

Organizational Profile

The mission of the Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) is to provide unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge and learning in all children. The mission was updated in 2013 by the Board of Directors, the 21 member governing body of the 501(c)(3) non-profit located in Jackson, MS. The museum is guided by five core values, including: we take fun seriously; we provide children innovative learning experiences that tap their curiosity and creativity; we reach diverse populations throughout the state; we develop partnerships that empower children and those who care for them; and we are responsible stewards of our resources. These values, as an integral part of the 2014 – 2018 MCM Strategic Plan, were approved and adopted in September 2013 by the MCM Board of Directors.

The museum is a 52,000 square foot facility with six permanent exhibit galleries of educational, interactive exhibits focusing on the challenges Mississippi's children face in education. After nearly ten years of planning and development, the museum opened to the public in December 2010. The journey to create the museum was undertaken as a community—a collaboration among a statewide team of educational partners, community leaders, elected officials, philanthropists, corporate and private business leaders, educators, administrators, parents, volunteers and children—and with nationally recognized children's museum experts and leaders in the field of child development. The vision of the Mississippi Children's Museum is to inspire Mississippi's children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential. We do this through hands-on, engaging exhibits and programs focusing on: science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); literacy, cultural arts, health and nutrition; and Mississippi heritage—the keys to helping our children become lifelong learners and productive adults.

MCM was developed to be an accessible centerpiece for education, serving the state's almost 3,000,000 people, of which 26 % are children and 33% live in poverty. Mississippi is largely a rural and agricultural state of 82 counties, comprising 47,000 square miles with approximately 63 people per square mile. With 59% of its population identifying as white and 37% as African American, Mississippi has the largest percentage of African-American children in the nation. *The Children First Annual Report* indicates that 59% of school children in Mississippi are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. The National Assessment of Educational Progress reports that only 30% of 4th graders in Mississippi perform at or above proficient in mathematics, and only 23% of Mississippi's 4th graders perform at or above proficient in Science.

Program and exhibit development is rooted in the best research in child development to reach children ages 0-12. However, our goals extend beyond operating a top flight children's museum. Visits to and activities of MCM instill in children the wonder of discovery and a love of learning, with special emphasis on those children who need new, creative experiences otherwise not available to them. The museum's strengths lie in providing world-class exhibits which promote lifelong learning for children and those who care for them. MCM is a principal in tackling the substantial developmental obstacles that face Mississippi children and their caregivers. A priority is exposing children to Mississippi's uniqueness: its rich culture and heritage; its struggles; and its hopes. These are represented in a manner that educate and inspire future leaders, and expose children to possibilities and experiences that for many would otherwise be unattainable. The museum has worked in collaboration with the State Department of Education to align with the recently adopted common core curriculum and early learning standards.

The museum understands the importance of strong community partnerships and collaborations. Since opening, MCM has collaborated with over 65 organizations serving children in our state and community. The museum is also an economic benefit to the State of Mississippi. MCM has over 50 employees and a network of over 400 youth and adult volunteers. Since opening in 2010, the museum has seen over 1,000,000 visitors.

Strategic Plan Summary **2014 – 2018**

Strategic Plan Platform

Inspiring Children. Transforming Mississippi.

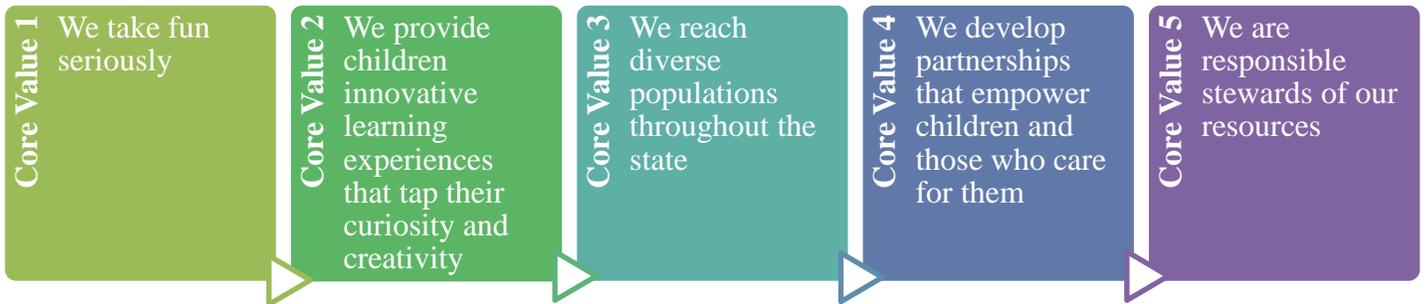
Mission

The Mississippi Children's Museum will provide unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge and learning in all children.

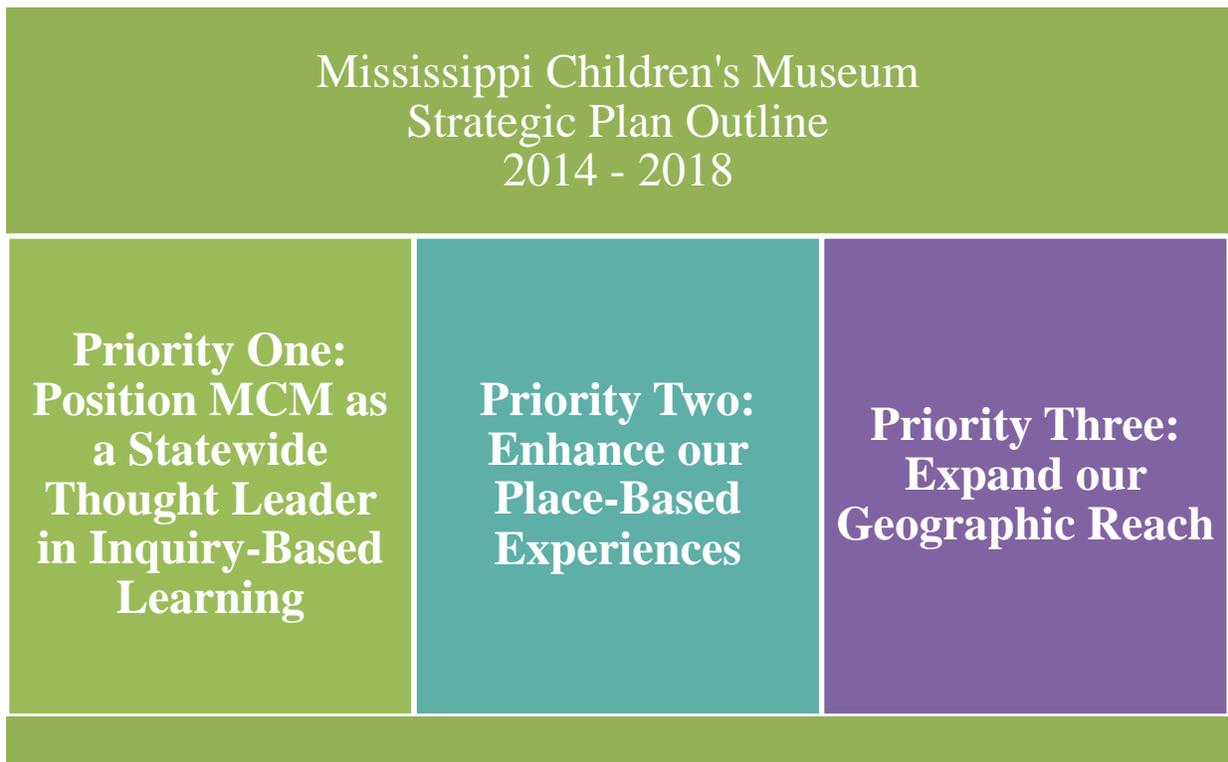
Vision

To inspire Mississippi's children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential.

Core Values



Priorities



Priority One: Position MCM as a Statewide Thought Leader in Inquiry-Based Learning

Formalize our intellectual property around the philosophy of inquiry-based learning

- Establish the Office of Inquiry-Based Learning

Disseminate intellectual property and educational resources to audiences statewide

- Develop and deploy high-quality, age-targeted marketing messages
- Expand reach of statewide, highly-evaluated professional development for educators
- Develop a statewide-recognized speaker’s series and conference on children’s development, education, parenting and play

Establish an evidentiary foundation for the efficacy of MCM’s educational philosophy and practices

- Determine feasible evaluation procedures for museum exhibits, programs and ongoing initiatives
- Implement full-scale ongoing evaluation of MCM exhibits, programs and initiatives
- Formalize evaluation results for dissemination to current/potential funders; educational institutions and the general public

Priority Two: Enhance our Place-Based Experiences

Enhance and expand the existing Mississippi Children’s Museum facility, visitor experiences, exhibits and programs

- Enhance current, and develop new, exhibits for children ages 0-12
- Enhance current, and develop new, programs for children ages 0-12
- Enhance the MCM visitor experience, addressed through operations procedures and facility needs
- Enhance MCM administrative operations, technology and procedures

Priority Three: Expand our Geographic Reach

Get outside of our walls to have a meaningful impact on children beyond the physical space of the museum

- Develop multi-media content for children, parents and educators
- Develop a traveling program or semi-permanent pop-up experience for Mississippi schools, community centers and/or libraries

1. Statement of Need

What do you propose to do?

The Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) will utilize IMLS funding to assemble a team of community partners to address critical needs in its community relating to child health and wellness through its project the *Wonder of Wellness: A Family Perspective (WoW)*. This project will focus on how to engage whole families in conversation about health, instead of concentrating solely on the child. Studies show that children are influenced by the habits of those around them, so by using this approach, MCM and other community partners intend to encourage healthy choices and habits throughout the family unit. With the expertise of partners in the medical and social/emotional health fields and feedback from community members through forums and roundtables, funding will allow MCM and community partners to develop, pilot, and launch programming that will address the specific needs of the Jackson, MS community identified through preliminary project activities. The initial format for the programming is a four prong approach to health and wellness for children that will increase knowledge of components of a healthy lifestyle and encourage further development of healthy habits in children and their caregivers. The four prongs of this approach will provide a holistic view of children's health in Mississippi by learning about various body systems and examining the impact of healthy eating; healthy physical habits such as exercise, sleep, and hygiene; and social/emotional factors and their impact on the body.

Explain how your project will address the challenge identified in this funding initiative.

Through the creation of programming that is designed to address the needs of Mississippi's children, *WoW* seeks to examine the effects of the healthy habits of the whole family on promoting health and wellness for the child. As a children's museum, MCM is able to bring together community partners to create an innovative approach to overcoming health challenges for children in Mississippi that can meet families where they are. This project will include partnerships between a variety of organizations, businesses, educators, and other audiences to discover shared goals and objectives that can be strengthened through collaboration and create lasting impact throughout the community. The ultimate objective is to produce hands-on and engaging educational pieces that will empower the children and families to make healthy choices and provide tools, skills, and resources to help both caregivers and children grow in their understanding of and put them on a path toward healthy living.

How does this project differ from, complement, or build upon previous work, demonstration projects, or research in this area?

MCM believes that by providing valuable health and nutrition education and activities, the quality of life for Mississippi children and families can be improved. Since 2010, MCM has been providing dynamic health programming for children ages birth through twelve throughout Mississippi in partnership with some of the state's leading health institutions, including the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) and St. Dominic Health Services. With the support from these health experts, MCM has hosted two health focused programs, Question It? Discover It! and Fueled for Adventure. These programs encourage healthy habits by exploring the ways that body systems work, how these systems help children to grow and play, and what foods are best to keep them healthy. Additionally, the museum boasts a 3,200 square foot health and nutrition focused exhibit gallery which teaches children about the value of making healthy choices, such as choosing fresh foods and exercising, as well as demonstrates firsthand how those choices affect their bodies through its exhibits and activities. By using existing programming and exhibits as a jumping off point, MCM will convene community partners working in the health industry, including these two hospital systems, as well as organizations directly serving children and families to create innovative programming that fill the gaps in health education and awareness. The *WoW* project will also place an emphasis on social/emotional wellness that may change the way families in Mississippi view emotional wellness and its relationship to physical health. Very few child-focused health programs demonstrate this correlation, and *WoW* offers a unique opportunity to examine how mental, emotional, and physical health are related while educating and empowering families to live healthier lives and provide them with the resources they need. Although there are other programs and research relating to children's health in Mississippi, very few, if any, have been led by a museum that specializes in children's wellbeing. Through community conversations, MCM and project partners will identify programs and resources

offered by other institutions that can support participating families and others throughout the community.

What is the community improvement opportunity you will be addressing and how was it identified?

The *WoW* project seeks to address the issue of childhood obesity and the growing concerns of unhealthy habits being formed at a young age. With Mississippi consistently ranking last, or next to last, in national health indicators, programs that target the health and wellbeing of Mississippi's children are not only relevant but essential to the future of the state. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's KidsCount Data Center (KidsCount), one of the nation's leading organizations that addresses child wellbeing in the United States, provides startling statistics that indicate Mississippi's children face some of the worst health outcomes in the country. According to KidsCount, not only are 37% of children aged 10-17 in Mississippi classified as overweight or obese, but children living in the South are more likely to be overweight or obese than their peers in other parts of the country. The Mississippi Obesity Action Plan, published by the Mississippi Department of Health details the numerous risks of childhood obesity and the prevalence of unhealthy behaviors in Mississippi's children. Many children do not regularly eat breakfast, vegetables, and fruit or have the proper level of physical activity each week. These behaviors, amongst many others, contribute to obesity rates that can cause an increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, sleep apnea and multiple psychosocial issues. Upon reviewing data that indicates 26% of Mississippi's children have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions, it became apparent that this was an additional challenge to be addressed in the scope of children's health throughout the state.

What is the evidence that the community improvement opportunity has already achieved broad interest and support (i.e. momentum)?

Mississippi's health and wellness statistics reveal the critical need for improved wellbeing in citizens of all ages, but particularly increasing health education for children and families. As the largest city in Mississippi, and centrally located within the state, Jackson, MS has many organizations with goals to improve the health of children. While many schools provide physical education and after-school athletic activities, other community organizations are offering programs to encourage healthy lifestyles, including Move to Learn and Go Noodle. In addition, UMMC, home of Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital, Children's of Mississippi, and the Center for the Advancement of Youth, has numerous programs designed specifically to address children's physical and mental health issues. While many other organizations have established or are creating these programs, there is not currently a large amount of collaboration between these organizations to offer comprehensive programming across the city. In speaking with other community partners, there has been considerable verbal support of this project and its goals to increase childhood health outcomes for Mississippi's children.

How does it fit within your institution's strategic plan, priorities, and opportunities?

All three priorities from the museum's current strategic plan, which is guided by the platform *Inspiring Children, Transforming Mississippi* have a direct correlation to the *WoW* project: 1) Position MCM as a Statewide Thought Leader in Inquiry-Based Learning; 2) Enhance our Place-Based Experiences; and 3) Expand our Geographic Reach. The *WoW* project will advance these strategic priorities by incorporating inquiry-based learning strategies with health and wellness education, including the creation of programming and pop-up experiences for children that are designed to meet their specific needs and utilize their natural curiosity. The programming and other experiences created through this project will increase the relevance of MCM's offerings to the community as well as provide a unique experience for children and families in the Jackson area; enhance MCM's existing programming; and provide numerous opportunities for community volunteers and partners to engage in service-learning. In addition, MCM will utilize the *WoW* project to expand the geographic reach of the museum by creating pop-up experiences and opportunities that can be adapted for and replicated in other communities in the future. Addressing the critical need for increased health and wellness awareness has been a primary initiative of the museum since its inception. This project will further the reach of this initiative and provide additional opportunities to focus on the wellbeing of children in the community by capitalizing on community partnerships and inspire children and families to make changes that will lead to brighter futures.

What key facts or key events are the basis or impetus for your project?

Childhood obesity has been an ongoing struggle for the state of Mississippi, and children's health and wellness

has been one of MCM's primary initiatives since opening in 2010. As the museum and other community partners began to discuss the issues facing the Jackson area, it became clear that increasing awareness of health related topics is necessary to reduce these health risks for generations to come. Statistics provided from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KidsCount Data Center and the Mississippi Department of Health indicate the large number of children facing health issues, often at a younger age than ever. In many times, these issues could be avoided or resolved with small changes regarding healthy eating, physical activity, and meeting other fundamental needs. Last year, a parent participating in a family program hosted by MCM explained that her child, who was in fourth grade at the time, had been diagnosed with high blood pressure, and she was looking for resources to navigate this type of condition while allowing her child to maintain a typical childhood. Additionally, many families participating in the program revealed that they did not know about the impact of social and emotional situations on their child's overall health.

Who are the non-traditional audiences you seek to involve?

The *WoW* project will engage a variety of audiences and community members to find the best avenue to raise awareness of health issues and provide accessible information about healthy lifestyles to children, caregivers, educators, and others working with children. In addition to more traditional partners like hospitals and health systems, health organizations, and local schools, this project will pursue partnerships with social and emotional health organizations, including Canopy Children's Solutions and the UMMC Center for the Advancement of Youth. Other potential project partners and audiences that may be less traditional for this type of project include community organizations and state agencies working with children and families, including the Boys and Girls Club of Central Mississippi, the Junior League of Jackson, Unity House, the Mississippi Department of Health, and the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services.

How will their voices be heard and how will you encourage new coalitions for change to form in support of the community opportunity and existing momentum?

Multiple community roundtables across the Jackson area will allow voices from multiple stakeholders and audiences to provide feedback about issues facing the community and possible solutions amongst partners. The goal of these roundtables will be to establish programming that will address some of the critical childhood health issues facing Mississippi's children. The specific form of this programming will be created through small group discussions about health, how caregivers and families can influence the habits of their children, and how to change the scope of care for families who lack adequate access to resources or are unsure of what resources are available to them. These roundtables will also examine what opportunities can be brought together to tackle the issue, including the possibility of a database of resources and the creation of partnerships that will allow organizations to refer families to another participating organization to provide multiple services and address all of the family's needs. Additionally, MCM and its partners will conduct quantitative and qualitative evaluations to assess the needs of the community and initial ideas about how these issues might be addressed.

2. Impact

Considering Section A.4, describe how your project will have impact in your community to address the opportunities and needs you identified.

The *WoW* project will be a catalyst for bringing together a consortium of community-based partners that will be able to co-create programming that will change the ways childhood health and wellness is approached throughout the community. By involving numerous partners representing the diverse population of the Jackson, MS community, this project will invite participants from both the private and public sectors with focuses on child development, health, social and emotional wellbeing, and creating strong communities to create a substantial program that will promote improved health outcomes for all children. MCM seeks to involve a wide variety of community partners, both those with existing relationships and others that the museum has not worked with previously in the process of determining the best route to address these issues and the planning, development, pilot, and launch of the resulting program activities.

How will the community be involved in defining the opportunities and associated needs to achieve community improvement and creating a collective vision for impact?

During the initial stages of this project, MCM will coordinate at least four small community roundtable sessions and one larger meeting with all engaged community partners. During the roundtable sessions, representatives from a variety of organizations, sectors, and backgrounds will discuss the most pressing needs within the issue of children's health and wellness, as well as discuss their visions for the best ways to approach these issues. The information gathered at each roundtable will be compiled and distributed amongst all participants to review. Following the dissemination of these initial concepts, MCM will host a meeting for all participating community partners to choose the primary needs to be addressed, and the best course to create meaningful change surrounding these issues in the community. MCM and other community partners will also gather information from their constituents through surveys and informal interviews to be sure that voices from throughout the community are heard as the project begins. It is important that the community have a say in what is addressed as well as how the project activities address it.

Explain how your proposed project will involve the community in the development of the intervention.

Once the specific needs to be addressed have been identified, community organizations and partners interested in developing, testing, and launching the program will continue to meet regularly to establish the details of the intervention. This project has confirmed partnerships with Canopy Children's Solutions, UMMC, St. Dominic Health Services, and the Boys and Girls Club of Central Mississippi to complete all project activities. In addition to these organizations, other community partners will be brought in throughout the program development period. Community members will be invited to participate in focus groups as the program is developed and piloted to examine the feasibility and possible effects of all activities. The success of this program is reliant on recruiting a diverse group of partners representing a variety of fields and matching these partners to the correct program components for maximum impact.

Explain how your proposed processes will have impact by leveraging your institution's ability to create or support community dialog and narratives?

MCM has sought to increase access to and knowledge about resources for families and children in Mississippi since it opened. Part of how MCM has achieved success in providing for these families is by creating strong partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and leaders in childhood development and education. Because of its unique position as a cultural institution, a non-profit organization serving children, and an educational resource for Mississippians, MCM is often able to act as a convener for community projects, specifically those relating to child development issues. By having a concise mission that focuses the museum's efforts on supporting children and those who care for them, MCM creates a space that allows others to discuss critical issues as equals looking to achieve a common goal. Providing an avenue for honest, passionate discussions that seek creative solutions to the area's ongoing problems clears a path to open community dialog that can be uplifting and beneficial in multiple partners working together for the greater good.

Describe your performance goals for the project that will ensure impact.

Through the community roundtables to establish the specific childhood health-related issues that will be addressed and the continued planning and communication to develop and begin testing the program activities, the *WoW* project will launch a series of programmatic components that will address health and wellness for the whole family. The goal of this program is to have both children and caregivers participate in the opportunities this project will make available, and to provide the project team with data relating to the issues before, during, and after the program components occur.

- **Elaborate upon how you will be monitoring, tracking, and assessing your progress and how this will be shared with the community.**

Progress toward the goals of the *WoW* project will be evaluated through quantitative and qualitative observational methods. MCM staff will collect and compile data at each of the planning meetings, both regarding the issues to be addressed and the development of the programming. Upon the launch of the program pilot, MCM staff members and interns, with guidance from the project's external evaluator, will observe children and caregivers as they participate in the project activities, allowing information to

be gathered within the context of learning rather than only through self-reporting. MCM will document progress using a variety of techniques and procedures including informal feedback; anecdotal records; observational reports; video and audio tape recordings; experience charts; and photographs. The project team will also conduct structured surveys the beginning, middle, and end of the project activities. To measure attainment of long-term goals, assessment results will be further investigated to determine whether trends and impacts are discernible from year one to year two in project participants. Attendance to the program activities will be monitored to provide additional context. MCM will disseminate project progress and results to participating partners and stakeholders throughout the project period. MCM will also provide progress reports on the project activities to participating families and through the museum's website for other community members to review and provide feedback as needed.

- **What key metrics are important for your project?**

As part of the *WoW* project, MCM and its partners will examine the number of participants, as well as the depth of knowledge and interest level of the participants through pre- and post-surveys. The consortium will also create goals and indicators that will be used to prove success in this program, including but not limited to: the number of topics addressed, the specific topics that will be addressed; the provision of hands-on, accessible activities for children; and additional support for caregivers to reinforce techniques and information provided in the program.

- **What outcomes and outputs are most important to determine the overall impact of your project?**

The *WoW* project will have numerous outcomes and outputs that will be examined by MCM, the project evaluation team, and other partners. Through the course of the project, MCM seeks to establish a variety of resources and program components that will reach audiences who have previously lacked access to these resources. To determine the impact of the project, MCM and its partners will create a health curriculum that is tailored specifically for the needs of the community but can be adapted to provide critical information to communities of multiple sizes and geographic locations. This program will include a minimum of four sessions for caregivers and four sessions for children participating in the project activities. MCM will also development a hands-on pop-up experience in conjunction with the curriculum that can bring aspects of the museum experience into a non-museum environment, such as a school, after-school program, or other community event. Finally, MCM seeks to establish a comprehensive database of resources available for families, both children and caregivers, in Mississippi who have been unable to find the support they need, whether it has been through a lack of access or a lack of knowledge that resources exist.

Describe your project's results.

The long-term objective of this project is to increase the knowledge of Mississippi's children and caregivers about child health issues, including physical activity, healthy eating, and social/emotional wellness, resulting in increased health outcomes for children and their families in the Jackson, MS community. To achieve this objective, the *WoW* project must provide a variety of project activities that will not only build this knowledge, but increase an interest in the project issues, while making program components accessible and engaging. Through the caregiver and child sessions, as well as the database of resources for issues facing these families, MCM hopes to equip community members with the tools to change their own lifestyles to create healthy futures, as well as encourage these participants and partners to share this information with families across the state. With healthy lifestyles becoming easy, accessible, and exciting to children and their caregivers, this project's activities will ultimately lead to reduced health risks and improved physical and mental health of program participants.

- **How may they be used, adapted, scaled, and/or replicated in other LAMs upon the conclusion of your project?** MCM intends to share the tangible results of the *WoW* project, including curriculum for both caregiver and child-centered sessions, plans for pop-up experiences and activities, and the project's database of resources with other LAMs upon the completion of the project period. This project has been

designed so that as it addresses the unique needs of Mississippi's children, it is also piloting a program that can be adapted to suit the needs of any community across the country. MCM will also develop training materials that will be accessible for LAMs interested in replicating or adapting the program for their community. One of the strengths of MCM and its partners is creating programming opportunities that are adaptable to multiple communities, as proven through the successful replication of the museum's existing family literacy program, as well as a large-scale reading celebration held each year. Through its experience with adjusting, scaling, and replicating programs, MCM is confident that this project will be successful in continuing beyond the grant period in multiple communities.

Explain how your project will generate findings that serve as the basis for approaches, processes, tools, and resources that will support ongoing application across LAMs.

It is widely recognized that Mississippi ranks last or close to last in child wellness indicators. By creating a program to meet the critical and substantial needs of the largely underserved population in Jackson, MS, the *WoW* project will produce findings that indicate that this program could be successful and replicable in communities throughout the country. This project will likely also yield results that can serve as the basis for approaches to address other serious issues beyond the health and wellness realm featured in this project. With the correct collection of expertise and community support, the fundamentals of this project may also be adapted to address disparities in literacy, science, and mathematics, among other issues plaguing communities of all sizes.

3. Project Design-

Articulate your specific project questions, conceptual design, and processes for your selected community opportunity framed within the context of Section A.1.

The *WoW* project is the result of MCM staff and community partners asking several questions, the most prominent being:

- “What are the most pressing issues facing children in Jackson and across Mississippi?”
- “How can the museum collaborate with experts and community members to address this issue in a new way?”
- “What steps will need to be taken to address this problem?”
- “How can this project involve caregivers in creating change concerning children and family health issues?”
- “Who are potential partners that can add expertise, enthusiasm, and other necessary pieces to this project?”
- “What program activities will best meet the community where it is and providing a lasting impact on the community?”
- “How will we know if it is successful?”
- “What resources will we need to complete the objectives?”

By creating a community coalition, MCM seeks to include members of local community groups, such as Parent-Teacher Organizations, churches, and neighborhood programs, in addition to organizations and businesses, in the process of developing and completing this project.

- **Describe your conceptual framework, what type of data you will gather to track progress and outcomes, and how it will be analyzed, interpreted, reported, and managed.**

Throughout the project period, MCM, with the assistance of an external evaluator, will gather data from participating families relating to their current habits regarding health and wellness, including how often they eat fruits and vegetables, the average amount of time spent exercising each week, the average amount of time spent sleeping each night, how often do the children in their family brush their teeth, how do the children react when they are under stress or pressure, and other similar questions. Additional

questions will be developed throughout project period through discussions with partner groups. This will allow the partners to establish a baseline for the type of information that needs to be shared during the program's sessions. MCM will also request data from its partners regarding the type of work and expertise of each partner in order to best utilize their skills and assets during the program activities. Both sets of data will be compiled, analyzed, reported and managed by the evaluation team at MCM with supervision from the external evaluator.

- **What are the goals, outcomes, and assumptions of your project, as framed within a social well-being framework?**

The goals of the *WoW* project are to improve health outcomes in children and families in Jackson, MS through a series of programming opportunities and resources that will increase knowledge of and interest in living a healthier life. These programs will address four key aspects of health and wellness, including: human anatomy and body systems; nutrition/healthy eating; physical activity/wellness; social and emotional wellness and mental health. Many families in this community may or may not have the correct information about the topics we want to address. If the program can help provide accurate information and real life applications that would allow families to implement changes without a large expense and access resources that are available throughout the community, it is more likely that healthy habits will become easier for the child and the caregivers to maintain. By concentrating on these four categories, MCM intends to create a program that mobilizes community partners and establishes a holistic approach to children's health in Mississippi.

- **How do your institution's assets map back to the identified community opportunity?**

MCM has a history of hosting successful family programming in a variety of initiatives as well as health-related programs and events. MCM frequently works with a variety of community partners to strengthen its projects, whether it is as a consultant, participant, presenter, or member of the museum's board of directors or advisory committees. The museum also boasts two health-focused exhibit galleries. With more than 50 existing partnerships across the state, MCM feels that its greatest asset in this project is that of a community convener and advocate for children in Mississippi.

- **What will be the roles of community members and key stakeholders in implementation, and how will they have appropriate and ongoing involvement and ownership?**

The specific roles of community members and stakeholders will depend on the type of partner they are in the project. Healthcare professionals, including representatives from hospitals, physical trainers, nutritionists, and representatives from mental health systems, will help with the development of the curriculum as well as the delivery of the information during the sessions for both children and caregivers. Representatives from community organizations will provide feedback on the way the program sessions and activities will be presented to participating families, provide insights about the community the project is serving, and help recruit families to participate in the program that include a diverse representation of the community. It is necessary to this project's success that there are also community members and stakeholders with backgrounds in education, social work, economics, finance, and social justice in order to provide a comprehensive approach to helping families access tools to lead healthier lives. All community partners and stakeholders will be kept informed of project activities throughout the length of the project period, with many of them participating in these activities on a regular basis during the two years of the project.

When and in what sequence will your activities occur?

Activities prior to proposed IMLS grant period (May – September 2018)

- Internal planning; community engagement; initial concept meetings;
- Confirmed and potential community partners to be identified;
- Concept engagement with community partners to identify specific issues to be addressed;
- Initial project development meetings; and

- Identify project partners that will participate in early discussions and possible focus groups

Activities during proposed IMLS grant period (October 2018 – September 2020)

- Final issue-based meetings to establish specific community goals (October 2018)
- Project activity planning meetings (October – December 2018)
- Curriculum development for educational session activities (November 2018 – January 2019)
- Piloting and evaluation of health education programming (October 2019 – January 2020)
- Initial concept of health-related pop-up experience hosted by MCM (February – May 2019)
- Creation and evaluation of pop-up experiences and exhibit (April - September 2019)
- Remediation of health programming curriculum (February - April 2020)
- Launch of full-scale health-programming for community members (May – August 2020)
- Remediation of pop-up experience (February – April 2020)
- Launch of health-based pop-up experience for use in community (May 2020)
- Additional evaluation of all project activities (September 2019 - May 2020)
- Collection and dissemination of project results (May – September 2020)

During the grant period, the project team will undertake the development, implementation and evaluation of key elements of the *WoW* programming components, including educational programming for children and caregivers; continued community meetings with stakeholders, program participants, community organizations, and other members of the community; and a health-based hands-on pop-up experience that will be available to community members at large by the beginning of 2020. The project team will utilize an agile design process applied to program development, which makes the family's experience the focal point of the design process. With a focus on the whole experience rather than viewing this project as individual pieces, this process takes the entire family into account, including how the staff and partners facilitate learning, the setting, the space, and the prior knowledge of participating children and families.

- **What are the key decision points? What are the risks?** Key decisions about this project will be made at regular intervals throughout the project, including at the end of initial concept meetings, the launch of curriculum development meetings, the launch of pilot programming for both the educational sessions and pop-up experience, throughout the evaluation periods, and prior to the launch of all full scale project activities. As with the creation of any new interactive experience, be it exhibits or programs, there are inherent risks that the concepts and information addressed will not be as relevant to the target audience for more than three to five years after launch. MCM is experienced in creating adaptable programming and educational components, and will bring this expertise to the project. MCM has worked to alleviate these concerns through creating an experience that is adaptable over time, with components that are easy to replace or remediate as needed. By creating a strong foundation through the curriculum development process, MCM and its partners will be able to provide unique learning experiences that can be updated to reflect the changing needs of the community.
- **Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?** MCM staff, including Susan Garrard, President/CEO, and Jana Perry, Director of Education and Programs will plan, implement, and manage the project. This includes: administering funds; ensuring project aligns with MCM's mission and strategic plan; and coordinating all aspects of program development and evaluation. Other MCM staff members responsible for project activities include the Director of Finance, Director of External Affairs, Director of Exhibits and Facilities, Assistant Director of Programs, Assistant Director of Enrichment, Assistant Director of Statewide Outreach, Assistant Director of Advertising and Design, Finance Assistant, and additional part-time and full-time staff, as well as MCM interns and volunteers. The project is also supported by confirmed and potential external partners, including: University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC); St. Dominic Health Services; UMMC's Center for the Advancement of Youth; Boys and Girls Club of Central Mississippi; Canopy Children's Solutions; Jackson Public School District's chapter of Parents for Public Schools; Unity House; Mississippi

Department of Health; Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services; Junior League of Jackson; Region 8 Mental Health System and other organizations.

How will the proposal marshal the community's resources (e.g. financial, expertise, relationships) to build upon existing momentum and stakeholder networks in order to spark discourse and coalesce around a vision for change?

The *WoW* project will use a diverse coalition of organizations, institutions, and leaders from across the community to concentrate on the issue of children's health and the role of the family in achieving improved health outcomes in the Jackson, MS area. By bringing together numerous project partners, this proposal will have the support of community members who are dedicated to the project and willing to invest through their time, expertise, and other resources to ensure the success of the program. Identified project partners will include many that have expertise in health, child development, education, community programs, and creating partnerships to encourage systemic change. The project includes the opportunity for many additional partners, stakeholders, and community members to share feedback and become involved in the resulting programs.

- What financial, personnel, partnering, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?** IMLS funding of \$147,500, along with \$161,915 in cost share provided by MCM, other project partners, and additional private donations, will allow MCM to complete the *WoW* project. Significant time from MCM staff and key project partners and stakeholders will be contributed over the duration of the project, as well as support from the Board of Directors, Educator Advisory Board, MCM Partners support group, and community members. The museum has made a significant commitment to ensuring best practices are employed throughout the *WoW* project's development, through participation in industry conferences and consortia (Association of Children's Museums, Association of Science and Technology Centers, American Alliance of Museums); the engagement of external evaluators; and strong partnerships with education, community and business leaders. Twenty full-time and 37 part-time staff members will support the project, with 22 of those employees dedicated to the development, management, and direct facilitation of the museum's educational initiatives. In addition to regular staff members, the project will be supported by MCM's 400 volunteers.
- What is the role of partners and how were they identified as part of the community asset mapping? How do they complement your institution's competencies? Does the proposal present documentation of substantial buy-in by the community members and key stakeholders to the proposed project plan and goals?** The community partners will play a vital role in the *WoW* project by providing their individual expertise, leadership, or support. While many of these community partners have existing relationships with the museum, some of them were approached or will be approached because of the unique perspective they will bring to this project or because of their strong reputation and rapport with members of the community the project will serve. By utilizing project partners that are experts in their fields, we can ensure that all programs and curriculum developed throughout the project period have the most up-to-date information available. Without their guidance, opinion, and expertise we would not be able to move forward in the same substantive way. This project will also allow project partners to engage with audiences and populations they may not have access to in other situations, allowing for increased community engagement on all levels. Conversations with many community members and representatives from organizations and industries relating to the project have proven that this project is well-received by key stakeholders, and with support from IMLS, can become a reality.

In addition to making the results of your work available for public distribution, how and with whom will you share your project's work? The museum, which has been a statewide leader in creating innovative programming to address the needs of Mississippi's children, will share project progress and results and solicit feedback at a variety of conferences and meetings, which may include national museum conferences; and conferences for those in childhood health and wellness professions. Additionally, results will be shared with community leaders, especially those working with children through associations such as, Mississippi

Association of School Superintendents (MASS) and Mississippi Association of School Administrators (MASA); through Association of Children's Museums and Association of Science and Technology Centers publications; state agencies, including the Mississippi Department of Health meetings, conferences and communication offices; Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL); academic journals; MCM's website and publications; and through media channels. Upon the completion of this project, MCM intends to make the results of this project available to as many community leaders and organizations as possible, not only in Mississippi but throughout the country. It is the intention of this project to create a highly replicable curriculum and program that can be used to address child health and wellness issues nationwide. At the completion of the project, the curriculum will be available on the MCM website and downloadable for public use.

How will you share results and discoveries as your project progresses with key stakeholders and the community? Throughout the project period, MCM and other active partners will share the progress, results, and discoveries of the *WoW* project with key stakeholders and community members. This will be done through making information available via the museum's website (which averages 32,000 views monthly) and publications including the museum's tri-annual newsletter, *The Playbook*, which boasts a readership of 8,000 households and community partners. Information will also be shared at community meetings and roundtables, and through planned progress reports for organizations and thought leaders participating in the project.

