



Inspire! Grants for Small Museums

Sample Application IGSM-249883-OMS-21
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Feiro Marine Life Center

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$48,962
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:
<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/igsm-249883-oms-21>

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category (if applicable) to which you are applying.

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Project Justification

Feiro Marine Life Center is seeking \$48,962 from the IMLS Inspire! Grants for Small Museums for exhibition master planning for a new 16,000 ft² Marine Discovery Center. The Marine Discovery Center is a joint venture of Feiro Marine Life Center (Feiro), NOAA's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary) and Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (Foundation), and will replace Feiro's existing nearly 40-year-old facility.

What need problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?

In 1980, the late Art Feiro, a community leader and beloved educator, garnered state and local support to build the Feiro Marine Life Center in Port Angeles, Washington. Since its opening in 1981, the center has provided tens of thousands of hours of programming to K-16 students on the Olympic Peninsula and an opportunity for visitors to the area to learn about the sea life in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, along with relevant ocean issues. Feiro has been a leader in experiential learning programs and in partnership programming in this community of 75,000 residents.

In 2008, Feiro Marine Life Center transitioned from an educational center jointly managed by Peninsula College (a community college) and the City of Port Angeles, to an independent not-for-profit. During that transition, the Board developed a strategic plan to develop a sustainable operational model, and included plans for revenue growth, staffing, planning for a new facility and conducting a suite of educational programs. At the conclusion of the five-year plan (2014), an Executive Director with a background in museum education was hired to lead the organization into the next phase of growth and sustainability. Feiro's second strategic plan was adopted by the Board in 2015. This plan shifted focus to better realize the existing professional standards of public aquariums in day-to-day activities, including education and guest services, and to increase the mission-impact of Feiro in the community.

The strategic plans of 2008 and 2015 identified the need for a facility that is adequate to serve the community and the visitors to community. Millions of visitors travel through Port Angeles annually to visit Olympic National Park and make their way to Victoria, British Columbia via the ferry. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary preserves and protects over 3,100 square miles of ocean off the Olympic Peninsula, conducting science and research, and providing education and outreach programs. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Foundation supports the sanctuary's efforts by raising awareness and funds for programs and advocating on behalf of marine environment efforts.

Today's 3,500 ft² Feiro is too small, dated and inefficient to continue meeting the increasing professional standards for aquarium exhibits, and suffers from an inability to expand in its current footprint in a public park. The Sanctuary operates a much smaller seasonal visitor facility that is also, sixteen years after its opening, inadequate to its needs. A joint feasibility study completed in 2012 showed that a new shared facility is needed and that there is a consumer market for the facility. The study also indicated the means and methods for moving forward with partners to build a new Marine Discovery Center.

Since then, community support from city and county funding sources, as well as limited Federal funds (through the National Marine Sanctuary Program), foundation gifts, and private donations have raised more than \$200,000 to ascertain property agreements as part of an economic development project called the Port Angeles Waterfront Center, develop partnership models and frameworks for the three Marine Discovery Center entities and five Port Angeles Waterfront Center entities, conduct a capital campaign feasibility study, and, most recently, complete a conceptual design produced by MIG | Portico of Seattle. The

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economic analysis completed by subcontractor KO Projects as part of this conceptual design greenlighted the proposed pro forma based on 60,000 annual visitors in order to sustain a viable business model. The next step in this process, for which we are seeking these funds, is to complete an Exhibition Master Plan, intended to showcase science and research, facilitate learning experiences, and galvanize the community to participate in marine stewardship.

How will your project advance your institutions' strategic plan?

In order to be economically sustainable for the long term Feiro must be able to attract a greater number of visitors, and thus revenue. The existing City-owned building that Feiro has occupied for the best part of 40 years is reaching its end-of-life stage. Its open seawater system drawing water from Port Angeles Harbor is greatly impacted by marine events, such as combined sewer overflow and potential hazardous material spills from boat traffic, as the harbor is the first full-service port available to ships coming into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, en route to the Puget Sound, harboring and refueling military, container shipping, and pleasure boats. The Marine Discovery Center partnership is a critical piece of Feiro's strategic plan to move to a larger and more responsive facility. Without continued forward progress on the Marine Discovery Center project, such as our proposed Exhibition Master Planning, the timespan for Feiro's existence grows ever shorter.

What or who will benefit from your project?

The Marine Discovery Center has been a collaborative effort from the start. The three project partners will all benefit through the increased reach of their educational and ocean conservation messages. Community members, including members of six regional Native American Tribes (Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Makah, Hoh, Quileute and the Quinault Indian Nation), will benefit from increased formal and informal learning experiences that are not otherwise available locally. Other marine science centers are located an hour to three hours by car from Port Angeles. Clallam County as a whole will benefit from the increased economic activity generated by the new facility.

Leadership from the above six Tribes have been invited to participate in the development of the Marine Discovery Center from the beginning. They all participated in listening sessions with MIG | Portico during the conceptual design process. We have committed to reaching in more deeply to ascertain how or whether the exhibits can represent any of their ocean conservation, natural resources or cultural messages and stories, as each Tribe has described different preferences for involvement. For example, the Quileute Tribe would like to be included in marketing promotions and for the Center to promote its public facing events and tourism endeavors. The Quinault Indian Nation would like to ensure the exhibits clarify how traditional ways of knowing are critical to understanding natural resource practices and management. Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is developing the third building on the Waterfront Center campus, a cultural center located adjacent to the Marine Discovery Center, and we have discussed joint educational programming and tours. Lastly, visitors to the Olympic Peninsula will benefit from having a deeper and more connected understanding of the benefits and threats to the marine and watershed environments located in this unique place.

How will your project address the goals of Inspire! Grants for Small Museums?

The results and benefits of the Exhibition Master Plan project are aligned with IMLS's agency-level goal to promote lifelong learning. Each of the partners involved in the Marine Discovery Center brings their strengths to the effort to support cross-disciplinary and inquiry-based learning. Feiro, through its live exhibits, has provided programs and opportunities for learners of all ages and abilities. The Sanctuary provides education and outreach of its science and research through technology to a local and global

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audience and the Foundation's role in advocacy and volunteerism encourages exploration and curiosity in families and individuals of all ages and abilities. The Marine Discovery Center will increase our capacities for concern, empathy, affection and care for the community of life.

This project also supports the goals of the Community Anchor and especially Transforming Communities. The planned Marine Discovery Center is part of a larger project, the Port Angeles Waterfront Center, which includes a performing arts center with and a Tribal cultural center. The construction of the performing arts center is underway and over the next three to five years the other two facilities will be completed. The site partners have a shared goal that this place is a vibrant, welcoming destination celebrating people, history, and the natural environment – the core of arts, science and culture on the Olympic Peninsula.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities, including evaluation, will you carry out?

Specifically, Feiro will work with a professional exhibit design team to develop an Exhibit Master Plan.

If awarded, Feiro will issue an RFP to hire a firm with experience developing live animal aquarium exhibits. That planning process will include, but is not limited to, these steps:

- Prioritize interpretive goals, visitor experience, and exhibition priorities.
- Identify representatives of key stakeholder groups for content and conceptual input, including community members, educators and students, volunteers, marine conservation professionals, Tribal leadership, government agencies and NGOs.
- Create a communication plan to keep stakeholders and consultants informed.
- Develop and implement formative evaluation processes for exhibit concepts and content.
- Survey visitors across audience segments and seasons
- Site visits to nearby aquariums, marine science centers, and other relevant exhibit/programming facilities
- Consult with professionals who have recent experience in creating and running aquarium and/or exhibition facilities and programs.
- Convene 4-6 stakeholder meetings to review and further develop interpretive and visitor experience concepts.
- Develop schematic drawings for aquarium exhibition and public spaces.
- Develop preliminary design concept drawings and narrative where appropriate.
- Develop exhibit budget estimates.
- Develop design and production schedules for the next phases of the project.
- Conduct assessment with staff, board, and key stakeholders.

What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

The risk to the project is similar to the risks that Feiro and the partners have encountered in the planning efforts to date. The major risks identified are:

Fundraising: All parties engage in seeking funding for the Marine Discovery Center and for projects and planning leading up to the construction. The partners identify which of the organizations is most appropriate to make the request and are supported in the effort. For example, Feiro, as a museum, is the lead on this proposal. The Sanctuary and the Foundation have also contributed funding and resources to the Marine Discovery Center project, as opportunities are available.

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Partner Priorities: Although the three organizations have similar missions, our priorities differ. As the partners approach decisions, we use a ‘decision making document’ that records the method and the outcome of the decision. This is signed by representatives of all three partners. This procedure, though thorough, does slow down the process.

Changing Priorities: In the light of COVID, it is imperative that the exhibit team be thoughtful and creative in the exhibit work and open to doing things a ‘different way.’

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

Board and staff members of Feiro, the Sanctuary and the Foundation comprise the Marine Discovery Center Leadership team and report to their respective organizations. This team will develop the RFP, and interview the Exhibition Master Plan firm, similar to the successful conceptual design process used in 2019-2020. Feiro’s Executive Director will be the primary point of contact and Feiro will execute the contract with the exhibit design firm, pay all invoices and coordinate project activity.

Individuals include:

Melissa Williams, Executive Director, Feiro Marine Life Center
Tamara Galvan, Facilities Director, Feiro Marine Life Center
Carol Bernthal, Superintendent Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Kevin Grant, Deputy Superintendent Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Mark Ozias, Board Chair, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Deborah Moriarty, Board Member, past ED, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Will partners be engaged and, if so, for what purpose?

Feiro will work with Marine Discover Center partners the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. In addition to the Tribal leadership named above, representatives of city and county government, the local Chambers of Commerce, local School Districts, and other environmental nonprofit organizations will be asked to participate in the exhibition master planning process.

When and in what sequence will your activities occur?

Upon receipt of award and additional funding from partners the following sequence of activities is anticipated:

- September 2021 – review conceptual designs, capital campaign updates and timelines.
- October 2021 - Initiate an RFP for an Exhibition Master Plan
- December 2021 – Hire exhibition professional
- January 2022-May 2022 Work with Exhibition team, partners and stakeholders to complete the Exhibition Master Plan

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

Feiro staff, including ED Melissa Williams, and Facilities Director, Tamara Galvan will be integral to the project. Their time is projected in the budget outline. Depending on COVID restrictions, meetings may be held virtually or in-person at Feiro or partner venues. The Sanctuary and Foundation partners will cover their own staff and travel costs.

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

The RFP for exhibit design will include all of the milestones and timeline as indicated in this proposal. As with the project's completed conceptual design report, payments for work completed will be based on deliverables and accomplishments.

How and with whom will you share your project's results?

The project results will be shared with the community and stakeholders as well as project partners and site partners. Exhibit design will be a component of the fundraising campaign. We also share information with seven other small marine science centers in the region through the Community Marine Science Centers of the Salish Sea collaborative, which includes the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, who is also undertaking their own exhibition planning process.

Project Results

What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?

Feiro and the project partners will have completed an accessible, creative, interactive, and engaging exhibition experience connecting the guest to the ocean environment. This is the essential next step in the timeline for the planning of the Marine Discovery Center.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the intended audience change as a result of your project?

During this process, the project team will develop specific learning goals and objectives for the exhibits that look to increase positive emotions such as empathy for and protective stewardship actions in the marine environment, increase knowledge of historical and recent Tribal interests, improve scientific literacy skills, and develop deeper understandings of the life histories and adaptations of important local species, such as Southern Resident Killer Whales, sand lance and other forage fish, eelgrass, etc.

What data will you collect and report to measure your project's success?

We will measure success by reaching the goals and meeting the timeline of the Exhibition Master Plan process. A notebook of 'decision making documents' will track the effort and decision making process. The measurement of success will be a design that is approved by all partners in design and affordability.

What tangible products will result from your project?

Feiro will have an Exhibition Master Plan available for moving forward with the project.

How will you sustain the benefits of your project?

The Exhibition Master Plan will complete the blueprint for moving forward with the Marine Discovery Center capital campaign.

