



Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-255853-OMS-24

Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$330,800
Amount of cost share:	\$334,269

The Pauli Murray Center for History & Social Justice will create an exhibit about Pauli Murray, a civil rights and LGBTQ+ activist. Within Murray's childhood home, the multimedia exhibit will highlight Murray's leadership roles in legal advocacy in cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Staff will conduct interpretive community programs and develop educational curriculum related to the exhibit. The institution will hire a part-time public historian, and staff will work with paid, graduate student interns. Staff will share the results of the project at a professional conference.

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.

The Pauli Murray Center for History & Social Justice (Pauli Murray Center or PMC) seeks \$343,614 to fund the next phase in its multi-year Inaugural Exhibit project. Previous work on the project secured the completion of restoration work on Pauli Murray's childhood home and the development of a rough design concept for an exhibit. However, this first phase also demonstrated the need to dedicate specific resources to an exhibit installation within the newly restored home while laying the groundwork for an inaugural exhibit based on the rough concept design.

Project Justification

The Pauli Murray Center has as its mission to lift up the life and legacy of the activist, legal scholar, feminist, poet, and Episcopal priest, Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, in order to address enduring inequities and injustices. The PMC and its supporters envision a world where fairness and justice are the standard for all people no matter their race, class, sexual orientation, gender, or spiritual practice. These two components are at the core of this multi-phased project that culminates in the opening of an inaugural exhibit housed in Pauli Murray's childhood home on 906 Carroll Street in Durham, North Carolina. In alignment with the objective to develop an exhibition under Goal 1 of the African American History and Culture program, **the Pauli Murray Center is seeking IMLS funding for the second phase of this project that will:**

- complete the concept design for the exhibit
- initiate and complete the design development process for the exhibit
- fabricate and install graphic and artifact-based elements for the exhibit
- activate the exhibit and Pauli's childhood home through new interpretive programs
- develop curriculum to support both the exhibit and existing youth resources centered on Pauli Murray and
- create a multimedia blueprint for the third phase of the project through consultation with leaders in the digital engagement space.

In 2021, the Pauli Murray Center was awarded a grant from the Mellon Foundation that included \$83,500 to shape a concept design for an inaugural exhibit in Pauli Murray's childhood home. This project allowed the Pauli Murray Center to work with Studio Aorta, in partnership with Jennifer Scott (Executive Director of the Urban League Museum), and Brandie Ragghianti (North Carolina-based public historian with expertise in Black and LGBTQ+ Southern history). The results of this partnership yielded a rough concept design (*see **Supportingdoc1.pdf***) of the exhibit that will help visitors better understand Pauli Murray's life and her/their legacy's inextricable link to today's movements for equity and justice.

A major part of this first phase was the restoration of the home where Pauli Murray grew up on 906 Carroll Street in Durham, North Carolina (*see **Supportingdoc6.pdf** & **Supportingdoc7.pdf***). The renovations have been long standing and delicate given the age of the structure. Challenges related to pandemic-era supply chain issues, weather, worker availability, and access to funding have shifted completion dates multiple times. However, we are grateful that the renovation will be complete in March of 2024 so that Pauli Murray's

childhood home can be fully-integrated into this next phase of the project and strengthen the impact for the eventual inaugural exhibit.

Along with the home renovation, the Pauli Murray Center developed an interpretive plan with Studio Aorta serving as exhibit designers and collaborated to reimagine the Center's existing mobile exhibition, "*Pauli Murray: Imp, Crusader, Dude, Priest*" (see [Supportingdoc5.pdf](#)), so that it could be displayed in Pauli Murray's childhood home until the installation of the inaugural exhibit. This 'placeholder' exhibit will provide our community with the opportunity to return to 906 Carroll Street, experience the internal physical space for the first time, and engage with Pauli Murray's advocacy work.

Beneficiaries. Creating the space to delve into the multiple intersections of Pauli's identities and how those relate to her/their advocacy work has the ability to equip a wide range of community members and visitors with both language and a feeling of mutual understanding as they navigate a cultural landscape that is increasingly divided. Pauli was a Black, queer, gender-nonconforming person from a working-class family living at a time when any one of these identities posed a threat to the accepted status quo. Pauli's prolific writing in support of civil rights for African Americans and women's equality added to the pantheon of efforts that continue to touch all Americans in the present day. With this in mind, all members of the community have the potential to experience the impact of the inaugural exhibit and its complementary programs.

Alongside the publicly presented exhibition, the Pauli Murray Center aims to embrace the opportunity to build the capacity of aspiring museum professionals through this project. Staying true to Pauli and her/their family's legacy of education as an engine for social justice, this project will create multiple spaces to equip educators, students, and other learners with the necessary tools for advocacy. Currently, the Pauli Murray Center has strong relationships with a number of curriculum development entities, educators, and educational institutions. This project will create an opportunity for the Pauli Murray Center to leverage these relationships, include the work of one of Pauli's descendants, and add another mechanism to a current PMC program: the Pauli Murray Social Justice Teaching Fellowship (see [Supportingdoc5.pdf](#)).

This next phase of **the project will meet the first goal of IMLS' Museum Grants for African American History and Culture: to build the capacity of African American museums and their ability to serve their communities.** Specifically, it will provide learning opportunities for lifelong learners as it reaches into multiple communities that are grappling with concerns related to equity and human rights. This project also provides learning tools for educators, new career development opportunities for young museum professionals, and builds the infrastructure for an innovative approach to exhibiting the life and work of a historic figure.

Project Work Plan

Activities. The goal for this project is to create the first exhibit focused on Pauli Murray's life and work inside of her/their childhood home. In order to achieve this, necessary activities include:

- **Hiring of a Public Historian** – The Public Historian will supervise the installation of the exhibit in the newly-restored childhood home of Pauli Murray. This individual will also be responsible for supervising two graduate student interns as they assist with the installation.
- **Hiring of Project Intern** – They will conceptualize, plan, and implement new interpretive programs to amplify the life and legacy of Pauli Murray, in partnership with PMC staff and project partner, Whistle Stop Tours. As young museum professionals, they will also have an opportunity to get hands-on experience collaborating with more seasoned professionals as well as dedicating a great deal of their effort to making the exhibit accessible to all members of our community.
- **Design, Fabrication, and Installation of Exhibit** – The PMC has engaged the all woman and woman of color-led Studio Aorta to design the inaugural exhibit and will continue working with them in conjunction with the Public Historian to manage the physical installation in Pauli Murray’s childhood home. During this project, Studio Aorta will: (1) complete the exhibit Concept Design (2) initiate and complete the exhibit Design Development process and (3) coordinate the fabrication and installation of a graphic and artifact-based exhibit. They will do this work with the support of the project Public Historian, as well as an Exhibits Associate.
- **Development of Interpretive Programs and Experiences** - Whistle Stop Tours, a current partner of the Pauli Murray Center, will continue their partnership by developing interpretive programs and experiences specific to the exhibit and the historic site.
- **8th Gr. Curriculum Development** - The Pauli Murray Center will engage with a curriculum development partner to be determined to create curriculum specific to Ms. Rosita Stevens-Holsey’s book, *Pauli Murray: The Life of a Pioneering Feminist and Civil Rights Activist* (see *Supportingdoc2.pdf* & *Supportingdoc5.pdf*).
- **Stakeholder and Advisory Board Meetings** – The project team will consult with stakeholders and members of an educational Advisory Board to solidify content for the exhibit and curriculum, respectively.
- **Multimedia Blueprint** - The PMC will consult with leaders in the digital engagement space to create a Multimedia Blueprint for Phase 3 of the exhibit. This will include recommendations for methods and equipment for audio/visual integration in the exhibit reflective of the concept provided by Studio Aorta.
- **Presentation of Exhibit Outcomes at Conferences** - Conference proposals will be submitted to present the project. The Project Employee will attend and present at the Association for African American Museums annual conference and the PastForward Conference. The Project Employee will also submit two proposals for Fall 2026 conferences.
- **Exhibit Opening** - The PMC will invite community members, stakeholders, and supporters for an exhibit opening.

Project Management. **Angela Thorpe**, PMC Executive Director of the Pauli Murray Center. She will oversee the project and work with project teams to ensure deliverables and benchmarks are met, and develops materials for reports as needed. **Calvetta Watlington**, is Managing Director of the Pauli Murray Center. She will write

and submit project interim and final reports in collaboration with the Development Director. **Christen Ruiz**, PMC Development Director, serves as the grant contact for this project, ensuring the grant follows internal and IMLS guidelines. Prepares interim and final reports in collaboration with PMC Managing Director. **Karita Cardona**, PMC Executive Assistant, Procurements Liaison. Manages procurement and purchasing for the project. **Miriam Valle**, PMC Bookkeeper (contract), manages and monitors payments to contractors. Also monitors IMLS reimbursements in support of PMC Managing Director. **Public Historian (project employee)**. Collaborates with exhibit designers to shape Concept Design, Design Development, and fabrication and installation of exhibition. Also collaborates with the Programming and Interpretation Team and Curriculum Design Team to ensure this work is aligned with the exhibit. **Exhibits Associate**, supports the exhibition development, fabrication, and installation process. **Studio Aorta**, Exhibit Designer. Leads the team in Concept Design and Design Development for the exhibit. Also coordinates exhibit fabrication and serves as the liaison between the PMC and the TBD Exhibit Installer. **Aya Shabu**, Founder and Creative Director, Whistle Stop Tours. Leads the team in conceptualizing, planning and implementing interpretive programs and experiences to support the exhibit. **Torriana Foster**, PMC Programming and Communications Coordinator. Supports the planning and implementation of interpretive programs and experiences to support the exhibit. Also conceptualizes, plans, and implements the exhibit opening event. **Curriculum Development Partner**. Leads the team in the conceptualizing, planning, and development of curriculum materials. **Rosita Stevens Holsey**, Founder & Director of Preserving Pauli Murray. Supports the conceptualization, planning, and development of curriculum materials. **Anjalique Knight-Abernathy**, PMC Director of Education and Outreach. Supports the conceptualization, planning, and development of curriculum materials and ensures they are accessible digitally, as well as across diverse networks of educators and students. **Two Summer Interns**, enrolled in an HBCU and majoring in History, will be utilized Summer 2024 and Summer 2025 to assist the Project Historian.

Timeline. **July 2024.** Planning meeting with Studio Aorta to outline Public Historian job description. **August 2024.** Public Historian job description written, edited, and finalized. **September 2024.** Public Historian job description posted and shared across public history networks. **November 2024.** Interviews for Public Historian take place. **December 2024.** Public Historian hired. Project kickoff meeting with Studio Aorta takes place on site at PMC offices. **January 2025.** Concept Design meeting with core exhibits team (Studio Aorta, PMC Public Historian, PMC Executive Director, PMC Director of Education and Outreach, one member from PMC Board of Directors Facilities & Operations Committee, and a contract Exhibits Associate) takes place. **February 2025.** Public Historian writes, edits, and finalizes internship description for Interpretation and Programming Intern; intern recruitment commences. **March 2025.** Two Concept Design meetings with community stakeholders take place. **April 2025.** Concept Design presentation made to PMC Board of Directors. Concept Design meeting with core exhibits team takes place. **May 2025.** Exhibit Concept Design finalized. Interviews for Interpretation and Programming Intern take place. **June 2025.** Interpretation and Programming Intern hired. Studio Aorta leads Design Development workshop with core exhibits team (including intern). Public Historian, intern, and Whistle Stop Tours begin conceptualizing new interpretive programs and experiences, with support from PMC Firebrand Interns. PMC Director of Education and Outreach and PMC Programming and Communications Coordinator begin planning for the exhibit opening event. **August 2025.** Public Historian attends Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Conference. Design

Development meeting with core exhibits team takes place. Design Development meeting with community stakeholders takes place. **September 2025.** Interpretive programs and experiences finalized by Public Historian, intern, and Whistle Stop Tours; planning for implementation begins. Design Development presentation made to PMC Board of Directors. Exhibit design finalized; exhibit printing/fabrication begins. **November 2025.** Public Historian submits proposals to present at two Fall 2026 conferences: AAAM Conference and PastForward National Preservation Conference. **December 2025.** Exhibit installed in Rev. Dr. Murray's childhood home. **January 2026.** Exhibit opening event takes place. PMC Director of Education and Outreach, Rosita Stevens-Holsey, and Carolina K-12 begin curriculum development. Educator Advisory Board to support curriculum development established. **February 2026.** New interpretive programs and experiences launch to the public. **March 2026.** Interpretation and Programming internship concludes. Educator Advisory Board meets to review the draft curriculum. **May 2026.** Educator Advisory Board meets to review the draft curriculum. Public Historian begins consulting with digital engagement leaders to begin crafting multimedia blueprint for exhibition. **June 2026.** Curriculum finalized and made accessible to the public via the PMC's website. **August 2026.** Public Historian presents at AAAM Conference. **September 2026.** Public Historian begins crafting multimedia blueprint for exhibition. **October 2026.** Public Historian attends Association for the Study of African American Life and History Annual Meeting and Conference. **November 2026.** Public Historian presents at PastForward Conference. **December 2026.** Public Historian shares final multimedia blueprint with PMC Staff and Board of Directors. Public Historian position ends. **January 2027.** Project concludes.

Risks. The recent discussion around what parts of American history are taught in public schools has been divisive and led to proposed legislation that is increasingly restrictive of topics related to systemic racism. Given that this is the landscape that educators must traverse in their profession, project collaborators must be attentive to changes in the state curriculum requirements for public school classrooms and develop alternative opportunities for learning and professional development. Pauli Murray was a queer person who grappled with her/their gender identity throughout her/their life. This fact could also be considered a 'risk' with a project that seeks to include a queer person in public school education materials. Once again, alternative opportunities to share Pauli's story for public school educators and students must be developed. To ensure community support, educators and stakeholders involved in the development of curriculum will be asked to share their practical expertise and listening sessions will be employed if and when they are deemed necessary.

Resources. This 30-month project runs July 2024-January 2027. Total funds sought to enable activities are \$343,614 to cover expenses incurred by this project that go beyond basic operational costs: funds to hire a Public Historian, interns, exhibit design & graphics, exhibit tour development, and travel to IMLS meetings. All permanent and contract personnel needs are met through the Pauli Murray Center, including the salaries and benefits of full-time employees.

Tracking progress. Staff will use a project management matrix to assign tasks/deadlines. Using the matrix as a guide, staff will hold quarterly meetings to discuss deliverables, identify challenges, and facilitate communication. Regular meetings and communications will ensure the forward movement of the project and resolve problems.

Sharing Results. Results will be shared with professional colleagues and communities. The Public Historian will submit a proposal to present at two conferences: the Association for African American Museums Conference and PastForward National Preservation Conference. Other members of the project team will seek to present its results at IMLS sponsored events as well as appropriate presentations at meetings and workshops. Community meetings will be used to share results with local stakeholders as will “opening night programming” associated with the exhibit.

Project Results

Performance Measure Statement. Through this project, the Pauli Murray Center will create an exhibition centered on the life and legacy of Pauli Murray within a National Historic Landmark – Pauli Murray’s childhood home. In this way, the project supports IMLS’ performance goal of Building the capacity of African American museums and their ability to serve their communities.

Intended Results. This project continues building upon the foundation laid by a previous grant. A new exhibit will be installed in Pauli Murray’s childhood home and invite the community to deepen its relationship with Pauli’s legacy through interpretive programs and events. This project will also lay the groundwork for the third and final phase of the PMC Inaugural Exhibit that will include integrated multimedia additions to the exhibit.

Tangible Products include **1)** an open exhibit within Pauli Murray’s childhood home complete with installed graphics and artifacts; **2)** curriculum that supports both the exhibit and existing youth resources centered on Pauli Murray; **3)** a multimedia blueprint for Phase 3 of the exhibit project; and **4)** new interpretive programs based upon the exhibit.

Knowledge, Skills or Attitudes	Objectives	Evaluation Methodology
To increase knowledge of the life and legacy of Pauli Murray, her/their advocacy, and impact on modern American life and social justice advocacy	Complete installation of Phase 2 of the inaugural exhibit	Exhibit attendance, measurement of attendance for one year after opening (January 2026). Exhibit visitor surveys will be collected. # of tours attended.
Increased interpretive programs for the Pauli Murray Center	Development of multiple programs centered on the inaugural exhibit.	#of programs delivered, # of participants in programs. Participants in programs will be asked to complete brief surveys.
Attendees at conferences will learn about this project	To share project results with the greater museum community	Number of conferences where project results are shared.

<p>Graduate students receive hands-on training in exhibition design, interpretive program development, and community engagement</p>	<p>To cultivate the next generation of African American museum and public history practitioners by hiring 2 interns for 12-weeks.</p>	<p>Exit interviews when internships end will ask qualitative questions about the internship experience, lessons learned, and whether the opportunity has prepared the individual for a professional career. # of conferences and professional development opportunities attended.</p>
<p>Use of the curriculum based on Pauli Murray and the exhibit.</p>	<p>Curriculum developed and shared with networks of local educators.</p>	<p>Number of times curriculum was shared with educators, # of books distributed, # of classrooms using books and/or curriculum.</p>

Sustainability. This proposal seeks funds for the second phase of the exhibit that will live on after the project as part of the Pauli Murray Center’s exhibit program. The stability of this project is integral to the third and final phase that would introduce a multimedia component to the proposed existing exhibit. The bulk of expenditures will be one-time. Ongoing maintenance will be assumed by the Pauli Murray Center’s annual operating budget. Current Pauli Murray Center leadership have a proven track record of sustaining long-range projects and producing quality results. Salaries/benefits for staff responsible for this project are covered by the Pauli Murray Center. Grant funds from IMLS provide funds that go beyond basic operational costs to cover the activities of this phase of the PMC Inaugural Exhibit and hire term-limited staff and graduate student interns to launch the exhibit and create interpretive programs.

