INSTITUTE *of*
**Museum**and**Library**
SERVICES

# Museums Empowered

Sample Application ME-255829-OMS-24
Project Category: Organizational Management

# Mark Twain House and Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:      $228,709
Amount of cost share:        $357,211

The Mark Twain House and Museum will develop a capacity-building initiative for staff and the Board of Trustees to improve internal and external engagement by placing audiences at the center of the museum's work. The museum will build staff capacity to identify and meet community needs by learning about audience engagement topics and tools. These learnings will then be put into practice through evaluation and program development.  Project activities include a series of learning workshops that will generate an audience evaluation plan and a community engagement plan. The project will result in staff creating three pilot offerings — including a new public program, a new house tour, and a new exhibition component — as well as increased staff capacity to implement audience-centered practices.

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.

## Empowering an Audience-Centered Museum:
## Comprehensive Learning and Evaluation at the Mark Twain House & Museum

**Project Justification: What do we plan to do? IMLS goals met, Strategic Plan connection**

The Mark Twain House & Museum (MTH) in Hartford, CT, preserves and interprets the 1874 family home of Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, and works to ensure that Twain's legacy is relevant now and in the future. In our 50th year of operation as a public museum, the MTH is embarking on an ambitious project—and the primary goal of our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan--to realign our operations to center visitors in all that we do, making the audience and community engagement a central component of the work of the museum. To paraphrase Stephen Weil (1999)[2], we want to be a museum that is not just about someone—Mark Twain—but is for someone—the community right around us and our regional, national and international audiences.

Well aware of the magnitude of this kind of shift, The MTH staff are seeking an IMLS Museums Empowered grant for $228,709 to create a comprehensive all-staff learning and capacity building initiative. Over a three-year period, all full and part-time staff will work with members of the board of trustees, consultants, and each other to:

- Cultivate knowledge about; audience-centered museums and community engagement as processes, and the practice of audience evaluation as a crucial tool for learning about our audiences.
- Build internal capacity to practice evaluation.
- Remediate our lack of audience data through quantitative and qualitative audience evaluation.
- Apply learnings and evaluation data by piloting new public offerings in the interpretation, education and curatorial departments; and ultimately develop abilities in audience-centered operations and community engagement as core functions of our museum.
- The entire project will be evaluated for its impact on the staff, board and organization as a whole.

For this project, we understand the term audience-centered to mean learning about and focusing our attention on the users of our museum, finding points of connection between audiences' values, perspectives, and interests and our own mission-based activities. We understand community engagement as the consistent and reciprocal relationships built with the communities that we serve; sharing authority with a community. We are using the term community to mean the residents of the City of Hartford and the Greater Hartford region, while we use the term audience(s) to mean the wide-ranging group of people who visit The MTH from all 50 states and over 40 countries around the world.

It is also important to note that The MTH is a predominantly White organization, located between two neighborhoods which represent two different experiences of living in Connecticut; our site in Asylum Hill is a neighborhood in the City of Hartford whose residents are 42% Latine, 40% Black, 35% White, 3% Asian and 25% identify as multiple races/ethnicities. However, our organization lies a five-minute drive from West Hartford, whose demographics reflect the Greater Hartford region; 75% White, 15% Latine, 13% Black, 4.2% Asian, and 10% identifying as multiple/other races/ethnicities. Of the 36% of our U.S. audience that comes from Connecticut, 13% have zip codes within the City of Hartford, and 23% come from the rest of Connecticut, closely clustered in the Greater Hartford region—the 20+ towns around the city. Our staff and the majority of our current audience most closely resembles that of the Greater Hartford region.

When considering the shift to audience-centered work as well as community engagement, we recognize that The MTH does have some history of community-based programming. Prior to the pandemic the museum held regular well-attended all-community events with local musicians, food and drink from near-by restaurants, performers, and family activities. As well, the 7+ acres around our site constitute one of the few open green spaces in this part of Hartford, and many residents enjoy the space, walking dogs, eating lunch, and cooling off on hot days. But community-based programs do not substitute for audience-centered experiences that spring from the interests,

values and perspectives of visitors, nor for community engagement, in which communities are active participants in programming. Thus, any community engagement within the City of Hartford faces a credibility gap, and questions about commitment and relevance.

In recognition of the cultural, social and political dimensions of White organizations engaging communities of color, staff at The MTH will assess internal capacity, cultural competency, and unconscious bias throughout the project. All aspects of this project intersect with issues of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion and this work will be woven into workshops in each phase of the proposed project. The DEAI work undertaken during this project will also build on a series of trainings that are part of on-going work of our Social, Environmental and Governance Committee—made up of staff and members of the Board of Trustees. We will work with our DEAI consultants for the Museums Empowered project to connect to our on-going work. The training and evaluation work outlined in this grant is another important step in what will be a many year commitment to learn about and work with our audiences and the community that we are a part of. But we cannot start this work without taking these steps; the assistance of IMLS would be greatly appreciated.

This proposed project will also help us to tackle an additional staff capacity challenge that The MTH faces in implementing our Strategic Plan. During the course of strategic planning and beyond, staff agreed that this new strategic direction was crucial to our future, and that knowing more about our visitors and connecting to their values and perspectives was crucial to the sustainability of the museum, but that we had very different ideas of how to do this work and what the impacts would be to day-to-day operations. With 84% of our 20 full-time and 47 part-time staff hired between 2020 – 2023, and thus quite new to the organization, staff have had limited time working together as a team, and few opportunities to develop a connection to each other and the museum and shared vision. So, while we have an unusual opportunity to change our operations to center visitors with all staff on board with this idea, and with little need to manage a change operation with potential resistance from long-time staff, we nonetheless don't necessarily share a vision of the goal. By learning and working together our intention is to simultaneously build organization culture and connection through the work, remove work silos across the museum, and build shared interpretive vision for the future, all of which so that we can better serve our audiences.

This project closely aligns with the following general goals and objectives outlined by the IMLS as well as those specific to the Museums Empowered funding stream; our project explicitly meets Objective 1.2: Support the training and professional development of the museum workforce, while also meeting Museum Empowered specific Goal 4, Strengthen and support museum staff as the essential part of a resilient organizational culture. The project focuses on Objective 4.1: Develop comprehensive organizational learning opportunities that address emerging priorities facing a museum—in this case meeting our Strategic goal of re-orienting our museum to place visitors at the center of our operations. As well, because this project will also utilize evaluation as a key tool in our work and learning, we also meet Goal 3, Evaluation: Strengthen the ability of museum staff to use evaluation as a tool to shape museum programs and improve outcomes, with a focus on Objective 3.1: Increase staff knowledge of program evaluation methods and the usefulness of evaluation reports, tools, data, and metrics.

**Project Need/Problem to be solved and how we identified it:**

We are seeking a learning and staff capacity-building grant centered on the primary goal of our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. In developing the new strategic plan in 2022, the need to prioritize our audience, and engage with our community emerged as an important direction shift; as the world slowly began recovering from the pandemic, The MTH similarly began to rebuild. In April 2020 all staff were furloughed by 20% of their time; in the following months many retired or left, burned out and exhausted. New staff came on board between 2021-2023, and had to quickly pivot with the rest of the museum world to virtual programming, and producing on-line content, experimenting with an operating model for the new world we were in. Across the museum there was a

quick realization that there was a loss of institutional knowledge, vast information gaps about our audiences, a lack of community connection, loss of visitors, financial struggles and potential unsustainability.

To further complicate matters, The MTH had entered into the pandemic in 2020 having just emerged from a prolonged series of financial and operational setbacks that had threatened our stability from 2008 through 2017 (see Strategic Plan description for more details). A new director, Pieter Roos, came on board in 2017 with the mandate to bring stability to the organization. The previous 2019-2022 strategic plan was all about righting the ship; stabilizing the historic house, infrastructure, and finances, and ensuring that our doors would remain open to the public. This strategic plan was interrupted by the pandemic, but many objectives were seen through, including addressing much deferred maintenance, clearing debt, balancing our budget, while successfully gaining museum reaccreditation with AAM. By 2022 staff were ready to move forward in new directions and define the value and relevance of The MTH in a post-pandemic world.

During the 2023-2025 strategic planning process staff identified sustainability and relevance as our biggest challenges and understood that both were interrelated and tied to our audiences; our value and connection. Seeking to ground our work in best practices, staff dug into case studies and research about audience-centered museums and community engagement[3]. The "Engaging your community: A Toolkit for Museums,"[4] created by the Ontario Museum Association and partners, lists a series of symptoms or triggers that might encourage any museum to pursue community engagement. We noted common Internal Triggers such as decline in visitation (at 75% of pre-pandemic numbers), decline in volunteer support, decline in financial support from the community (for example 89% of our donors only donated once, and only 6% of visitors donated to the museum), major repairs necessary to our historic house that were well beyond our means (the 1874 house was last fully conserved in 1999, and major work was being planned), major staffing changes, needing a new strategic plan and direction, and the External Triggers of an uncertain and challenging economic and social environment following the pandemic.[5] We clearly had more than enough reasons to pursue a true shift in operations.

We also recognized that museums focused on one person's legacy often struggle to embrace audience-centric work. The MTH had been concerned with broadcasting Twain's legacy, a one-way transmission of information. And Mark Twain's legacy is complicated. Beyond his role as documentarian and critic of America's Gilded Age, Samuel Clemens, as Mark Twain, changed the way American literature was conceived and written—bringing the vernacular and poetic to works intended to be read by everyone, often through subscription services. No American author before Twain went so far in the democratization of literature. Twain's works are considered foundational in the American Literary Canon, even as they have also been frequently banned, for different reasons in every generation. His work is currently being called into question for the derogatory language and stereotypical depictions used to describe and represent African Americans, making books such as the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* hard to teach in high school and college classrooms. As scholars explore the ways that race, class, and gender have been (mis)represented in the Canon, it's important to complicate and explore in a far more nuanced way the thinking and writing of a fundamental figure like Mark Twain. We realized that in order to understand what Mark Twain might mean to contemporary and future audiences we needed to be engaging in critical conversations about expanding definitions of the literary and historic Canon now.

**Target group/Involved with planning**

The primary target group for this grant is the staff of The MTH as well as the Board of Trustees. As a result of this grant, staff will gain knowledge, skills and abilities to help transform our museum into one that places visitors at the center of operations. Staff and board members will also have the opportunity to collaborate and build stronger connections with each other and the organization. Involving all staff, including part-time staff is key—in particular, our part-time staff are the front-line, leading tours and living history events. Their knowledge of our visitors and their connection to this change are crucial. Staff have been the driver of this project from the beginning, through the work of the strategic planning process, identifying key issues, championing this strategic

direction while recognizing our challenges. A working group of staff was charged with planning the project and identifying funding; IMLS Museums Empowered was quickly identified as a good fit for the project. Over the last five months feedback sessions about the project plan and a staff survey about training needs for this project have helped the team to develop this proposal.

The Secondary target group is the museum's audience including potential visitors from Hartford and the Greater Hartford Region. Our audiences will ultimately benefit as The MTH uses the knowledge and skills gained during this project to create an audience-centered experience. Through the work of evaluation funded by this grant, staff will reach out and learn about the perspectives, values and interests of visitors and potential audiences, and through the learnings staff will prototype new public offerings and develop a community engagement plan, setting the stage for on-going audience-centered programming and reciprocal relationships. One of the primary goals of this project is to bring the voices of our audiences into our process and let what we learn guide our next steps.

**Beneficiaries (both internal and external)**

The 20 full-time and 47 part-time Staff and 32 members of the Board of Trustees will be the primary and immediate beneficiaries. Our audiences and our local and regional community will also ultimately benefit as we seek to improve our public programming and find our place in the community around us. Our audience comes primarily from the Greater Hartford Region, the City of Hartford, and the Northeastern states (63% of total American visitors). Our pre-pandemic visitation was 70,000 people and we expect to meet and ultimately exceed that number, by building on our local and regional populations. The demographic characteristics of our visitors and our region are described in detail in the organization profile.

**Project Work Plan**

We will achieve our goal in developing staff-wide knowledge, skills and abilities around audience-centered work and community engagement through a comprehensive series of learning opportunities over a 3-year period. This proposed project will occur in three phases, each with new goals and deliverables, all building on each other to create a dynamic learning environment that consistently offers support over all phases of the project. Thus, staff will take part in multiple learning and working sessions with experienced consultants who bring a range of perspectives and knowledge to scaffold the team's learning. Each phase will consist of building knowledge and understanding about topics and then putting that knowledge into action through evaluation, analysis and program development. Our intention is to embed the practice of audience evaluation in a larger practice of reflection, assessment, and learning; the Wallace Foundation funded study on using data to build arts audiences found that the most effective way of bringing audience data into everyday use.[6]

**Phase 1: About Us, What is an Audience-Centered Museum? What is Community Engagement? What about Evaluation?**

Phase 1 will set the stage for all other phases, and last 15 months. The curriculum will combine active learning with reading and presentations about the staff of the MTH, including our values and perspectives, our cultural and social heritages, our working styles, and cultural competency. Workshops will then focus on audience-centered museums, community engagement, and the importance of evaluation and data in this work. Reading groups and regular discussions in small groups, made up of cross-departmental teams, will occur in every phase, with readings drawn from our consultants and staff preferences. In this Phase, Claudia Ocello of Museum Partners Consulting (MPC) will come on-board to introduce key concepts of audience-centered museum work, the role and practice of evaluation. MPC will also be a partner throughout the project and will assess the effectiveness of each phase of learning. Thus, in the first phase MPC will also survey staff for their current state of knowledge, skills and abilities with respect to the project themes. Stephanie Joy Muscat, of Bevara Consulting will lead workshops in community engagement, community respect, and intersections with DEAI.

This Phase will also include an audience evaluation project to both learn about our audiences and develop skills of audience evaluation. Quantitative data collection will be undertaken by MTH staff with training and support from MPC—examining our current practices and developing new member and visitor surveys and visitor intercepts will allow staff to build skills for the future while gaining a better understanding of our on-site audience and members. This evaluation work will also enable us to tap into national, international and regional audiences that visit our site. Qualitative work will be undertaken by Beth Pite Consulting and Bevara Consulting. They will conduct focus groups with Hartford and Greater Hartford residents, funders, city leaders, neighborhood associations, other service- oriented nonprofits such as the Hartford Public Library and Boys and Girls Clubs, other arts and culture organizations such as the Greater Hartford Arts Council, along with staff and board members. Staff will work with a scholarly advisory committee throughout this process to tap into up-to-date scholarship about Twain and late 19th century history, while continuing to engage scholars in the work of the museum. At the end of this phase, we will have a series of audience evaluation reports, a final report summarizing key learning and conclusions

**Phase 2: What is Data Analysis and Why should we do it? Using Benchmarking & Best Practices research.**

Phase 2 will focus on building skills in analyzing data and creating a museum culture that values and uses audience data to drive our work. To ensure the continuity of the evaluation training and data collection of Phase 1, staff will be working with MPC to develop an Evaluation and Strategic Data Plan that will identify key staff, regular deliverables and actions for routine audience data collection. Our focus will be also on synthesizing the reports from focus groups, as well as digging into research about other museums and organizations that have similarly transformed themselves.

As part of our analysis of data and trends, we will benchmark our evaluation results and research with other museums in New England who are similarly centering their audiences, exploring the interpretation of complex and "hard" history, that incorporate historic preservation and community engagement into their work, and are experimenting with new ways to engage audiences. Small groups of key staff will visit other museums and organize presentations at The MTH featuring key museums' similar transformations. Sites to be visited will include History Cambridge, The Mount; Edith Wharton's Home, Royall House and Slave Quarters, Emily Dickinson Home, while we will seek presentations from such museums as the Levine Museum of the New South and The Museum of Us.

Following through on our Community Engagement Plan, staff will also continue to work on the intersections of audience-centered work and DEAI considerations. As part this learning module, consultants from the International Coalition for Sites of Conscience will lead workshops on interpreting complicated and difficult histories for our audiences and facilitating dialogue around the complicated legacy of an author and public figure like Mark Twain. The topic of one Learning Module within Phase 2 has deliberately been left TBD—as the project unfolds we want to be able to be responsive to staff interest and questions/issues that will inevitably arise. This Phase will end with preliminary plans for new themes and formats for our public offerings, based on our audience evaluations, research, and benchmarking. As in each phase we will have reading and discussion groups which will help integrate all staff into the on-going learning process and continue to build time into staff schedules for cross-departmental work.

**Phase 3: Applying our Learning: Design Prototyping and Piloting New Offerings**

Phase 3 will focus on closing the learning loop; we'll be applying data to creating 3 pilots of new themes and formats for public offerings, including 1 new program, 1 new house tour alternative, and 1 exhibition component. Iterative testing/prototyping. Consultant Hillel O'Leary of Hillel O'Leary Design Consulting and faculty in the Industrial Design Department at RISD (Rhode Island School of Design) will lead staff through the process of designing, developing, and prototyping visitor engagement tools, objects, and experiences. With many years of

experience both leading workshops in design thinking and designing exhibition components and environments for museums, O'Leary will work with staff to develop the skills and abilities to pilot new programs and exhibits utilizing on-going feedback from visitors.

This Phase will involve smaller groups of staff—the Core Team and the Interpretation Team, as well as Part-time Front-line staff. These groups will be responsible for regularly updating and involving the organization in the work of prototyping. Reading and discussion groups will continue. The project will be closed out with a summative project evaluation by Museum Partners Consulting (MPC). End products: will end with a written product that documents the learning and decisions made in that phase.

**Risks**

The success of this project hinges on our ability to maintain open and clear dialogue throughout the organization as we seek to bring change to how we operate as a museum. In any change operation there is also the risk that staff will feel alienated and unwilling to work towards a new goal. We must also clearly coordinate staff time (balancing assigned duties and primary roles within the organization) to ensure that everyone can participate in the professional development work. Because this project is long-term, complex, and requires multiple department cooperation, the risk for splintered and counterproductive work is possible. The organization has held multiple meetings with all departments, and at all levels, to discuss and commit to this work. The project Core Team will be meeting regularly throughout the project to assess the number of hours being spent, gain feedback on how staff are balancing their duties, and will work with the ED to resolve issues if they arise. Beyond the internal issues we may face, The MTH also has a credibility gap with the Hartford community, and this impacts our ability to begin the process of building relationships. We will use the information we learn during community focus groups to guide our actions, and are prepared for the long haul of engagement.

**Personnel**

The project will be led by Jodi DeBruyne, Director of Collections and Rebecca Floyd, Director of Interpretation, building cross-departmental collaboration into the management of the project. Each will focus on different aspects but will collaborate on all work; Jodi managing consultants, budgeting, timeline, and Rebecca coordinating staff time and meetings, outputs/deliverables, recording of sessions, technology. They will be supported by a Core Team consisting of Jessica Neuwirth, Grants Manager/Writer who will serve as the Project Archivist, documenting meetings and learnings, assist with writing reports and staff training manuals and with overseeing quality and timeliness of deliverables; Erin Bartram, Associate Director of Education, a specialist in adult education (college and PD) will bring her experience and knowledge to the design of the learning modules/curriculum; and Sydney Baker, Executive Assistant, who will be the liaison to the Executive Director, Board of Trustees, and other senior staff not directly involved in the project. She will also manage all aspects of staff communication and coordination of staff and consultant meetings. The Executive Director, along with other department heads, development and finance staff will serve on the Expanded Core team, attending all staff training sessions, and quarterly meetings to ensure that learning is shared at all organizational levels while demonstrating their commitment to the project. Interpretation, Education and Curatorial Staff will make up the Interpretation Core team. They will attend all staff meetings, trainings in evaluation and analysis, museum visits, and all prototyping work. All part-time and full-time staff will take part in reading and working groups during all staff sessions. Through these groups all staff will have roles to play in providing input and feedback, with the additional goal to break up silos and hierarchy of the organization.

The MTH is committing an extensive amount of staff time to this important project at a value of $357,211. Throughout both the planning process for this grant application, the percentage of time each staff member was committing was discussed and agreed upon. All Part-time staff will take part in project activities above and beyond their usual hours, and all Full-time staff will commit a portion of their regular duties to this work.

**Project Results**

Staff and board of trustees will gain knowledge and shared understanding of what an audience-centered museum is and the theory and practice of community engagement, their impact on the operations of the museum, and the benefits of this approach.

Staff will develop knowledge about the role of audience evaluation and will feel more confident in researching, learning from, and listening to our audiences and community to improve our public offerings. Staff and board members will also gain deeper knowledge and insight into the values, perspectives and interests of the audiences and communities around us.

Staff will develop skills and abilities to undertake regular evaluation tasks such as surveys and visitor intercepts, to analyze audience data and utilize the results to develop and improve museum initiatives for the benefit of our audiences. Staff will develop knowledge and skills in design thinking and skill in designing user-centered program and exhibit components based on audience research.

Staff will build a stronger organizational work culture of collaboration and connection to the organization, finding points of shared vision.

**Deliverables**

Final report for each stage, incorporating all preliminary and interim reports, detailing key insights and results; Interim Evaluation reports, including of individual sessions, to keep project learning on track; Final project evaluation report—summative evaluation; Annotated bibliography for each learning module; Recorded and edited sessions/presentations with consultants; Materials for staff training developed from sessions and workshops; Community Engagement plan; Evaluations and Data Collection Plan; Evaluation instruments for surveys and intercepts; Focus Group Data collection, analysis and report; Survey and Intercept data collection and report; 3 Prototype experiments in applying learning and evaluation results

**Sustainability**

The sustainability of this project is built into the project design and strategic planning processes of The MTH. The deliverables of this project—all evaluation and audience-centered learnings—will be incorporated into our next round of strategic planning, providing crucial information about our audiences, community, and potential paths forward that will drive new strategic goals and objectives. The project is designed so that strategic planning for 2026-2029 will overlap with the second half of this project—allowing us to immediately put into use the work we have been doing. As well, training staff in both gathering and analyzing audience data is intended to help us embed these practices in our regular operations. The data collection plan generated during this project will specify staff responsibility and time frames for data collection for the next 3 years. Staff will also continue to gather, analyze and report on statistics at staff meetings once a month, creating accountability while helping to build a work culture that knows and responds to audience data. Staff will also continue to review, develop and enact the engagement plan, and plan a check-in with Stephanie Joy Muscat of Bevara Consulting in the second year of the project to provide accountability and support for this work.

Given the high staff turnover that in part motivated this grant, we have also planned for sustainability in other ways throughout the project. We want to ensure that key learnings and results can be shared through training and documents that will become part of on-boarding of new staff and on-going staff training. All consultant presentations will be recorded (and edited with approval of the featured consultant) for later use in training. All reports and bibliographies with annotations for each learning module will be compiled by the Project Documentarian and shared as part of regular staff training.

**Empowering an Audience-Centered Museum:**
**Comprehensive Learning and Evaluation**
**at the Mark Twain House & Museum**

**Schedule of Completion**

      **3 pages, one page per year**

Schedule of Tasks for Museums Empowered Grant
**The Mark Twain House & Museum**

**Phase 1: Evaluation Data Collection**

| Month | Month 1 Sep-24 | Month 2 Oct-24 | Month 3 Nov-24 | Month 4 Dec-24 | Month 5 Jan-25 | Month 6 Feb-25 | Month 7 Mar-25 | Month 8 Apr-25 | Month 9 May-25 | Month 10 Jun-25 | Month 11 Jul-25 | Month 12 Aug-25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Week | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 |

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS |
|---|---|
| **Project Start-up** | |
| Funds Awarded | |
| Project/Phase Introduction for all staff, Advisory Committees, Board | Core Team |
| Progress Reporting | Core Team |
| Confirm Contracts with Consultants | Core Team |
| Confirm Scholar Advisory Committee | Core Team |
| **Recurring Meetings** | |
| Status Meetings | Core Team |
| Status Meetings | Core Team+ |
| Board of Trustees Updates (Recurring) | Core Team |
| Progress Reporting (Recurring) | Core Team |
| **Resource Library and Recurring Reading Groups** | |
| Set Up Resource Library | Core Team |
| Build Resource Library | Core Team, Consultants |
| Develop Reading Groups | Core Team |
| Assign Readings | Core Team |
| Reading Discussion Groups | Core ++ |
| **External Partners Start-up** | |
| Museum Partners Consulting (MPC): Kick Off | MPC |
| Bevara Kick Off | Bevara |
| Beth Pite Consulting Hartford Focus groups kick-off | Beth Pite Consulting |
| **Module 1: Learning About Us** | |
| Bevara fields all-staff survey; Initial snap shot of KSAs | Bevara |
| Site Visit and Staff Training; What's our mission and role in carrying it out? | Bevara |
| Communication Style Training | MPC |
| MTH Stakeholder Assessment & Engagement Planning | Bevara and Core + Admin and Interpretation |
| **Module 2: Visitor-Centric Methodology and Community Engagement** | |
| Audience-Centered Methodology Training | MPC |
| Community Engagement Training | Bevara |
| DEAI and Community Engagement Training | Bevara and TBD |
| Determine Focus group subjects and goals | Core team and Consultants |
| Determine Focus group members for both Bevara, MPC, and Pite | Core team and Consultants |
| Community Engagement work begins; identify focus group participants, publicize project, coordinate Bevara and Beth Pite scopes, begin work | Bevara |
| Bevara-led focus groups--staff, board, nonprofits, other museums. Focus groups will include Hist/Lit and Museum Advisory Committees. | Bevara |
| Beth Pite-led focus groups here--Hartford stakeholders | Beth Pite Consulting |
| Bevara: Community Engagement Report | Bevara |
| Beth Pite Focus group report | Beth Pite Consulting |
| **Module 3: What is Evaluation? How do we do it?** | |
| Evaluation 101 Training | MPC and all Staff |
| Assess current evaluation instruments, current state of staff knowledge about visitors, determine what changes are needed, what we need to know | MPC, Core, Interpretation, Education. Curatorial, Administration, Retail |
| Workshop current and future surveys and evaluation tools: How to write effective evaluation instruments | MPC, Core, Interpretation, Education. Curatorial, Administration, Retail |
| Excel Training to support data gathering and analysis | Core ++ |
| Advanced Excel Training for advanced data analysis | Core |
| Train Core Group in administering questionnaires and intercept interviews | MPC, Core, Interpretation, Education, Front-Line staff |
| Train all staff in administering questionnaires and intercept interviews | MPC + all staff |
| **Module 4: Learning Put Into Practice: Data Collection & Preliminary Analysis** | |
| Administer Intercept Interviews & Surveys | MTH Staff |
| Analyzing intercept/survey Evaluation Data Training | MPC |
| MTH Onsite Staff Training to review Commnity engagement findings | Bevara |
| MTH Onsite 4-month Check In | Bevara |
| **Phase One: Reporting and Reflecting** | |
| Project Close Out Meeting--reflecting and commnity engagement action plan | Bevara |

## Schedule of Tasks for Museums Empowered Grant
**The Mark Twain House & Museum**

| | | Phase 1: Evaluation Data Collection | | | | | | Phase 2: Research, Benchmarking, & Applying Data | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Month 13 Sep-25 | Month 14 Oct-25 | Month 15 Nov-25 | Month 16 Dec-25 | Month 17 Jan-26 | Month 18 Feb-26 | Month 19 Mar-26 | Month 20 Apr-26 | Month 21 May-26 | Month 22 Jun-26 | Month 23 Jul-26 | Month 24 Aug-26 |
| **TASK** | **PARTICIPANTS** | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 | WEEK 1-4 |

**Phase One: Reporting and Reflecting, Continued**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Project Close Out Meeting--reflecting and commnity engagement action plan | Bevara | Dec-25 W1 |
| MPC: Phase 1 Wrap Up Meeting--reporting and reflecting | MPC | Jan-26 W1–2 |
| Beth Pite closeout--reporting | Pite | Jan-26 W1–2 |
| Project Update | Advisory Committee | Jan-26 W1 |
| Core Group: Phase 1 Wrap Up Report | MTH | Feb-26 W1–2 |
| Core Group: Phase 1 Sustainability Materials, Community engagement action plan | Core Team+, Consultants | Feb-26 W1–3 |

**Phase Two: Start-up**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Project/Phase Introduction for all staff, Advisory Committee, Board | Core Team | Mar-26 W1–3 |
| Progress Reporting | Core Team | Feb-26 W2 |
| Confirm Contracts with Consultants | Core Team | Mar-26 W1 |
| Confirm Scholar Advisory Committee | Core Team | Mar-26 W1 |

**Recurring Meetings**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Status Meetings | Core Team | Recurring (Sep-25 through Aug-26) |
| Status Meetings | Core Team+ | Recurring |
| Board of Trustees Updates (Recurring) | Core Team, Board | Recurring |
| Progress Reporting (Recurring) | Core Team | Recurring |

**Resource Library and Recurring Reading Groups**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Set Up Resource Library | Core Team | Sep-25 W1 |
| Build Resource Library | Core Team, Consultants | Sep-25 – Aug-26 (continuous) |
| Develop Reading Groups | Core Team | Recurring |
| Assign Readings | Core Team | Recurring |
| Reading Discussion Groups | Core ++ | Recurring |

**Module 5 What is Data and a Museum-wide Data culture?**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Museum Partners Consulting (MPC): Kick Off | MPC | Mar-26 W1 |
| Introduction to Data and Data analysis | MPC | Mar-26 W2 |
| How do we embed data culture in our institution decision-making? | MPC, Core+ | Mar-26 W3 |
| Developing a data collection and evaluation plan | Core+, MPC | Mar-26 W4 |

**Module 6: Case Studies & Benchmarking**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Training: How to Read and Analyze Data | MPC | Mar-26 W4 |
| Preliminary Data Analysis | Core Group + Admin and Interpretation | Apr-26 W2 |
| Preliminary Write Up | Core Group | Apr-26 W3 |
| Share Preliminary Data Analysis | Core + Admin and Interpretation | May-26 W1 |
| Share Preliminary Data Analysis with Scholar Advisory Committee | Core and Advisory committee | May-26 W2 |
| MPC Lead: All Staff Convening: Preliminary Themes and formats | MPC, All Staff | Jun-26 W1–2 |
| Set goals for Site visits to other museums, select and arrange visits | Core Group | Jun-26 W2 |
| MTH Staff: Site Visits to 6 other museums chosen to highlight relevant work in community engagement, audience-centered practices, and for connections to evaluation analysis | Core Group, Interpretation | Jul-26 – Aug-26 |
| Invite 2 -3 Guest Museums TBD: Case Study Presentations | Core Group, TBD Guests | Jul-26 – Aug-26 |
| Case Study Discussion Groups | Core + Admin and Interpretation | Jul-26 – Aug-26 |

**Module 7: Difficult Histories & Facilitated Dialogue**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| DEAI, Community Engagement and interpreting hard histories | All Staff and TBD | May-26 W1–3 |
| Yearly Check-in with Bevara Consulting/Community Engagement Plan | Bevara and Core Team | Apr-26 W3–4 |
| International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) Interpreting Hard history and Faciliated Dialogue | All Staff and ICSC | Aug-26 |

**Module 8: TBD Module**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| TBD: Topic will respond to staff interest and need | TBD | Aug-26 |

**Module 9: Learning Put Into Practice:**

| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | Scheduled (Month / Week) |
|---|---|---|
| Finalize Themes, Formats & Learning Review Sessions | Core Group + MPC | Aug-26 |

**Schedule of Tasks for Museums Empowered Grant**
**The Mark Twain House & Museum**

| | | Phase 2: Research, | | | Phase 3: Pilot Projects Implementation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Month 25 Sep-26 | Month 26 Oct-26 | Month 27 Nov-26 | Month 28 Dec-26 | Month 29 Jan-27 | Month 30 Feb-27 | Month 31 Mar-27 | Month 31 Apr-27 | Month 33 May-27 | Month 34 Jun-27 | Month 35 Jul-27 | Month 36 Aug-27 |
| TASK | PARTICIPANTS | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 | WEEK 1 2 3 4 |
| **Module 6: Case Studies & Benchmarking** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site Visits to 6 other museums chosen to highlight relevant work related to data analysis | Core Group, Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Invite 2 -3 Guest Museums TBD: Case Study Presentations | Core Group, TBD Guests | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Case Study Discussion Groups | Core + Admin and Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Review results with Scholar Advisory Committee | Core, Advisory Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Module 8: TBD Module** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TBD: Topic will respond to staff interest and need | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Module 9: Learning Put Into Practice:** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finalize Themes, Formats & Learning Review Sessions | Core Group | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core Group: Share Preliminary Data Analysis, themes and formats | With all internal and external stakeholders | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Working sessions with expanded staff groups | Core+, Interpretation and Education Core, etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Review themes and formats and get feedback from Scholar Advisory Committee | Core, Advisory Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Select themes and formats for prototyping in Phase 3 | Core+, Interpretation and Education Core, etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MPC Lead: All Staff Convening: Results & Next Steps | All Staff, MPC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Phase Two Wrap Up** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MPC: Phase 2 Wrap Up Meeting | MPC, Core team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core Group: Phase 2 Wrap Up Report | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core Group: Phase 2 Sustainability Materials | Core Team, Consultants | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Phase Three: Start-up** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Museum Partners Consulting (MPC): Kick Off for Interpretative and Evaluation of prototypes | MPC, Core team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Program and Exhibit Prototyping and Design Consultant (O'Leary Consulting): Kick Off | O'Leary Consulting, Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Evaluation Consultant (MPC): Kick Off | MPC, Core team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project/Phase Introduction for all staff, Advisory Committees, Board | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Progress Reporting | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Confirm Contracts with Consultants | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Confirm Scholar Advisory Committee | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Recurring Meetings** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Status Meetings | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Status Meetings | Core Team+ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Board of Trustees Updates | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Progress Reporting | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Resource Library and Recurring Reading Groups** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Set Up Resource Library | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Build Resource Library | Core Team, Consultants | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop Reading Groups | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assign Readings | Core Team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reading Discussion Groups | Core ++ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Module 10:Design Strategy and Prototyping** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction to Design strategy and prototyping | HODC, Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prototyping workshops for Program, exhibit component, and tour alternative | HODC, Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot prototypes with Focus Groups and Advisory Committee | HODC, Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Focus Group Feedback & Evaluation Data Collection | Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Evaluation & Data Analysis, prototype revisions | Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Develop Implementation Plans** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pre-planning for Strategic Plan, Interpretive Plan, Branding & Marketing Plan, etc | Core + Admin and Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MPC: Phase 3 Wrap Up Meeting | All staff | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core Group: Phase 3 Wrap Up Report | Core + Interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core Group: Phase 3 Sustainability Materials | MPC, Core team | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Evaluate the Process** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Evaluation Consultant (MPC): Evaluates Project & Outcomes | MPC | | | | | | | | | | | | |