

Accessibility Grants

2009

Museum of Science, Boston – Boston, MA

Amount: \$100,000

Grant: National Leadership Grants for Museums - Planning Grants

The purpose of this proposed research study is to generate for the museum field an enhanced understanding of the institutional conditions that prevent museum professionals from taking action to include people with disabilities in museum learning. This study will describe the range of actions taken, or not taken, toward inclusion at six museums of a diverse range of disciplines and sizes. It will generate new understandings institutional leaders and professional development organizations can use to take action to change institutional conditions, cultures, and practices so that museum professionals are better able to create museum learning experiences that are welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities.

Queens Museum of Art – New York, NY

Amount: \$433,596

Grant: National Leadership Grants for Libraries - Library-Museum Collaboration

The Queens Museum of Art, in partnership with the Queens Library and Quality Services for the Autistic Community, will develop and implement a model community-based art therapy program for Spanish-speaking families of children with autism spectrum disorders. These non-English-speaking families face multiple challenges in trying to access library and museum services. The Queens Museum of Art and the Queens Library will reach out together and make their institutions more inviting to such families. Project activities include coordinated staff training on serving this underserved segment of the community, building the Queens Library's Spanish-language collections on special needs subjects, and events to help these families connect. Over the three-year grant period, the project will produce 25 scheduled activities for families of children with autism spectrum disorders as well as two exhibitions of artwork by students with the disorders.

Braille Institute Library Services – Los Angeles, CA

Award: National Medal for Museum and Library Services

The award-winning Braille Institute Library Services is committed to providing high-quality programming and library services to its blind, visually impaired, reading disabled, and physically handicapped patrons in southern California, many of whom are over the age of 65. Outreach efforts include several book-of-the-month clubs, a children's book club, and an annual summer reading program that promotes childhood literacy by encouraging children to continue reading even when school is not in session. The library also serves as a one-stop shop for audio, Braille, and digital books for the blind and visually impaired. Since its beginning, Braille Institute Library Services has been and remains committed to empowering patrons with knowledge, literacy, and independence.

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community – Baraga, MI

Amount: \$120,374

Grant: Native American Library Services - Enhancement Grants

The Ojibwa Community Library at the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community will focus on expanding and enhancing existing library services to senior and disabled tribal members. Project staff will implement in-home outreach services to home bound and limited mobility members, provide portable visual and audio assistance equipment, establish a collection of large-print books and periodicals, expand library services and assistive technology into the senior center, and improve accessibility through expanded evening and weekend hours. The project will improve the overall quality of life for senior, visually challenged, and home bound community members, providing increased opportunities and abilities to access the library's informational, educational, recreational, and cultural resources.

Miami-Dade Public Library System—Miami, FL

Award: National Medal for Museum and Library Services

The library system partnered with the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind to provide an annual “Make-a-Bookmark Contest” for visually impaired and blind children. Winners of the contest have their bookmarks printed and distributed by the library system.

Skokie Public Library—Skokie, IL

Award: National Medal for Museum and Library Services

The Skokie Accessibly Library Service was created as a way for the library to provide visually or hearing impaired or those with limited mobility with services including telecommunication devices for the deaf, JAWS for Windows speech synthesis, and Duxbury Braille Translation Software. The library is also fully accessible for patrons in wheelchairs or scooters.

New Canaan Library—New Canaan, CT

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

The New Canaan Library designed and implemented Webster’s Bridge as a range of materials, services, technology and programs in support of the community’s 451 students (10% of the pre-K-12 student population) with special needs, their parents and siblings, and educators. It provided collections and collection guides, assistive technology, programs, and staff training. The fully integrated collection expanded the library’s existing resources and added assistive technology, enhanced services, and quarterly programming into the open, welcoming library space. The project built upon community meetings dating to 2005 as well as a grant the Library received from a local family in late 2005 to nurture the community of special needs children and children with learning disabilities, Downs Syndrome, and autism. Parent surveys and advisory group meetings showed that primary needs included developmentally appropriate books for children’s pleasure reading, assistive technology to help access the library’s collections, books and other materials that address special needs broadly, specific books about parenting children with special needs, books specific to particular special needs, library staff training, making the materials readily accessible, and more programming directed to toward specific challenges. One additional important project goal was to increase awareness of the prevalence of special needs families in the community, increase understanding of these families and the challenges they face, and foster the idea that these children and families are just one of many unique subsets of library patrons. LSTA enabled purchase of books, DVDs and music CDs. Because a large number of students with special needs – 147 - are learning disabled, and an additional 22 are autistic, these areas were the focus of much of the materials purchased.

Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind and Print Handicapped, Inc.

Amount: \$191,593

Grant: Congressionally-directed grants

The Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind and Print Handicapped, Inc. (IRIS) brings newspapers and other timely and topical information to the blind and print handicapped of Iowa. IRIS volunteers read newspapers to the blind and print handicapped over subcarrier audio frequencies of public, non-commercial and commercial radio stations in Iowa. A subcarrier frequency is a side channel available on FM band signal. The organization also web streams material from its web site and will establish a download page so listeners may retrieve archived material. The organization is administered by two staff persons and a volunteer board of directors. The project provides for the continuing support of a small office and broadcast studio and support for remote broadcast locations. The project will also provide for special pre-tuned subcarrier audio receivers to be distributed at no cost to qualified blind and print handicapped Iowans. The receivers will be distributed through contacts with the Iowa Department for the Blind, Veterans Administration, eye care professionals, volunteers and other informal partners. The project will allow blind and print handicapped Iowans to remain connected to their communities. Although the time frame for the project will be 15 months, IRIS hopes to continue the reading operation indefinitely.

2007

Art Education for the Blind – New York, NY

Amount: \$77,050

Grant: 21st Century Museum Professionals

Art Education for the Blind (AEB) will complete the production and online launch of its “Handbook for Museums and Educators,” a practical guide designed to facilitate the process of creating accessible programming for people with visual impairments or other disabilities. AEB will work with over ten museums to pilot and evaluate tools involving the development of accessible art education programs, disability awareness training for museum staff, and the creation of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Available both online and in CD format, the handbook’s multimedia features will offer effective, user-friendly teaching tools, enabling users to select, download, and customize information and components most pertinent to their institutions’ needs.

Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden – New York, NY

Amount: \$45,983

Grant: Museums for America - Supporting Lifelong Learning

“Expanding Access, Welcoming New Audiences” is a multifaceted accessibility expansion plan by the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden to increase access for Spanish-speaking visitors and visitors with hearing loss, vision loss, or developmental impairments. Activities will include the production of Braille and large print guides, guided verbal description tours, tactile exhibit enhancements, art workshops for the visually impaired, assistive listening devices, and the creation of audio tours in Spanish and guided tours in American Sign Language.

2006

Museum of disABILITY History – Williamsville, NY

Amount: \$23,613

Grant: Museums for America - Supporting Lifelong Learning

Museum of disABILITY History & Culture (ModHC)will hire a research intern/assistant to support its website development project, which will establish a virtual version of ModHC on the Internet. The research intern/assistant will help the museum coordinator (curator) develop new exhibits for the physical and virtual website. The ultimate goal of the project is to expand community awareness about people with disabilities and their impact on society.

Staten Island Children's Museum – Staten Island, NY

Amount: \$21,850

Grant: Museums for America - Serving as Centers of Community Engagement

The Staten Island Children's Museum works with partners to mainstream persons with disabilities in a controlled and welcoming environment. The ART Project (Abilities, Resources, Training) targets the following three groups. (1) Children with anxiety and attention disorders are mainstreamed into summer "mini-camps," where they paint, sculpt, garden, and cook with other children. (2) Fifteen special education teenagers will work at the museum, helping with mailings, preparing for workshops, maintaining exhibits, and assisting in the Operations Department. (3) The museum will work with On Your Mark to offer a museum café run by 15 disabled adults. In addition to café training, the workers will learn horticulture/groundskeeping and janitorial skills, and how to use public transportation.

David Lloyd Kreeger Foundation – Washington, DC

Amount: \$232,836

Grant: National Leadership Grants for Museums - Advancing Learning Communities

The Kreeger Museum in partnership with the Catholic University of America (CUA) will develop a model program for using art and music for students with special educational needs. The program includes the development of specially designed art museum tours and workshops with docents who are trained by visual artists and CUA faculty in special education and music education. The tour will be followed by a workshop taught by a professional artist. The students will listen to contemporary and classical music, dissect the sounds, and interpret them in drawing exercises and compositional development. The Hear Art, See Music workshops will include the dissemination of CD-ROMs and DVDs to museum educators as tools to design museum programs for children with special education needs. This program is designed to be replicated by small and mid-size museums.

California State Library—Sacramento, CA

Amount: \$2,527,432

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

This project provided library services in alternate formats to California residents unable to use standard print due to physical disabilities. Users who met the eligibility requirements set by federal law for the Library of Congress National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) were served through the Braille and Talking Book Library in Sacramento and the Braille Institute in Los Angeles. The service provided reading materials to Californians of all ages. The library materials, equivalent to those available to any non-disabled California resident through their local public library, allowed users to receive books, magazines and newspapers of their choice in Braille, recorded or electronic formats. The service allowed users with disabilities to maintain equal access to print information needed in their daily lives and for lifelong learning – e.g., current events, bestsellers, general nonfiction, history, health, mysteries, juvenile and young adult literature, grocery ads, television and job listings, etc.

Colorado State Library—Denver, CO

Amount: \$261,080

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

The Colorado Talking book Library provides free library services to the print disabled residents of Colorado. Collections include books on tape, Braille books, large print books and descriptive videos. Additional services available are reference services to patrons and an on-line public access to the library's catalog through the KLAS circulation system. The Colorado Talking book Library supports the LSTA goal of service to underserved populations by providing large print books to libraries with institutional accounts and any in Colorado can qualify.

Florence County Library—Florence, SC

Amount: \$2,628

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

Project VISION was developed to provide computer access solutions in several aspects of library automation to aid deaf, blind and visually impaired patrons. The library system already had an existing program to provide accessibility for this target group, but the program was very limited. In seeking and receiving LSTA funding, the library's intent is to provide its special needs citizens with on-site availability of adaptive software and hardware for improved access to the library's print and electronic information resources. In partnership with the SC Commission for the Blind (SCCB), the Florence County Library identified citizens with low vision and macular degeneration (whose primary service outlets are its main library and its Lake City branch) as their primary target group. A principal project objective is to place magnifying software (ZoomText) and a CCTV magnifier (Aladdin Sunshine) in these libraries. Working with the SCCB, the library expects to train its computer services staff (FTE and part-time) and select branch library staff in the use of the equipment/software. Staff training by SCCB will also include these two resources. SCCB will also be used to help market the library's new service. Florence/Darlington Tech College will refer students in need of adaptive computer equipment. Caregivers, family members and others will be reached through local newspaper advertising. The library also plans to target ADA office of Frances Marion University (also located in Florence) to reach area visually impaired students. As a result of the generosity of Wachovia and the Wal-Mart Foundation, the main library acquired one license for JAWS for Windows (synthesized speech) and one license for OpenBook (converts print into electronic text). Library administration believes that combining LSTA support with local support already provided (Wachovia and Wal-Mart) makes the Vision Project sustainable for many years to come.

Holmes County Board of MRDD/Holmes County Training Center—Holmes, OH

Amount: \$23,200

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

This is a joint project of the Holmes County Board of MRDD/Holmes County Training Center and the Holmes County District Public Library to provide a broader, more accessible collection of informational and teaching materials that will assist the disabled and their parents, care givers, teachers and other professionals working with individuals with developmental disabilities. Specifically, a variety of resource materials on syndromes, disability conditions and parenting materials related to developmental disabilities were purchased and a collection of educational and adaptive toys were made available to loan to families. A room at the Training Center was dedicated as a Special Needs Lending Library that will be available to all residents of Holmes County and the resource books will be available to anyone in Ohio with a library card. A self-checkout module is available to patrons at all times the Training Center is open and the Center is staffed part-time. The driving principals of this project were to make library services more available to everyone in the community; to make it easier for the disabled to use the library and its resources; and to provide information about disabilities to individuals with a disability and their families.

New Mexico State Library—Santa Fe, NM

Amount: \$5,785

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

This project establishes a contractual relationship with the Utah State Library, one of the largest Braille material depositories in the US, to provide Braille reading materials for nearly 100 eligible New Mexicans. The New Mexico Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) is a joint Federal-State program and is one of 57 regional libraries of the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The library is responsible for meeting the reading and information needs of approximately 4000 New Mexico citizens who are blind, visually impaired, physically handicapped, or reading disabled. The New Mexico State Library is unable to directly provide to the New Mexico Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped funds or storage space for materials in Braille. LSTA funds allow for the provision of Braille materials for eligible and interested New Mexico LBPH patrons.

Seattle Public Library—Seattle, WA

Amount: \$328,000

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

To provide free library service consisting of books and magazines in alternate formats to meet the information, self-education, and recreational needs of visually impaired, blind, physically handicapped, and learning disabled residents statewide who are eligible under the criteria of the U.S. Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS).

State Library of Louisiana—Baton Rouge, LA

Amount: \$572,665

Grant: Grants to State Library Agencies

Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (SBPH) serves over 7600 print-impaired Louisiana citizens of all ages and diverse ethnic groups, keeping them informed, literate and well-read via accessible library materials. Blind, visually impaired and disabled persons are often marginalized because of a lack of access to information; this library program includes special needs readers in society by ensuring them equal access to information. To qualify, a person must have a condition that limits his ability to read standard print, such as a visual impairment, a reading disability, or a physical disability. SBPH provides free library service via mail, sending special format materials directly to persons enrolled in the service. SBPH loans books on special format tape, cassette players, Braille books and large print books to individuals at home, as well as in a variety of group settings such as assisted living centers, nursing homes, hospitals and other institutions. Digital books on flash memory devices will debut in 2008-2009. Schools, clinics and other organizations may enroll as institutional clients. SBPH actively seeks and registers new patrons, loans materials that are not available through standard library service, provides reader advisors to assist patrons, loans playback machines and conducts a summer reading program for youngsters.

2005

Amazement Square – Lynchburg, VA

Amount: \$49,196

Grant: Museums for America

To improve the educational, social, and recreational opportunities available to students with special needs, Amazement Square is collaborating with Laurel Regional School, which serves students aged 4-21 in Lynchburg and five surrounding counties who are severely and profoundly mentally and physically handicapped. Through biweekly, two-hour hands-on workshops held at both the museum

and the school, students learn to focus their creativity in innovative ways and have opportunities to interact with the public as a way of becoming integrated into mainstream society. Due to the diversity, multiplicity, and varying degrees of severity of students' disabilities, programmatic activities at Laurel Regional School address both group and individual needs. Programs have a thematic focus, complement the school's established curriculum, and incorporate selected museum exhibits to provide additional learning experiences for the students.

Connecticut Children's Museum, Inc. – New Haven, CT

Amount: \$48,708

Grant: Museums for America

The Museum Multiple Intelligences Inclusion Project will infuse the Connecticut Children's Museum and its programs with a layer of inclusive elements to broaden access for children with special needs. This project will highlight the importance of inclusion for all children, making it an expected and ordinary part of the museum's design, thus placing inclusion on the community agenda. An in-depth review of the Connecticut Children Museum will set the tempo for this project. The museum will develop a project evaluation tool; assess the physical plant for accessibility issues; evaluate exhibits for inclusive components; analyze programs for inclusion and accessibility; and create a community conversation by partnering with children with special needs, their families, and disability consultants to place inclusion on the agenda. To move the accessibility agenda forward, the Museum Multiple Intelligences Inclusion Project will have the following components: 1) Install state-of-the-art accessibility components to the physical plant. 2) Develop an audio description CD of the museum and provide staff training in audio description. 3) Create textured maps, brochures, flyers, and annual reports and an accessible Web site. 4) Design integrated inclusion exhibits. 5) Install informational Braille handrails in hallways. 6) Create tactile engravings of museum murals. 7) Transcribe museum's collection of children's picture books into Braille. 8) Organize and implement series of Textured Literacy Program field trips. 9) Engage an American Sign Language interpreter for every Saturdays at 2: Creating Readers program. 10) Provide a Braille copy of each Creating Readers book. 11) Create a PowerPoint presentation documenting the Museum Multiple Intelligences Inclusion Project. 12) Establish an Inclusion Advisory Group.

Lincoln Park Zoological Gardens – Chicago, IL

Amount: \$149,540

Grant: Museums for America

Lincoln Park Zoo will use a two-year IMLS grant to fund its Education Inclusion Initiative. This project will evaluate and adapt education programming in five targeted areas, making them more accessible and engaging to young children, students, and adults with disabilities (e.g., physical impairments, learning disabilities, cognitive/behavioral/emotional disorders). The five programs are 1) public lectures, 2) docent training, 3) on-grounds curiosity carts, 4) Project N.O.A.H. (a literary program), and 5) the Zoo Intern Program (ZIP) for teens. The zoo chose these programs because they are broadly representative of all programming in the zoo. This sharp focus will help the zoo reach the widest range of audiences while keeping the initiative realistic and achievable within a two-year time frame. Although the zoo is proud of the array and depth of its formal and public education opportunities, only one program, Hands-On Zoo, specifically addresses visitors with disabilities. While this program is excellent, adaptive, and well received, the zoo is aware of the limited scope and variety of programs for this audience. The Education Inclusion Initiative will address this deficiency by developing and implementing inclusive components for visitors with disabilities. Led by Vice President of Education Dr. Robert Davis and Manager of Formal Programs Dr. Marlene Meisels (Ph.D. in special education), this initiative seeks systemic change to improve the zoo's ability to fulfill its mission in the best possible manner. Instead of one separate program to accommodate visitors with

disabilities, the project will create a wide circle of inclusion for this audience across a range of zoo's most important and popular education programs.