

Narrative

1. Statement of Need:

The James & Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts (Hearst Center), as home to the Cultural Division of the City of Cedar Falls, has successfully served the community since it opened in 1989. As expected, the needs of the community have become more sophisticated and the Hearst Center collection has become more defined in the past eighteen years due to individual gifts to the collection, an active acquisition process, involvement with the center, and the increase in high tech businesses, clean industrial activity, and population growth. To meet these needs, the building must expand and staff members need additional professional inspiration and input. The Hearst Center is set to physically expand and construction is scheduled to begin in July of 2010. The expanded facility is designed with several specific spaces that will encourage school visits to the Children's Book Illustration Collection, (a gallery, a studio learning-lab, and a large entrance and staging area with facilities to serve groups visiting the facility.) Therefore, the focus of this grant is to increase institutional capacity to meet these needs by preparing the Curator/Registrar and the Education Coordinator to use Children's Book Illustration Collection effectively to serve community-identified needs and effectively use this collection to meet these needs.

The Hearst Center's Vision, Mission Statement, and Statement of Purpose and Goals of the Strategic Plan, all reviewed and approved in February 2005 follow:

Vision: The James and Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts aspires to energize and integrate the aesthetic, intellectual, and creative potential of its citizens through the excellence and appeal of its exhibitions and educational activities.

Mission: The Hearst Center opens doors to the humanities and creative arts.

Purpose: The Hearst Center is a public institution committed to enhancing the cultural prosperity of the community through high quality programs that encourage engagement in and appreciation of the humanities and creative arts by all age groups. The Center features midwestern artists and scholars in its exhibitions and educational activities. Its permanent collection focuses on the art of illustration with a special emphasis on children's book art.

The Hearst Center's Strategic Plan, adopted by the Cedar Falls Art and Culture Board in February of 2005, includes three goals:

- I. Enhance the visibility and the integration of the visual and literary arts in the community.
- II. Initiate a major fund raising drive and create a capital improvement fund.
- III. Upgrade delivery of programs and exhibits to the community and develop innovative new programs.

This project is directly related to both the statement of purpose and is closely aligned to the first and the third goals of the plan, as described below.

To provide first-rate Children's Book Illustration exhibits and excellent educational programs for the community, the Cultural Division Manager (Director), Curator/Registrar, and Education Coordinator have identified the need for more information about how larger institutions with children's book collections discern specific audience needs, prepare and present exhibitions, develop and implement programming, communicate about and administer these programs, care for and preserve their collections, and share resources. Funds from this grant will provide half of the cost to help Hearst Center's staff members increase their capacity to serve the community by providing travel and subsistence costs for individuals to observe and work directly with several different professionals at larger and more mature facilities with similar collections. Observing and working with other professionals with similar jobs and in related jobs at three separate institutions, staff members will collect information about how others are currently engaging the community to help identify their needs; conceptualizing and executing successful children's book illustration exhibitions; planning and implementing exciting educational programming; how these institutions plan for collections care; and carry out procedures to preserve their collections.

The Hearst Center's Curator and Education Coordinator will each research and choose three institutions that fit the criteria described above, (individuals might choose different institutions), and make arrangements to visit and work closely with two or three staff members at these institutions for a period of four days. While at these museums, Hearst Center staff members will spend a significant time in the middle of the day and at the end of the day making written notes of their observations. Once the six visits are completed, Hearst staff members will identify Best Practices by discussing and comparing the data they have collected through direct observation. The factors they will analyze will include comparisons of: administrative structures and policies; internal and external communication systems; collection exhibition and preservation practices; programming planning and implementation; and miscellaneous factors that are unexpected learning outcomes. Once these notes are compared, staff members will select those that most closely meet the needs of the Cedar Falls community. These Best Practices will be emulated and/or adapted for use in the expanded facility to provide the quality and depth of experience the citizens of Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley deserve.

2. Project Design:

The overall design of this project is very simple. With assistance from the Director, staff members will:

- Identify job-specific and job-related objectives;
- Research and identify the institutions and professionals they want to learn from meeting the following criteria: larger institutions known for excellence; and possessing a collection of children's book illustrations;
- Contact and arrange for these visits, initial contact - Director to Director;
- Travel and conduct visits and take notes during the visit;
- Organize, share, and compare notes and observations;
- Analyze and choose those as most related to the Hearst Center's needs;
- Identify those to be adapted or emulated;
- Identify underlying values that inform the Best Practices identified;
- Develop procedures based on the Best Practices and related values; and
- Publish and disseminate an internal document "Excellent Value: Procedures and Practices to Follow at the Hearst Center."

Evaluation:

There will be several group-administered evaluation periods during the year:

After staff members have each identified job-related specifics to be observed, the group will meet and compare notes, provide feedback, and suggest revisions;

Upon completion of the first visits by each of the three staff members, the two employees will meet with the director and review notes taken by one another. Once again the three will review these notes, compare quality of the information gathered, and make suggestions for revisions to both the quality of the notes gathered and for refocusing which might improve the overall quality of information to compare.

In addition, if it appears that there is an underlying fault in the structure of the process, the group will identify how to resolve the situation and action will be taken that will affect the structure of the rest of the project. All suggested changes would be reviewed with IMLS staff for approval;

Upon completion of the second visits by each of the two staff members, the group will meet once again and compare notes and focus and make further suggestions;

Before the workweek spent to identify Best Practices, the group will meet once again and organize and arrange notes for study, identify needs, and assign self-assign tasks for making notes to satisfy these needs.

When Best Practices have been identified, each staff member will write an Evaluation of the experiences they have had and will make suggestions for future use.

Objectives:

A. To improve the lives of the citizens of Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley by encouraging visual and literary literacy by providing excellent educational exhibits and related programming focusing on the Children's Book Illustration Collection.

B. To enhance the life of the Children's Book Illustration Collection and other collections at the Hearst Center, and increase the value to the community of services at the Hearst Center by ensuring communications and procedures are effective, collection management practices are up-to-date by observing, identifying, and adapting Best Practices in larger institutions with similar collections.

C. To improve the impact of exhibits on communities and maximize collections at the Hearst Center and at other institutions with Children's Book Illustrations by developing peer relationships amongst professionals at several of those institutions to Research Best Practices, to encourage the exchange of ideas and the development of exhibits for exchange amongst institutions.

3. Project Resources:

The Hearst Center's Curator/Registrar and Education Coordinator will each research and choose three institutions that fit the criteria described above, (individuals might choose different institutions), and make arrangements to visit and work closely with two or three staff members at these institutions for a period of four days. While at these museums, Hearst Center staff members will spend a significant time in the middle of the day and at the end of the day making written notes of their observations. Once all six visits are completed, Hearst Staff members will identify Best Practices by discussing and comparing the data they have collected through direct observation. The factors they will analyze will include comparisons of: administrative structures and policies; internal and external communication systems; collection exhibition and preservation practices; programming planning and implementation; and miscellaneous factors that are unexpected learning outcomes. Once these notes are compared, staff members will select those that most closely meet the needs of the Cedar Falls community. These Best Practices will be emulated and/or adapted for use in the expanded facility to provide the quality and depth of experience the citizens of Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley deserve.

Between September 1, 2008 and August 31, 2009, the staff at the Hearst Center will carefully plan and schedule the time they spend during on this project around their most time-sensitive Hearst-centered responsibilities: one week at the Hearst Center researching and planning their visits, three separate weeks visiting selected institutions, and one week intense work period at the Hearst Center following these visits working with the Director to identify Best Practices. As part of this plan, the Director and the Development Coordinator will oversee the responsibilities of those traveling and upon each return, the Director will add 20 additional hours to the schedule of one or more of the students already working at the Hearst Center to provide administrative assistance for two weeks upon each return. The Curator/Registrar and Education Coordinator will prioritize the workload and delegate simple administrative matters to assistants in order to catch up on their duties from the previous period.

Staff Members Involved:

The Cultural Division Manager (Director), Mary Huber, has been a museum administrator for 32 years, the first 14 years were spent in the Education and Visitor Services Departments at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the previous eighteen years have been at the Hearst Center for the Arts. With a B.F.A. from The Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and a B.S. in Arts Education from the University of Minnesota, Huber has engaged in ongoing museum and management training throughout her career, including the Getty's Museum Management Institute in 1992.

The Education Coordinator, Lisa Becker, has a B.A. in Arts Education from the University of Northern Iowa and was awarded an M.A. in Museum Education by the University of Iowa (U of I) in 2006. During the two years she was at the U of I, Becker volunteered and then interned at the University of Iowa Museum. She has participated in one regional/state conference and three job-specific workshops since starting at the Hearst Center in the summer of 2006.

Emily Drennan is the Curator/Registrar and has had three years of study at the University of Northern Iowa. Drennan has had four years of experience at the Hearst Center, first as a Hearst Office Assistant, then Assistant to the Curator/Registrar, and as Curator/Registrar starting in January of 2005. Drennan has traveled extensively and visited museums around the world. Since becoming Curator/Registrar, Drennan has attended three job-specific workshops, two state museum conferences, and one regional museum conference.

Operating Budget Match:

A portion of the Cultural Division's operating Budgets for both Fiscal Year 2009 (7/1/2008 - 6/30/2009) and Fiscal Year 2010 (7/1/2009 - 6/30/2010) will be used to share the costs of this project. Budget categories to be used include Personnel, Supplies, and Services. Personnel lines will to pay for a portion of wages for each staff member's time spent planning; traveling, researching, and analyzing data; for the Director's time administering the project and identifying Best Practices; and for additional administrative support time required to help keep ongoing duties up to date. Supplies (Office) lines will be used for office supplies used to complete the project; Services, (Travel) and Services, (Education) will pay for a portion of travel and subsistence expenses to complete this project. {Because locations have not yet been identified, airfare has been noted on the budget @ \$395 round trip. This is currently the lowest rate available to any metropolitan area from the local airport. Subsistence has been listed @ \$225/day to include housing, meals, and local transportation.}

4. Impact:

In this project, which is developed to Research Best Practices, direct observation with hands-on participation has been determined to be the most effective way for Hearst Center staff to collect information about practices at other institutions. Although there will be identified criteria specified, unexpected observations and learning will take place. Unexpected learning is often the most valuable and useful. This project is designed to take advantage of those opportunities.

Observation, Comparison, and Analysis are essential for evaluating and identifying those Best Practices that are most appropriate for adaptation to serve the Cedar Falls community. The resulting peer relationships with staff members at these institutions will be immediately helpful as practices are evaluated, and especially appreciated when staff need input and feedback as these practices are adapted to the community's specific needs.

Measurable Objectives:

A few of the measurable objectives for this project are listed below.

The Curator/Registrar will have learned and noted at least three new procedures and processes for exhibition installation.

The Curator/Registrar will have noted at least two years of past exhibitions and at least the current year of children's book illustration exhibitions at three institutions.

The Curator/Registrar and the Education Coordinator will have observed and noted at least two new techniques for identifying community needs.

The Curator/Registrar and the Education Coordinator will have observed and noted at least four organizational structures and commented on strengths and weaknesses in relationship to delivering educational programs and exhibiting children's book illustrations.

The Curator/Registrar and the Education Coordinator will have noted information about at least four different children's book illustration collection, with emphasis on strengths and unique holdings.

The Curator/Registrar and the Education Coordinator will have each observed and noted planning techniques of each professional and the strengths of each technique.

The Education Coordinator will have researched and noted at least two years of previous and one year of current programming related to children's book illustration at each institution and noted the results of past events or the perceived strengths of upcoming events.

Publications:

The final phase of this project will be to collect the selected Best Practices, identify the underlying values that inform and serve those practices and create a document "Excellent Value: Procedures and Practices to Follow at the Hearst Center." This document include the underlying values that have been identified as seminal, practices observed will become procedures at the Hearst Center and this document will be discussed at a full staff meeting and distributed to all employees. It will also become part of the "New Hearst Center Orientation" session and the "Staff Handbook" that all employees receive. These will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Long Term Impact:

Developing procedures based on Best Practices observed and chosen from among mature professionals in related institutions; disseminating information about the underlying values that serve those practices; and disseminating that information to generations of new staff members can only improve the staff understanding of program excellence. The audience's understanding of program excellence will also be enhanced and their expectations and expression of excellence will continue to help improve performance of the Hearst Center staff. This improved performance will ensure continued high quality and meaningful audience experiences at the Hearst Center for the Arts.

BUDGET FORM - PAGE FOUR

Section B: Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages	1,277.00	11,122.00	12,399.00
2. Fringe Benefits			0.00
3. Consultant Fees			0.00
4. Travel	7,600.00	1,520.00	9,120.00
5. Supplies and Materials	410.00		410.00
6. Services			0.00
7. Student Support			0.00
8. Other Costs			0.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-8)	9,287.00	12,642.00	21,929.00
9. Indirect Costs			0.00
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	9,287.00	12,642.00	21,929.00

Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	9,287.00
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Cash Contribution	12,642.00
b. In-Kind Contribution	
c. Other Federal Agencies*	
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	12,642.00
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	21,929.00
% of Total Costs Requested from IMLS	0.00%

* If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

