



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-251647-OMS-22
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Connecticut Historical Society

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$84,015
Amount of cost share:	\$84,078

The Connecticut Historical Society will provide digital access to primary sources as a response to new state legislation mandating every secondary school in Connecticut offer a course on Black and Latino studies starting in the 2022–2023 school year. Project activities include developing 10 digital resource packs that will contain digital copies of primary sources from the history society’s collection, a lesson plan linking the primary sources to themes in the state curriculum, and a short video giving deeper context to the primary sources. Staff members will work with a Teacher Advisory Board to plan, develop, and pilot test the resource packs before making them available for free on the museum’s website. As a result of the project, Connecticut teachers will have access to lessons aligned with the new state curriculum, and American history teachers outside of the area will have access to primary sources and content that illustrate the experiences of Black and Latino individuals in one of the country’s original colonies.

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 NARRATIVE

The Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) seeks an award from the Museums for America program to support its *Supporting Equity in Education* project (SEE). The project will produce 10 digital resource packs with content related to Black and African American studies and Latino and Puerto Rican studies. These packs will support Connecticut teachers as they respond to new state legislation that mandates every secondary school in Connecticut offer a course on Black and Latino studies starting in the 2022-2023 school year.

Given the close ties this project has to education and to Connecticut educators in particular, the project will be supported throughout all phases by a Teacher Advisory Board comprised of a diverse selection of teachers and social studies coordinators from various school districts throughout the state. This board will provide feedback and insight to ensure the project meets the precise needs of the target population.

Project Justification

1. Which program goal/project category and associated objective(s) will your project?

SEE will address Museums for America's Goal 1: Lifelong Learning. It will specifically address Objective 1.3: Support in-school and out-of-school programs.

2. How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?

The CHS recently engaged the international arts and culture consulting firm Lord Cultural Resources to work collaboratively with the Board, CEO, and staff to facilitate a strategic planning process which resulted in a new strategic plan adopted in June 2020. This project advances a key goal of the new strategic plan:

- Goal 2 - Expand the CHS influence across the state through local partnerships: This goal reaffirms the CHS's commitment to build connections with the various constituents of the state. The CHS believes that in fostering and maintaining long-term relationships across Connecticut, the CHS continues to be an integral partner for uniting different communities around the state through cooperative initiatives.

SEE meets this goal in two ways. First, the project will build and strengthen relationships with high school educators throughout Connecticut as they and CHS staff collaborate to develop and pilot new content. Second, SEE will help amplify the voices, history, and contributions of Black and Latino people in Connecticut. This undertaking helps CHS express its commitment to being an "inclusive cultural organization" that helps to unite "different communities around the state through cooperative initiatives."

3. What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

SEE will address the need for high-quality content to support and empower Connecticut teachers as they begin delivery of a new state-mandated curriculum focused on Black and Latino studies.

The seed for this project was planted in June of 2019 when the Connecticut General Assembly passed CT PA 19-12, which mandated the development of a Black and Latino course of studies for the high school level. Connecticut's State Department of Education selected the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to develop the curriculum, which was approved in December of 2020 and released to teachers in July of 2021. The

curriculum is currently being piloted in a select number of high schools. It will be a required offering in every school district throughout the state beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

Recognizing the impactful change to the state’s social studies curriculum that this new mandate represents, the CHS staff actively stayed abreast of course and curriculum developments. In March of 2021, CHS staff attended a SERC webinar titled, “Implementing Black and Latino Studies in Your High Schools.”

Early feedback from that first webinar indicated the new draft curriculum boasted many strengths. At the same time, a number of educators suggested the curriculum would be improved by the inclusion of primary sources that directly illustrated the experiences of Black and Latino people throughout Connecticut’s history. The inclusion of such sources would provide context for many of the topics included in the SERC curriculum and heighten the focus on Connecticut and its history.

Recognizing its ability to provide just such materials, the CHS increased its degree of involvement in the roll-out of the curriculum. In April of 2021, the CHS’s School Programs Manager joined with approximately 50 teachers and curriculum developers from across the state as part of a Community of Practice. This group, organized by Yale Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang as part of the work of the Connecticut Anti-Racist Teaching and Learning Collective, represented a teacher-driven effort to share curriculum and discuss pedagogy as pertaining to the new SERC curriculum.

Then, over the summer of 2021, CHS staff engaged with a smaller focus group of teachers drawn from the larger Community of Practice. The primary purpose of these targeted focus group meetings was to help the CHS determine how exactly they could best support teachers as they begin delivery of the new SERC curriculum.

Feedback from the focus groups indicated that teachers would benefit most from digital access to primary sources from the CHS collection that highlight the experiences of Black and Latino people throughout Connecticut history. Furthermore, it was determined that these primary sources would be the most useful to teachers if they were part of a larger package of content that gave some context for the sources and, ideally, included some lesson plans and activities that would help teachers communicate learning objectives to students.

The development of such content will give teachers support as they adapt to their new requirements without creating additional work for them. Accordingly, the SEE project proposes the development of 10 digital resource packs with content related to Black and Latino studies. Each pack will include:



Digital copies or representations of at least 2 primary sources from the CHS collection—objects, documents, or images—related to Black or Latino studies.



At least one lesson plan—and accompanying student activities for independent or group work—that links the sources to topics in the new state curriculum.



At least one short (2-3 minute) video that gives deeper context to the sources and helps bring history to life while highlighting CHS collections, exhibitions, and relevant sites across the state.

4. Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

The target group for this project is Connecticut educators, specifically high school teachers responsible for the delivery of the new SERC curriculum focusing on Black and Latino studies. The target group has been heavily involved and represented in the development of SEE. Indeed, this project evolved from conversations with high school educators through the Community of Practice group and the focus groups described above. It is not an exaggeration to say that the target group has not only been involved in the planning of this project, but it has also driven the project's development through ongoing feedback.

5. Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

While Connecticut educators are the initial target group for the project, the CHS believes an accounting of the beneficiaries of the project expands beyond the state's teachers and beyond the state.

To begin with, for every teacher that utilizes the content, the project's beneficiaries will expand to include that teacher's students. Considering that Connecticut has 431 public high schools, the number of Connecticut beneficiaries could reasonably be expected to expand into the thousands.

The CHS believes, however, that the project has the potential for even broader, national appeal. The topics in the SERC curriculum include topics applicable to any study of American History. They include, for example, topics such as slavery, Puerto Rican migration, the civil rights movement, and more. The primary sources in the CHS' collection that deal with these topics are therefore applicable to any social studies curriculum that teaches American History at the high school level—this is particularly true given Connecticut's role as one of the original 13 colonies.

The CHS is bolstered in its belief that the project can have national impact in part because of its evolving relationship with the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC), the nation's leading clearinghouse for interactive, digital programming. The CHS recently partnered with CILC to expand the organization's geographic footprint. CILC allows CHS to promote the museum and its award-winning distance learning programs to educators and learners throughout the country. Since launching its distance learning programming, the CHS has seen repeat visitation nation-wide and is developing relationships with educators around the country. Last school year alone, early in our relationship with CILC, the CHS served more than 150 non-Connecticut students through virtual programming.



Understanding Impact: The Primus Papers

The Primus Papers offer a clear example of how items in the SEE project can be of interest to both Connecticut educators and a national audience.

The Primus family was a middle-class Black family from Hartford, Connecticut. Among the items in the CHS collection are letters of correspondence between Rebecca Primus Thomas and her close friend Addie Brown. Thomas was a teacher who was sent by the Freedmen's Aid Society of Hartford to Maryland to help found a school for newly-freed people in the years following the Civil War. Thomas's letters to Brown include her thoughts on the Southern Black individuals she met in Maryland in relation to the established Black communities in Connecticut. These stories have relevance to both Connecticut and national stories of Black experiences during the Reconstruction period of American history.

Considering the above, in combination with strong marketing efforts to teachers, the CHS believes the number of beneficiaries and the scale of the project's impact could be significant, both on a state and national level.

Project Work Plan

6. What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

The project will unfold through 3 phases. Phase 1 will involve the development of the digital resource packs to support Black and Latino studies. This will include the digitization of approximately 50 items from the CHS collection, 20 of which will be included in the packs. Additional sources will be included in the project's appendix as additional teacher resources. Phase 2 will involve piloting those digital resource packs in a minimum of 20 classrooms throughout the state. Finally, Phase 3 will involve refining the digital resource packs based on feedback from teachers who participated in Phase 2 before making the digital resource packs available for free on the CHS website. Please note that the attached Schedule of Completion provides greater detail on each phase, breaking each phase down to a sequence of activities and steps that will guide the project's implementation.

7. What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

The greatest risk to the project is teacher turnover or withdrawal from participation in the development or piloting phase. To mitigate this risk, the CHS will have multiple teachers from multiple districts involved in the Teacher Advisory Board. Teachers involved in the advisory board include classroom teachers and district-level coordinators to ensure a variety of voices. The CHS is also encouraging teachers to inform and involve their administrators in this project, so that if the teachers are re-assigned, change schools, or leave the district, administrators and coordinators are more likely to connect the CHS with the new teachers.

8. Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

SEE will be a program of the CHS's Education Department. As such, it will operate under the auspices of Rebecca Gavin, the Koopman Family Director of Education. Ms. Gavin will serve as Project Director and will spend 7% of her time overseeing this project, managing the grant budget, and reporting to IMLS.

Reporting to Ms. Gavin, CHS School Programs Manager Corinne Swanson will serve as the Project Manager. Ms. Swanson will have direct oversight of the project, including the development, piloting, and publishing phases. She will also be responsible for gathering all data related to the project's operation. Ms. Swanson has six years of experience working in museum education at the CHS as Museum Educator, Coordinator of Youth & Family Programs, and now School Programs Manager. She has overseen CHS projects such as the initiation of the museum's summer youth program and educational programming for homeschool students. She holds a B.A. in History and is in the process of completing her M.S. in Elementary Education. The CHS expects that Ms. Swanson will spend 25% of her time managing the project.

Ms. Swanson will oversee two project-specific individuals who will be funded by this grant. First, a Curriculum Specialist will liaise with the Teacher Advisory Board and will be chiefly responsible for the development of the lesson plans and video content to be included in all 10 digital resource packs. By hiring additional staff to

focus on this project, the CHS is confident we will be able to develop robust, comprehensive packs that are aligned with teachers' needs in a shorter time frame. The Curriculum Specialist will be a twelve-month position involved in Phase 1 of the project. Second, an Education Project Specialist will help identify primary sources within the CHS collection to be included with the digital resource packs or source appendix, and match those primary sources to appropriate curriculum units. In year 2, the Education Project Specialist will be responsible for refining the packs based on teacher feedback. The CHS has identified an internal candidate for this position, Kristen Levithan. Ms. Levithan's resume is included in the Resumes attachment.

Finally, a Teacher Advisory Board will be vital to the project's success. This body, representing a diverse representation of school districts, will provide guidance and feedback throughout the project. In phase 1, the Teacher Advisory Board will consist of 10 teachers. They will advise CHS on what topics from the SERC curriculum could be enhanced by digital resource packs. In phase 2, the Teacher Advisory Board, along with an additional 10 teachers, will pilot the digital resource packs in their classrooms throughout the state. In phase 3, the advisory board will convene to offer feedback on the piloting experience and contribute to the refinement of the digital resource packs so the final product can be uploaded to the CHS website to be available for free access. Given the essential role of the Teacher Advisory Board, the CHS has already begun the process of identifying participants. Letters of support from identified individuals are included with this proposal.

9. What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

Additional resources for the project can be divided into the following categories:

CHS Staff

In addition to the staff listed in response to the prior question, a number of current CHS staff will play a supportive role in the execution of SEE. CHS staff work a 35-hour work week. These staff will include a Research Historian, Digitization Lab Manager, Marketing and Communications Manager, and Welcome Desk/Digital Assets Coordinator. Individuals in these positions will provide in-kind services. More detail is available in the attached Budget Justification document.

CHS Collections

The CHS is the State of Connecticut's official historical society (and one of the nation's oldest, having been established in 1825). The CHS' collection currently includes more than 4 million manuscripts, graphics, books, artifacts, and other historical materials. Accordingly, the CHS is the ideal entity to provide primary sources for the SERC curriculum. Some potential sources that may be included from the CHS collection are:



Black Panther Newspapers: 1960s and 70s Black

Panther Party newspapers, including those covering the 1969-1971 New Haven Black Panther Party trials.



Primus Family Papers, 1853-1924:

Correspondence of members of the Primus family, a middle-class Black family living in Hartford.



Nuestras Historias Oral History Collection:

Oral histories and photographs collected from twelve individuals who helped establish the Puerto Rican community in Hartford in the mid-20th century.

CHS Facility

The CHS is located on 7.4 acres in the historic West End of Hartford, the state's capital city. The facility will be a resource for the project in three ways: (1) the CHS's recently completed Digitization Lab will be used to digitize objects to be included in the digital resource packs; (2) some video content will be filmed in the CHS collection storage spaces and exhibitions, including the permanent *Making Connecticut* exhibition; and (3) the John G. Martin Distance Learning Studio will be used to produce the video content for the digital learning packs. The Digitization Lab serves as the hub for digitizing our 2D and small- to medium-sized 3D object collections. The lab features multiple "zones" with an area for scanning using a flatbed scanner, another for photographing 3D objects, and a third for photographing bound materials. The John G. Martin Distance Learning Studio, built in 2020, is outfitted with all the equipment necessary to present programs online, including a conference camera and sound equipment, a green screen, and a document camera.

10. How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The attached Schedule of Completion details when each phase, activity, and associated step of the Work Plan (above) will be completed. This will provide a benchmark to ensure that the project stays on track through the grant's period of performance. Progress on SEE as detailed in the Schedule will be monitored frequently and at multiple levels within the museum's operating hierarchy. The CHS's education staff, which includes the key individuals responsible for the project's planning and implementation, meets regularly under the direction of Ms. Gavin. Ms. Swanson will use these meetings to report on progress or challenges.

Project Results

11. What are your project's intended results?

The project's results can be divided into 3 categories: tangible products, measurable outcomes, and goals. Tangible products are discussed in the response to question 13. Goals are discussed in response to question 12. Measurable outcomes for the project are as follows:

1. Outcome: Upon completion of phase 3, at least 80% of teachers involved in the project will report through satisfaction surveys that the digital resource packs are effective tools that support their delivery of the SERC curriculum.
2. Outcome: Upon completion of phase 3, at least 80% of teachers involved in the project will report through satisfaction surveys a favorable relationship with the CHS and a better understanding of the CHS and its offerings.

12. How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change?

The long-term goals for the project are:

1. Goal: Teachers will feel more empowered to use primary sources such as those included in the CHS collection to understand the past, contextualize the present, and apply those new perspectives to contemporary movements for social justice and change.
2. Goal: Teachers will develop a deeper understanding of the CHS and its offerings and will feel more inclined to see the organization as a partner and ally in future endeavors.

13. What products will result from your project?

The project will produce the following products:

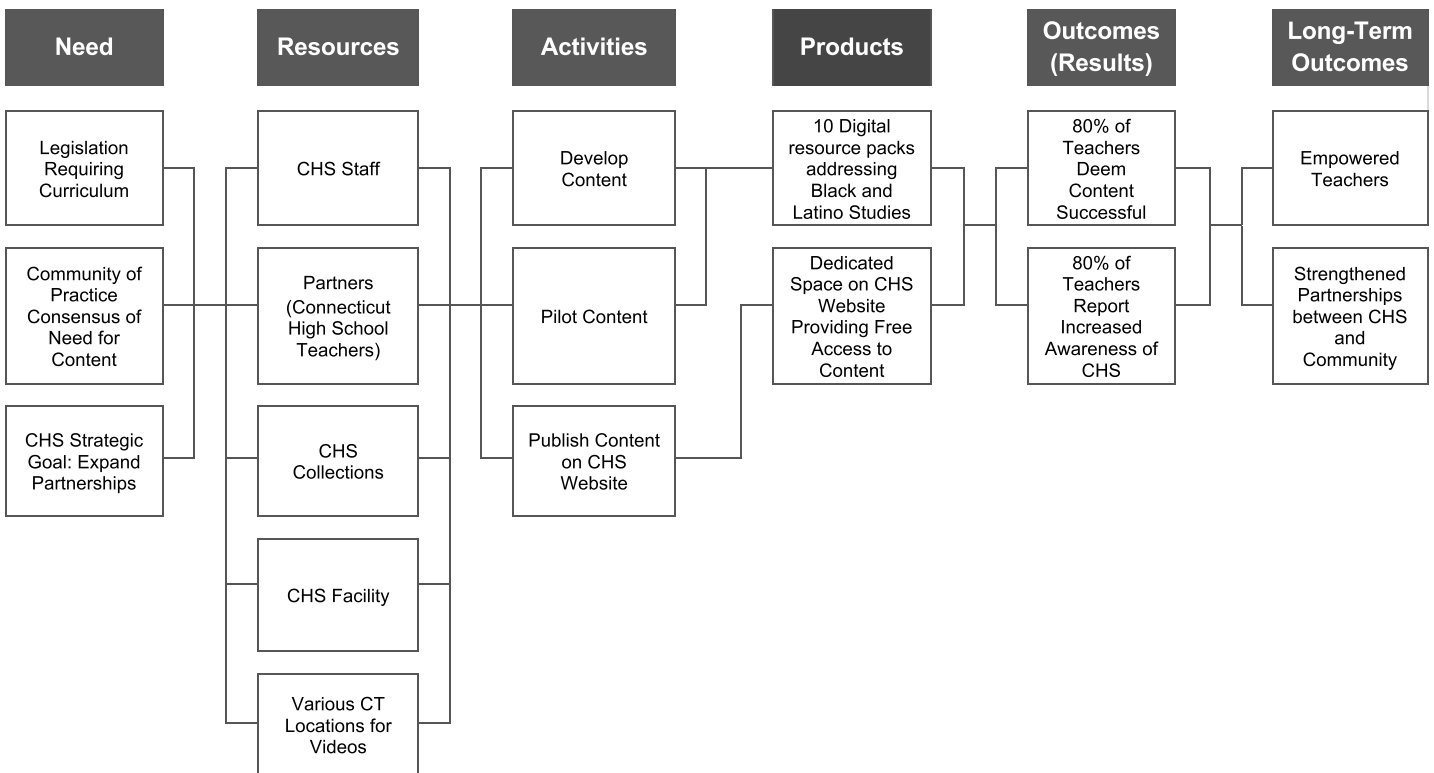
1. Product: 10 digital resource packs that address the topics of Black and Latino studies. Each pack will contain (1) digital copies of at least 2 primary sources from the CHS collection related to Black or Latino studies; (2) at least 1 lesson plan with learning objectives that link the primary sources to topics from the SERC curriculum; and (3) at least one short (2-3 minute) video filmed either among CHS collections or at a relevant site around Connecticut that gives deeper context to the primary source that drives the lessons.
2. Product: At least 1 dedicated page on the CHS website from which all 10 digital resource packs and accompanying source appendix can be accessed and downloaded for free.

14. How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The digital resource packs generated through this project will, after piloting, be available online for free to all educators. The CHS will engage in ongoing marketing to ensure that awareness of these resources remains high among high school teachers in Connecticut and beyond. These marketing efforts will include eblasts and inclusion in the CHS’ annual course catalog, which reaches more than 20,000 teachers each year. The CHS will also place ads in the nationally distributed e-newsletter coordinated through the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS). Staff will also present the program at the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies annual conference and will submit a conference session proposal for the 2023 NCSS Annual Conference.

Summary of Project

The following logic chart provides a summary overview of the proposed project:



SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

	Project Year 1 (September 2022-August 2023)												
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	
Phase 1: Develop Content													
Activity 1: Gather resources													
Step 1a: Hire staff	■	■	■										
Step 1b: Convene Teacher Advisory Board	■	■	■	■									
Step 1c: Identify primary sources in CHS collection related to Black and Latino history	■	■	■	■	■	■							
Activity 2: Create digital resource packs for Black and Latino studies													
Step 2a: Curriculum Specialist and education staff determine units to be created			■	■	■								
Step 2b: Research Historian and Digitization Lab Manager locate and digitize sources				■	■	■							
Step 2c: Curriculum Specialist writes lesson plans and activities				■	■	■	■						
Step 2d: Curriculum Specialist and Marketing and Communications Manager plan and film videos						■	■						
Step 2e: Welcome Desk/Digital Assets Coordinator edits and finalizes videos							■	■					
Step 2f: Education Project Specialist creates source appendix				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Activity 3: Draft digital resource packs are reviewed by Teacher Advisory Board													
Step 3a: Share draft digital resource packs with Teacher Advisory Board and receive feedback								■	■				
Step 3b: Curriculum Specialist revises packs based on Teacher Advisory Board feedback										■	■		
Step 3c: Curriculum Specialist and education staff develop Teacher Satisfaction Survey										■	■		
Phase 2: Pilot and Evaluate Content													
Activity 4: Identify 20 Pilot Teachers													
Step 4a: Identify additional teacher partners to pilot digital resource packs in their classrooms												■	■

	Project Year 2(September 2023-August 2024)												
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	
Phase 2: Pilot and Evaluate Content cont.													
Activity 4: Identify 20 Pilot Teachers													
Step 4a: Identify additional teacher partners to pilot digital resource packs (<i>continued from year 1</i>)	■												
Step 4b. Curriculum Specialist meets with pilot teachers to discuss expectations	■	■											
Activity 5: Pilot Teachers use digital resource packs to supplement SERC curriculum													
Step 5a: Digital resource packs addressing Black studies to be delivered in pilot classrooms	■	■	■	■	■								
Step 5b: Digital resource packs addressing Latino studies to be delivered in pilot classrooms					■	■	■	■	■	■			
Activity 6: Pilot Teachers complete Teacher Satisfaction Surveys													
Step 6a. Pilot teachers submit evaluations throughout Phase 2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Step 6b. Education Project Specialist reviews evaluations and communicates with pilot teachers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Phase 3: Publish Content													
Activity 6: Education Project Specialist revises content													
Step 6a. Content is revised based on Teacher Satisfaction Surveys			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Activity 7: Teacher Advisory Board convenes to discuss feedback													
Step 7a. Education staff meets with Teacher Advisory Board											■		
Activity 8: Digital resource packs are completed													
Step 8a Education Staff finalize digital resource packs based on feedback											■	■	
Activity 9: Digital resource packs published to CHS website with free access to all teachers													
Step 9a. Marketing and Communications Manager publishes content on website													■