



## Museums for America

Sample Application MA-253342-OMS-23  
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

### Tampa Museum of Art

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$103,677
Amount of cost share:	\$103,699

The Tampa Museum of Art will partner with King's Kids Christian Academy, a needs-based private school to expand its art therapy-informed program, Art Space, to three new campuses. Project activities include developing art therapy-informed lesson plans and then piloting, evaluating, and refining the school and museum visits. Project funds will support hiring two part-time outreach programs assistants who will lead the museum visits. The project will provide students with creative interventions to augment existing social-emotional learning used by the schools while learning coping skills and exploring emotional expression.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

### **Project Justification**

The Tampa Museum of Art (TMA) proposes to expand its existing Art Therapy-Informed Program, *Art Space*, to local schools. Through championing lifelong learning, TMA educators hope to advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities and provide support to in-school programs at four area private schools. For this project, TMA will continue to work with King's Kids Christian Academy, a needs-based, private preschool, and expand the project to all three campuses of the Academy Prep Centers, a needs-based, private middle school. Funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services will support the hiring of two part-time Outreach Programs Assistants, the development of art-therapy informed lesson plans, and the implementation and evaluation of the school and museum visits. This project will support the social-emotional education of early learners and middle schoolers both in the school and in the community.

This project addresses Goal 6 and 7 of the Museum's Strategic Plan. The current Strategic Plan set goals to build audiences and the reputation of the Museum and to ensure the human resources are in place to do so. It also aligns with the Strategic Action Plan currently in development that aims to outline capacity and staffing needs as TMA's physical footprint expands.

The objective of this program is to provide students with a unique and creative intervention to aid in their social and emotional development. Participants will learn coping skills, explore healthy ways to express emotions, and practice social skills in the museum and school environments. This will provide the students with tools to cope and self-regulation techniques to aide in safe-guarding their mental-health needs while navigating stressors and potential trauma in school and at home. The objective will be accomplished through art therapy-informed art making activities, in-gallery discussions, language and skill building, and an overall inclusive trauma-informed approach throughout the program. Participants will also be able to join in larger community events and an art exhibition.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, "One in six U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year, and half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14." There are biological and environmental factors that contribute to mental health conditions. Challenges that our youths may face such as homelessness, hunger, physical and sexual abuse, discord in the home, and bullying are examples of risks for mental health disorders. Common mental health challenges seen among students in U.S. schools are depression, anxiety, trauma, and ADHD. Students may display signs of social-emotional struggles by becoming aggressive toward others, being harmful toward themselves, or shutting down.

The expertise of staff at the museum can help to ease some of the stress caused by mental health challenges. Museums provide an environment with many therapeutic benefits. Museums have been found to relieve feelings of isolation and help individuals relate to others. As stated by Salom (as cited in Ioannides, 2017) museums display the "commonalities among human situations, emotions, difficulties and achievements as expressed in aesthetic form." Opportunities for empathy and commonalities come up both in the artwork and while witnessing artwork among other people. According to Sandell (as cited in Ioannides, 2017) "At the individual level, engagement with museums can enhance self-esteem, confidence and creativity, and foster intellectual stimulation." The museum environment overall is a safe and calming setting for many individuals. Now, we are hearing from doctors in Montreal, who have been prescribing museum visits to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts since 2018. They, along with countless others whose studies demonstrate cognitive regeneration through the visual arts, believe that these "prescriptions" give their patients an opportunity to "visit the museum to ease their suffering, without any side effects" (Montreal Museums, 2018).

TMA has an established practice of using art-therapy informed interventions with a wide range of audiences to assist in easing mental and physical ailments, support youth development, and support mental wellbeing. Since 1994, one of TMA's cornerstone education programs, *Art Space*, has used the therapeutic benefits of art making and museum visits to support organizations that serve underrepresented populations. The first organization to participate in this program was the Spring, a domestic abuse shelter. In the *Art Space* program, students work with an art instructor twice a month during the school year, once at their location and once at the museum. In the last few years, the museum has made strides to intentionally incorporate art-therapy best practices into the art instruction of all *Art Space* programs, including partnering with the Art Therapy department at the University of Tampa. This partnership provides additional

programmatic support from the students, as well as additional program evaluation and progressing the academic and professional cause of utilizing Museums as a resource for and the sites of Art Therapy informed interventions. Recent participants in *Art Space* include adolescents who were victims of human trafficking, children of migrant families, children in foster care, children residing in a domestic abuse shelter, and homeless adults.

In 2015, TMA launched the program *Connections*. *Connections* uses art-therapy informed questioning practices to support the programs of institutions offering services to adults including memory care, substance use disorder recovery, trauma-informed counseling, and various support groups. Through facilitated gallery experiences, participants are invited use works of art to invoke memories and explore feelings and moods.

In February of 2020, TMA hired a Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern as the Studio Programs Instructor to manage the Art Space program. After that person left in 2021, TMA promoted that position to a full-time Outreach Programs Coordinator and was able to hire a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Art Therapist in the role. Along with expanding *Art Space* and enriching its Art Therapy informed practices, the Coordinator has also been engaged in furthering *Connections* and providing trauma-informed best practice recommendations for other education programs.

In Hillsborough County, where King's Kids Christian Academy and one of the Academy Prep Centers are located, children and adolescents face risk factors for mental health challenges and disorders. According to the Florida Department of Health, Child Health Status Profile, Hillsborough County rated 4/4 (4 being the least favorable) for severe housing problems and 4/4 for child food insecurity rate. Also in this profile, it was reported that Hillsborough County rated 4/4 for School Environmental Safety Incidents (Violent acts K-12). With the added stressors related to the pandemic, it is evident that the students in Hillsborough County and the surrounding areas are in need of support around mental health.

*Intended Audience and Beneficiaries* For this program, we will start by working with a preschool and a middle school which has three sites. The middle school is a tuition free private school offering needs based placement for low and middle income students. The preschool has many students who face economic challenges. This project would support art and mental health programs both in school and out of school. It would also support programming for early learners. Letters of support from both organizations can be found in Supporting Document 2.

Group #1: Academy Prep Centers middle school students at three sites, focusing on two classrooms per site, a total of 102 students. According to the school website, Academy Prep is a private school which strives to provide a structured and enriching environment for economically disadvantaged students. This school is tuition free and runs year-round. Academic classes are separated by gender. Academy Prep Centers are located in Tampa, FL, Lakeland, FL, and St. Petersburg, FL. These sites extend the reach of the project into three different counties: Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Polk.

Group #2: This program will focus on the VPK at King's Kids Christian Academy. King's Kids Christian Academy is an inner-city early child development center in Tampa, FL. Many of the children at this school face economic challenges. Their mission is to "work in partnership with students, families, and the community to ensure that each student acquires the knowledge, skills, core values, and spiritual maturity necessary to achieve personal success, to enrich the community, and to transform the world." Their core values are empowerment, communication, ethics, recognition, and behavior. A key part of their curriculum is social-emotional learning, which this proposed program will be able to expand upon. This program will start by focusing on one Voluntary Prekindergarten class (ages 4 and 5) and one class of 3 year olds, a total of 30 students.

### **Project Work Plan**

TMA proposes a two-year work plan for this project, beginning in September 2023. In year one, TMA will focus on the hiring of two part-time Outreach Programs Assistants, development of art-therapy informed lesson plans, and piloting and evaluating the school and museum visits. In year two, revisions to the program will be made as a result of survey responses. Those changes will be executed in the full program roll out. The following goals will guide this project:

**Goal 1:** Students will learn and practice three coping skills through art therapy-informed art activities, skill building, and discussions. Coping skills taught will include art making, identification and expression of emotions through art, and breathing techniques.

**Goal 2:** Provide students with a safe and accepting environment to express themselves. Students will be validated by facilitators and assistants, will have group ground rules for respectful sharing and listening among peers, will be offered sensory accommodations such as fidgets, and will participate in activities specialized to their needs.

**Goal 3:** Practice social skills with students through art therapy-informed group conversations and team-building activities in school and community settings.

In order to track progress on achieving the goals of this project, TMA will distribute pre and post program surveys to parents, teachers, and students. The Outreach Programs Coordinator and Assistants will also be responsible for completing observational evaluations during select school and museum visits.

**Risks:** Some of the risks in working with children include: attention spans affecting levels of participation, possible inconsistent attendance from participants, and the need to meet the varying developmental needs of all participants. To mitigate some of these risks, survey questions will include opportunities for respondents to share challenges experienced in the program. Developmental needs of students can be reviewed during pre-program interviews with teachers. Activities and timelines will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Transportation for museum visits will be provided by the school and parents. There may be unexpected issues with transportation, such as a bus breaking down, which would affect the students' ability to visit the museum at their scheduled time. The Tour Programs Coordinator will work diligently with the Assistants to make sure the opportunity to reschedule visits as needed is available. The program has also addressed the known economic and physical challenges of parent parking in a downtown location by providing parents with parking vouchers to the nearest parking facility. While there may be difficulties identifying qualified candidates for the two Outreach Assistant positions, TMA's close relationship with UT, the Florida Art Therapy Association, and the local art therapists will provide an expanded candidate pool or allow us to contract facilitators if needed. Programming is related to the exhibitions at the museum and sometimes exhibition openings become delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. However, recent construction has renovated our spaces to create more galleries. The opportunity show more permanent collection works for longer periods of time will allow us to navigate any challenges with temporary exhibition delays.

### Project Management and Resources

The *Art Space* program is overseen by the Community Engagement Manager, Kessanda Abel, at TMA. Execution of the program is managed by Renee Buono, Outreach Programs Coordinator. The Outreach Programs Coordinator is a licensed mental health counselor and Art Therapist. She brings extensive knowledge and experience to all of the *Art Space* sessions facilitated with community partners. For *Art Space*, TMA partners with the University of Tampa. Students taking the Practicum course with the Art Therapy department assist with the implementation of the program under the supervision of the Outreach Programs Coordinator and their professor.

For this expansion of the program, the Outreach Programs Coordinator will take the lead on the execution of the project. She will work with the Community Engagement Manager to hire two part-time staff members dedicated to working with Kings Kids Christian Academy and the Academy Prep Centers. Under the supervision of the Outreach Programs Coordinator, the Outreach Programs Assistants will be responsible for the administrative tasks of scheduling visits and designing art making activities.

Brittney Bevel, Education Curator, will take on the responsibility of project director. She will be responsible for insuring data tracking and that all assigned tasks are executed. She will work with the accounting department to make sure that they have all of the data necessary for processing the grant.

In addition to project oversight, the Education Curator will also work with the newly hired staff to train them on gallery teaching techniques that can be used when the schools visit the Museum. She will be assisted by Iris Gonzalez, Tour Programs Coordinator. The Tour Programs Coordinator will also assist with scheduling Museum Visits for all four schools.

Finally, the Studio Programs Coordinator, Stacey Stormes, will work with the Outreach Programs Coordinator and Assistants on scheduling time to use the classrooms and the ordering of supplies.

In addition to the support for staff time spent on this project, TMA will also need financial resources to purchase supplies, provide parking in downtown Tampa for families during Museum visits, and travel reimbursements for the Outreach Programs Coordinator and Assistants to travel to and from the schools.

To support the learning of students at their school, in year 1 TMA will put together one supply kit with middle school aged appropriate materials for facilitators to take to the Academy Prep Centers and one supply kit with preschool aged appropriate materials for facilitators to take to King's Kids Christian Academy. In year 2 of the grant project, TMA will need to replenish some of the supplies originally purchased. TMA anticipates the need to purchase additional art supplies throughout the school year. We have set a budget of \$30 per visit, per school for the visits to the Academy Prep Centers, and a budget of \$10 per visit for the visits to the King's Kids Christian Academy. In addition to this, we anticipate up to 4 lessons plans a year at each site requiring additional supply purchases above and beyond this. For the visits to the Academy Prep Centers, we have set a budget of \$5000 to purchase lesson plan specific specialty supplies. For the visits to the King's Kids Christian Academy, we have set a budget of \$200 to purchase lesson plan specific specialty supplies. An example of supplies purchased for one specialty lesson plan per age group, along with a breakdown of the supply kit costs is included in Supporting Document 3.

*Program Structure* The Tampa Museum of Art Program would be a two-part program taking place at the art museum and at the school. The groups will first meet at the school for an art making activity led by the Outreach Programs Coordinator, an Outreach Programs Assistant, or another trained facilitator. During these meetings, students will participate in a grounding activity, art-therapy informed art making, and group sharing. Self-expressive vocabulary, safe space sharing techniques, and other outcome related content will be introduced during school visits, which will occur once a month. Once a semester, the group of students will visit the museum to view the artwork on display in the galleries, participate in art therapy-informed discussions about the artwork, and engage in skill building activities within the galleries. Afterward, in the Museum's Vinik Family Education Center, they will participate in an art therapy-informed art making activity based on the artwork they viewed in the galleries. Where possible education staff or contractual facilitators will be assigned a classroom for the duration each program year to provide consistency which will encourage an environment most conducive to the attainment of program outcomes.

Sessions at the School: When the museum representatives go out to the school to facilitate art making, they will visit one classroom each session. The art activity will be based on the artwork on display at the Tampa Museum of Art. The art activity will also be art-therapy informed and centered around the goals of this program. The museum representatives will bring the required art supplies with them to the school. Creating art at the school provides an opportunity for the students to start the program in a familiar setting. Through the art making activity and accompanying conversation, the students will learn about what to expect at the Tampa Museum of Art. This experience will also create a connection between the school and the museum.

Sessions at the Museum: For the sessions at the Tampa Museum of Art, the students from Academy Prep will access the museum and return to school through their school provided transportation. The King's Kids students will be transported by their parents. For both groups parents will join the students for the tour to create a bonding experience and reinforce learning. Both school systems require parent involvement as a condition of student enrollment. Students will participate in an interactive tour of the galleries. During the tour, the students will participate in art therapy-informed discussions, gallery games, and team building activities. Afterward, the students will participate in art making in the Vinik Family Education Center. The lead for the visit will be the staff member or members assigned to the class or

classes, additional staff, contracted facilitators, or University of Tampa art therapy students will assist as needed depending on the number of students and gallery requirement.

Art Exhibition: To conclude to program, the students will be able to showcase their artwork at the Tampa Museum of Art. Each student will have one piece of artwork displayed in the Vinik Family Education Center at the Tampa Museum of Art. A reception will be held to honor the students who participated in this program and they will be able to invite caregivers and/or other influential people in their lives. Refreshments will be served and guests will be able to access the galleries. This event will be a great opportunity for the students to practice the skills they have learned and show artwork they created during the program. It will be beneficial for their self-esteem as well. The artwork will hang in the museum for about three months and then the artwork will be returned to the students.

*Timeline* With notification of receipt of the grant, TMA will begin the process of hiring the two Outreach Programs Assistants in September of 2023 with a target start date of early December. While the hiring process is happening, the Outreach Programs Coordinator and Community Engagement Manager will begin building survey and evaluation instruments and working with schools to schedule classroom and museum visits. In November, the Outreach Programs Coordinator will begin building lesson plans for the first two months of visits. Once the Assistants are onboarded, the Coordinator will work with them to finalize lessons, create sample projects, and order supplies. During the first four months of the grant project, the Outreach Programs Coordinator, with the assistance of the Tour Programs Coordinator, will continue to visit classes at King's Kids Christian Academy. If needed, TMA will also identify an additional LMHC to contract to oversee classroom visits.

In January 2024, TMA will start school visits with Academy Prep Centers of Tampa, Lakeland, and St. Petersburg. Sessions with King's Kids Academy will continue. During the spring semester, the Outreach Programs Assistants, under the supervisor of the Coordinator, will be responsible for developing lesson plans and art-making interventions to be presented at all four schools. They will also be the leads on executing the lesson plans in the classrooms. Each school will visit the Museum once between February and May. The Assistants will work with the Tour Programs Coordinator to schedule those visits. The Outreach Programs Coordinator will work with the schools to implement surveys and evaluation protocols. The contracted LMHC will supervise classroom visits when the Outreach Programs Coordinator is not available.

After final surveys have been administered in May, the Outreach Programs Coordinator and Community Engagement Manager will review the data collected and determine what, if anything, needs to be addressed. The Academy Prep centers are year-round schools and King's Kids Christian Academy offers summer programming. Visits at the schools will continue during the summer. In July and August of 2024, final changes will be decided, and TMA will begin preparations for the roll out of year two of the program. An interim report submitted to IMLS will also serve as the foundation for proposals for sharing the results of the program.

In September 2024, TMA will begin year two of the program. During this year, visits to the schools will continue monthly. Outreach Programs Assistants will continue to be responsible for the design and implementation of the lesson plans. The Outreach Programs Coordinator will continue to oversee the program and the evaluation component. Final surveys and evaluations will be distributed and collected in December 2024 and May 2025. While classroom visits will continue, The Education team will spend the summer organizing lesson plans and analyzing survey results. This information will be used to develop proposals for journal articles and conferences. The TMA Education team will actively seek opportunities to share their expertise on this program with other museum professionals during this second year. The intention is to create a model of implementation that can be replicated at other museums and schools. If results are favorable, TMA will also submit a proposal to the Hillsborough County Public Schools to implement a similar program for students in the local school district.

## Project Results

As a result of this project, TMA hopes to reach the following outcomes:

1. Through parent surveys, 50% of respondents will have indicated that their student expressed interest in participating in art making and art-based programming outside of school, have begun or increased the use of target words or statements, and/or have used breathing techniques independently.
2. Students or parents will complete a survey instrument, such as the Mood and Feelings Questionnaire, at the beginning and end of the semester. TMA anticipates seeing an increase in “Not True” statements from 65% of respondents.
3. Through observational evaluations, 65% of participating students will have demonstrated improved group work and discussion skills including the use of target vocabulary, “I feel” statements, and grounding observations with evidence (because statements).

*Program benefits* Recent Census Bureau data indicates a need for interventions that can help increase mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Data collected from 4,101,357 Florida households between October 5-17, 2022 recorded the feelings or behaviors of children in the household during the previous four weeks. Of the families from Florida that responded to the question, 18% indicated that children felt anxious or clingy, 13% felt sad or depressed, 19% demonstrated changes in ability to focus, and 10% noticed unusual anger or outbursts. Numbers indicate an even higher percentage of respondents in each of these categories when considered at the national level.

Research shows that art interventions, both looking and making, have a positive effect on the mood and wellbeing of recipients. In researching the effects of art-making on self-identity in children and adolescents with “differing social abilities,” Fletcher and Lawrence (2017) found that art making had a positive effect on self-identity and awareness, social dynamics among peer groups, relaxation, and enjoyment in groups of students ages 8-18. In a study by Lindsey, Robertson, and Lindsey (2018) it was found that art making with mindfulness training with a group of eighth graders resulted in “significant reduction in self-reported stress and anxiety levels between the pre-intervention and at the three-week follow-up.” Art making had a positive effect on self-identity and awareness, social dynamics among peer groups, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Americans for the Arts (2015) found that participation in the arts, including visual art, in early childhood have a positive effect on the development of social and emotional skills. Kaimal, Ray, and Muniz (2016) observed that making art resulted in “statistically significant lowering of cortisol levels” in participants and the participants expressed that they found art making to be relaxing. Research by Bochmann and Yu (2022) indicated that mindfulness-based activities with children assist in the development of emotional and behavioral self-regulation skills.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts found that after engaging with the arts, 79% of people in deprived communities in London ate more healthily, 77% engaged in more physical activity, and 82% enjoyed greater well-being (Creative Health, 2017). They also found that music therapy reduces agitation and need for medication in 67% of people with dementia (Creative Health, 2017).

While TMA has a history of using art-therapy informed interventions with a wide range of audiences, it has not had an opportunity to formally evaluate the programs. Anecdotal and survey information from the program directors at participating organizations tells us that participation in the Museum programs supports the therapies taking place at the facilities and increases the quality of life for their clients. Quotes from program directors at organizations that participate in the *Connections* program include:

- “We come back because of the feeling of self-worth, of self-esteem, the joy of being selected for an art program.” From an assisted living facility focusing on Memory Care.
- “They realize that they can be normal or treated with respect.” From a Substance Use Disorder recovery facility.

Our *Art Space* partners have told us that in their students they have noticed that their opinion and interest in art, their willingness to create art independently, their self-confidence, and their willingness to express themselves has greatly

increased due to participation in the program. They particularly appreciate having a registered art therapist visit them in their own environment, where they could show off their art projects done in between sessions.

For the existing *Art Space* and *Connections* programs, TMA works with wide variety of audiences, each with a unique set of needs. Success of the program is dependent on the historical knowledge of current staff. The Education Curator and Community Engagement Manager have been involved in the projects for the last 7 and 10 years, respectively. They have been working on the programs from the beginning of *Connections* and the reimagining of *Art Space*. While they have successfully trained additional staff in the facilitation of these programs, there are not formal programmatic processes written down. This grant project will allow the opportunity to formalize and share processes in the *Art Space* program and develop a model for evaluating other programs at the institution.

As a result of this project, TMA will build a model of presenting therapeutic, art-based interventions in the classroom. Final products will include a series of art-therapy informed lesson plans for two different age groups (preschool and middle school students). While all lessons will be based on art on view at the Tampa Museum of Art, they can be applied to various institutions and suggestions for artwork selection will be included. Through conference presentations, scholarly articles in publications such as the Journal of Museum Education, and meetings with educators at other institutions, TMA will share the program and assist other institutions in the implementation of similar projects with other schools. Hillsborough County Public Schools has shown an interest in a similar expansion program. This grant project will allow the TMA to gather quantifiable data to establish the program county wide.

*Sustainability* While this proposal requests funding for a two-year project, years following the program activity are anticipated. The Museum and its partners will continue to explore options for sustaining and institutionalizing the project. TMA has developed a relationship with local foundations and organizations that support work aimed at mental healthcare. *Connections* has been supported from the beginning by the Tampa Bay Foundation for Mental Health, TMS of South Tampa, and the Frankle Family Foundation. The project currently receives support from PNC Bank. *Art Space* receives funding from Wells Fargo, La Damas de Arte and the Gobioff Foundation. The Outreach Programs Coordinator position is partially funded by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners to support outreach programs that take place outside of the Tampa Museum of Art and within Hillsborough County. In addition, we believe as we find greater enthusiasm to support the institution in its mission to provide free services to those whose quality of life has diminished due to the COVID-19 crisis, we will continue to find community support.

Currently, the main cost associated with this program is staff dedicated to the administrative oversight, supervision, and implementation of expanding the *Art Space* program into classrooms. Support from the IMLS will help the Museum to purchase the equipment and supplies needed to build the program and to build effective evaluation processes to make a case for future support along with building a reliable group of trained facilitators to meet the community's demand.



