



Inspire! Grants for Small Museums

Sample Application IGSM-255743-OMS-24
Project Category: Lifelong Learning
Project Type: Small Project (\$5,000-\$25,000)

Children's Museum of Green Bay

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$25,000
Amount of cost share:	\$4,893

The Children's Museum of Green Bay will provide educational programming and free museum admission to support reading programs at rural libraries in Northeast Wisconsin. Fostering literacy is a critical need, with only 35% of Wisconsin third-grade students meeting reading proficiency targets. The museum will partner with five regional libraries to offer a series of outreach programs, six mini-traveling exhibitions, and free museum passes. The project will support education staff time and travel, the purchase of program and exhibition supplies and materials, and museum admission fees. The project will advance reading proficiency and promote positive family interactions in rural communities. Children and families will benefit by having more consistent access to fun and educational art and STEM activities. The museum will track project results through post-outreach program logs, evaluation surveys, assessment meetings, and attendance records.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Performance Measurement Plan

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 Narrative

Partners in Play: The Children's Museum of Green Bay and Rural Libraries

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

- IMLS Goal 1 – Champion Lifelong Learning
 - Objective 1.1: Advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all.
- Inspire! Grant for Small Museums Goal – Build the capacity for small museums to provide museum services to their communities.
 - Objective 1: Support the development of cross-disciplinary learning experiences for small museums.
- The Children's Museum of Green Bay (hereinafter referred to as the Museum) is a place where children play to learn, and adults learn to play. The Museum creates and develops programming that challenges and inspires children and families. Partners in Play advances four key components of the Museum's strategic plan:
 - 1) expand programming by leading off-site programs.
 - 2) support marginalized families in local communities by providing access to the Museum.
 - 3) Increase programming offered during school breaks/vacations.
 - 4) increase community awareness of museum program offerings.

Partners in Play serves children and families who live in rural communities by partnering with local libraries within a 40-mile radius of the Museum. Off-site outreach programs will occur during school breaks at six libraries in Northeast Wisconsin. Admission passes and mini traveling exhibits provided through Play Partners will free provide Museum access and bring increased awareness of the Museum's offerings.

- Rural libraries face a unique set of challenges – they operate with a small staff in a small space on a small budget. A typical library (with a community population of 2,500 or fewer) is staffed by 1.9 full-time staff in an average 2,600 square foot space¹. And because these libraries are funded by the population that they serve, the smaller the population, the fewer resources to fund them. Yet, these small libraries often find themselves as the primary provider of youth enrichment opportunities during out-of-school times because cost barriers, travel limitations, and time constraints restrict programming access in rural communities².

Libraries offer access to free (or low cost) activities that are hands-on, educational, and culturally relevant. And while children and family programming occurs year-round, library summer reading programs frequently see a higher attendance, due to school vacation. These reading programs encourage book selections based on children's personal interests, rather than the assigned books from school, and these programs can help prevent summer learning loss. Reading programs encourage socialization, new perspectives, and emotional awareness in children, and children who like to read perform better in school³.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, reading proficiency levels have been slowly declining. Only 35% of Wisconsin third grade students are meeting reading proficiency targets. Rural local school districts follow this alarming trend of reading scores, with only the following percentages of third grade students reading at a proficient level⁴:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Oconto Unified School District: 25% | • Gillett School District: 54% |
| • Oconto Falls School District: 35% | • Seymour School District: 21% |
| • Lena Public School District: 39% | |

At the 2022 Reading Success Summit, parents noted several times that rewards for reading completion were beneficial for children⁵. By providing Museum passes as incentives for summer reading programs, educational play at the Museum will become that extrinsic reward, which can lead to an intrinsic love of reading and learning in the future. By collaborating with organizations, like the Museum, rural libraries can meet and serve community patrons

“where they are⁶.” Museum outreach programs and traveling exhibits at the libraries will provide hands-on activities within the local communities themselves, and required travel would not be an obstacle for families. Museum admission passes for library check-out will further eliminate cost barriers for families, providing access for all. By working together, rural libraries and the Museum can encourage a love of literacy in young children and provide families with continued enrichment opportunities that are educational, play-based, safe, and most of all – fun.

- The target/beneficiary groups for Partners in Play are children (aged 2-12 years) and families in rural communities within a 40-mile radius of Green Bay, Wisconsin.
 - Anticipated Total Number of Children for Outreach Programs, Admission Pass Check-Outs and Admission Passes as Reading Incentives: 1,800
 - Approximately Total Number of Card Holders at the 5 Libraries: 9,000

The Museum’s Director of Education conferred separately with each library director to analyze current child programming needs/gaps in their community and to brainstorm how the Museum could support the libraries.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

- Partners in Play consists of four components: 1) outreach programs, 2) mini traveling exhibits, 3) museum passes for check out from libraries, and 4) museum passes as incentives/awards for library reading programs.
 - 1) Outreach programs for children and families will occur during school breaks at each library. Five outreach programs will occur annually. One outreach program is preliminarily scheduled at each library in the following months: December (winter break), March (spring break), June, July, and August. Programs can accommodate up to 30 persons at each session. Library staff will meet with the Museum’s Director of Education to schedule outreach programs during times deemed most beneficial for youth programming during school breaks (morning/afternoon/evening; weekday/weekend). Library staff will also determine which outreach program themes will be most relevant and/or interesting to their patrons. Libraries will determine if patrons need to pre-register, and will utilize the library’s established program registration process if necessary. The following outreach themes are available: Give Me Shelter, Slime Time, Unsinkable Ships, Pottery of the Past, and Tape Resist Canvas Painting. Every outreach program will include:
 - 60-minute outreach session
 - Facilitation by the Museum’s education team
 - All necessary consumable and non-consumable supplies
 - Background information on the program theme
 - Hands-on activities, including a project that participants may keep
 - 2) The Museum will provide hands-on interactive pieces that will travel in a rotation system around to the participating libraries. These mini exhibits were selected based on the available youth area and storage space at the libraries. Mini exhibits require minimal supervision and limited consumable supplies; they are meant to support the library’s current activities, not create additional work for the library staff. Exhibits can be moved by a singular person, if necessary for library programming. The exhibit rotation system and transportation will be managed by the Museum, with input from individual libraries. Rotation will occur every two months. The following mini exhibits will be available:
 - Wind Tunnel with Scarves
 - Big Blue Blocks (foam buildables)
 - Discovery Ramps (wooden balls and ramp set)
 - Giant Light Bright
 - Magnetic Tiles
 - BiggoBlocks (large legos)
 - 3) Each library will have daily admission passes that library patrons can check out to receive free admission at The Children’s Museum of Green Bay. Each pass will provide free admission for one adult and one child. Each library may establish its own check out protocols and regulations based on the needs of their community’s patrons. The number of total combined pass check-outs per library is based on library’s children’s program attendance, community population, and school district enrollment.
 - Farnsworth Public Library (Oconto): 4 printed passes for 200 combined check outs
 - Oconto Falls Community Library = 4 printed passes for 200 combined check outs
 - Lena Public Library = 2 printed passes for 75 combined check outs
 - Gillett Public Library = 2 printed passes for 75 combined check outs
 - Muehl Public Library (Seymour) = 4 printed passes for 200 combined check outs

- 4) The Children’s Museum of Green Bay will provide one free daily admission pass (single use) to each child signed up for the summer reading or other children’s reading challenge programs at each library. When children complete their reading program, they will be awarded their museum pass. Libraries will be responsible for distributing passes to children upon completion. Passes are only valid for child admission at the museum, and passes will have an expiration date of December 30, 2025. The number of admission passes projected for this program was based on the number of children who participated in the summer reading program at each library in 2023.

Partners in Play will occur on a consistent basis. The Museum staff who lead outreach programs will complete a post-outreach log after each session to evaluate participants’ engagement, activity difficult, program objectives and project challenges, and overall program “flow.” Library staff and anonymously selected patrons will complete evaluation surveys on a bi-monthly basis for mini exhibits and after each outreach program to monitor for necessary adjustments. Assessment meetings, including the Museum and library staff, will happen at the mid-point and end of the Partners in Play.

Activity One: Initial Meeting with Libraries

Activity Two: Outreach - Finalize Program Schedule

Activity Three: Outreach – Lead Programs

Activity Four: Outreach – Complete Post Program Logs

Activity Five: Outreach – Complete Evaluation Surveys (Library Staff and Anonymous Patrons)

Activity Six: Mini Exhibits – Purchase and Assemble Exhibits

Activity Seven: Mini Exhibits – Finalize Rotation Schedule

Activity Eight: Mini Exhibits – Deliver/Rotate Exhibits

Activity Nine: Mini Exhibits – Available at Libraries for Play

Activity Ten: Mini Exhibits - Complete Evaluation Surveys (Library Staff and Anonymous Patrons)

Activity Eleven: Admission Passes for Library Check-Out – Available at Libraries for Check-Out

Activity Twelve: Admission Passes for Library Check-Out – Compile Usage Data

Activity Thirteen: Admission Passes as Reading Incentives – Available at Libraries for Distribution

Activity Fourteen: Admission Passes as Reading Incentives – Compile Usage Data

Activity Fifteen: Lead Assessment Meetings

Activity Sixteen: Complete Final Report

- Risks to Partners in Play include: 1) Museum staff loss or absence, 2) low attendance/participation, 3) inclement weather, and 4) breakage of mini exhibits
 - The Museum and each library will include back-up dates and remain flexible if outreach programs need to be re-scheduled. Written education plans, including objectives and instructions, for each outreach program will be completed and shared with all staff on the Museum education team. In addition, all the Museum education team will be trained in leading outreach, even if this is not their primary role. This will enable staffing substitutions should the need arise. The Director of Education will disclose all data, analyses, and schedules of Partners in Play via shared document files/drives with the Museum’s Executive Director. Should losses or emergencies occur, another Museum staff will be able to smoothly continue Partners in Play.
 - If low attendance for outreach programs is consistent at a library, the Museum and library staff can adjust the schedule to offer outreach at different times or to select alternate program themes. If check-out of museum passes or distribution of museum incentive passes is low due to lack of participation, the Museum could extend the Partners in Play ending point to increase the number of passes utilized.
 - The Museum and libraries will remain flexible with mini exhibit rotation dates. While a rotation date will be scheduled at least 2 months in advance, if inclement weather occurs where travel would not be safe or advised, this date can be rescheduled. The rescheduled date would be as soon as feasible.
 - Breakage will be likely due to the young population utilizing the exhibits. This is anticipated and a regular occurrence at the Museum itself. The Museum will purchase and provide replacements as feasible. The Museum will provide written troubleshooting directions with diagrams as necessary for the mini exhibits.

- Whitney Potvin will plan, implement, and manage Partners in Play. She has served as the Director of Education at The Children’s Museum of Green Bay since August 2020, and has been a member of the Museum’s education team since 2014. She holds a degree in education and is a licensed teacher through the Department of Public Instruction in Wisconsin. She previously worked as a classroom teacher and a residential summer camp program director. Whitney first launched the Museum’s outreach programming in fall 2014; the Museum presently leads over 140 outreach programs per year at schools, libraries, local shelters, and community organizations. She oversees museum programming and serves as the Museum’s liaison for area school districts, childcare centers, and out-of-school/extended learning programs. Whitney is also the Museum’s grant writer and is responsible for tracking data and reporting results for grant funds awarded.
- Olivia Dow, Education Specialist One at the Museum, will assist in leading outreach programs and evaluating Partners in Play. She has worked on the Museum’s education team since August 2023. She holds a degree in educational studies. Olivia develops and leads daily educational programs at the Museum, including toddler movement classes and story times, STEM-based activities, garden-to-table activities, and hands-on art projects. She is trained to lead programs with at-risk groups. Previously, she was the lead teacher for a childcare center.
- Education Specialist Two is currently an open position that the Museum is actively seeking to fill. This role is responsible for implementing museum STEAM-based programs, leading outreach programs off-site, researching/developing new programs and special events, evaluating programs, and supporting visitor services team. A degree in education (or 2+ years of comparable/relevant work experience) is preferred.
- The Museum will need 3 staff members to successfully implement Partners in Play.
 - Education Specialists One and Two will each devote 1-12 hours per month. During outreach program months, 12 hours will be required for time to purchase supplies, prepare supplies, lead programs, and complete post logs. At the mid and end points, 6 hours will be needed each month for assessment meetings; and an additional 1 hour will be needed at the beginning of the program. This amounts to 67 hours in Year One and 6 hours in Year Two for Education Specialist One; and 57 hours in Year One and 6 hours in Year Two for Education Specialist Two.
 - Director of Education will devote 2-14 hours per month to Partners in Play. The first two months include 10 hours each for initial meetings with libraries, finalizing schedules and pass procedures, and acquiring/assembling exhibits. Every month includes 2 hours for checking in with each library to monitor partnership progress. During “even” months, 8 hours are needed for exhibit delivery/rotation. During the first year, 2 additional hours will be needed to compile data from surveys and pass usage. The mid-point and end-point will require 6 additional hours per month to include full assessment meetings and reporting. This will amount to 128 hours in Year One and 32 hours in Year Two.
- The Museum will need to purchase consumable and non-consumable supplies for outreach programs. Non-consumable supplies include classroom sets of scissors, hole punchers, paint brushes, cups, and storage containers. Consumable supplies for outreach programs include varying art materials and STEM building supplies. Detailed list is included in budget justification. This amounts to \$68.39 for non-consumable materials, and \$1,539.29 in consumable supplies.
- The Museum will need to purchase the mini traveling exhibits, storage containers, and a transport cart. This amounts to a \$3,410.83 total.
- The Museum will reimburse for miles traveled for outreach programs and mini exhibit rotations. The reimbursement rate is \$.655 per mile for a total of \$1,401.70 in Year One and \$151.96 in Year Two.
- Each library has committed to providing the necessary space for mini traveling exhibits and outreach programs. This space may be conference rooms, play areas, community rooms, or outdoor grounds (dependent on supplies and weather). Libraries will develop procedures to pass check-outs.
- The Museum will track the progress of Partners in Play through four main methods:
 - 1) The Museum staff who lead outreach programs will complete a post-outreach log after each session to evaluate participants’ engagement, activity difficulty, program objectives, and overall program “flow.” Logs will be analyzed quarterly by the Director of Education to determine if adjustments need to be made to the outreach lesson/education plans, supplies, schedule, or set up.
 - 2) Evaluation surveys will be completed on a quarterly basis by library staff and anonymously selected participants.

- 3) Assessment meetings will be held at the mid and end points between the Director of Education, library staff, and Education Specialists. Data from log and survey analyses will be reviewed, and alterations may be made to the structure/schedule of Partners in Play to best serve participants.
- 4) Partners in Play participants (outreach programs attendance, check-out passes used, and incentive passes used) will be documented in the Museum's attendance reports (day, month, year), generated through the point-of-sale computer system Altru/Blackbaud. Attendance will be tracked for each library and collectively as a whole.

PROJECT RESULTS

- By implementing Partners in Play, the Museum will achieve the following:
 - 1) foster a love of literacy
 - 2) provide children and families from rural communities with access to consistent fun educational activities through Art and STEM projects
 - 3) promote positive family interactions (children and adults) through interactive, play-based experiences
 - Outreach Programs: 1 program during winter break, 1 program during spring break, 3 programs during summer break at 5 rural libraries (25 total programs)
Goal: approximately 20 participants per program
 - Mini Traveling Exhibits: 1 exhibit that remains at the library for 2 months then rotates (6 total exhibits)
Goal: children and adults can play together as a family
 - Admission Passes for Check-Out: 750 passes that each provide free admission for one adult and one child.
Goal: 80% of passes are checked out before Partners in Play end date
 - Admission Passes as Reading Incentives: 575 passes that provide free admission for one child.
Goal: 80% of reading incentives passes are used before established pass expiration date

- Rural libraries play a key role in their communities by providing reading and information access for all. But small libraries face many barriers – limited finances, space, and staff. Partners in Play emphasizes that importance of play AND the importance of reading for children. Through Partners in Play, the Museum will help ease library limitations and potentially increase library attendance and utilization as well. Bringing families to the library is the first step, and the opportunity to check out free museum passes may be just the necessary catalyst. Once at the library, participation in programs and engagement with resources will likely follow.

Children learn through play, and shared play-based experiences can bring together children and families. Play interactions do not need to be complex, just open-minded, as parents can explore through Museum visits, outreach programs, and mini exhibits. Parents and children will understand that the Museum provides safe, educational play spaces, accessible for all families, regardless of location or socio-economic status. Families know that they will have fun while engaging at the museum and libraries, but understand that they are learning as well. Exhibits and outreach programs all have focused objectives and alignment with education standards.

Reading with children helps them expand their understanding of their world and encourages imaginations. Proficient readers develop larger vocabularies and ultimately perform better in school. Early literacy begins in toddlerhood, which means these are critical years to begin shaping their language and literacy development. Alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, increased vocabulary, and print awareness are skills that children develop through reading books. By developing habitual reading and a love of books, young children are preparing themselves for future success.

- “Products” from Partners in Play will include all Art and STEM projects/activities from outreach programs. All supplies necessary for activities will be provided to participants, who may keep their finished projects. Six mini exhibits will also be purchased.

- When grant funding expires, The Children's Museum of Green Bay and libraries will continue to seek sponsorship, donors, or alternate grant funds to support the Play Partners program. Because Partners in Play is a pilot program, data from the 2024-2025 initial phase will be instrumental in providing support for additional funding requests.



Schedule of Completion

Partners in Play: The Children's Museum of Green Bay and Rural Libraries

Year One

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Activity One	█											
Activity Two		█										
Activity Three				█	█		█	█		█	█	█
Activity Four				█	█		█	█		█	█	█
Activity Five				█	█		█	█		█	█	█
Activity Six	█	█										
Activity Seven		█										
Activity Eight			█		█		█		█		█	
Activity Nine			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Activity Ten					█		█		█		█	
Activity Eleven		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Activity Twelve				█	█			█	█			█
Activity Thirteen				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Activity Fourteen									█	█		
Activity Fifteen								█	█			
Activity Sixteen												

Activity One: Initial Meeting with Libraries

Activity Two: Outreach - Finalize Program Schedule

Activity Three: Outreach – Lead Programs

Activity Four: Outreach – Complete Post Program Logs

Activity Five: Outreach – Complete Evaluation Surveys (Library Staff and Anonymous Patrons)

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Activity Seven: Mini Exhibits – Finalize Rotation Schedule

Activity Eight: Mini Exhibits – Deliver/Rotate Exhibits

Activity Nine: Mini Exhibits – Available at Libraries for Play

Activity Ten: Mini Exhibits - Complete Evaluation Surveys (Library Staff and Anonymous Patrons)

Activity Eleven: Admission Passes for Library Check-Out – Available at Libraries for Check-Out

Activity Twelve: Admission Passes for Library Check-Out – Compile Usage Data

Activity Thirteen: Admission Passes as Reading Incentives – Available at Libraries for Distribution

Activity Fourteen: Admission Passes as Reading Incentives – Compile Usage Data

Activity Fifteen: Lead Assessment Meetings

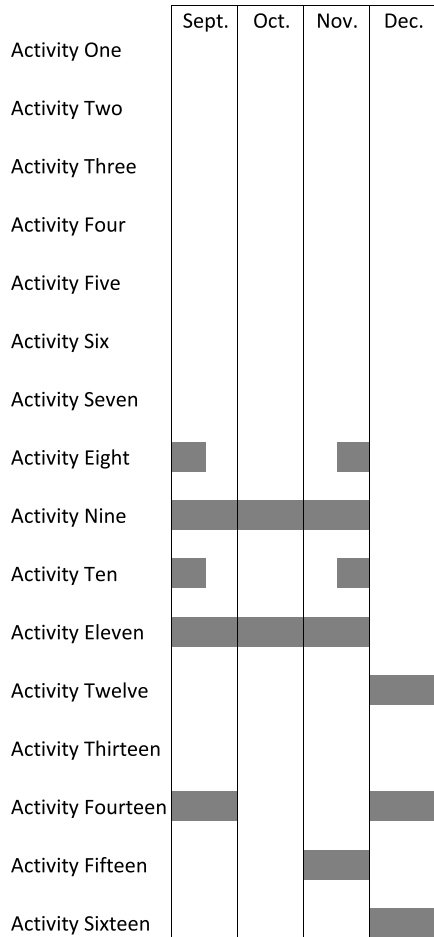
Activity Sixteen: Complete Final Report



Schedule of Completion

Partners in Play: The Children's Museum of Green Bay and Rural Libraries

Year Two



- Activity One: Initial Meeting with Libraries
- Activity Two: Outreach - Finalize Program Schedule
- Activity Three: Outreach – Lead Programs
- Activity Four: Outreach – Complete Post Program Logs
- Activity Five: Outreach – Complete Evaluation Surveys (Library Staff and Anonymous Patrons)
- Activity Six: Mini Exhibits – Purchase and Assemble Exhibits
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- Activity Fourteen: Admission Passes as Reading Incentives – Compile Usage Data
- Activity Fifteen: Lead Assessment Meetings
- Activity Sixteen: Complete Final Report

Applicant Name: The Children’s Museum of Green Bay
 Project Title: Partners in Play



Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
<p>Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.</p>			
	<p>At the mid and end points - using an attendance report generated through our point-of-sale computer system, we (Project Director) will compare the total number of library pass (reading program incentives) museum visitors against the anticipated number of visitors proposed for the project.</p> <p>Each month - using an attendance report generated through our point-of-sale computer system, we (Project Director) will compare the total number of library pass (check out) museum visitors against the anticipated number of visitors proposed for the project.</p> <p>Each quarter – we (Project Director) and Education Specialists will meet to review data/findings from post-outreach observation logs and evaluation surveys from exhibits and outreach.</p> <p>After each outreach program – using an attendance report generated through our point-of-sale computer system, we (Project Director) will compare the total number of outreach program participants against the anticipated number of participants proposed for the project.</p>			
<p>Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.</p>			

<p>used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group</p>	<p>Each quarter - we (Project Director) will assess expenditures on outreach supplies based on projected costs and per-program basis.</p> <p>Each quarter – we (Project Director) will assess the mileage and travel time based on projected vs. actual costs.</p>
<p>Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.</p> <p>Every two months – we (the Museum) and library staff will administer an evaluation survey to library patrons (selected at random, anonymous) who have interacted with mini exhibits.</p> <p>After each outreach program – we (the Museum) will complete the log to explore and document engagement, activity difficulty, objectives, and overall “flow.”</p> <p>After each outreach program – we (the Museum) and/or library staff will administer an evaluation survey to participants (selected at random, anonymous) who have completed the outreach program.</p>
<p>Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.</p> <p>Each quarter – we (Project Director) will assess the proposed schedule of completion and the actual completion dates for outreach programs and exhibit rotations.</p> <p>Each quarter – we (Project Director) will assess the exhibit delivery and travel time based on projected vs. actual time.</p>