a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable institution. Emphasizing community collaboration, storytelling, and the preservation of Polish Canadian history on a national scale will ensure it becomes a meaningful and sustainable part of Canada's cultural landscape.