



# 21st Century Museum Professionals Program

Sample Application 21MP-256452-OMS-24

## Five College Consortium

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$306,115
Amount of cost share:	\$347,842

The Five College Consortium will build a professional development training program that creates opportunities for museum staff as well pathways for undergraduate and graduate interns entering the museum workforce. The project partners include the consortium of five colleges along with seven campus museums and three affiliated museums in western Massachusetts. Project activities include seminars, workshops, and trainings with museum staff based on work areas and career interests to develop paths for gaining skills and helping grow the next generation of museum leaders. The project will result in training 210 professionals and over 100 undergraduate and graduate interns, fellows, and assistants to meet the changing needs of museums in administration, education, exhibition development, and collections management.

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 most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.



## Proposal to Institute of Museum and Library Services

### **Museums10 Workforce Development: A Collaborative Approach for the Future**

#### Proposal Narrative

On behalf of Museums10 (M10), a collaborative initiative of the seven museums of Five College, Incorporated's (FCI) member campuses (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and UMass Amherst) and three affiliated museums (Historic Deerfield, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and the Yiddish Book Center), FCI seeks a 3-year grant of **\$347,789** for **Museums10 Workforce Development: A Collaborative Approach for the Future**, a program to develop professional skills in all levels of M10's workforce of more than 200. This program builds on preparatory work accomplished by M10 in recent years as well as on our long record of cross-museum collaboration.

M10 leaders have long discussed developing a plan for much-needed professional development, but they have lacked the human and financial resources to make significant progress. Close collaboration among M10's member institutions over the years has helped them identify shared training needs; it also means that the development of cooperative programming is second nature. FCI will help administer a grant-funded initiative that will facilitate this vital work.

Each of the Consortium museums offers varying levels of orientation or training for staff, but all see a need for more comprehensive professional development and agree that there are clear benefits to cross-institutional collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. The evolution of technology, pedagogy, and cultural perspectives over the years means ongoing professional development is critical at all stages of museum careers. Additionally, professionals in M10 have a particular responsibility to stay informed on current trends as they model museum practice for higher education students who may pursue museum careers.

As noted above, the individual members of M10 each provide some level of professional development, but none are able to operate at a sufficient scale to provide a focused training program specifically designed for museum staff.

The member institutions of M10 are well-suited to building a collaborative professional development program. By meeting regularly within M10, the 10 museum directors learn to recognize the structures and practices that are unique to each institution, as well as those that cross institutional boundaries. In addition, the staff of FCI have extensive experience developing and facilitating collaborative programming, such as with its current Building Academic Leaders faculty development program, which

is financed by a three-year, \$1.6 million Mellon Foundation grant. The Five College Librarians Council's professional development committee also provides a useful model and inspiration for this work and, when appropriate, library staff will be invited to the new program.

### **Project Justification**

#### **Program Goal and Objective**

M10's mission is to foster connections and support across its 10 museums in the Connecticut (Kwintekw) River Valley, to promote the cultural landscape of our region, and to create opportunities for learning and professional development. M10 is unusual in that the varying missions of M10 museums have created a dynamic collaborative infrastructure, with six of them sharing a collections database and user interface. The collaborative now seeks a 21st Century Museums Professionals Program grant under IMLS Goal 1: Support the Professional Development of the museum workforce, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, and Objective 1.1: Develop new or enhanced professional development and training programs for the museum workforce.

By building on the strength of an established network of museum professionals, and modeling new consortia professional development frameworks, the proposed programming will expand skill sets, deepen knowledge, further enhance collaboration, and promote idea-sharing to increase collective impact. As discussed in a recent phone call with IMLS staff, we will also support ongoing efforts to increase staff diversification.

#### **Need**

Emerging from the pandemic, the institutions in M10 collaborations are faced with intersecting transformations within both higher education and the museum profession. This includes expanded commitments to social justice and new applications for technology, with the overall promise of more inclusive, innovative, and digitally-integrated museum experiences in the post-pandemic era. Museums in the consortium resumed post-pandemic activity on different schedules, with some just recently welcoming visitors back on-site during the 2023-24 academic year. Following a period of disconnection, there is an essential need for our experienced and emerging professionals to come together and address the challenges and opportunities of this time.

For museums, shifts in external engagement and operations have been accompanied by demands for updated internal work cultures. A recent study focused on art museums provides some important insights: 68% of art museum workers have considered leaving the field and art museums lost 30% of full-time employees between 2020 and 2022 (Museums Moving Forward, "[Workplace Equity and Organizational Culture in Art Museums](#)," 2023). Professional development and community-building offer the potential to increase employee satisfaction, as well as channels for career advancement. M10 has the opportunity to combine efforts in supporting our accomplished staff to feel inspired, informed, and motivated to better and best serve our shared, diverse communities.

#### **Target Group**

The primary target group for the proposed project is all museum staff across M10. This includes approximately 210 professionals and over 100 undergraduate and graduate interns, fellows, and assistants. M10 is a consortium of seven campus museums and three campus-affiliated museums (as noted earlier), representing art, history, natural history, and book collections, along with historic buildings. Staff reside across the region, with most centered in Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin

counties in Western Massachusetts. Museum staff have been involved in developing and recommending components of the professional development program detailed below, and the needs of each museum are being taken into account in the identification of consultants/trainers for the program.

Many museum staff currently gather regularly by discipline in peer-led M10 committees, including curators, educators, and collection managers. These committees provide an opportunity for shared learning and discussion, and they have surfaced training and development needs that cut across institutions. Additionally, an annual summit has brought the professional community together since 2014 (with a pause in 2020). Post-program evaluations for these summits have provided an opportunity to gather ideas from across the consortium for essential professional development topics.

### **Beneficiaries**

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project, beyond the staff of M10 institutions, are visitors across our 10 museums. A significant audience for these museums lies within the campuses of the Five College Consortium, representing some 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students, 2,300 faculty, and 8,000 staff members. The Consortium is made up of a research-intensive state flagship university (the University of Massachusetts Amherst) and four top-ranked private liberal arts colleges, including two of the oldest women's colleges in the country: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College.

More broadly, the 10 museums engage the populations of our surrounding counties, including the Massachusetts cities and towns of Hampshire County (population: 162,308); Hampden County (population: 465,825); and Franklin County (population: 71,029). The range of communities within these counties is broad and varied. For example, Hampden County is one of the most diverse counties in Massachusetts, with 40.3% BIPOC residents, and it is home to the city of Springfield – Massachusetts's third largest city. Meanwhile, Franklin County is the most rural county in Massachusetts, with 78% of its acreage in forest and 9% in crop or pasture (MassGIS Land Cover, 2016). In addition, the museums are intrinsic to the cultural fabric of the region, attracting thousands of visitors – and members – a year from around the country and the world.

### **How will the Museum Field Benefit from Your Project?**

M10 staff are nationally and internationally connected to broader professional networks. They will carry their learning from this project into conversations with colleagues across the field and model consortial development projects. Additionally, our museums all support aspiring and emerging professionals in different ways—through fellowships, internships, assistantships, and integrated coursework. They will be invited to participate in components of this project to build knowledge that will be carried forward into their careers.

### **Project Work Plan**

We envision a 3-year grant period that would allow for robust planning and thoughtful assessment while incorporating three full academic years of professional development activities for all museum staff.

### **Planning**

During the initial months of the grant, the PI and project director (described in the Leadership section) will convene the program team to refine the curriculum for the program. During this period, the PI and project director (PD) will undertake the recruitment of an associate project director (APD), who will

support the project leaders in all facets of this effort and have the skills and knowledge to recognize additional training needs – both generally and on specific issues. The team will further assess other knowledge, skills, and resources that are most needed to fill evolving roles effectively. This work will be compiled and analyzed by the (APD) and supplemented with selections from the literature to guide the program curriculum and to provide a reading list for program participants. Detailed benchmarking with other comparable programs will also be conducted by the (APD) and the leadership team. Program activities, speakers, and assessments will all be detailed in the first months of the program.

### **Activities**

Following the identification of the (APD) and the work noted above, the project involves two parallel threads, as follows:

- 1) An a la carte menu of general subject offerings (through workshops, seminars, trainings) during all three grant years, with museum staff able to make choices based on their work area and interests.
- 2) Beginning in year 2 and based on learning from year 1 and the work of project leadership, curated pathways will be offered to provide a coherent, planned structure for those interested in a broader landscape of museum practice. These pathways are focused on providing content for the development of future museum and museum department leaders.

Based on commitment, interest, and noted progress, a small number of staff will be invited to attend a professional museum, library, or scholarly conference, such as NEMA, AAM, ARCS (Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists), AASLH (American Association for State and Local History), or SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management). This will strengthen M10's collective base of knowledge, build interrelated skill sets, provide networking opportunities, raise awareness of innovative projects, and publicize the collections and services at M10 institutions. Those who attend will be expected to provide de-briefs, materials, and information to the full group of professional development participants.

In addition to museum staff, libraries and special collections (archives) staff will be invited to participate in the program, recognizing the many useful connections and intersections among these organizations.

#### *Museums10 Summit*

This grant will build on and reimagine the annual, one-day M10 Summit to become a two-day program for professional development.

#### *Professional Development Topics*

While we continue to refine planned program components, the following are important professional development areas for program inclusion and were partly drawn from surveys of museum directors and staff. Activities will be led by either internal or external museum professionals or, for non-museum-specific topics, experts in that area.

#### **Collections Management**

- Inclusive cataloging and other record-keeping tools
- Advanced practices in Digital Asset Management Systems
- Metadata practice and implications for practice
- Data entry standards for collective optimization and alignment

### **Exhibits and Education**

- Incorporating STEAM in museum education
- In-gallery teaching; museum/gallery tours; traveling exhibitions
- Inclusive planning, labeling, and collateral learning tools
- Teaching with material culture and inquiry-based museum teaching
- Subject analysis training
- Andragogy and pedagogy training for staff (and, potentially, students)

### **Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility through Universal Design**

- Universal design principles for exhibitions
- Utilizing a DEIA lens for stronger design
- Programming for those experiencing dementia / memory loss
- Creative aging programs - training for staff in facilitating programs/workshops for older visitors, understanding ageism in American museums, and developing meaningful responses
- Broadening the practice of universal design for increased accessibility

### **Partnerships & External Relations, Engagement**

- PR training, presentation skills, speaking to the media
- Partnership practice for museums and K-12, colleges/universities, community engagement
- Museum / library partnerships & opportunities

### **Project Management, Emergency Planning/Management**

- Project management training
- Emergency planning in an era of climate change / resilience / mutual aid

### **Personnel, HR, Supervision, Collaboration**

- Leadership and supervisory training / mentoring
- Recruiting and retaining a diverse staff
- Training in anti-racist and DEIA protocols and response
- Collaborative work models
- Engaging volunteers in long-term museum work
- Contemporary practices and trends in teacher professional development (including virtual and asynchronous learning)

### **Leadership**

The core leadership team will include the Executive Director of the Five College Consortium – Dr. Sarah Pfatteicher — as Principal Investigator (FCI), along with Jennifer Schantz as Project Director. Dr. Pfatteicher is a historian of technology and an engineering ethicist with more than 25 years’ experience in academic administration. Ms. Schantz, the Director of The Eric Carle Museum for Picture Book Art, has more than 20 years of experience in New York cultural institutions, including recent positions as Executive Director of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and executive positions at the New-York Historical Society. The core team (the Directors or a senior executive from the M10 museums) will bear primary responsibility for their institution’s participation in the program, as well as for pursuing long-range opportunities for program sustainability. The long-standing M10 committee will serve as an oversight council.

The Associate Project Director will be recruited during the opening months of the grant period and is expected to bring skills in conducting interviews, literature reviews, planning, and assessments, as well as having a deep familiarity with museum practice. Preference will be given to candidates with a degree or significant experience in museum studies and the skills to provide some of the professional development offerings directly, though we anticipate the majority of the offerings will draw on others. The position description for the APD is included in the attachment that includes the resumes of the PD, PI, and leadership council. We expect that the project will include opportunities to publish research based on the development and outcomes of the program.

### **Sustainability**

FCI has a long history of shared programming across the member campuses, with processes in place to administer and fund such programs, and M10 shares this experience. As a professional development program, institutionalization of this program will begin with the M10 directors, who have the authority to recommend programs for ongoing support. The Five College Board of Directors (comprising the College Presidents and University Chancellor), with advice from the Five College Provosts and Principal Business Officers, is responsible for formal approval of funded Five College programming. The project leadership team will be responsible for submitting progress reports to these committees annually and for proposing a budget and structure for continuing the program following the completion of the grant.

### **Project Results**

This project will result in:

- Training a diverse and expert staff at all professional levels to meet the specific needs required to run best practice, 21st century museums and to enable strong museum careers.
- Preparing museum staff for current – and future – needs in museum administration, education, exhibition development, collections management, and technology.
- Adding to M10's ability to positively and successfully reach and serve its campuses and the local and regional communities.
- Building additional collaborative abilities and opportunities among the institutions in M10.
- Serving as a model for outstanding staff development among consortial organizations beyond western Massachusetts.

**Museums10 Workforce Development: A Collaborative Approach for the Future**

**Project Length - 3 years (8/1/24 - 7/31/27)**

**Work Timeline**

	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Activity Detail</b>
<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>1 Start-Up</b>	8/1/24-9/30/24	Conduct organizational tasks, establish a solid foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Launch &amp; complete search for associate project director</li> <li>.. Convene leadership team, affirm governance/oversight structure &amp; goals</li> <li>.. Refine and add details/assignments to timeline</li> <li>.. Build initial communications plans/vehicles (e.g., newsletters to museum staff with information, opportunities, and progress)</li> </ul>
	<b>2 Build &amp; Align</b>	10/1/24-12/31/24	Onboard associate project director, develop inputs & resources, finalize training priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Project leaders onboard/orient new associate project director</li> <li>.. Associate project director organizes inputs, needs, &amp; resources, and maps priorities for review &amp; approval by leadership (museum directors)</li> <li>.. Associate project director (with team support) designs spring 2025 offerings</li> </ul>
	<b>3 Pilot</b>	1/1/25-5/31/25	Offer preliminary versions of trainings (via a la carte menu of opportunities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide access to 2-3 opportunities/month, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Non-local consultants/speakers</li> <li>.. Local consultants</li> <li>.. Webinars</li> <li>.. General trainings</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Plan for coordinated/tracked offerings for fall</li> </ul>
	<b>4 Assess &amp; Adapt</b>	6/1/25-7/31/25	Review feedback from pilot & adapt programming for year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Undertake participant surveys and conversations</li> <li>.. Discussion &amp; assessment by associate project director and leadership team</li> <li>.. Build Year 2 programming</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>5 Coordinated Curriculum</b>	8/1/25-5/31/26	Offer refined programs from year 1 and launch curated pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Continue a la carte menu with revisions based on assessment of year 1</li> <li>.. Launch coordinated curriculum of development pathways, with an ordered, coherent structure for focused learning</li> </ul>
	<b>6 Refinement</b>	6/1/26-7/31/26	Review feedback from previous trainings & adapt programming for year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Undertake participant surveys and conversations</li> <li>.. Discussion &amp; assessment by associate project director and leadership team</li> <li>.. Build Year 3 programming</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>7 Institutionalization Planning</b>	8/1/26-5/31/27	Continue a la carte menu and coordinated curriculum pathways, and plan transition from grant-funded to institutionalized version of professional development training catalog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Continue a la carte menu with revisions based on assessment of year 2</li> <li>.. Continue coordinated curriculum of specific pathways for professional development</li> <li>.. Assessment by associate project director and leadership team</li> </ul>
	<b>8 Closing / Institutionalization</b>	6/1/27-7/31/27	Review feedback from previous sessions and adapt programming for the program's institutionalized version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Undertake participant surveys and conversations</li> <li>.. Discussion &amp; assessment by associate project director and leadership team</li> <li>.. Develop and launch ongoing professional development structure</li> </ul>