

Sample Application

2011 National Leadership Grants for Museums

Demonstration

Children's Museum of
Manhattan
New York, NY

Built to Learn

ABSTRACT

The Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) will collaborate to utilize museum pedagogy to transform public housing into epicenters of lifelong learning, healthy childhood development, community collaboration and workforce readiness.

CMOM proposes a three-year national leadership project to create a replicable model that unites and embeds the museum experience—interactive exhibits and educational programs—inside of a public housing community. The Johnson Houses in East Harlem, New York will serve as the first ***Built to Learn*** demonstration site to house 2,000 sq. ft. of CMOM interactive exhibit environments, based on the IMLS-funded *PlayWorks*TM and upcoming health exhibition, *Eat, Sleep, Play*. With a year-round permanent base in the facility's newly renovated Community and Day Care Centers, the ***Built to Learn*** project will include:

- **Exhibit environments** composed of up to 25 interactive environments, activities and graphics that provide families in Johnson Houses and East Harlem with a safe, nurturing, interactive environment that supports children's development of academic skills while building healthy habits.
- **Parent and child engagement programs** that work in tandem with, and are enhanced by, the interactive exhibit, and are based on CMOM's curriculum for teaching early childhood literacy and health lessons through arts, science, music, movement, storytelling and cooking.
- **Professional development programs** to provide parents and caregivers with tools and strategies to support the learning and developmental needs of young children.
- **Workforce programs** to train and employ residents and community members in museum-related vocations.
- **Community Resource Development** to augment existing NYCHA programs for older children and serve as a resource for neighboring sites (libraries, schools, health clinics, child care centers, etc.).

Working with NYCHA, CMOM will demonstrate the effectiveness of recreating the museum experience inside of public housing. This new model applies the excellence of museum pedagogy to the dire educational, economic and health issues effecting children and families living in low-income communities. The project will result in a case study exploring the public value of museums and their essential role in the community.

The project intends to have national impact on multiple levels:

1. Increase the leadership capacity of museums by creating and disseminating a replicable model for community-based exhibit environments that utilize the arts to effectively engage children and families.
2. Demonstrate the impact of a museum-led, community-wide response in tackling critical social issues (in this case, early childhood education and childhood obesity) by disseminating best practices.
3. Influence practice and policy by assessing the public value of the museum, with the hope that other successful strategic partnerships can be formed between community organizations such as public housing and arts and cultural institutions such as museums.
4. Provide access to new content, products, networks, research and process to implement effective early childhood education and health education in low-income communities.
5. Improve the learning and healthy development of children and families in East Harlem.

The project design was crafted in response to four interrelated needs: the school readiness and health needs of young children living in low-income communities; the local community needs in East Harlem, New York; the museum community's need for innovative and effective models of community engagement; and the public housing community's need to engage in new efforts to create revitalized and sustainable housing communities.

INTRODUCTION

The lives of millions of low-income Americans center around daily routines inside of public housing. In cities large and small, families in public housing struggle to provide the home and community foundation needed to prepare their children for success. Given the urgency and scope of this problem, as discussed below, it is essential to address the issue where people reside and spend most of their day. As such, the largest landlord in the U.S., the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), has turned to a museum—the Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)—to transform public housing into an epicenter of lifelong learning, healthy childhood development, community engagement and workforce readiness.

CMOM and NYCHA propose *Built to Learn*, a three year leadership project that will bring the museum experience of interactive exhibits and hands-on education programs to a public housing community. The Johnson Houses in East Harlem will be home to a permanent year-round 2,000 sq. ft. exhibit environment, supported by a vigorous schedule of early childhood, health and workforce programs for adults and children in the community. *Built to Learn* will adapt CMOM’s IMLS-funded *PlayWorks*™ early childhood exhibit and upcoming health exhibition *Eat, Sleep, Play* to provide families and children (ages birth through eight) living in and around Johnson Houses with the experiences and skills needed for lifelong success. The project will demonstrate the efficacy of museums serving as primary agents of change in low-income communities and provide a case study on the essential role of museums in the learning lives of all Americans.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Across the country, millions of young children living in low-income communities lack access to quality early childhood education. A lack of intellectual stimulation during the early years at home and in school can place children at a disadvantage throughout their lives. In order to maximize children’s natural and robust capacity to learn, grow, develop and be ready for kindergarten and beyond, there are essential capacities that must be fostered during the early years of life. This includes using ideas and words meaningfully and creatively (storytelling, face-to-face verbal exchanges, nursery rhymes); forming close relationships with caring adults and other children; interacting with the world through hands-on activities; engaging in imaginative play and expression of creativity through the arts; safe, nurturing environments in which to play and learn; and healthy nutrition, exercise and sleep.

In New York City, 50% of low-income children are not prepared to enter kindergarten. They are likely to start school with limited language skills, health problems and social and emotional problems that interfere with learning. By [kindergarten](#), a child on public assistance has heard 32 million words fewer than a middle-class child. Studies show that by fourth grade, one-third of students are scoring “below basic” on national reading tests, with minority children showing even greater difficulties. The unfortunate reality is that too many low-income children are not prepared to enter school, either academically or socially and the larger the gap is early on, the harder it is to close.

Current obesity prevention research also suggests that nutrition and exercise habits are also formed during these same critical early childhood years, when children follow examples set by their first teachers and role models—parents and caregivers. Patterns established early are difficult and costly to reverse. Childhood obesity is an even greater concern for children living at or below the poverty line. A 2007 report by the New York City Department of Health indicates that more than 40% of Head Start children are overweight or obese. If left unchecked, the growing epidemic of childhood obesity will result in a generation of children that, for the first time ever, will not outlive their parents.

This creates an enduring challenge for society. Early childhood education has the best long-term potential for return on investment in terms of overall development, school success and the impact on long-term earnings potential. Obesity prevention efforts that target the very young may avert long-term economic cost and burden on the healthcare system. However, researchers and policymakers point to an education pipeline and support system that is fractured and incoherent, and ignores decades of research about the importance of early childhood interventions, especially for low-income and minority children. The result is a squandering of tax-payer dollars, program redundancies and dilution of impact. Now, after years of federal legislation resulting in siloed efforts among agencies (child care, education, social service, health and labor), there is renewed focus on the creation of seamless, high quality early childhood efforts that build linkages, connect previously disparate efforts and efficiently coordinate services to achieve shared goals.

In November of 2010, CMOM attended a meeting at the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) of *Ready to Learn* grantees. The DOE stressed the importance of finding new models to connect learning across ages 2-8, connect school learning to the home and the community, and create synergies between initiatives that currently exist across multiple federal agencies. It is within this national context, mirrored in many other social innovation efforts, including *Promise*

Neighborhoods, that the core premise of this leadership proposal is based: museums are uniquely capable of creating learning experiences that are central to the goals currently articulated by educators, health experts and social scientists.

Museums are a natural bridge among the health, education, cultural and civic sectors. With expertise reaching and engaging families, and access to a diverse range of service providers in low-income communities, museums are ideally situated to link organizations and services that are close geographically and overlap in mission, but are not connected. Museums are also unique creators of immersive learning experiences that transcend the didactic, bringing learning to life by making it concrete and visible. The exhibit environment is the most powerful manifestation of museum education—creating an educational backdrop within which families are engaged and programs are enhanced, and establishing a permanence of educational place and values. Simultaneously transforming people and place, the true potential is in uniting exhibits and programs in a fully integrated learning environment.

NYCHA, the nation's largest low-income housing provider, selected CMOM as its partner to transform public housing. CMOM has more than three decades of experience successfully translating research into engaging programs for children and families, and cultivating a deep understanding of trends and issues affecting families from across the economic spectrum. NYCHA joins numerous local, state and national partners—including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and City University of New York (CUNY)—who have also turned to CMOM to help engage low-income families with innovative, engaging, behavior-changing programs.

NYCHA provides affordable housing for nearly half a million low- to moderate-income residents. The largest concentration of public housing is in East Harlem – also known as Spanish Harlem and El Barrio – home to a diverse group of immigrants, large African-American population and nearly 20,000 children under the age of nine. East Harlem typifies the struggles of many low-income communities and is unable to support the needs of its current population due to an insufficient range and coordination of services in education and health. (Please see Supporting Document #1) Based on a preliminary assessment with local residents, the Johnson Houses in East Harlem were identified as an ideal demonstration site to bring museum learning to public housing.

NYCHA professionals who work closely with the Harlem Children's Zone (in central Harlem) and other neighborhood initiatives, will bring the best learning about successful community-based projects to this project in order to move forward with a core strategy of this project: to use the existing system of public housing programs as a sustainable base for programs created with CMOM, as opposed to creating a new organization or structures to connect the diverse programs and agencies needed to help prepare children for school and beyond.

In preparing to work inside of public housing, CMOM conducted a national scan of museum outreach to gain insights and guidance about projects of deep community involvement. To be sure, museums have been anchors for economic redevelopment in cities such as Baltimore (Inner Harbor) and Chicago (Navy Pier) and neighborhoods such as the Lower East Side of Manhattan (the New Museum). There is also much to learn from the community assessment done by the Chicago History Museum in developing a museum-wide strategic plan; the Louisiana Humanities Council in developing and delivering literature and poetry programs in underserved communities; Boston Children's Museum's *Countdown to Kindergarten* initiative; American Museum of Natural History's teacher certification program; and the San José Discovery Museum's careful and prolonged outreach to the Latino community.

A recent environmental scan of the children's museum field confirmed that while museums have placed installations or exhibits in schools, libraries, hospitals, community and/or recreation centers—including Austin Children's Museum's *Air-to-Go*, Minnesota Children's Museum's library initiative, Long Island Children's Museum's work with social service agencies, and the Children's Museum of Phoenix's pioneering work with the Phoenix Library—no children's museum has combined outreach programming with permanent exhibits in public housing. Stepping Stones has worked with Norwalk Housing Authority in Connecticut to conduct outreach, but has not developed specific exhibit elements or programming relating to socio-economic demographic. The Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) is partnering on the Chicago Housing Authority's redevelopment project which, while different in purpose, will provide insight into how museums can be integral to their community. CMOM will continue to engage in conversation with CCM as they develop this program.

A literature review and informal interviews with more than a dozen museums and science centers from across the country confirmed several beliefs:

- Because of their expertise engaging children and families, children’s museums have been sought after by a range of community partners;
- Museums are clearly looking for community engagement models that are successful with high-risk audiences;
- Physical limitations of museum facilities and unattractive real estate markets have prompted institutions to expand off-site programs and consider satellite locations for exhibits;
- Museums are natural partners in educational reform efforts and community revitalization initiatives;
- The entire museum community would benefit from new models that validate their effectiveness in tackling complex social issues that impact families and communities; and
- Limited resources and ongoing cost of maintenance has posed challenges to the feasibility of such endeavors.

Responding to these needs, CMOM will create a replicable community engagement model that unites and embeds the pillars of the museum experience—interactive exhibits and educational programs—inside of public housing. The Johnson Houses will serve as the first **Built to Learn** demonstration site to integrate approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of CMOM exhibits—based on the IMLS-funded *PlayWorks*™ early childhood exhibit and the upcoming health exhibit, *Eat, Sleep, Play*—into the facility’s Community and Day Care Centers. With a permanent year-round base in public housing, **Built to Learn** will serve as an anchor for community engagement, ensuring that children and families have access to a network of integrated experiences that encourage academic achievement and healthy development.

NATIONAL IMPACT AND INTENDED RESULTS

Working with NYCHA, CMOM will demonstrate the effectiveness of recreating the museum experience inside of public housing. This new model applies the excellence of museum pedagogy to the dire educational, economic and health issues effecting children and families living in low-income communities.

The project intends to have national impact on multiple levels:

1. Increase the leadership capacity of museums by creating and disseminating a replicable model for community-based exhibit environments that utilize the arts to effectively engage children and families.
2. Demonstrate the impact of a museum-led, community-wide response in tackling critical social issues (in this case, early childhood education and childhood obesity) by disseminating best practices.
3. Influence practice and policy by assessing the public value of the museum, with the hope that other successful strategic partnerships can be formed between community organizations such as public housing and arts and cultural institutions such as museums.
4. Provide access to new content, products, networks, research and process to implement effective early childhood education and health education in low-income communities.
5. Improve the learning and healthy development of children and families in East Harlem.

CMOM envisions significant impact on the museum field as a result of the project. As outlined above, few, if any, museums have established a long-term physical presence in public housing, despite a mission-critical need to serve at-risk families. It will increase the capacity of museums to meet the needs of diverse audiences by providing access to new models and best practices for designing, implementing and evaluating new approaches to museum-based education. The project reflects the needs of museums of all sizes and community organizations that are seeking tested programs, while contending with varying capacities and limited resources.

The project will connect to NYCHA’s continuum of services for children birth through eight. **Built to Learn** will provide the foundation for learning and healthy development in the early years of life, and connect to Mayoral and NYC Department of Education (DOE) programs that target school-age children living in public housing, including NYC Early Literacy Learners (NYCELL) and Partners in Reading After-School Program (PIR). **Built to Learn** will maximize the impact of these programs by creating an environment that enhances the process and dialogue around teaching and learning, while creating professional development programs to ensure the economic success of residents.

The project demonstrates innovation and efficiency by leveraging existing resources and systems of support to create new synergies among partners. By bringing the Museum experience directly to communities in-need, and creating programs that are carefully coordinated with educators, health providers, workforce and social service agencies, CMOM aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of a model that positions the museum as community convener, educational expert, and key delivery agent on the continuum of services for children and families. The project aims to generate best practices that explore and, ideally, affirm the role of museums in tackling complex community issues. In this context, the project can

provide evidence of the effectiveness of museum pedagogy and the vital role museums play in contributing to systemic change.

The project will result in a new family-based learning environment for residents in the Johnson Houses and surrounding community that provides consistent support for the learning and developmental needs of children. Day care, after-school and family programs are united into a cohesive set of programs, and the facility will serve as a resource for neighboring sites (libraries, schools, health clinics, child care centers, etc.). Through professional development in early childhood education and workforce training in museum-related vocations, ***Built to Learn*** will provide residents and community members with career mobility. By establishing an integrated system of support in the early years of life, ***Built to Learn*** will set the stage for schooling, and long-term success into adulthood, for children living in East Harlem.

The East Harlem project will be the model for other ***Built to Learn*** centers CMOM and NYCHA plan to roll out over the next 5-10 years, with at least one in each borough, to serve the 500,000 residents of public housing in the city, including the 45,000 children under the age of eight. *Ultimately, this represents the full realization of bringing a museum to a community in need and will be a model for other museums and other public housing agencies around the country as an important part of the effort to prepare children for school and to develop healthy habits early in life and to expose children of all backgrounds to the museum experience.*

This project provides a compelling example for museums of all sizes to reframe their public value and erase assumptions about the traditional physical boundaries of a museum's reach and community impact, and has the potential to elevate the perception of museums by showing the effectiveness of bringing museum learning to children living in public housing. It is our hope that the success of this project will lead decision-makers in child development, health, education and policy to a new appreciation of the positive and lasting impact museums have on families and communities.

PROJECT DESIGN AND EVALUATION PLAN

Built to Learn will adapt approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of CMOM interactive exhibitry—based on CMOM's early childhood exhibit and health exhibits—to demonstrate the effectiveness of anchoring the museum experience inside of a public housing community. The integrated project model consists of:

- **Exhibit environments** composed of up to 25 interactive environments, activities and graphics that provide families in Johnson Houses and East Harlem with a safe, nurturing, interactive environment that supports children's development of academic skills while building healthy habits.
- **Parent and child engagement programs** that work in tandem with, and are enhanced by, the interactive exhibit, and are based on CMOM's curriculum for teaching early childhood literacy and health lessons through arts, science, music, movement, storytelling and cooking.
- **Professional development programs** to provide parents and caregivers with tools and strategies to support the learning and developmental needs of young children.
- **Workforce programs** to train and employ residents and community members in museum-related vocations.
- **Community Resource Development** to augment existing NYCHA programs for older children (NYCEL, PIR, etc.) and serve as a resource for neighboring sites (libraries, schools, health clinics, child care centers, etc.).

Pre-Grant Period: Site Selection and Preliminary Planning

During a 12-month privately funded pre-grant planning phase, the Johnson Houses at 1800 Lexington Avenue in New York City was identified as the most promising demonstration site for the first community anchor. CMOM and NYCHA outlined preliminary goals and parameters; developed site selection criteria and conducted site inspections; and examined current community needs and existing programs, such as NYCELL, to determine how they might be integrated with the exhibition. Key selection factors were the high-need demographics of residents and the community; potential for exhibits and programming in the Community Center and Day Care spaces (opens April 2011) and opportunities to connect to existing program partners. (Please see Supporting Document #2) The close proximity (under 3 miles) of CMOM to Johnson Houses is beneficial to the project planning process and will facilitate access for CMOM staff.

Pre-Grant period planning assumptions include: NYCHA will provide staffing and management of facilities; visitation and usage will be free of charge for the Johnson Houses residents; the space will be open 7-days a week, year-round to the Johnson Houses residents during the grant period and, eventually, open to non-residents; visitation is assumed to be

families residing in the Johnson Houses, the surrounding community and potentially local school groups; and target audience is children up to 8 years of age with adult caregivers.

After a day-long meeting at CMOM, members of the Johnson Houses Residents Association toured *PlayWorks*TM and viewed the model for the *Eat, Sleep, Play* exhibit. Ms. Velez, the President of the Association, expressed need and great desire for a full replication of the exhibit. Given space limitations, they specifically requested Alphie the Letter Eating Dragon to help children build literacy; math components; art activities, since children there do not have access to arts; and health activities—in particular, the play area designed around the Green Cart initiative, which brings fresh fruits and vegetables to NYC neighborhoods. This led to the preliminary identification of exhibit components outlined on page six.

NYCHA has secured \$200,000 from the NYC Mayor's Fund for CMOM to pilot early childhood literacy and health programming at the Johnson Houses beginning in late spring 2011. By summer 2011, NYCHA will have completed bids and selected organizations to operate the Community Center and Day Care facilities. The Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN), a social service organization for at-risk families and children in East Harlem and South Bronx, has been identified as a possible provider. The privately funded pre-grant activities will allow CMOM to build slowly, assess audience needs and test program approaches for the IMLS project.

IMLS Grant Period

Over the course of the three-year grant, major project activities will include: 1.) Community Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement; 2.) Creation of Permanent Exhibit Environments in Public Housing; 3.) Early Childhood Programs and Professional Development and 4.) Evaluation

For a detailed chronology, please refer to the attached Schedule of Completion.

I. Community Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement

Local communities often have histories of strained relationships with community-based organizations that come in to provide “solutions” for residents in need. East Harlem is no exception, and key to the success of this project will be the continued development of a strong working relationship with the community. Crucial to the sustainability of this effort is creating buy-in and ensuring that the needs and priorities of the community are aligned with the goals of the project.

In fall of 2011, CMOM will work with NYCHA and the President of the Johnson Houses Residents Association to form a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of residents, CBOs, local officials, and businesses and community members. The CAC will provide input into project planning, community assessment and project evaluation and enable CMOM to develop relationships with the local community. The CAC will be responsible for ensuring that programs and learning environments meet the needs and priorities of residents in East Harlem; programs and services reflect the language, values and cultural backgrounds of the community; and residents and the local community participate actively in planning, providing ongoing iterative feedback, and sharing information and decision making as needed.

From October 1-December 30, 2011, CMOM will review preliminary planning assumptions with all stakeholders including the CAC, NYCHA, Community Center and Day Care operators. Since the Johnson Houses recently underwent renovation, activities will include assessment of infrastructure and governing regulations. CMOM will analyze existing local resources and community programs, and assess resident needs and programmatic interests to plan the long-term services and operations. During this time, CMOM will identify planning parameters, including patterns of usage, standards and regulations, operational and maintenance issues, and resources specific to this neighborhood.

CMOM intends to employ community-based participatory evaluation to inform program development and design, and to inform the development of a project case study. Throughout the entire grant period, CAC and other stakeholders will be involved in evaluation activities, including site visits, neighborhood surveys, focus groups and community dialogues.

II. Creation of Permanent Exhibit Environments in Public Housing

The 2,000 sq. ft. exhibit environment will be designed for children ages 6 months-5 years (but is appropriate for children up to 8 years of age), in the Johnson Houses Community Center with additional components in Day Care classrooms. The exhibit environment will be adapted from two CMOM exhibits that have been developed in collaboration with leading

scholars, designers and medical experts, and are complemented by research-based curricula and family programs. Evidence of the versatility, adaptability and efficacy of *PlayWorks*TM was demonstrated in 2006, when CMOM and the Louisiana Children’s Museum (LCM) created an adaptation called *Play Helps*TM for families affected by the Katrina disaster. A modified and supported version continues to be successful with families in Louisiana. In 2009, CMOM was awarded an IMLS National Leadership Grant for its *Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative* to develop and test an arts-based early childhood obesity prevention curriculum, which includes a new permanent health exhibit (*Eat, Sleep, Play*) at CMOM and exhibit replication plans for national distribution with small museums and community centers.

The exhibit environment at Johnson Houses will be a new resource for the community. It will be filled with up to 25 interactive stations and activity areas that joyfully engage children through play, exploration and discovery in the Community Center and throughout Day Care Classrooms. The carefully designed environment will provide a context to help parents understand this unique time of learning and their critical role in their child’s development. It will also serve to strengthen the family and community as the center of lifelong learning, teaching adults how to prepare children for preschool and learn healthy habits. Open-ended activities invite in-depth exploration and an array of learning stations will target core skills in math, literacy, science, health and art. Graphic signage will provide ongoing “coaching” to parents, teachers and caregivers as they become active partners in the child’s learning. (Please see Supporting Document #3)

A sample of proposed interactive components at Johnson Houses might include:

- ***Alphie the Letter Eating Dragon***— Children climb and feed the dragon alphabet blocks (embedded with electronic sensors). As the letters are dropped into its mouth, Alphie “reads” each one, saying, for example, “A is for Apple,” and prompts children that he’s hungry, that a letter is tasty, or he sings the alphabet song. Children learn to recognize letters, build vocabulary, understand that words are made up of letters, and connect words to pictures and letters to sounds. Parents and caretakers learn that, as children play and have fun, they are engaged in active learning and that building language and vocabulary is not necessarily restricted to reading books, but that hearing words and identifying letters helps facilitate children’s acquisition of reading and communication skills. In this way, Alphie literally puts language and discourse at the center of family and community life.
- ***Green Cart***—Children sort fruits and vegetables to learn which colorful combinations give them superpowers — from super vision to a super immune system. Children and their caregivers learn the health benefits of eating a rainbow of fruit and vegetables every day as they categorize, count, and pretend to buy and sell produce.
- ***Creative Builders***—Children use foam blocks of various shapes and sizes to change space and create imaginative structures. Walls become three-dimensional puzzles with holes that children fill with blocks. As children build they learn key math skills – addition, subtraction, sorting and counting; explore how basic shapes fit together to create more complex ones; and develop spatial relations.
- ***Magic Art Wall***—Children paint with multicolored shaving cream on a large plexiglass wall that “magically” washes the wall clean when water flows from the top, teaching children about transitions between activities.
- ***NYC Bus***—A specially designed bus with three steering wheels so children learn to develop self-control as they share and take turns, and learn important concepts of directionality like east and west, uptown and downtown.
- ***Peek-a-Boo***—Caregivers and babies play traditional games at a high tech half-silvered Peek-a-Boo Mirror. With the press of a hand, baby or caregiver appear and disappear. Playing with their caregivers, they learn object permanence and build a sense of security about the world around them. Caregivers learn how simple childhood games they played as children help to build a strong foundation for lifelong health and learning.
- ***The Chattering Stomach***—Children crawl through a small stomach that responds to eating too much food with lights, sounds and visuals, to learn how their stomach has a mind of its own!

Exhibition planning, design and installation

From October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012, the project team will continue to engage in planning and assessment with all stakeholders. Activities of this phase will also include creating sample layouts for community review, assessment of infrastructure related to installing the exhibition environment and community usage patterns. The team will continue to analyze existing local resources and community programs and assess resident needs and programmatic interests to fully plan the long-term services, operations and space.

During the preliminary and final design phases (April – December 2012), the exhibition team will work with project partners and Community Advisors to select and adapt final exhibit components from *PlayWorks*TM and *Eat, Sleep, Play*. An iterative design review process will ensure that the selected exhibition components meet the needs of the local

community, integrate with the programs and services being offered at the Community and Day Care Centers, and are engaging and retain their appeal for both adults and children.

As the physical design is refined, final layouts, components designs, bilingual signage and graphics will be comprehensively reviewed by NYCHA, the Advisory Board, Johnson Houses Maintenance and Operations staff, and Community and Day Care Center operators to ensure that the project meets all regulations and is sustainable. An interpretive plan accompanying the design control drawings will articulate the experiential and content goals enabling evaluators to assess the success of individual components.

During the fabrication phase in winter and spring of 2013, exhibit components will be fabricated off-site. During this time, assembly and maintenance manuals will be created. The components will be delivered and installed at Johnson Houses in June 2013. CMOM anticipates a soft opening at this time, with the summer months planned for staff training, community outreach/engagement, and preparation for an official opening in September 2013. During the summer months, exhibit environments will be observed, evaluated and fine-tuned. Promotional materials will be created as needed. From October 2013 through September 2014, CMOM and project partners will continue to conduct family engagement and professional development programs, workforce training and community festivals in the newly outfitted space. In fall of 2014, the project partners and advisors will meet to view the exhibition environments, review evaluation findings, and make recommendations for further replication at other NYCHA sites.

Workforce Training and Job Creation

In addition to providing early childhood professional development, NYCHA and CMOM will train and employ residents in exhibit fabrication and operations at Johnson Houses and future sites. CMOM and NYCHA will help residents and community members develop skills involved in building and maintaining exhibitions including, but not limited to, carpentry, painting, equipment and technical maintenance and troubleshooting. Training space will be provided at the NYCHA Rutgers Houses (Manhattan) which are outfitted for carpentry and other trades-related training. The workforce training component will be integrated with NYCHA's Job-Plus initiative, a national demonstration project which seeks to raise and sustain the level of employment in one or a cluster of public housing developments.

III. Early Childhood Programs and Professional Development

Built to Learn will include intensive programs that engage parents and children in early childhood learning and obesity prevention. Building off of expertise with diverse audiences and years of successful community-tested programs—arts, literacy and health programs for families at East Side House Settlement in the South Bronx since 2005, training for CUNY childcare providers since 2007, and training for staff and families at eight Head Start centers—CMOM's programs will garner the deep trust of the Johnson Houses needed for this project to be successful and sustainable.

Parent and Child Engagement

Each grant year, CMOM will conduct two 10-week long sessions of parent/child programs, offered twice per week, enrolling up to 40 children and parents in each class. All classes will include pre-school readiness and health activities that incorporate art, movement, math, science and literacy. Health programs build off of CMOM's *Early Childhood Obesity Prevention* initiative, which has been developed in partnership with the NIH. During the project period, CMOM will also organize day-long events for staff and families living in and around Johnson Houses to generate community interest and participation in the project and highlight the importance of family engagement. In year two, CMOM will work with Community and Day Care Center staff to create a plan for integrating and sustaining CMOM's parent/child engagement programs into the long-term operations of Johnson Houses. In year three, CMOM will oversee the development or adaptation of curriculum as needed, and implement a train-the-trainer program at Johnson Houses.

All curricular materials are bilingual, aligned with National and State performance standards and use the arts to engage children and adults with a range of learning styles. These programs reach multigenerational audiences and, as such, will include the full range of family arrangements at Johnson Houses, as many children are under the care of grandparents. CMOM's early childhood and health curricula have been evaluated, reviewed by experts and used successfully in public housing, Head Start, with at-home care providers, single mothers living in temporary housing, and diverse family audiences who visit the Museum. (Please see Supporting Documents #4 and #5)

Professional Development

The President of the Johnson Houses Residents Association specifically requested educational and career programs for adults living in Johnson Houses. Using the interactive teaching environment of *Built to Learn* as the “classroom,” CMOM will conduct professional development programs to equip residents with the tools and strategies for understanding and supporting early childhood learning and obesity prevention. For example,

CMOM will use its early childhood training model, which has been tested through a citywide partnership with CUNY Professional Development Institute (PDI) to train unlicensed childcare providers. (Please see Supporting Document #6) This model has expanded to include obesity training and is being used to train Head Start; New York State Department of Health’s Women, Infant and Children (WIC); and NYC DOH’s Nurse-Family Partnership. CMOM’s professional development model provides vivid proof of the effectiveness of using museum approaches to address a critical need in early childhood and health.

From October 2012-September 2014, CMOM will conduct four professional development sessions to teach participants to incorporate preschool readiness skills into classroom or home care settings. Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of early childhood skills and establishing healthy habits; the connection between preschool readiness and health; effective techniques to support literacy and healthy nutritional habits; and how to create and support a healthy environment at home. Each session consists of 10 hours of training for up to 50 participants per session. Upon completion of the 10-hour training session, participants will receive a certificate of completion. CMOM will also connect participants to professional opportunities in early childhood education and childcare by offering a career pathway program to become licensed at-home childcare providers through CUNY PDI. (Please see Supporting Document #7)

IV. Evaluation

In addition to formative and summative evaluation models, the project provides an opportunity to engage in innovative methods of evaluation to explore and better understand the “public value” of museums and their community impact. At the suggestion of evaluator MEM & Associates, CMOM will implement a three-pronged evaluation plan: 1.) Needs Assessment, 2.) Fidelity of Implementation Evaluation, and 3.) Outcomes and Impact Evaluation.

All evaluation activities will follow a participatory evaluation approach. Participatory evaluation, or participatory action research (PAR), does not give special primacy to an outside evaluator, but rather forms a team of key stakeholders who, with the advice of the evaluator, share in the decisions and implementation of evaluation activities. Research demonstrates that PAR is especially well suited to community-based projects (Cousins, 1992) and is philosophically aligned with a project whose cornerstones are active community participation, shared decision making and co-design. Increased depth and range of participation by primary audiences and other stakeholders increases the usefulness and use of evaluation findings (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). An evaluation team including people from all stakeholder groups will be formed early in year one. The evaluator will facilitate the meetings and the work of the team. The Evaluation Team will work together on study design, data collection methods, data analysis and report of findings. Whenever possible, members of the community will be trained and will assist with data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings.

Over the course of the project, CMOM plans on engaging in the following PAR activities:

1. Needs Assessment: Using a community asset mapping method, Evaluation Team members will document the resources and practices in the immediate community that (a) currently exist to support the positive development of young children birth to 5 and (b) are identified as being needed if young children and their families are to have sufficient community resources and support. Documentation will take the form of completion of inventories of community services and practices, notes from observations and interviews and photographs.
2. Fidelity of Implementation Evaluation: Once the exhibition and accompanying programs launch, the Evaluation Team will use observations, interviews and surveys to assess the extent to which the exhibition and programs meet their design objectives. This aspect of the evaluation will verify to what degree the exhibition and programs were successfully implemented; document the level and degree of engagement; and assess children’s and families’ comprehension of the content after viewing the exhibition and participating in the programs. Funds have been earmarked for remediation of the exhibit environments based on evaluation results.
3. Outcomes and Impact Evaluation: In spring and summer of 2014 (6 months after the formal opening of the exhibition and programs) the Evaluation Team will conduct a second community mapping project. They will

gather evidence of change in children's development of math, literacy and social-emotional preschool readiness skills and parental awareness and knowledge of how to support early childhood skills development. The Evaluation Team will convene a "World Café" with community members, residents and project team leaders to examine data comparing community assets maps; review data on readiness for school and parental knowledge; and provide additional feedback and evidence of indicators of success for the entire community.

At the conclusion of the three-year grant, relevant research findings will be synthesized in a final report and case study, and included in the project replication and related dissemination materials.

PROJECT RESOURCES: BUDGET, PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT

With support from CMOM's Board of Directors and Executive Director, Andrew S. Ackerman, CMOM has assembled a strong management team to successfully carry out this three-year project. Day-to-day project oversight will be carried out by senior staff member Karen Snider, Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Leslie Bushara, Deputy Director for Education. A new temporary full-time Project Manager will be hired to provide daily project support and coordination of partners, and Manager of Exhibitions and Operations, Tom Quaranta will provide support for assessments, design, building and implementation of the exhibit. Ms. Bushara and Ms. Snider worked together to design the proposed project, drawing on a decade of experience collaborating on major CMOM exhibitions and projects. CMOM will prioritize this project for the next three years and Ms. Snider's and Ms. Bushara's departments will devote significant time to the implementation. Ms. Snider has led CMOM's exhibition team with projects such as *PlayWorks™*; traveling exhibits *Monkey King* and *Oh, Seuss!, Off to Great Places*; NEH-funded *Gods Myths and Mortals*; and the upcoming exhibit, *Eat, Sleep, Play*. Ms. Bushara created the *Bronx Arts and Literacy* program and national *Early Childhood Obesity Prevention* project; led the development of *PlayHelps*; and leads CMOM's professional development programs, including CUNY and Head Start. The project's senior leadership team will be supported by CMOM's highly qualified education, exhibits, design and support staff. Mr. Ackerman leads a disciplined museum administration, accustomed to careful financial management and a strong work ethic. Mr. Ackerman has led CMOM since 1990, with prior leadership positions as President of ACM and at the NY State Council on the Arts and the Jewish Museum. ("Resumes and Project Staff" attached)

CMOM's Board designated early childhood and health as two of the core initiatives for the next five years, along with creativity and cultural diversity. A Board sub-committee has been assigned to work with staff to insure that support is provided. CMOM's partners in this project have previously worked with the Museum and are leaders and strong managers. Mr. John Rhea, Chair of the NYC Housing Authority has affirmed NYCHA's partnership and strong support for the project and will ensure its success. Ms. Janet Rice Elman, Executive Director of the Association of Children's Museums for 20 years, has helped establish the children's museum field nationally and internationally. Ms. Ethel Velez, President of the Johnson Houses Residents Association, will serve as the primary project liaison with the housing community. Project for Public Spaces will be an advisor and provide guidance on successful urban planning and community development efforts. The project will be guided by the advice and input of a Community Advisory Committee and national Advisory Board with experts from the children's museums, health, community design and education fields. (Please see Letters of Support, Supporting Document #8)

The three-year project budget requests 48% of the total cost from IMLS, with cost sharing spread over the funding period consistent with the overall budget, and NYCHA and CUNY providing cost-share of staff time. CMOM's costs are tightly controlled and reflect CMOM's commitment to the Project. Approximately 70% of the budget is allocated towards the creation of physical learning environments, including a substantial investment in evaluation.

CMOM's Board is committed to the ***Built to Learn*** initiative and has provided \$70,000 for pre-planning, and to ensure financial and staff capacity to execute multiple federal grants, earmarked funding from a \$1.1 million fundraising gala in 2010 to hire the Manager of Exhibitions and Operations, two new positions for the education department and a new Communications Director. This infrastructure will enable CMOM to manage national projects simultaneously while maintaining day-to-day operations. NYCHA and CMOM have also secured \$200,000 from the Mayor's Fund to support programming at Johnson Houses in 2011. CMOM has also received funding from Goldman Sachs and Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, a portion of which will be allocated to support our work with NYCHA. CMOM is committed to supporting the project beyond the duration of IMLS funding and, as such, will develop a comprehensive fundraising plan. CMOM has identified several prospects, including: Booth Ferris Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Kresge Foundation and NY Community Trust.

DISSEMINATION

An important aspect of the dissemination plan is to reach beyond the museum community to raise awareness in other fields of the essential role museums can play in building community. To be sure, CMOM will disseminate findings through conferences and publications of ACM, ASTC and AAM to bring the results to museum colleagues. NYCHA colleagues are committed to publishing results and presenting papers in arenas of urban planning, public housing and innovation in government on the local and national levels. CMOM will leverage its partnership with NIH to disseminate results through the [We Can! website](#) and more than 1,000 *We Can!* national community partner sites (city/state governments, schools, libraries, after-school programs, hospitals, pediatric and health centers). CMOM and early childhood experts involved in the project will present at education conferences and will submit papers to journals devoted to early education, parenting and community education. Even at this early juncture, CMOM has begun a conversation with a NY Times reporter to cover the project from its inception for an exclusive story.

CMOM will disseminate results and promote the IMLS-funded project through its [website](#), corporate partners and broad network of organizations, including: United Neighborhood Houses, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Alliance for Children and Families and American Academy of Pediatrics. Project results and best practices will be synthesized in evaluation reports and a final case study from MEM & Associates and distributed to the Advisory Board, IMLS and shared through the above mentioned networks. In 2014, CMOM will present evaluation findings, program results and case study at national conferences including ACM and AAM, and will extend its reach to include ASTC, NAEYC and AAP conferences to ensure the broadest impact. Publication of articles and research findings will extend across museum literature (*Hand to Hand*, *Exhibitionist*, *Museum News* and *Curator*) and the social science, health and early childhood communities (*Parenting*, *Future of Children*).

NYCHA has expressed a commitment to expanding this model to other sites throughout the five boroughs, and has shared the project with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and White House Office of Social Innovation, and the two are exploring potential for national replication and collaboration.

SUSTAINABILITY

Built to Learn is cost-efficient and sustainable. It is distinguished from other projects through: the combination of content and intellectual property already developed and tested through privately funded initiatives; presence of a permanent exhibit environment in a community setting such as public housing, with a concentrated population of end-users; inclusion of job training to sustain long-term operation and success; development of long-term operational plans and infrastructure for community engagement; and, importantly, the sharing of resources between CMOM and a major city agency such as NYCHA, without creating a new organizational superstructure. NYCHA brings to bear financial resources of staff time and facilities, but also programs with child care and social service agencies and the DOE that extend the proposed project. The project complements other local and national efforts, including Harlem Children's Zone and *Promise Neighborhoods*.

CMOM will capitalize on its national and local partnerships—NYCHA, NIH, ACM, ACS, DOE and DOH—to embed the project in existing networks of support. CMOM has invested resources to develop and sustain these partnerships; IMLS funding leverages these investments to provide the museum community with new models, products and networks, thereby allowing them to focus on implementing effective programs. Further, the results of this project will help CMOM and other museums make the case for funding as they seek support from foundations and government agencies.

The development of a community Advisory Board actively involved in planning and decision-making will be critical to the long-term success of the project. By aligning the project with the needs of the local community, it is our hope that CMOM and NYCHA will garner deeper willingness and commitment from local residents to assume responsibility for future operations and success of ***Built to Learn***. By providing residents with workforce training, the project will help the community gain practical skills that can lead to better jobs and quality of life, creating incentives and self-sufficiency.

As a result of IMLS providing essential seed funding for the ***Built to Learn*** project, CMOM will have a fully developed replication plan for museums working with community-based partners. Support from Goldman Sachs and Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund will cover the costs of full-time staff and curriculum development, with general operating support covering the part time employees and other field costs. As the capital expenditures are one-time up-front investments, the cost to operate and sustain the ***Built to Learn*** budget will be significantly less in year three and beyond. CMOM will allocate additional support as needed through its unrestricted revenue sources and earned income from membership fees.

BUDGET FORM: Section B, Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages	117,688	550,203	667,891
2. Fringe Benefits	21,184	99,037	120,220
3. Consultant Fees	73,250	39,500	112,750
4. Travel	5,175	35,230	40,405
5. Supplies and Materials	0	85,469	85,469
6. Services	334,000	76,000	410,000
7. Student Support	0	0	0
8. Other Costs	1,425	5,925	7,350
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-8)	552,722	891,364	1,444,086
9. Indirect Costs	11,977	24,919	36,896
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	564,699	916,282	1,480,982

Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	564,699
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Applicant's Contribution	916,282
b. Kind Contribution	0
c. Other Federal Agencies*	0
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	916,282
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	1,480,982
Percentage of total project costs requested from IMLS	38%

*If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

Children's Museum of Manhattan Schedule of Completion

	Pre-Grant Period	Year 1: October 2011 - September 2012												Year 2: October 2012 - September 2013												Year 3: October 2013 - September 2014														
	Jun-Aug 2011	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep			
Projectwide Resources		Project Manager												Project Manager												Project Manager														
		Advisors												Advisors												Advisors														
		Institutional Partners/ACM												Institutional Partners/ ACM,CUNY, SCAN, Day Care												Institutional Partners/ ACM,CUNY, SCAN, Day Care														
		Evaluation/MEM and Associates												Evaluation/MEM and Associates												Evaluation/MEM and Associates														
Needs Assessment & Evaluation	Needs Assessment						Stakeholder Review							Stakeholder Review							Fidelity of Implementation Evaluation			Outcomes & Impact Evaluation				Case Study												
Exhibit Environments				Prelim Design				Final Design					Fabricate & Install												Re-mediate															
On-Site Family Programs	Conduct Family Pilot Program & Festival			Conduct Pilot EC Programs				Conduct Pilot Health Programs			Conduct EC/Health Pilot Summer		Conduct Revised EC & Health Programs							Soft Opening & Family Festivals			Conduct EC & Health Programs						Family Program & Festival											
Workforce Training																									Vocational Training & Support															
Early Childhood & Health Professional Development													Conduct Pilot PD							Conduct Pilot PD							Conduct Pilot PD							Conduct Pilot PD						

**Total direct project costs requested from IMLS for Year 1:
\$204,248.50**

**Total direct project costs requested from IMLS for Year 2:
\$547,920.58.**

**Total direct project costs requested from IMLS for Year 3:
\$194,366.55**