



Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-251597-OMS-22

SEEK Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$46,000
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The SEEK Museum will develop an education program to meet the needs of K-12 students and teachers in Kentucky and nearby Tennessee. A newly hired education coordinator will conduct outreach to school systems and orient them with educational curriculum and online learning resources recently developed with the Russellville Public School system and scholars at Western Kentucky University. The museum will design, implement, and evaluate school programs and teacher training opportunities using these resources. As a result of these activities, students and teachers will gain knowledge in local history that correlates to the nation's history of race relations and realize the importance of seeking equality, justice, and peace for our world.

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 to which you are applying.

HISTORIC RUSSELLVILLE INC dba SEEK MUSEUM

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – PAGE 1

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Our proposed Project requests funding for the compensation of a part-time position for an Education Coordinator, and this project will address Goal 1 – to build the capacity of African American museums and their ability to serve their communities, specifically by meeting Objective 1.1 to develop, to enhance or expand school programs and Objective 1.2 to enhance professional management.

This goal and these objectives will be addressed by developing a public education program that will be focused on recruiting students to come to the SEEK Museum and learn about our country's shared racial history. Very little of this history has been told by museums and textbooks, and there are not many sites that offer the opportunity for visitors to learn about these important parts of America's history. After over a decade of development, the SEEK Museum has installed exhibits that are based on local historical events that offer a comprehensive storyline beginning with enslaved people being brought to Kentucky and continuing through the 20th century civil rights movement. This history needs to be told, and the experience of touring a museum in the buildings where this history actually took place offers a wonderful opportunity to educate the students as well as other visitors.

The target group for this project are the students in the public school systems within a reasonable driving distance of the museum. Our preliminary definition of this group is Kentucky students within 30 minutes of the museum, and there are over 43,000 students or approximately 2,800 per grade in this category. Most of these schools are located in an area of Kentucky that was known as the "Black Belt", a region that had the most fertile agricultural land in the state and consequently also had the largest number of enslaved people. Many of the early settlers of this portion of Kentucky were Revolutionary War veterans who obtained land grants based on their service. Most of them emigrated from Virginia and brought enslaved people with them. This area stretches along a portion of Kentucky's southern border with Tennessee. Although there have been significant numbers of African Americans who migrated from this area, the percentage of minority students in the public schools of this area is significantly higher than the state average. We feel that it is especially important to provide these educational opportunities to these minority students, as well as to the remainder of the classmates.

An expanded targeted audience would include Tennessee students who attend schools within 30 minutes of the museum, increasing the number of students to over 120,000 or 10,000 per grade. These adjoining counties also had high percentages of enslaved people prior to the Civil War, and they also have high percentages of minority students.

Our organization has been working with the Russellville public school system, that is located in the same community as the Museum, on ways to incorporate the historical content that we have collected into the school's curriculum. We initiated a successful grant application for the History Department at that school to obtain funding for a 5 year pilot project to develop programs that include adding local history into their lesson plans. This project includes students working with teachers in research projects; participating in discussions with community groups; developing artistic and theatrical works for performance or display; and the production of static and audio/visual exhibits and materials for public display at the SEEK Museum and at other locations in the community. This project will be included in our promotions to other school districts when they are recruited for tours of the Museum.

Our organization has also been working with Professor Selena Doss, an Associate Professor of African American History at Western Kentucky University. Dr. Doss, who is on the Board of Directors of Kentucky Humanities, has been acting as our advisor on several activities, and she has recently been advising us on the matters related to a grant that the Museum received as part of the American Rescue Plan administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our grant includes the following items related to educational programming: a) the development of curriculum materials associated with the content of the museums; b) the beginning of the digitization of our archived materials; and c) the creation of an enhanced digital presence by developing a new website that will include direct links for educators to review our curriculum and related digital images of some of our archived items. The target date for the completion of these activities is summer of 2022, so these enhancements will be in place if this proposed project to fund a part time Education Coordinator is selected for funding by IMLS. The resume of Dr. Doss is attached to this application, along with her letter of support for this project (supportingdoc1).

The SEEK Museum is a unique educational site. It contains 6 historic buildings in which historical events related to the topic of race occurred. These include the Palladian style townhouse of a Revolutionary War Major who was one of the largest owners of enslaved people in Kentucky, but who also was the first Kentuckian to “free” some of the enslaved people by sending 31 of them to Liberia in connection with the American Colonization Society. He later emancipated the remaining 65 people who were enslaved at his death. In addition to his residence, a two room brick work building that was probably used as a kitchen and laundry has been restored. We are able to tell the personal stories of the dozens of the enslaved people because of the copious amount of records that the Bibb family saved, along with research that has been done by the Museum staff. These 2 buildings are located in the Russellville National Register Historic District and they were the core structures of a 4 acre urban plantation. Five blocks away, 4 other historic buildings have been restored and are located in a separate National Register Historic District known as the Black Bottom. This neighborhood developed primarily after the Civil War and became the business and residential center of the African American community. One of the museum buildings was constructed by Dorcas Cooksey, who bought his

freedom in the 1850s and built this home for his family in the 1880s. Another museum building was constructed for Wesley Orendorff, a USCT veteran who was injured at the Battle of Saltville and whose military pension was used to pay for his home. A third museum building was the home of an African American preacher from the neighborhood and later the home of the first African American in the county to serve on a jury. The fourth museum building was constructed after World War II by a successful white family as living quarters for their maid, who was the sister-in-law of Alice Allison Dunnigan, the first African American woman to be authorized to attend Congressional, White House and Supreme Court briefings. Ms. Dunnigan always stayed at this house when she returned to Kentucky, including the years that she was working to enforce the newly enacted Civil Rights laws. A bronze portrait statue of Ms. Dunnigan, the first public statue in Kentucky of an African American woman, was dedicated and installed in 2019 and a park dedicated to the struggle for Civil Rights has been created adjacent to this house. This site was approved to be a part of the US Civil Rights Trail in 2020 after the statue was installed. A fifth museum building will become a part of the museum in 2022 when the Schochoh Rosenwald school, that had been moved to the Logan County High School in 1984 by the retired teachers association, will be moved to a vacant lot that is owned by the Museum and is next to the 1880 Cooksey house. This site is approximately 300 feet away from where a segregated school had been constructed in the 1880's, and this building will give the Museum an opportunity to have a special focus on legalized segregation and educational opportunities. Photo collages of the Bibb House structures and the Black Bottom structures and outdoor signage explaining the Black Bottom National Register District and part of the exhibit about Ms. Dunnigan are attached to this application (supportingdoc2, supportingdoc3, supportingdoc4 and supportingdoc5).

Because the SEEK Museum addresses our country's history related to the subject of race from 1792 to the present, the educational opportunities are extremely broad. Educational tours can include the whole spectrum or can be structured to include one or more components of the museum. These educational opportunities have been recognized by KET, the public television network for most of the state, which has produced a video about the Bibb House and another video about Alice Dunnigan that are part of their educational resources offered to schools. A photo collage of these two offerings are attached to this application as supportingdoc6. The Scripps-Howard Center for Community Engagement partnered with the Thomas Clark Foundation and produced a video about our exhibit addressing racial violence, and they are featuring it in their project to develop classroom resources related to racial matters.

If our request for funding for a part time Education Coordinator is approved, the primary beneficiaries of this project will be the students that tour the museums and learn these hidden and untold stories of the past. The name that we selected for the museum, SEEK Museum, is an acronym for Struggles for Emancipation and Equality in Kentucky. An illustration of our logo is attached to this application as supportingdoc7. We explain during tours that "seek" is a verb with different applications. The first group of applications is focused on education and the minds of the visitors who can SEEK Knowledge, Truth and Understanding of the complex topics that

are addressed in the museum. The second group of applications is focused on actions and the corresponding results that have either occurred or are current goals such as to SEEK Freedom, Equality, Justice and Peace. Our hope is that the knowledge, truth and understanding obtained by the students who tour the museums will be shared by them with others, who will then be interested in attending the museum and acquiring this knowledge. An informed citizen is an important goal for our society, and we feel that this is especially true for information related to our country's history related to race. Hopefully, the visitors to the museums will be inspired to work for freedom, equality, justice and peace. An example of the inspiration and educational opportunities that a visit to the Museum can invoke is attached as supportingdoc8 and supportingdoc9, which is the cover of Kentucky Monthly magazine and the story written by a teacher about her visit to the Museum.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

This project will be managed by the President of the organization, J. Gran Clark. Mr. Clark has managed the creation and growth of this organization since its inception, and his educational and work background have created a goal oriented organization that has created a unique historic site. The Executive Director of the Museum, Michael Morrow, has contributed his skills and time to the organization side by side with Mr. Clark. His research skills and his ability to connect history to current issues has resulted in a statewide reputation as a leader in African American history matters. Resumes of Mr. Clark and Mr. Morrow are attached to this application.

Upon approval of the grant application, the initial activity would be to advertise for the position of the part time Education Coordinator. This will be done jointly by the Executive Director and the President of the Museum, and a proposed job description has been attached to this application as supportingdoc10. The applications for the position will be reviewed by the Executive Director and the President of the Museum, who will interview the best applicants and then make the decision regarding the person to be hired for the position.

The person hired will start by becoming familiar with the exhibits and archival materials, and meetings will be held with Dr. Selena Doss and Dr. Nancy Dawson, who both have doctorate degrees in African American history, to discuss the curriculum materials that will have been developed at that point as part of the American Rescue Plan grant.

Meetings with the web designer who is creating an enhanced website that will include the curriculum materials will be held. One of the goals of these digital enhancements is to create a web presence that will allow educators, as well as others, to see the subject matter and content of the museums in advance. We recognize that it is difficult to deal with issues such as slavery, racial violence and segregation, and we also recognize that the teaching of these subjects in schools has become a political issue. Our goal is to let the educators see that our museum is

based on telling personal stories of people from the area. These stories can then be used as a base for the teachers to educate their students about the national historical events that correspond to these personal stories. Meetings with Andrew McLean, the teacher that is the head of the Russellville High School History department, shall be held to review the projects that are being developed there as part of the grant that was received from the Excellence in Education group.

Small meetings with other local persons who are affiliated or supportive of the Museum will be held to introduce the Education Coordinator.

The Education Coordinator will then create a data base of schools within the primary target area with contact information and personnel data. With a student population of approximately 2,800 in the target area, this equates to over 100 hundred teachers that would be on this list for each grade. A decision will be made at that time to determine the target age range for students to be solicited for the tours.

Promotional materials will be developed and assembled, and a plan will be developed to schedule personal meetings with school personnel to introduce them to the educational opportunities of the museum and to explain the curriculum materials. A plan for follow ups after the personal meetings will also be developed, and teachers and administrators will be offered free tours of the museum.

In addition to trying to schedule student tours, the Education Coordinator will develop plans for teacher training programs to be held at the Bibb House in the community room (which contains a small kitchen and separate bathrooms). The programs would be focused on topics such as learning strategies for student from minority backgrounds and addressing difficult topics such as racism. The teachers in the schools in the primary target area would be the initial focus of these programs, with tours of the museum being included. In addition to increasing the awareness of the teachers to these important issues, a secondary goal would be to introduce the teachers to the learning opportunities at the museum.

The grant application seeks funding for 2 years for this part time position, and the expectation is that the target area would be expanded during the second year to include the Tennessee schools within 30 miles of the museum or to expand the outreach to other Kentucky schools within 60 miles of the museum.

We recognize that there are risks that this program will not be successful. We are charting new territory, and we will be doing it during a time period when the subject matter has become politicized. It will be important to hire the best person for this position, who will be able to support our goals and also be able to convince teachers that the subject matter is presented fairly. These risks will also be mitigated by the fact that we are the only resource that provides this opportunity, and we feel that we have created a positive image in the region by attempting to

honestly and thoughtfully address these subjects. This positive image was developed in part when we hosted the homecoming dedication ceremony in 2019 for the Alice Allison Dunnigan statue, which had initially been exhibited in Washington DC at the Newseum for two months, and then shown at the Truman Presidential Library and Museum, the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University. Over 400 stories were published nationwide about Ms. Dunnigan and the statue, and this positive press translated into the surrounding communities being very supportive of our project. We also hosted the first reunion of the descendants of Major Bibb and the descendants of the people who were enslaved by him that year. Over 100 people attended from across the country, and this event was also covered extensively by the news media and created additional awareness and support for the museum. There are two upcoming events that will occur next summer that will help promote the museum and its educational programming. One of them is a full length documentary about the Bibb story that will be released in August of 2022 during the annual 8th of August Emancipation Day celebration. The other is the projected broadcast in 2022 by WKYU, the public television station associated with Western Kentucky University, of a documentary that focuses on the stories told by our exhibit on racial violence at the Cooksey house.

The planning of this project will be the responsibility of the Museum Director and the Project Manager of the organization, and the implementation of this project will be the responsibility of the Education Coordinator, subject to the supervision and review of the Museum Director and the Project Manager of the organization. The education advisors, Dr. Doss and Dr. Dawson, will also review and help supervise the project.

We feel that the part time Education Coordinator position will need to work an average of 15 hours per week, and the funds to compensate this person would come from the grant proceeds. The Museum will furnish office space with a computer, printer and cell phone, and the only other expenses that would be funded by the grant would be the travel expenses for the Education Coordinator to visit schools within the target area and the travel expenses for IMLS meetings.

The progress and success of this project will be tracked by the Education Coordinator submitting monthly and quarterly reports to the Museum Director and the Project Manager that will include what activities were initiated and/or completed. A chart of the schools in the target area will be created at the beginning of the project and goals and accomplishments will be identified and updated as developments occur. The Education Coordinator will be expected to accompany the Museum Director on the tours of the museum by schools. This will create a better relationship with the school personnel, and it will help the Education Coordinator understand the educational opportunities that the museum offers.

PROJECT RESULTS

The intended results from this project will begin with the development of good working relationships between the Museum and our Education Coordinator with the schools in the vicinity of the museum. The expectation is that the Education Coordinator will be able to persuade the schools to bring their students to the museum and to initiate online programming to allow the museum and the schools to interact before and after tours, and to develop processes that will allow the schools to provide feedback to the museum.

A second group of results is our expectation that almost all of the students who tour the museum will seek knowledge by being exposed to historical facts that have never been told to them. Once they have been exposed to and learned this history, our hope is that these students will seek truth (by analyzing historical and current events more thoroughly to discern what is true and accurate), seek understanding (by realizing the effects that this history has had on each of us) and realize the importance of seeking equality, justice and peace for our world.

We also hope and expect that students of African American heritage will realize the resilience and determination of their ancestors who had to endure enslavement, racial based violence and legalized segregation, and that they will be proud of these efforts to overcome the societal obstacles in the past and that they will work towards continuing this effort to create a more just and fair world.

We believe that we will be able to sustain the benefits of this project by being able to fund the position of the part time Education Coordinator from the proceeds received from school tours. If we were able to average 3 tours per week, the revenue should allow us to continue to fund this position. This will allow us to sustain the benefits of this project, and we will strive to continue to provide these educational opportunities to students in the future and to grow by expanding our outreach and programming.

HISTORIC RUSSELLVILLE INC dba SEEK MUSEUM

SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION (July 2023 – June 2024)

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Create database of schools and personnel in expanded areas	<hr/>											
Develop and assemble updated promotional materials	<hr/>											
Develop and schedule Teacher training programs	<hr/>											
Schedule and attend meetings with teachers and school personnel	<hr/>											
Attend tours and solicit feedback	<hr/>											