



Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-255512-OMS-24

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$248,720
Amount of cost share:	\$250,010

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator will improve organizational sustainability through increased hiring and the creation of organizational guides. The institution will hire a part-time graduate student to receive training, create organizational and technical guidance, and work closely with staff on programmatic activities focusing on the Latin and Caribbean Diaspora. Informed by Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator's strategic plan, staff will work with a consultant to create an organizational emergency preparedness plan for ongoing sustainability. Staff will attend conferences for professional development and share project results. Beneficiaries of the project will include staff, board of directors, and artist interns.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Product 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.

Narrative

Project Justification

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, Inc. is an arts incubator dedicated to promoting, nurturing, and cultivating the vision and diverse creativity of emerging artists from the Caribbean and Latin American Diaspora, through experimentation, exhibitions, artists-in-residence programs, international cultural exchanges, and dialog in contemporary art. We aim to create outreach activities that celebrate Miami-Dade's rich cultural and social fabric.

Which program goal and associated objective of Museum Grants for African American History and Culture will your project address?

The *Organizational Sustainability, Knowledge Transference, and Emergency Planning* project will create organizational capacity for its full-time two-person staff President and Executive Director, three part-time staff, the board of directors, and artist interns. Our project addresses IMLS Goal 1: Champion Lifelong Learning and AAHC Goal 2: Support the growth and development of museum professionals at African-American museums. Our efforts seek to champion lifelong learning around supporting the training and professional development of our museum workforce.

Based on the recent 2023 Strategic Planning process, we hope to implement the suggestions advised in our strategic plan. This outline will build upon the newest DVCAI strategic plan, guided by Toby Thompkins, DVCAI Founder and President, Rosie Gordon-Wallace, and Executive Director Tanya Desdunes.

We seek to support the current Executive Director, the President, and its current board members by increasing the capacity of the organization by hiring a graduate assistant to facilitate documentation and a professional consultant to create an organizational emergency plan. The consultant's recommendations will help us pursue short-term and long-term goals by creating and organizing formal plans in preparation for emergencies. These documents will help our organization become a more sustainable organization. The graduate assistant will support the staff's daily tasks to allow our staff to focus on administrative, educational programming, and collection management. The graduate assistant's purpose will be to support the staff's daily tasks to allow our staff and consultant to work together to bridge gaps between our present and future goals. An IMLS AAHC grant will enhance and expand our ability to serve our mission-driven programming such as the International Cultural Exchanges, the Caribbean Crossroads Series, and Artist-in-Residence programs.

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified? Describe how you have used demographic information, economic circumstances, condition assessments, and other relevant data from reliable sources to define the need, problem, or challenge and develop the scope for the project.

DVCAI is an organization that has existed since 1996. Our need is to continue our organization's operations and capacity beyond its founder. We have taken the first step to address this challenge by hiring the first paid Executive Director, Tanya Desdunes with support from the Mellon Foundation. This invaluable support and investment aids our current Founder and President, Rosie Gordon-Wallace, and demonstrates how the organization has planned on moving forward to becoming an established institution with reach and longevity beyond its founder. However, after our 2023 strategic planning with Toby Thompkins, we identified other challenges with "Founder's Syndrome." Essentially many processes "live" with our founder alone and we need

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to conduct a “knowledge transfer” to our Executive Director, staff, and board. DVCAI needs to document and institutionalize the established processes to ensure sustainability. This means the ways we engage with artists, organization partners, members, funders, and art collectors need to have specificity to empower staff and the artists we serve. The organization continues to increase its trajectory, and programming and elevate more international services to our artists. As one of the few Black women-led artist incubating organizations, DVCAI would like to sustain the organization beyond its founder to build its capacity as DVCAI approaches its 30th anniversary in 2026. There will be a continued culture of formalization, institutionalization, planning, and training of additional museum professionals for the organization to continue. This project will allow the organization to have documentation of procedures, sponsor and donor relationship development, annual reports, and evaluation data as administrative documentation, and digital processes to secure additional grant funding opportunities and attain national recognition. Our project will hire a graduate assistant and a consultant to aid Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator in the development of a more sustainable, thoughtful, and innovative organization. Our organization needs to secure funding to increase our institution's capacity and provide lifelong learning opportunities as a local and national leader in the arts and culture space. DVCAI artists are nationally and internationally recognized and this support should continue.

Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning? “Target group” refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project. Identify the number of individuals in the target group or in each target group, if you identify more than one.

For this project, our target group is the two-person staff President and Executive Director, three part-time staff, our 14 board members, and two artist interns. All have been involved in our strategic planning meetings for the past year and seek to execute the documentation and knowledge transference portion of the plan. Being an organization based in Miami, FL, we must hire a consultant to prepare us for emergencies (climate-based and organizational) as well. The main beneficiaries are the greater community of emerging African American, Latinx, and Caribbean artists and DVCAI residency artists who need to be listed and featured within exhibits to gain larger exposure. DVCAI operates with two full-time staff members, Founder/President and Executive Director, and three part-time employees. While currently exhibiting 35 artists, DVCAI programs serve 11,500 Miami Dade County residents, visitors to the area, and international participants.

These daily pressures put our small staff working long hours with little time to prepare for the future. We need funding to execute our strategic planning and create emergency plans without putting additional pressure on our current staff. Securing funding will allow us to operate more effectively and efficiently, reaching a larger and more diverse audience. We are working to make DVCAI more accessible to general audiences, scholars, and researchers interested in topics surrounding curatorial arts through our Caribbean Crossroads Series programming including but not limited to nomadic exhibitions, virtual art fairs, public Back-Chat programs, community concerts, artists-in-residence programs, and international cultural partnerships. DVCAI has a living archive held at the University of Miami Special Collections and the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) at Florida International University and the University of Florida. This collection is comprised of more than 1,500 images, including mixed media, paintings, collages, works on paper, monoprints, lithographs, videos on VHS, exhibition loops on CDs, 16-millimeter film and photography, and over 800 catalogs. The online collection has had over 150,000 views to date. With the onboarding of the new Executive Director, there has been ongoing training from the Founder and President to ensure that current sustainability is in place. The need for our artists continues to grow and our capacity to serve needs to do so as well. What’s needed now more than ever is the execution of our sustainability plan that will allow for the organization to sustain itself and the following

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activities: cultural programming, board development, marketing, emergency preparedness, and volunteer recruitment and management.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project? “Beneficiaries” refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project. They may or may not be the same as your “target group.” Identify the number of individuals who will benefit from your project in the long term, if reliable and defensible counts are possible. Otherwise describe the characteristics of the beneficiaries you expect to be served eventually by your project.

The beneficiaries include our staff members, board members, participating artists, and the staff at our partner institutions who will be learning through these collaborations about partnerships, equity, diversity, and working with emerging artists of color. The ultimate beneficiaries of this project are artists, art collectors, art enthusiasts, and the general public who enjoy learning about artists, art, and art making.

As our scholar-in-residence Dr. Alix Pierre notes:

[Artists] are historians, memorialists, and archivists. As such, they are skilled in listening, processing, and storing data. Additionally, they preserve records and make them available to the public. They can be viewed as living libraries. We posit that the...exhibiting artists are griots in their own rights, versed in the art of cataloging and chronicling.¹

The *Organizational Sustainability, Knowledge Transference, and Emergency Planning* project informs the work of Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator. There were three goals suggested by the consultant that will guide long-term organizational sustainability, one is Organizational Infrastructure Building; Goal 1: Secure capital funding to achieve working space, (Brick and Mortar Space); Goal 2: Build Internal Infrastructure and Create Operational Goals; Goal 3: Map our internal operational processes, procedures, staffing protocols and networks so that knowledge transfer can be institutionalized, scaled, and sustainable. The hiring of a graduate assistant to aid in the preparation of these guides will assist in knowledge transfer. In addition, the graduate assistant would learn about working with BIPOC artists, Black women-led organizations, museum partnerships, exhibitions, and programming.

DVCAI partners and the Board of Directors will also be further engaged in the process as we ask our board members to participate in sharing and promoting this project with their extended community. When the *Depth of Identity: Art as Memory and Archive* exhibit premiered in August 2022 in Miami, F.L., the exhibit reached over 1,000 people for in-person visits. Here are select articles about our *Depth of Identity: Art as Memory and Archive* exhibit attesting to its broad community reach and engagement: [‘I want to raise questions with my work.’](#); [Under-Represented Artists Explore Personal Legacies In ‘Depth Of Identity.’](#); [Asser Saint-Val Has Art Under His Skin](#); [Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator Launches Exhibition Depth Of Identity: Art As Memory And Archive At Green Space Miami](#); [Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator Launches Depth of Identity Exhibition](#).

DVCAI is seeking support to continue its service to the greater Diasporic Black, Caribbean immigrant artist community. With support from IMLS, DVCAI will undertake documentation of processes for knowledge transfer and emergency planning to focus on critical priorities and strategies for the future as outlined in the new

¹Pierre, Alix, *Depth of Identity, Art as Memory and Archive*, 2023.

2023-2026 strategic plan. New activities will include year-round artist residences and traveling exhibitions, a capital campaign for DVCAI to reside at a new organization location in Miami (AGORA project), full digitization of the DVCAI collection at the University of Miami, a “Founders Chair” from which the founder will fundraise to create an endowment that will support and sustain staff and artists residencies from the Caribbean, South Carolina and New Orleans (cities with slave trade histories from the Caribbean) and continued improvements for our expansive digital collection on Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC).

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

To achieve the successful completion of this project, DVCAI will complete the following:

- Hire one part-time graduate assistant enrolled in the following programs: Art, History, Caribbean Studies, or a closely related field. The graduate assistant would aid in the process of documentation by mapping our internal operational processes, procedures, staffing protocols, and networks so that knowledge transfer can be institutionalized, scaled, and made sustainable. They would create several guides focused on: Operations; Programming (Studio 164 Artists-in-Residence, International Cultural Exchange, DVCAI Photoeye Photography, Caribbean Crossroads Series); Digital and Physical Archives (collaborations with dLOC, University of Miami, University of Florida, and Florida International University); and Internal File Management Protocols and Preservation.
- Secure supplies, equipment, software licensing, and materials needed for the graduate assistant.
- Hire a consultant to create an emergency plan to document protocols for DVCAI’s operations in case of operational (illness or death) and climate-based emergencies. We would search for a consultant through our staff and Board contacts with cerf+ Craft Emergency Relief Fund, SouthArts, AAAM (Association of American Museums), and the Miami Cultural Coalition.

Activity	Personnel	Timeline	Progress Tracking
<p>Hire a Part-Time Graduate Assistant Create a job description, and request a graduate assistant. The Graduate Assistant will work 20 hours per week, focused specifically on the planning process. Duties for the Graduate Assistant will include performing administrative, educational programming, and event organization</p>	<p>Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Tanya Desdunes, Devora Perez, Izia Lindsay.</p>	<p>July 2024 to Sept. 2024</p>	<p>Regular meetings with artists, staff, and the DVCAI board. Checklist of tasks and responsibilities delegated.</p>

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tasks. The graduate assistant will aid in the documentation of the knowledge transfer of the organization.			
Hire Consultant Through our current Board of Directors, cerfPlus, SouthArts, AAAM, and the Miami Cultural Coalition we will search for a consultant.	Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Tanya Desdunes	July 2024 to Sept. 2024	Checklist of tasks and responsibilities delegated.
Ongoing Evaluation and Review of the Project	Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Tanya Desdunes, Devora Perez, Izia Lindsay	Quarterly throughout project	Regular meetings with artists, staff, and the DVCAI board. Checklist of tasks and responsibilities delegated.
Onboard Graduate Assistant	Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Tanya Desdunes, Devora Perez, Izia Lindsay	Oct. 2024 to December 2024	Regular meetings with artists, staff, and the DVCAI board. Checklist of tasks and responsibilities delegated.
Create an Emergency Preparedness Plan The consultant will help us prepare an emergency plan that includes biological, natural, or human threats to DVCAI staff and the artists we serve. The Emergency Preparedness Plan will contribute to DVCAI’s sustainability.	Consultant, Tanya Desdunes, Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Devora Perez, Izia Lindsay	Jan. 2025 to December 2025 (flexible depending on the hiring of the consultant)	Regular meetings with partners, artists, staff, and the DVCAI board.
Develop Documentation for Knowledge Transfer	Tanya Desdunes, Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Devora Perez, Izia Lindsay, Graduate Assistant	July 2024 to December 2026	Regular meetings with partners, artists, staff, and the DVCAI board. Checklist of tasks and responsibilities delegated.

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<p>Internal report of findings Final Grant Reporting Conduct evaluations of the plans, emergency prep, and new educational and programming designs. The new plans will be evaluated by how far DVCAI has progressed in terms of audience growth and ongoing projects.</p>	<p>Rosie Gordon-Wallace and Tanya Desdunes</p>	<p>Jan. 2026 to June 2026</p>	<p>Create internal reports of findings, opportunities, and challenges. Submit final IMLS reports.</p>
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What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

A primary risk to the project is the potential for a disaster or emergency to occur before finishing the emergency preparedness plan. To mitigate this, we will do our best to follow existing practices and attempt to put a working draft of the preparedness plan into action. The risk of falling behind schedule or not staying on our original timeline is always a possibility. To combat this we will employ a realistic timeline that makes sense at the current full capacity. By hiring a graduate assistant, the hired staff will remain at standard capacity.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

The Executive Director, Tanya Desdunes will plan and implement the project. She will be responsible for seeing the overall completion of the project, on time, and within budget while remaining within the parameters of the grant. Rosie Gordon-Wallace will research and review for the consultant that will produce the implementation of the strategic plan, and the emergency plans. Rosie will support the graduate assistant in creating the guides for the documentation of internal processes. Izia Lindsay and Devora Perez will assist Tanya in the onboarding of the graduate assistant. Since they have previously worked on digital and programming projects in the past, they will assist the graduate assistant in creating guides for both areas.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

We will rely on the combined staff, newly hired graduate assistant, and board of directors to complete this project successfully. The project is imagined from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026. We request \$250,874.00 to support the staff, artists, traveling for conferences, and ongoing development. The project will support Rosie Gordon-Wallace and Tanya Desdunes as project directors. In addition, it will support the following staff members and creators to carry out its activities: Izia Lindsay for organization branding and design; and Devora Perez for aiding in exhibit documenting and programming. We propose to pay our graduate assistant \$45 an hour for 20 hours per week.

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How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

At the end of each month, museum staff will review progress with the hired consultant regarding the month's efforts within the larger project work plan. On a bi-monthly basis, we will also be meeting with our board members and community partners to share the progress being made and ask for feedback. Minutes from all meetings will be used to update a progress report that will be evaluated each month by the Executive Director. Website traffic and social media engagements will be tracked and reported by staff and a survey will be given to participants. We will engage with community partners and the DVCAI Board of Directors will reach out to funders and arts organizations to increase and track progress.

Project Results

Principal Investigator, Tanya Desdunes, is excited by the opportunity to deepen our support of artists, better integrate all our programs under DVCAI, model our community-driven principles within Miami, and be a stronger voice in the philanthropic sector for practices that center on equity, cultural intelligence, creative freedom, and meaningful engagement.

Our *Organizational Sustainability, Knowledge Transference, and Emergency Planning* project will address the need for documenting our process and ensuring knowledge transfer of how to work with BIPOC artists. This will provide funding to professionally develop our staff and advance our mission. With change comes the chance to reflect on our history, reaffirm our core values, and reassess how these guide our operations and programs. Our values - are mission-led. We serve artists, encourage freedom of expression, and seek equitable partnerships, critical dialogue, and life-long learning. We need the funds to continue this work and plan for emergencies. Diversity and inclusion form the tangible results that offer room to grow and adapt in a changing world.

Support from IMLS AAHC will:

- 1) Help execute our strategic plan to document and continue knowledge transfer.
- 2) Provide a paid stipend and museum management experience to a graduate assistant.
- 3) Develop an emergency readiness plan.
- 4) Provide additional support to staff for professional development.
- 5) Build capacity for DVCAI.
- 6) Ensure experiences and opportunities for growth at DVCAI.
- 7) Increase awareness of the work of Afro-Diasporic and Caribbean artists.
- 8) Provide a greater understanding of how Black women-led artist incubators are operated and sustained.
- 9) Sustain DVCAI through funds, in addition to several ongoing federal, state, local, and private grant awards in progress to support our staff, artists, and programming. These include grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation, the State of Florida - Division of Cultural Affairs, Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs, a recent Ford-funded [South Arts Southern Cultural Treasure Awardee](#), the Jorge Pérez CreARTE grant program, among others.
- 10) Safeguard our mission to work with emerging artists beyond the grant.

Schedule of Completion: *Organizational Sustainability, Knowledge Transference, and Emergency Planning*
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 Timeline: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Hire a Part-Time Graduate Assistant	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow									
Hiring Consultant	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow									
Onboard Graduate Assistant				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow						
Graduate Assistant Employment with DVCAI				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange						
Create Emergency Preparedness Plan							Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange						
Reviewing Plans, and Documents and Publish	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow				Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Ongoing Evaluation and Review of the Project				Yellow				Yellow				
				Orange				Orange				
Internal report of findings and Final Grant Reporting							Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange



Year 1 (July 2024-June 2025)



Year 2 (July 2025-June 2026)

Digital Products Plan

Type

Born-digital assets, mainly documentation of knowledge transference will be created. The assets will be documentation of our internal operational processes, procedures, staffing protocols, networks, and emergency preparedness plans. Devora Perez, trained by the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) to create metadata, will work on the metadata for the items as she has done in the past for our exhibit programming. Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS; <http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/>) metadata is created using the SobekCM tools and system, which are a full suite of production, digital collection (access), and repository (preservation) tools. The production workflow is integrated with the access system for consistency. As items are processed, the metadata is enhanced automatically and manually as objects move through the imaging/curation workflows. The SobekCM system assigns a unique Bibliographic Identifier (BibID) to each object processed and that BibID is used to track the item. The METS files include technical and structural data about each image, as well as descriptive and administrative information. Any pre-existing metadata (e.g., from catalog records, finding aids, museum accession records) will be imported into the SobekCM system at the first stage, before the start of imaging. The metadata for materials is prepared by catalogers, archivists, subject matter experts, registrars, curators, and others as appropriate for the project.

The SobekCM system stores all metadata in METS/MODS as well as automatically transforms and provides the metadata in MARCXML and Qualified Dublin Core, with all metadata accessible online. All materials are optimized for search engine access to ensure worldwide reach through Google and other search engines. SobekCM includes integrated support for OAI-PMH ([Open Archives Initiative or OAI](#)) to ensure all metadata is harvestable following OAI-PMH standards. Devora Perez will document these born digital assets on the DVCAI website and our partner Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC). We expect varied internal operational documents, however, only a few will be selected for archival documentation.

Availability

Our digital content will be available on DVCAI's and dLOC's websites, which collectively can reach an audience of over three million. dLOC partners have created the world's largest open-access collection of resources from and about the Caribbean (3.51 million pages, serving 4+ million users per month). As a dLOC partner, we seek to increase access to their collections using the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting ([OAI-PMH](#)).

Access

Photographs from both exhibits will be available on the DVCAI and dLOC websites. We will also use select images in our exhibit catalog. DVCAI retains all rights to its materials. As a dLOC partner, we seek open access to our collections using the Open Archives Initiative

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Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). We retain the copyright and ownership of our images. DVCAI will follow a permissions-based model (<https://dloc.com/AA00002865/00004>). Full documentation on rights and permissions is placed on all materials. We will be using a Creative Commons license - [Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International](#).

Sustainability

DVCAI has been a dLOC partner since 2017. Founded in 2004, the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) has grown to over 70 Partners and Associate Partners in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, and Europe. dLOC's multi-institutional collaborative model is bolstered by a democratic governance structure that allows for all partner institutions to contribute to dLOC's evolution and success.

dLOC is a cooperative of Partners within the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean that provides users with access to Caribbean cultural, historical, and research materials held in archives, libraries, and private collections. dLOC comprises collections that speak to the similarities and differences in histories, cultures, languages, and governmental systems. Types of collections include but are not limited to: newspapers, archives of Caribbean leaders and governments, official documents, documentation and numeric data for ecosystems, scientific scholarship, historic and contemporary maps, oral and popular histories, travel accounts, literature and poetry, musical expressions, and artifacts.

Partner institutions are the core of dLOC. Partners retain all rights to their materials and provide access to digitized versions of Caribbean cultural, historical, and research materials currently held in archives, libraries, and private collections. dLOC's diverse Partners serve an international community of scholars, students, and people by working together to preserve and provide enhanced electronic access to cultural, historical, legal, governmental, and research materials in a common web space with a multilingual interface. dLOC's Partners collaborate with scholars and teachers to promote and perform educational outreach on Caribbean Studies, developing new works of digital scholarship, and pursuing other research and teaching initiatives.

We use dLOC to maintain our archival assets in perpetuity. DVCAI staff, with the aid of dLOC, will preserve and maintain digital assets during and after the IMLS award period. DVCAI's collection will be available on both DVCAI's and dLOC's websites.

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator website: <http://dvcai.org/>

Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) website: <http://dloc.com/>

DVCAI's digital collection on dLOC: <https://dloc.com/collections/idvcai/results?q=>