



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-10-19-0264-19
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

San Jose Children's Discovery Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$118,347
Amount of cost share:	\$121,681

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2020 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2019 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the [FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

ABSTRACT FOR THE NEW DAY INITIATIVE

At this moment in history, the hope of building greater understanding with respect to immigrants and refugees may seem like a distant dream. Leveraging core competence in exhibit design/development, Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) proposes to set the stage for creation of a transformational traveling exhibition that addresses demographic trends and national challenges.

The New Day Initiative (NDI) is a planning grant proposal to lay the groundwork for an exhibition for children and families about the ancient Persian festival of Norooz. Spanning Muslim and non-Muslim peoples, Norooz holds potential to build connections among the many nationalities and cultures that trace their heritage to Persian roots, while also educating others about Persian culture. The festival offers a uniquely cross-cultural contribution to rebuilding a more trusting landscape in our nation.

CDM will partner with a nationally-known designer of cultural exhibitions to engage our region's diverse communities in design/development of an authentic, experiential 2,500 sf traveling exhibition highlighting what it means to be Persian through the festival of Norooz. Exhibition Design Partner Maryam Eskandari, principal of the architectural firm MIIM Designs, brings highly relevant expertise, having worked with Children's Museum of Manhattan to create *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*. Ensuring authenticity, the Panel of Cultural Experts from Stanford University and from local Iranian community organizations will connect our Museum with local Persian communities; deepen our understanding about the traditions and cultural expressions surrounding Norooz, and recommend promising strategies for authentic visitor experiences. The Communications Strategy Advisor will support efforts to build a coalition of support and plan proactively for potential hot button issues that may arise in locales where the exhibition travels. Through an 18-month in-depth civic engagement process, CDM will draw upon Community Leaders and Stakeholders to provide essential insights, resources, focus group reflections, and logistical support.

Beneficiaries of NDI include local, regional and national audiences who learn about the customs and traditions of this cherished holiday and share it with the next generation. Nationally, many immigrants and refugees in the United States with origins in the former lands of Persia, which include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan, and Turkey will see their traditions represented through an immersive, aesthetically-beautiful exhibition, offering opportunities for learning and pride among children and families across the nation. All visiting families will have the chance to learn more about Persian art and culture as the exhibition travels to communities across the United States.

Locally and regionally, the NDI civic engagement process will increase interest and understanding about what it means to be Persian among participants and visitors, investing them with confidence about their ability to advance and impact cross-cultural understanding. Launch of a family-focused Norooz event at CDM, and prototyping of specially-designed exhibits and activities about Persians culture draw local audiences into delightful experiences of connection, celebration, and joy. Positive results for staff and participants include increased knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes regarding Persian and Muslim cultures. Results will also include tangible products for CDM and for the field, including plans and tools for exhibit fabrication and fundraising, a Norooz Cultural Celebration at our Museum that can be replicated in future years, and a best practice Communications Strategy to prepare for the mounting of socially relevant exhibitions through public coalition building. Museum professionals will benefit when CDM and our partners share best practices in inclusion, cultural diversity, and exhibition development through conference presentations and online publications. The traveling exhibition resulting from the New Day Initiative will offer children and families across the country delightful and engaging experiences of Persian culture that create lasting memories and, through the power of children, bring people together across cultural divides.

"The future which we hold in trust for our own children will be shaped by our fairness to other people's children." -- Marian Wright Edelman

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) aspires to create an exceptional immersive exhibition rooted in ancient Persian culture that will foster understanding and appreciation today in our region and nationally. Building on our Museum's core competence in exhibition design/construction, our educational philosophy of authentic inquiry-based exploration, and our commitment to inclusion and global citizenship, CDM proposes to launch a creative participatory planning process leading to the production of an engaging and memorable 2,500 sf traveling exhibition for children and families celebrating the festival of Norooz.

Now observed as a secular holiday occurring at the vernal equinox, Norooz is a beloved tradition with origins in the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. Marking the arrival of spring for peoples in many countries around the world, crossing cultures, religions, and nationalities, Norooz (with various spellings in translation, including Norooz/Noruz/Nowruz) has been celebrated for three millennia, pre-dating Christianity and Islam. In earlier times, the geographic area known as Persia included lands in the Middle East and Central Asia, extending from the Nile River in present day Egypt to territory in India and Pakistan. At this moment in history, we believe Norooz offers a unique opportunity for CDM to play a catalyst role in building connections among the many nationalities and cultures in our region that trace their heritage to Persian roots. Lasting up to 13 days, Norooz welcomes the coming of spring, with shared practices that include advance preparation days and a festive family gathering, followed by visits from family members and friends, and the sharing of special treats including baklava and sugar-coated almonds. Customs vary from one part of the world to another, reflective of the many geographies and centuries of its celebration. Notable features include: *Amu Norooz*, a fictional figure in folklore who brings gifts to children, much like Santa Claus; the *Haft-sin*, a table decorated with seven items each beginning with the Persian letter S and symbolizing renewal (for example: Seer (garlic) represents health, Seeb (apple) represents beauty, and Sekeh (coins) represent prosperity; *Chahar Shanbeh Suri*, the ritual of jumping over a bonfire to remove negativities of the past and focus on the future; and the *Sizdah bedar*, the 13th day when people leave their houses to picnic outdoors and discard the *Haft-sin* greenery into running water. With traditions based in the language, food, music and leisure activities of the peoples and ethnic groups who lived across Persia, the holiday practices associated with Norooz have adapted as cultures, religions, and political boundaries have changed over time. With respect to religion, for example, aspects of Norooz are evident in the Christian celebration of Easter, and with the emergence of Islam, many locales incorporated Norooz making the festival a part of their heritage. A resource for educators published by the Outreach Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University notes that "It is a secular holiday that is enjoyed by people of several different faiths and as such can take on additional interpretations through the lens of religion." Today, while the region once known as Persia no longer exists, the traditions of Norooz are strong among people in its former lands including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan, and Turkey.

What We Propose to Do

Inspired by Norooz, which translates as "New Day," CDM will design, develop, and build a major children's exhibition about the festival. This planning grant lays the groundwork to create a traveling exhibition with nationwide impact. Leveraging more than two decades of exhibit development expertise, the New Day Initiative (NDI) seeks to engage communities in co-creating an immersive exhibition with a Persian aesthetic that will be a source of pride to all involved, and improve social wellbeing by acting as a springboard to increasing dialogue and improve social relations among communities that may now be disconnected.

For more than two decades, CDM has regularly developed and fabricated traveling exhibits of all sizes, totaling seven thus far, while creating and maintaining 35,000sf of exhibitions for our own galleries. Over the years,

CDM has been awarded multiple grants from the National Science Foundation to build innovative large-scale exhibitions, including *The Wonder Cabinet*, an early learning laboratory for children under five, and *Alice's Wonderland*, a traveling exhibit exploring math and science, both of which received Excellence in Exhibitions Awards from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) cdm.org/about/awards-honors CDM's proficiency in traveling exhibitions includes deep understanding from both producer and host perspectives. At any given moment, our Museum hosts one or more traveling exhibits, providing an in-depth understanding and a unique skillset for addressing the needs of host museums and their audiences. In 2013, CDM was proud to be awarded a grant of nearly \$1 million from the Freeman Foundation to develop *Voyage to Vietnam*, an immersive exhibition recently returned to our Museum after an acclaimed three-year, nine-city national tour. cdm.org/west-wing-changing-exhibits (also see **Supporting Document #3**) Through an experiential design and a rich Vietnamese-inspired aesthetic, *Voyage to Vietnam* gives visitors exposure to artifacts and experiences special to Vietnam, and helps families gain appreciation for traditions, values and daily lives of people living in Vietnam.

Central to CDM's many years of successful exhibition development has been our growing capacity to create bonds of belonging among our diverse communities through authentic connections with each other, with the Museum, and with the 21st century world around us. Through many years of strategic community engagement with targeted audiences, we have been able to open up pathways of communication, watch and listen as families share life stories, and ultimately, create truly meaningful educational programs, authentic events, and hands-on exhibits that resonate with our multicultural audience of more than 400,000 children and families annually. From these highly participatory processes emerge immersive experiences that visitors of all backgrounds return to again and again, introducing families of differing origins across ethnic and social divides, and making it possible for all to develop lasting appreciation for each other through an environment of celebration and trust. Imagine a girl of Chinese heritage making an Indian diya lamp in our Art Loft, or listen to the sounds of a little African American boy as he strums a three-string lute in our *Voyage to Vietnam* exhibit, or picture a Latino family enjoying our *Tres Reyes* event in early January and then deciding to return later in the month to learn about the Chinese *Lunar New Year* -- and you'll begin to grasp the profound impact of these extraordinary boundary-crossing experiences upon the children and family members of our community.

Ultimately, the fully implemented Norooz exhibition will be a joyful and welcoming place where families can share the customs and traditions of this cherished holiday with the next generation. The Norooz exhibition will also offer an entry point for families from many backgrounds to learn about Persian culture. With a striking immersive aesthetic and engaging hands-on exhibits, it is our aspiration that the Norooz exhibition will draw children and families into delightful experiences that create lasting memories and, through the power of children, bring people together across cultural divides.

Need, Problem or Challenge

Our world today often seems hopelessly fractured, marred by incidents of fear, bigotry, hatred, and violence. With rhetoric and tragedies escalating, in the United States and globally, a world of trust and understanding may seem like a distant dream. Tensions with Iran, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, refugee migrations to Europe, the US, and other parts of the world--these disruptions and displacements fuel misgivings and apprehension about the future. According to the FBI, anti-Muslim hate crimes are approximately five times more frequent than they were before the 9/11 terror attacks. Not only have there been calls to ban Muslims from entering our country, but it is also true that Muslims in the United States live daily amidst the perception that that they are a threat and under the suspicion that they are un-American. Rebuilding a more trusting landscape for Muslims and others experiencing hate and discrimination will take many years and many-faceted solutions. Yet we know that the starting point for trust is human connection. Research suggests that when people are able to connect, to find commonalities, and to recognize similarities despite their differences, then barriers between people break down, and their common humanity can emerge.

An enduring commitment to serving an audience reflective of the diverse communities of our region has been essential to the advancement of CDM's mission to inspire creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning. Our expertise in civic engagement has taught us that certain values are universal across cultures, including the importance of family, the challenge of holding onto traditions while also embracing life as Americans, and hopes for our children's future. These common values hold the power to spark connection and mutual understanding. In some parts of the world, religious groups, political parties and at times even warring factions, set aside their differences each year at the time of the vernal equinox to honor this ancient and revered Norooz tradition of welcoming the start of a new year. Here in the United States, the House of Representatives with a bipartisan vote in 2010 recognized the cultural and historical significance of Norooz in our own increasingly diverse nation. At CDM, we are impressed by how this enduring holiday has followed many peoples around the globe over centuries, and withstood the test of time. Our region of San Jose and the Bay Area is home to immigrant populations from around the world, and it has been the longtime commitment of our Museum to reach an audience that fully represents the community we serve. In recent years, serving as host site for new US citizens taking the oath of allegiance, we have come to recognize that through immigration and refugee resettlement, our region includes significant populations from the Middle East and Central Asia, including families from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We believe Norooz offers a unique occasion of convergence where Muslims and non-Muslims who honor this holiday, albeit traditionally in their own communities, might find ways to join together to share the festival with the next generation, and discover how joyous traditions of music, dance, food, art can foster mutual understanding and connection across sociopolitical boundaries. In addition, as with other cultural exhibits and programs that CDM produces, we expect the fun and wonder of Norooz to also draw families who will learn about this amazing holiday for the first time.

How Project Advances Our Strategic Plan

At CDM, our connection with the diverse families in our community is vital to who we are and who we have become. Demographic change has been a key driver in the development of our Museum's mission and identity from our earliest days. When CDM opened our iconic 52,000 sf facility in 1990, the city of San Jose was already a majority minority city. Since that time, our city and our entire Silicon Valley region have become among the most diverse in the nation. As the demographic center of immigration in Northern California, San Jose is comprised of people who are 33% Latino, 32% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% African American, and 35% European American. The number of immigrants in Santa Clara County is over 600,000. More importantly, when including children born in the US to immigrants, the number jumps to 1.1 million--60% of the County's total population. Serving immigrant families has been an enduring service priority for our Museum since its first decade when a major regional study by Pia Moriarity, Ph.D., entitled *Immigrant Participatory Arts, An Insight into Community-Building in Silicon Valley*, reported about the substantial challenges immigrants to our region face: "They stretch their lives between performing duties that honor their traditional cultures and facing the conflicting challenges of raising families in today's California. Their parents and ancestors link them enduringly to the old country, and their children link them inescapably to the new."

Our initial audience development project responded to the challenges by reaching out to the largest immigrant group in San Jose, when we launched the *Latino Audience Development Initiative (LADI)*, a comprehensive effort incorporating exhibits, programs, operations, marketing and governance that achieved a 20% increase in Latino general attendance. We have continued to build upon what we learned, hosting annual events like *Tres Reyes*, which has grown to become a beloved family tradition that now draws crowds of 5,000+ people. cdm.org/el-dia-de-los-tres-reyes-magos Expanding upon these learnings, in 2005 we rolled out our multi-year *Vietnamese Audience Development Initiative (VADI)*. By then, San Jose had become home to more people of Vietnamese descent than any city outside of Vietnam. It took seven years to fully succeed as we came to understand the generational differences between immigrant and second generation parents. Pointing to success,

analysis has shown that CDM members residing in zip codes with the highest concentration of Vietnamese families increased 33%. We are pleased that a case study of our work was selected for the Center for the Future of Museums' illuminating report, *Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums*. Thanks to lasting relationships with Vietnamese Cultural Advisors, CDM developed and fabricated *Voyage to Vietnam*. Its authenticity and charm enchanted families nationwide as they soaked up the essence of what it means to be Vietnamese through sights, sounds, stories, textures, and experiences associated with the Tet Festival.

With the support of IMLS, CDM moved beyond approaches for single ethnic communities and took up the bigger challenge of cross-cultural engagement. Through *Breaking Ground* and its successor *Common Ground*, multi-year initiatives brought together immigrant families from Mexico, Vietnam, India, the Philippines, and China to engage in cross-cultural dialogue about their experiences as immigrants in the United States. http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-08/01/content_30322454.htm Through the sharing of a meal, conversations about their own childhoods, and facilitated dinner discussions, adults found commonality in the types of things that surprised them, concerned them, and gave them hope when they came to the United States. It has been an honor for our museum to have played the role as trusted convener and facilitator for cultural exchange; making a profound impression on participants and staff alike, and helping us achieve a deeply-rooted institutional aspiration: "at CDM, the community finds reflections of itself." Out of these pioneering initiatives and with collaborative co-creation by participants, CDM fabricated two high-impact exhibits: 1) *World Market*, featuring hands-on activities with real cooking utensils, and video demonstrations with community elders from five cultures; and 2) *A Seat at the Table*, a traveling pop-up installation that engages participants in their own neighborhoods to explore connections between food, cultural identity, and immigrant experiences through creative expression in sculpture, poetry, and performance. mercurynews.com/2018/06/02/a-seat-at-the-table-celebrates-culture-immigration-through-food

Our goal of ensuring that CDM's audience is reflective of community demographics is an aspiration shared with many museums nationwide. AAM's landmark 1992 report *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* helped codify inclusion as a standard for all museums. Focusing the field's attention on the idea that museums must listen, reflect, and react to the needs of their local communities, this document strongly influenced how museums define their responsibilities to their communities. Its publication "recast the definition of excellence not merely to include equity, but to require it—for museums to embrace cultural diversity in all facets of their programs, staff, and audiences, in order to have any hope of sustaining vitality and relevance." CDM has taken this to heart, and our passion for inclusion continues to shape who we are as a community-serving organization. CDM's proficiency regarding traveling exhibitions includes deep understanding from both producer and host perspectives. Our design/build capacity is robust: for over two decades, we have regularly engaged in development and fabrication of traveling exhibits of all sizes, while creating and maintaining 35,000 sf of exhibitions for our own galleries. At any given moment, our Museum hosts one or more traveling exhibits, giving us an in-depth understanding and a unique skillset for addressing the needs of host museums and their audiences.

Who Will Benefit

Demographic trends make it essential for our museum to continuously seek ways of deepening our understanding of the needs of local populations, and build capacity to reach out, connect, and provide meaningful engagement opportunities to the diverse families of our community. Among immigrant and refugee groups locally, countries of origin such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, China, and India include significant populations who celebrate Norooz. In the Bay Area during March and April, you can find a Norooz feast in Cupertino, a Rumi art and poetry exhibition in San Jose, concerts in San Francisco and Oakland, and Persian fire jumping in Berkeley. Santa Clara County is home to a vibrant Persian community, with the third largest population in the nation that speaks Farsi. While Census data does not break out nationalities, it is known that

Iranians are the largest ethnicity in several of our county's Congressional districts. There are between 50,000 and 60,000 Iranians in the Bay Area, according to the PARS Equality Center which serves this community, and visitors have requested that we add a Persian festival to our Cultural Celebrations series. In addition to deepening CDM's relationships with important local communities, NDI benefits the field with solutions having potential to break down barriers regarding Muslim communities. Not only will a traveling exhibition introduce communities across the nation to positive cultural experiences of Muslim traditions, NDI also supports the museum field by taking a first step in finding practical communications strategies to help address museums' fears about focusing attention on subject matter that can be viewed as politically-charged. Recognizing that communities celebrating Norooz are among the most beleaguered in present-day America, the communications solutions we hope to achieve through NDI could make it possible for museums to have the courage to deal with the most challenging inclusion issues of our day.

How Project Addresses Museums for America Goals

NDI advances CDM's aspiration to build and nurture relationships with leaders in local and regional Persian and Muslim communities in a process of mutual discovery. The planning process for the Norooz exhibit builds upon CDM's demonstrated strengths in community engagement and exhibit design, development and fabrication, and benefit from the knowledge and understanding of local experts and community leaders. NDI addresses the Museums for America Program Goal: *Lifelong Learning* by supporting learning for people of all ages and backgrounds, providing high quality inclusive education opportunities, and fostering discovery, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration. NDI builds upon CDM's previous achievements in creating trusted spaces for community learning and dialogue to take on the unique challenges of Muslim social inclusion in the United States, particularly at this juncture when Muslim peoples are under duress, and leverages CDM's expertise, best practices, and our local, regional, and national connections in the endeavor to weave together a strong and resilient social fabric among our nation's diverse cultures and traditions.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

NDI reflects CDM's commitment to authentic, inquiry-based exploration and embodies our commitment to global citizenship. Focused on the Persian festival of Norooz, NDI sets the stage for creation of a transformational traveling exhibition for children and families. In addition to exhibition goals, a lasting tangible outcome for our Museum and local community will be the creation of a Persian cultural celebration that will be added to our annual calendar of festivals that includes *Tres Reyes* (Latino), *Children of the Dragon* (Vietnamese), *Diwali* (Indian), *Menorahs & Miracles* (Jewish), and *Lunar New Year* (Chinese). Equally important will be the forging of meaningful relationships with expanded audiences in our region.

Activities and Performance Measurements

In order to prepare for full implementation of a major exhibition, NDI's exploratory/piloting period for this planning grant encompasses Exhibit Design and Prototyping, Communications Strategy Development, Audience Development Event Launch, and Feasibility Planning.

Community Collaboration & Exhibit Design Development: For a project of this scope, CDM develops and convenes partnerships that build cultural competence and provide access to families in our community.

Exhibition Design Partner: Maryam Eskandari, principal of MIIM Designs, brings impressive experience in architectural design. Dr. Eskandari uses design for expression of identity and place that is both transformative and rooted in history. MIIM worked with Children's Museum of Manhattan on the creation of the interactive multimedia experience *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*. In initial conversations, together we envision that the Norooz exhibition concept will have a format similar to CDM's *Voyage to Vietnam*, which follows the progression of the traditional Tét Festival and features an immersive, experiential design with a Vietnamese-inspired aesthetic. MIIM will present two Design Charrettes aligned with the conceptual

framework, produce a Schematic Design for further review and comments, and ultimately prepare an Exhibition Promotion Booklet for use in fundraising. **Panel of Cultural Experts:** To ensure authenticity, NDI brings together a distinguished Panel of Cultural Experts to provide expertise for connecting with local Persian communities, deepening Museum understanding about the traditions and cultural expressions surrounding Norooz, and recommending promising strategies for creating authentic visitor experiences. The Panel includes Exhibit Development Partner Maryam Eskandari, Dr. Abbas Milani of Stanford University, and Bita Daryabari, founder of the Daryabari Iranian Cultural Center in San Jose. **Project Team:** Cross-departmental staff form a Project Team that includes the Director of Exhibits, Director of the Cultural Competency Learning Institute, Cultural Liaison, Communications Coordinator, and Senior Exhibit Developer. NDI is led by Executive Director Marilee Jennings. **Community Leaders:** Through recommendations of our Exhibition Design Partner and our Panel of Cultural Experts, we will recruit Community Cross Sector Leaders Representing Various Nationalities Celebrating Norooz. Community Leaders co-create the exhibit along with the Project Team, participating in Design Charrettes, providing advice and guidance regarding local Norooz practices, imagining exhibit experiences, and providing feedback as concepts and schematics are developed. Community Leaders also play the vital role of connecting us with Persian families with young children; these families participate in Focus Groups, prototyping of exhibits, and our Norooz event in 2021. Relevant cultural organizations in our city and region include Daryabari Iranian Community Center, Bisheh Arts Education Center, and Golestan International Center for Cultural Education.

Communications Strategy Development: Experience in the field tells us that building a coalition of support, including educating the media and the general public, is beneficial when launching a public exhibition, particularly when it has the potential to draw controversy. This need became starkly apparent when the *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far* exhibit was confronted with protests when it opened at the children's museum in Chattanooga. In order to be proactive, CDM plans to learn about best practices and develop a communications strategy to tell the stories that build community support, as well as create messaging to address potential concerns that may arise. We will engage a Communications Strategy Advisor to provide coaching and advice on how CDM can work with our community to build a coalition of support and plan proactively for potential hot button issues that may arise. Dr. Kymberly Pinder, whose work addresses history, race, and religion in American art, created a remarkable process to prepare the media and the public for the mounting of socially relevant exhibitions at UNM Art Museum. CDM staff conducts interviews with museums hosting the Zanzibar exhibit to surface information about community reactions and concerns that have come up. Based on what we learn, CDM will develop a communications strategy for media outreach and create scripts for addressing anticipated controversial topics and pilot-test them for future updating.

Audience Development Event Launch: Building upon our expertise for creating authentic Cultural Celebrations, CDM will develop and host a new Norooz Cultural Celebration at our Museum in Spring 2021. The event will draw new family audiences, and provide an opportunity to pilot-test activities and exhibits. Event development involves a participatory engagement process that includes recruitment of a synergistic Event Partner with ties to local families that celebrate Norooz, identification of event advisors and resource developers with connections to performers, activities, volunteers and marketing support, collaborating with these partner groups to schedule an optimal date for the event at our Museum, identification of media and marketing partners for event promotion and pilot-testing of new Coalition-Building Strategies, event planning and logistics.

Feasibility Planning: Based on learnings from our community and pilot-testing of exhibits, activities, and messaging, NDI results in production of an Exhibit Fabrication Plan, an Exhibition Promotion Booklet, and a Fundraising Plan. We will also share what we have learned through documentation and presentations at the Association of Children's Museums (ACM) annual InterActivity conference and ACM Publications.

Maturity Level of Initiative

NDI is an exploratory and piloting initiative accomplishing the advance work needed to plan for a groundbreaking children's exhibition with national scope. NDI brings forth the partnerships, communications strategies, fundraising resources, and exhibit design plans to prepare CDM to be at-the-ready with assets needed for full implementation of our traveling Norooz exhibition. **Opportunities and Strengths:** Promising elements pointing to the success of NDI include our Museum's extensive exhibition design/fabrication experience and expertise as shown through exhibits such as *Voyage to Vietnam*, *World Market*, and *A Seat at the Table* and several NSF-funded science and math exhibits; our community engagement expertise, exemplified by the *VADI*, *LADI*, *Breaking Ground* and *Common Ground*; the strong and vibrant Persian community living here in the Bay Area; enthusiasm about the concept already received from Iranian community leaders; and the amazingly beautiful Norooz holiday itself, with its unique and meaningful characteristics, its cultural richness that transcends national boundaries, and its roots in past civilizations and global longevity. **Risks:** During this exploratory phase, CDM will address and mitigate the risks inherent in future full implementation of a large-scale venture such as building an engaging, culturally-rich, durable traveling exhibition. Exploratory activities test community interest and engagement, establish essential relationships for audience and fund development, and create the exhibition design. Implementation of NDI ensures our institution has the multiple tools, resources, and capacities to achieve the creation of a major traveling exhibition with the appeal, educational impact, and coalition-building needed to sustain a national tour. We have accounted for risks through a multi-year timeframe that includes the proposed exploratory process that sets the stage for full implementation project, providing the necessary time to make adjustments and shift course if needed; a strong cadre of community experts and leaders that will be expanded, who will be our partners as we navigate through the process; resources including a well thought-out crisis management strategy to proactively address challenges that may arise; and our plan to conduct fundraising feasibility during the planning process to ensure the exhibition's successful completion. We are confident that CDM is up to these challenges because of our extensive experience in cultural engagement and our capacity to line up the right resources to achieve big goals; and our tenacity to work through challenges until they are overcome. We are also confident because of the strength, knowledge, and passion of our project partners; and the importance of the Iranian and other Norooz-celebrating peoples to the cultural fabric of our region.

Responsibilities, Sequencing, Resources, Tracking, and Results

This Project Work Plan describes the exploratory and piloting purpose of this proposal for NDI. The 18-month timeline is presented in the **Schedule of Completion** which outlines key implementation milestones and plans for sharing of results, as well as staff, consultant, and advisor responsibilities for planning, implementation, and management of the initiative. Staff and consultant roles and qualifications are further described in the **List of Key Project Staff and Consultants** and attached **Resumes**. **Supporting Document #2** contains proposals from our Exhibition Development Partner and Communications Strategy Consultant. **Supporting Document #3** contains the Exhibition Walkthrough for *Voyage to Vietnam*.

PROJECT RESULTS

Please see **Supporting Document #3** for the **Project Results** table with **Agency-Level Goal, Intended Results, Anticipated Changes, and Tangible Products**.

Sustaining the Benefits

IMLS support of an NDI planning grant will make it possible for CDM to prepare for fabrication of an extraordinary traveling exhibition promoting cultural pride and cross-cultural understanding for our own community and for communities across the nation. The Cultural Celebration launched at our Museum will be replicable in future years. It is also our hope that museums in general will benefit from and build upon best practices for supporting inclusion, particularly among Persian and Muslim-centered communities.

