



21st Century Museum Professionals Program

Sample Application 21MP-256460-OMS-24

Georgia O'Keefe Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$180,975
Amount of cost share:	\$323,200

The Georgia O'Keefe Museum will create a paid apprenticeship program to provide opportunities for emerging museum professionals in Northern New Mexico to gain hands on training in collections management and art preparation. Museums throughout the state have experienced a shortage of qualified registrars and art handlers who reside in the communities they serve. Building on a successful pilot project with the Institute of American Indian Arts, the museum will expand the program to include outreach and recruitment at a range of local higher education institutions. The project is intended to foster immersive learning experiences for recent graduates entering the museum workforce. In addition to the apprenticeships, the museum will provide informational workshops and training opportunities for current students enrolled at partner institutions. The project will result in new pathways for emerging professionals in the arts and culture field.

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.

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum

Narrative: 21st Century Apprentices for the New O’Keeffe in New Mexico

Project Snapshot

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum will create a paid apprenticeship program to provide opportunities for three emerging museum professionals in Northern New Mexico to gain hands-on training in collections management and art preparation. This program comes at a unique and pivotal time at the O’Keeffe as we prepare to open a new museum building in 2027 for exhibitions, collections, and education. By collaborating with local higher education institutions, including Central New Mexico Community College, the Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico Highlands University, Northern New Mexico College, Santa Fe Community College, and the University of New Mexico, we will foster immersive learning experiences for recent graduates from underrepresented backgrounds who are entering the museum field. New Mexico is home to a robust arts and culture economy with more than 180 museums and cultural sites. There is great potential to recruit and train a next generation of museum professionals who reflect the diverse demographics of the state and who can close the gap between the number of open positions in the museum industry and qualified, experienced candidates.

Project Justification

Addressing 21MP Goals & Objectives:

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum seeks support through the Institute of Museum and Library Services 21st Century Museum Professionals Program to support a three one-year paid apprentices in collections management and art preparation. This program will engage three recent graduates from higher education institutions in New Mexico, including Central New Mexico Community College, the Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico Highlands University, Northern New Mexico College, Santa Fe Community College, and the University of New Mexico. In addition to paid apprenticeships for three candidates, the O’Keeffe will also provide informational workshops and training opportunities to current students enrolled at the above institutions in our surrounding region so that students can learn about these career paths, as well as the variety of positions in a museum. The O’Keeffe requests \$180,975 to support this project over three years. Through this work, the O’Keeffe will advance the goals of this IMLS grant program, specifically:

Goal 1, Support the professional development of the museum workforce, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.

- **Objective 1.1:** Develop new or enhanced professional development and training programs for the museum workforce.

Goal 2, Recruit and train future museum professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.

- **Objective 2.3:** Recruit future museum professionals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds through paid internships, mentoring, and fellowship opportunities.

Responding to Need, Problems, and Challenges:

The seed for this project idea was a suggestion from a visiting student from the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) who during a tour with the O’Keeffe’s Lead Preparator asked about the skills, experience, and qualifications needed to obtain a position in art handling. Recognizing that there is not a clear pathway to becoming a preparator/art handler, we realized that there is an opportunity for the O’Keeffe to develop a program in which emerging professionals could gain a valuable new skillset by working directly with Museum staff in collections, conservation, and preparation.

In 2023, the O’Keeffe piloted a Collections Management Fellowship in partnership with IAIA and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. IAIA student Kimberly Becenti (Tohono O’odham Nation) joined the O’Keeffe staff for a year-long project to gain hands-on experience in all aspects of collections management, including registration, documentation, and evaluation of items, including artwork, textiles,

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and furnishings. The lessons learned from this successful project are informing our project plan to create a more robust three-year program offered to recent graduates of IAIA, as well as other local higher education institutions. The next three years lead up to the opening of the new O’Keeffe in downtown Santa Fe, providing candidates with a rare opportunity to be part of our team as we reinstall the Museum’s vast collection in a brand-new facility.

It is well understood that the museum field lacks diversity in many positions, and this is especially true in collections management and art preparation. Studies by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation showed that in collections management, 77% of people are White (2022), and in art preparation, 75% of people are White and more than 75% are male (2015). New Mexico is a highly diverse state, and there is much work needed to ensure that the demographics of staff members in the museum field reflect the diverse demographics of the state. The most recent census showed that 50.1% of New Mexicans are Hispanic/Latinx, 34.9% are White, 11.2% are Native American/Indigenous, 2.7% are Black, 1.9% are Asian, and 2.7% are Multi-Racial.

Through this project, the O’Keeffe will create new pathways for emerging professionals in New Mexico to begin a career in the arts and culture field. The O’Keeffe and our colleagues from museums throughout the state have experienced a shortage of qualified registrars and art handlers who are local to New Mexico, which speaks to a lack of in-state training and resources for interested students. This project is a first step in creating a model for career development that can be shared and replicated at peer institutions.

Target Group:

The target groups include current students and recent graduates from higher education institutions in northern New Mexico. Current students interested in entering the museum field will be engaged through informational workshops about the diverse careers available at a museum and training opportunities focused on art preparation and collections management. Recent graduates, defined as students who have completed their studies within the last two to three years, will be invited to apply for one of three paid apprenticeships where they will join the O’Keeffe as full-time paid staff members for in-depth experiential learning opportunities as we prepare to open a new museum building in 2027.

Collaborating institutions include:

- **Central New Mexico Community College (CNMCC):** New Mexico’s largest higher education institution for undergraduate enrollment, with 21,390 students. 53.7% Hispanic or Latino, 25.9% White, 6.62% American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.01% Two or More Races, 2.79% Black or African American, 2.14% Asian, and 0.28% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders.
- **Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA):** IAIA’s Museum Studies Program is believed to be the oldest in the nation, having been formally established in 1975 and receiving accreditation in 1984. The enrollment is 800 students and is generally made up of approximately 90% Native American and First Nations students. The O’Keeffe has previously partnered with IAIA on a student fellowship.
- **New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU):** NMHU has an enrollment of 2,800 students. 52.4% Hispanic or Latino, 22.4% White, 10.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.14% Black or African American, 2.8% Two or More Races, 0.907% Asian, and 0.378% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders. The O’Keeffe has previously partnered with NMHU on a photography project with their students.
- **Northern New Mexico College (NNMC):** The college’s original mission and charter makes NNMC the first Hispanic-serving institution in the United States, and enrolls 1,130 students.

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68.8% Hispanic or Latino, 13% White, 7.22% American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.63% Two or More Races, 2.02% Black or African American, 1.85% Asian, and 0.088% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders.

- **Santa Fe Community College (SFCC):** SFCC enrolls 6,480 students. 51.5% Hispanic or Latino, 31.6% White, 6.28% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.53% Asian, 1.44% Two or More Races, 1.32% Black or African American, and 0.0612% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders.
- **University of New Mexico (UNM):** UNM is one of eight Research I universities in the United States that are Hispanic Serving Institutes, and has an enrollment of 22,139 students across its undergraduate and graduate programs. 44.3% Hispanic or Latino, 32.6% White, 5.73% American Indian or Alaska Native, 4.43% Asian, 3.6% Two or More Races, 2.62% Black or African American, and 0.176% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders. The O’Keeffe has previously partnered with UNM for student fellowships and learning projects focused on the Museum’s historic properties.

Ultimate Beneficiaries:

This project will benefit students and recent graduates at the above institutions, including three recent graduates selected for the paid apprenticeships, as well as additional students participating in informational workshops and other training opportunities offered by the O’Keeffe. The apprenticeships will provide training in:

Art Preparation (First Apprentice and Second Apprentice):

- Basics of Art Handling, Care, and Set-Up
- De-Installation
- Wall Preparation and Art Hanging
- Exhibition Graphics Installation, Vinyl and Murals
- Mounts
- Cases
- Mannequins and Dressing
- Pests, Exhibition Maintenance and Cleaning
- Conservation Matting and Framing
- Crating and Uncrating
- Design in Exhibitions
- Exhibition Lighting

Collections Management (Third Apprentice):

- Research and Analysis
- Managing Inventories
- Collection Storage Strategies
- Cataloguing information
- Collections Management Software Systems
- Condition Reports
- Loan Agreements

The O’Keeffe will benefit from having the contributions of the apprentices as we work towards the opening of our new museum building in 2027, increasing our internal capacity to reinstall our diverse collections and implement new interpretive frameworks. In New Mexico, the museum field will benefit through this investment in sharing career opportunities and training experiences to ready the next generation of museum professionals that can bring their talents to sites across the state. The broader

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museum field beyond New Mexico will benefit as this project can serve as a model for career development that can be shared and replicated at peer institutions.

Project Work Plan

Project Activities:

The project will take place from August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2027 and include:

Activity 1: August 2024 to December 2024 - Launch, Planning, & Recruitment

- Finalize first apprenticeship description (August to September)
- Collaborate with higher education partners on recruitment strategies and planning for additional workshops/trainings for students (September to October)
- Interview and select Year 1 apprentice (November)

Activity 2: January 2025 to December 2025 - First Apprenticeship

- First apprenticeship focused on art preparation begins (January)
- Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors (January to December)
- Apprentice attends PACCIN Preparators Conference (May)
- Completion of apprentice curriculum (December)
- Evaluation of first apprenticeship (December)

Activity 3: August 2025 to December 2025 - Planning & Recruitment

- Finalize second apprenticeship description (August to September)
- Collaborate with higher education partners on recruitment strategies and planning for additional workshops/trainings for students (September to October)
- Interview and select second apprentice (November)

Activity 4: January 2026 to December 2026 - Second Apprenticeship

- Second apprenticeship focused on art preparation begins (January)
- Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors (January to December)
- Apprentice attends PACCIN Preparators conference (May)
- Completion of apprentice curriculum (December)
- Evaluation of second apprenticeship (December)

Activity 5: January 2026 to May 2026 - Planning & Recruitment

- Finalize third apprenticeship description (January to May)
- Interview and select third apprentice (May)

Activity 6: July 2026 to June 2027 - Third Apprenticeship

- Third apprenticeship focused on collections management begins (July)
- Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors (July to June)
- Apprentice attends Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists conference (November)
- Completion of apprentice curriculum (June)
- Evaluation of third apprenticeship (June)

Activity 7: July 2027 - Project Conclusion

- Overall evaluation of apprenticeship program (July)
- Project results shared through final report and through the O’Keeffe’s communication channels (July)

Potential Risks and Mitigation:

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A potential risk is the retention of the apprentices for the duration of the program, as they may be presented with other opportunities or face challenges in completing the program. While this cannot be completely mitigated, strategies include creating a work environment that fosters learning and growth and encourages long-term commitment. Examples include providing fair wages and benefits that are competitive within the field and region, with apprentices having access to additional professional development and networking opportunities to set them up for success beyond the program. In addition, O’Keeffe staff mentors will actively engage with apprentices during the program, seeking informal and formal feedback and input on projects and processes to adjust the program as needed. The O’Keeffe also promotes a healthy work-life balance, recognizing the need to be flexible when personal commitments arise.

Project Management:

The project will be managed by:

- **Jennifer Foley, Deputy Director for Collections and Engagement:** Jennifer will provide overall strategic direction for the project, as well as participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.
- **Tom Miller, Manager of Exhibition Design and Preparation, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum:** Tom will be a lead mentor for the apprentices, sharing his knowledge and expertise in art preparation and handling, meeting with the apprentice weekly, and setting them up for success in their projects.
- **Brandon Coon, Assistant Preparator:** will work directly with the apprentice during their time at the O’Keeffe in areas related to preparation. He will also participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.
- **Judy Chiba Smith, Registrar/Collections Manager, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum:** Judy will provide additional mentorship for the apprentice in areas related to collections management.

Additional staff involved include:

- **Dale Kronkright, Head of Conservation, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum:** Dale will work directly with the apprentices to share his expertise in conservation. He will also participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.
- **Bess Murphy, Luce Curator of Art and Social Practice:** Bess will work directly with the apprentices during their time at the O’Keeffe in areas related to social practice. She will also participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.
- **Sherri Sorensen-Clem, Associate Registrar/Collections Manager, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum:** Sherri will work directly with the apprentice during their time at the O’Keeffe in areas related to collections management. She will also participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.
- **Giustina Renzoni, Curator of Historic Properties:** Giustina will work directly with the apprentices in areas related to O’Keeffe’s historic properties. She will also participate in the broader informational workshops and trainings.

Required Resources:

This project will require commitment from O’Keeffe staff who will serve as mentors for the apprenticeships and participate in workshops and trainings at partnering institutions. We have budgeted

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the appropriate amount of staff time to support project activities, estimated at 15 to 18 hours per week of direct mentoring. Additional resources include a toolkit provided to each apprentice with the necessary equipment needed for their work, which they can keep beyond the length of the program to support their future endeavors.

Tracking Progress:

The overall intended goal of the internship is to increase the skill level of the apprentices related to art handling and collections care in museums and to develop future museum preparators and contract preparators in our region. O’Keeffe staff will work with our higher education partners to evaluate the success of workshops and trainings using surveys and in-person observation. The apprentices will meet with their O’Keeffe mentors weekly to discuss apprenticeship activities, address challenges, and identify areas to help improve their overall experience to support their career aspirations in the museum field. At the conclusion of the project, each apprentice will be asked to present on their experience, sharing the knowledge they gained and providing insights to improve future iterations of the program. They will also take part in exit interviews upon completion of the program.

Project Results

Intended Results:

The project will be successful if it provides students and recent graduates in New Mexico with meaningful experiences that increases their knowledge about collections care, fosters relevant skills for the workplace, and supports development of their professional network. It will address the need for hands-on training programs for students in New Mexico from underrepresented backgrounds, helping to build a new workforce for the culture sector in our state and beyond. Ultimately, we hope that this project will help to address the lack of diversity in collections management and art handling positions in the museum field.

Impact on Target Group: Participants will gain new skills in collections management and art preparation through their participation in the apprenticeships. They will also gain in-depth experience during a unique opportunity in the history of the O’Keeffe as we prepare to open a new museum. In addition, a larger audience of students at partnering institutions will learn about careers in the museum field that they may have not been familiar with and build connections with professionals in the sector.

Resulting Products: The O’Keeffe will thoughtfully document the apprenticeships, and a resulting end-product will be a detailed structure and curriculum that provides them with a solid foundation to apply for future position in art preparation or collections management. The project will be shared through the O’Keeffe’s communications channels, which include an e-newsletter (28,000 subscribers), Facebook (72,000 followers), Instagram (123,000 followers), and Twitter (7,600 followers). The O’Keeffe will also publish a feature story about the project in *O’Keeffe Magazine* which is distributed to more than 3,000 households throughout the country. We will also collaborate with our higher education partners to share the project with their audiences.

Sustaining the Project: This project is designed to take place over the three years leading up to the opening of the new O’Keeffe Museum, which will require additional capacity in collections management and art preparation. The apprentices will gain valuable experience that can be applied to positions at peer institutions in New Mexico and beyond. We will build deep partnerships with collaborating higher education institutions so that we can continue collaborations that benefit their students, such as continuing to provide workshops and trainings and recruiting students for the O’Keeffe’s ongoing internship and fellowship opportunities.

Applicant Name: Georgia O’Keeffe Museum

Project Title: 21st Century Apprentices for the New O’Keeffe in New Mexico

Activities	Year 1: August 2024 to July 2025												
	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	
Activity 1: Launch, Planning, & Recruitment													
Finalize first apprenticeship description	█	█											
Collaborate with higher education partners on recruitment strategies and planning		█	█										
Interview and select Year 1 apprentice				█									
Activity 2: First Apprenticeship													
First apprenticeship focused on art preparation begins						█							
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors						█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Apprentice attends PACCIN Preparators Conference										█			

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Activities	Year 2: August 2025 to July 2026												
	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	
Activity 2: First Apprenticeship													
<i>Continued activities from Year 1</i>													
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors													
Completion of apprentice curriculum													
Evaluation of first apprenticeship													
Activity 3: Planning & Recruitment													
Finalize second apprenticeship description													
Collaborate with higher education partners on recruitment strategies and planning													
Interview and select second apprentice													
Activity 4: Second Apprenticeship													
Second apprenticeship focused on art preparation begins													
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors													
Apprentice attends PACCIN Preparators conference													
Activity 5: Planning & Recruitment													
Finalize third apprenticeship description													
Interview and select third apprentice													
Activity 6: Third Apprenticeship													
Third apprenticeship focused on collections management begins													
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors													

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Year 3: August 2026 to July 2027												
Activities	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J
Activity 4: Second Apprenticeship												
<i>Continued activities from Year 2</i>												
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors	█	█	█	█	█							
Apprentice attends PACCIN Preparators conference												
Completion of apprentice curriculum					█							
Evaluation of second apprenticeship					█							
Activity 6: Third Apprenticeship												
<i>Continued activities from Year 2</i>												
Weekly meetings with O’Keeffe staff mentors	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Apprentice attends Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists conference				█								
Completion of apprentice curriculum											█	
Evaluation of third apprenticeship											█	
Activity 7: Project Conclusion												
Overall evaluation of apprenticeship program												█
Project results shared through final report and through the O’Keeffe’s communication channels												█