

1. **Statement of Need:** The Oberlin Heritage Center seeks a three-year grant from the Museums for America Building Institutional Capacity program to build and strengthen its organizational capacity and enhance its ability to better serve its community and region in accordance with its strategic plan and mission. The grant will help the Oberlin Heritage Center become the strongest organization it can be and assure that it develops and upholds the highest standards and practices in human resources, financial management and board governance, in accordance with expectations that are evolving since enactment of the Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2002.

IMLS funds will be particularly helpful since our region's "rust belt" economy has been hard hit and local private foundations are devoting more and more of their resources to addressing basic human needs. In the past fifteen years, five local foundations have provided generous support to the Oberlin Heritage Center, often for special projects but also for general operating support. Two of the five are now allocating more and more of their resources elsewhere in the country (primarily the southwest and east coast) where the descendants of the foundations' founders have moved. One of the five had changed its criteria so that it only funds public school projects. One is liquidating its remaining assets and will close in two years. One, a community foundation, remains in business and we continue to seek their support. Meanwhile the Oberlin Heritage Center board, staff and volunteers are working hard to increase operating support through the membership program, the annual fund campaign, the ongoing Endowment for History Education campaign, planned giving, and through fee for service projects.

The Oberlin Heritage Center has a strong track record of accomplishment. Since hiring a professional director in 1993 the organization has been transformed from a stagnant collection of buildings and artifacts without programming or tours to a lively museum and historical society that is known for quality programming throughout the community. During this time it has grown from having a handful of members to having an all time high of over 700 memberships from throughout the community and beyond. The organization has accomplished a great deal with limited funds through careful planning and management. The Oberlin Heritage Center's planning process was showcased in the American Association of Museums' (AAM) newsletter for peer reviewers, *NEWStandard* (Winter 2006 article on "What's So Important about Planning?") and the Heritage Center's institutional plan and other documents are among those featured on a CD-Rom compiled by the American Association of Museums in 2007 for use by small museums that are seeking to become accredited by AAM. Among other accomplishments, the Oberlin Heritage Center was selected to be part of the Adventure Cycling Association's Underground Railroad Bicycle Route (2007) and to become part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Partner Places* program (2006); Director Pat Murphy was named "Oberlinian of the Year" by the Oberlin News-Tribune (2006); the Oberlin Heritage Center was Accredited by the American Association of Museums (2005); The Oberlin Heritage Center was designated a facility on the National Park Services' National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (2004); and through the Oberlin Heritage Center's efforts, the town of Oberlin was designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's as one of its Dozen Distinctive Destinations (2004).

The Oberlin Heritage Center/Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization (O.H.I.O.) originated in 1903 as the Village Improvement Society. Today the organization sponsors many public programs, workshops, tours, and classes throughout the community, most at no charge. For upcoming program information visit the website at [www.oberlinheritage.org](http://www.oberlinheritage.org). On-going projects include the Community Awards program, the Oberlin Oral History Project, the City-wide Historic Sites Inventory (in cooperation with the City of Oberlin Historic Preservation Commission) and the Westwood Cemetery Gravestone Transcription Project. The Oberlin Heritage Center, a complex of three historic buildings, is strategically positioned between Oberlin College, downtown Oberlin and a residential neighborhood. The complex includes two historic houses (the Monroe House; 1866 and the Jewett House; 1884), and a one room school house (1837). The Monroe House was the home of two noted abolitionists, Giles Shurtleff who was the General of the first African-American regiment from Ohio to serve in the Civil War and Congressman James Monroe who traveled to Harpers Ferry following the John Brown Raid to attempt to recover the body of an Oberlin African-American who was killed in the aftermath of the raid. The Jewett House was the home of a college chemistry professor and his wife who was a progressive era reformer and author of textbooks on public health. They rented rooms to male college students. The town's frontier era one-room school house was where African-American and Caucasian children studied side by side in open defiance of Ohio's Black Laws. The Oberlin Heritage Center's guided tours of its own buildings and walking, driving and biking tours (guided and self-guided) tell the unique, nationally significant story of the college and community beginning in 1833 until the 1930s. Oberlin's compelling, rich and diverse history and culture effectively convey many of the principles important in defining the history of our country.

In pursuing AAM accreditation (which was accomplished in December 2005), the Oberlin Heritage Center devoted considerable attention to improving its policies and procedures in collections management, disaster planning, program evaluation, facilities and more. A 2004-2007 Museums for America Grant helped make significant gains in historic site interpretation, collections management, and fund development. The grant helped secure the services of a Certified Interpretive Planner, John Veverka to develop an interpretive plan (recommendations from it were subsequently incorporated into the organization's strategic plan), and also by helping acquire Past Perfect collections management software and training and Donor Perfect fundraising software.

The Oberlin Heritage Center's current five-year strategic plan was adopted in 2005. It was developed over a six month period by a trustee-staff team working with strategic planning consultant J.D. Britton of the Ohio Historical Society. Development of the plan included two three-hour long strategic planning "S.W.O.T." sessions to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The meetings were attended by 40 people, including some board members, key volunteers, members, staff, and community organization stakeholders. The complete chart version of the plan includes tasks, a chart showing who is responsible for what, what the anticipated estimated costs are for each item, what the projected completion date is, and what the funding sources are or may be to implement it. The plan is reviewed annually by the Strategic Planning Committee which presents a written progress report to the Board.

The Oberlin Heritage Center's strategic plan sets forth seven goals and accompanying objectives and tasks to help the organization address its most important challenges. (See Strategic Plan Summary in attachments). During the first two years of the strategic plan (fall 2005-fall 2007), significant progress has been made particularly in Goals 1 (Ensure that all Oberlin Heritage Center facilities and properties are well maintained and preserved and meet the needs of the staff and public), 2 (Ensure that the Oberlin Heritage Center has adequate financial resources to meet its needs and accomplish its plans), 3 (Ensure that the Oberlin Heritage Center develops educational programs and activities that tell the history of Oberlin for all the audiences it serves), 4 (Ensure that the Oberlin Heritage Center develops and maintains its collections in accordance with the highest museum and archival standards), and 5 (Expand Public Awareness of the Oberlin Heritage Center and Oberlin's rich heritage).

The proposed project is designed to specifically move the organization forward in two important Goals 6 (Ensure that the Oberlin Heritage Center maintains an effective and diverse Board of Trustees and has strong governing documents and policies.) and 7 (Ensure that the Oberlin Heritage Center has adequate human resources to support all operations and activities) but will also help the organization to proceed with all aspects of implementing its Strategic Plan. The grant will help the Oberlin Heritage Center make solid gains in organizational capacity particularly in the areas of financial management, board development, and human resources as well as in enhancing staff capacity through training in outcome based evaluation and leadership.

While the most immediate impact of the project will be to solidify and strengthen the organization internally, it will have a long-term benefit in making the museum more effective in serving its community and visitors. Program attendees are primarily from Lorain County but walk-in tour visitors, school groups, bicyclist groups, and motor coach tours come from throughout the Greater Cleveland area and many other states. 13% of tour visitors in 2006 came from Oberlin and Oberlin College; 37% from elsewhere in Lorain County, 27% from the Greater Cleveland area, and 18% from 37 states other than Ohio. Visitors also came from 7 foreign countries. In calendar year 2006, the organization welcomed 7,911 visitors for tours and activities, an increase of 1,190 over the year before. In the same year, volunteers logged 4,920 hours of service, representing an increase of 992 hours over the year before. Website visits numbered 9,539 in 2006 (and 6,740 the year before).

The Oberlin Heritage Center is centrally located in a small college town in central Lorain County in Northeast Ohio. The town's population in 2000 was 8,195, including the 2,905 students enrolled in Oberlin College. The community is located approximately 35 miles southwest of Cleveland in a county that is largely agricultural, except for the rustbelt cities of Lorain and Elyria where tens of thousands of jobs have been lost in the last twenty years due to the closing of automotive and steel plants. Oberlin is within the Cleveland-Lorain Metropolitan Statistical Area which has a population of 2,250,871 (2000 census). The town of Oberlin's two largest employers are Oberlin College and the Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control facility. According to the 2000 census,

the population is 72% white, 19% African-American, and 9% Asian and other minorities. While minorities represent 28% of the total population, 42% of the children in the Oberlin public schools are minorities, primarily African-Americans. Twenty-six percent of the town's residents live below the federal poverty level, the highest proportion for any community in Lorain County. The downtown business district has a charming (if somewhat neglected) array of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic buildings that was designated a National Register Historic District in 2005 (the designation was prepared by the Oberlin Heritage Center/O.H.I.O. staff at the request of the City of Oberlin).

The Oberlin Heritage Center works to promote historic preservation and heritage tourism and to offer services to visitors to the community, both on its own, and in collaboration with other organizations such as the Lorain County Visitors Bureau, the Greater Cleveland Convention and Visitors Bureau (recently renamed "Positively Cleveland"), the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts (FAVA), the City of Oberlin, and the Oberlin Area Chamber of Commerce/Main Street program.

**2. Project Design:** OHC is requesting IMLS support for staff and training expenses to strengthen the organization through:

- Paying for part of the salary of the Museum Education and Tour Coordinator on a decreasing basis over each of the three years of the grant period while the organization continues to build its Endowment for History Education fund to fully support this staff position by the close of the three year grant. At present interest from the Endowment for History Education funds approximately one-half of the salary for this full-time position and the balance is funded through a combination of special projects and grants.
- Paying for the part-time Financial Assistant to work extra hours over each of the three years of the grant period to assist the Executive Director to develop and strengthen policies and procedures.
- Paying for additional student interns during the academic year and a graduate student intern during each of the three summers of the grant period. They will assist with research and policy development and ongoing projects and programs.
- Enhancing financial management, procedures and policies and devise and implement a background check policy for paid staff and volunteers to be developed and implemented in accordance with the recommendations of our auditors, the American Association of Museums, and the Ohio Association of Non-Profit Organization's Standards for Excellence (an ethics and accountability code for the non-profit sector; see [www.oano.org](http://www.oano.org) for more information)
- Improving the volunteer and intern programs by training our Museum Education and Tour Coordinator in volunteer administration through the Forum For Volunteer Administrators and expanding her engagement in our community through attendance in the Leadership Lorain County program and developing new intern and volunteer manuals.
- Revising the board orientation manual and Constitution and By-laws to assure compliance with American Association of Museums best practices and standards, the

Sarbanes-Oxley of 2002, and Ohio Association of Non-Profit Organization's Standards for Excellence.

- Training two key staff members in outcome based evaluation to enhance future program planning, evaluation, and proposal writing.

The Oberlin Heritage Center's executive director, Patricia Murphy, will serve as project manager and will report regularly to the Board and the appropriate board committees on accomplishments and challenges. Outside input will be sought, where needed, from professional organizations such as the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations, the American Association for Museum Volunteers, the Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning, and auditors Cohen and Company. Accomplishing all the activities envisioned in the project will be of lasting benefit in ensuring a strong future for the Oberlin Heritage Center.

### **3. Project Resources: Time, Personnel, Budget**

**Time:** The grant project activities will take place over three years as follows:

#### Year One (August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009)

Purchase a laptop computer and wireless router for use by front desk/museum store/visitor information desk personnel and student interns.

Provide training for Museum Education and Tour Coordinator in volunteer administration (Forum for Volunteer Administrators/Foundation of Volunteer Administration Course – six half-day sessions in Cleveland)

Send Director and Museum Education and Tour Coordinator to "Outcome Thinking and Management: Shifting Focus from Activities to Results" at Foundation Center. (all day workshop in Cleveland).

Museum Director attends Ohio Association of Non-Profit Organizations Standards for Excellence Clinic/Workshops and completes organization's self-assessment. (a series of four afternoon workshops in Cleveland or Columbus depending on schedule)

Develop a financial procedures and policies manual for review and approval by the Finance Committee, auditor and Board. This will include developing and implementing a background check policy for staff, interns and volunteers as recommended by our auditors and in accordance with state law.

Revise board orientation manual in cooperation with the Board's Nominating Committee.

Review and revise Constitution and By-laws with the Board's Executive Committee.

#### Year Two (August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010)

Develop a volunteer orientation manual.

Develop an intern orientation manual.

Museum Education Tour Coordinator to take part in Leadership Lorain County training to foster lifelong leaders for improving the quality of life in Lorain County (10 month program that meets one full day per month plus evening activities)

Submit application for Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations' Standards for Excellence Certification.

Year Three (August 1, 2010 to August 3, 2011)

Ohio Association of Non-Profit Organizations conducts staff and peer review of our application, and (we hope) grants Standards for Excellence Certification.

Expand and improve volunteer recruitment, training and retention.

Museum education coordinator will attend Dreamweaver Training class in Cleveland (3-day class offered by Lodestone Digital ([www.lodestone.com](http://www.lodestone.com)) for people new to web design and development to build intuitive, attractive and accessible websites.

Create and post improved volunteer resources on the organization's website and make it a more effective tool for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers and interns and to make it a better tool to help the organization serve the community and visitors.

Staff will make presentations on developing volunteer, intern and board orientation manuals and procedures and other topics related to the grant project at statewide and regional museum association conferences (this will be ongoing).

**Personnel:** Implementing the work outlined in the grant will of course involve participation from throughout the organization as the Board, staff and volunteers work together to implement the strategic plan. The key personnel involved in the project are:

- **Patricia Murphy**, Executive Director (project management and oversight and collaboration with Board committees and the Board of Trustees). Murphy has worked for the organization since 1993 and is an experienced museum professional, Certified Fund Raising Executive, and an American Association of Museums and IMLS peer reviewer.
- **Patricia Holsworth**, Financial Assistant (financial management and policy development). Holsworth has been employed by the organization since 2000 and prior to that served as its Board Chair and also as director of the Oberlin Public Library. She has a wealth of non-profit experience and wishes to help strengthen all aspects of the organization's financial and human resources management in the next three years.
- **Elizabeth Schultz**, Museum Education and Tour Coordinator. Schultz is a recent graduate of the Cooperstown Museum Studies program who was hired in June 2007. She brings the latest theories and ideas in public history and is quickly becoming acquainted with her new community.
- **College Student Interns** (who will assist with research and policy and manual development and implementation as well as assisting with the organization's ongoing activities.) During the academic year, the organization recruits part time

undergraduate student interns from Oberlin College. With grant funds, the organization wishes to hire a public history or museum studies graduate student for a summer intern position each of the three years of the grant.

**Budget:** The project costs are for salaries and wages, training, and purchase of a laptop computer, software and wireless router. The organization will provide the project director's time as an in-kind contribution. All costs are outlined in detail in the budget forms and budget justification.

**4. Impact:** The grant will help the Oberlin Heritage Center achieve its strategic plan goals and become a stronger organization by enhancing its policies and procedures in financial management and personnel (board, staff, interns and volunteers) and enhancing its effectiveness in engaging the community. It will also help the organization to sustain itself over the next three years by providing partial staff support while the organization continues to work on increasing its endowment funds and investments. Specific accomplishments will include:

- Computerizing the front office/visitor information and ticket desk and museum store
- Developing a new financial policies and procedures manual
- Preparing a new volunteer orientation manual
- Developing a new student intern manual
- Implementing a new board orientation manual
- Strengthening and enhancing volunteer, intern and board recruitment, training and retention
- Building bridges with other organizations and businesses throughout the county through the Leadership Lorain County program
- Implementing Outcome Based Evaluation in program planning and development
- Becoming certified by the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations Standards for Excellence program (good for three years)

The impact of the grant will be felt beyond the Oberlin Heritage Center, in various ways. The project will help the staff to expand its knowledge base and better serve other small museums and nonprofit organizations in the region. The Oberlin Heritage Center staff will continue to present programs at regional, state-wide and national museum conferences, provide advice to staff, board, and volunteers from other small museums in the region, and offer fee-based workshops in Oberlin that have been attended by staff and professionals from near and far (past topics have included textile conservation, identifying historic photographs, how to be a good ancestor by caring for your collections and capturing your family's stories, how to be an effective museum director, running a successful membership program and more). In addition, the executive director will use the knowledge and experience she gains through the project in her service as a peer reviewer for the American Association of Museums' Museum Assessment Program, as a volunteer with the American Association for State and Local History's Incremental Standards project and as vice president for the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums.

## BUDGET FORM: Section B, Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages	\$75,573.00	\$95,618.00	\$171,191.00
2. Fringe Benefits	\$13,037.00	\$17,448.00	\$30,485.00
3. Consultant Fees			
4. Travel	\$527.00	\$527.00	\$1,054.00
5. Supplies and Materials	\$1,072.00	\$1,070.00	\$2,142.00
6. Services			
7. Student Support			
8. Other Costs	\$2,470.00	\$2,465.00	\$4,935.00
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-8)</b>	<b>\$92,679.00</b>	<b>\$117,128.00</b>	<b>\$209,807.00</b>
9. Indirect Costs	\$13,902.00	\$0.00	\$13,902.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)</b>	<b>\$106,581.00</b>	<b>\$117,128.00</b>	<b>\$223,709.00</b>

### Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	<b>\$106,581.00</b>
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Applicant's Contribution	<b>\$97,083.00</b>
b. Kind Contribution	<b>\$20,045.00</b>
c. Other Federal Agencies*	
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	<b>\$117,128.00</b>
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	\$223,709.00
Percentage of total project costs requested from IMLS	<b>48 %</b>

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

**10. Oberlin Heritage Center Museums for America Project, 2008-2011**  
**Schedule of Completion by Quarters**

<b>Major Activities</b>	<b>Aug. thru Oct. 2008</b>	<b>Nov. 08 thru Jan. 2009</b>	<b>Feb. thru April 2009</b>	<b>May thru July 2009</b>	<b>Aug. thru Oct. 2009</b>	<b>Nov. 09 thru Jan. 2010</b>	<b>Feb. thru Apr. 2010</b>	<b>May thru July 2010</b>	<b>Aug. thru Oct. 2010</b>	<b>Nov. 2010 thru Jan. 2011</b>	<b>Feb. thru April 2011</b>	<b>May thru July 2011</b>
<b>Purchase and install laptop and server</b>	xxx											
<b>Vol Admin class</b>	xxx	xxx										
<b>OBE class</b>		xxx										
<b>Standards for Excellence workshops</b>	xxx	xxx										
<b>Develop financial manual &amp; procedures</b>	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx								
<b>Revise Bd. Manual</b>		xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx							
<b>Revise Bylaws &amp; Constitution</b>		xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx							
<b>Develop vol manual</b>					xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx				
<b>Develop intern manual</b>					xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx				
<b>Leadership class</b>					xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx				
<b>Submit OANO Standards for Excellence application</b>					xxx							
<b>OANO review</b>						xxx	xxx	xxx				
<b>Expand vol. program</b>						xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
<b>OANO certification</b>										xxx		
<b>Dreamweaver training</b>										xxx		
<b>Website resources posted</b>											xxx	xxx
<b>Staff presentations at conferences</b>										xxx & ongoing	xxx	xxx