



# Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-249470-OMS-21

## New York Public Library (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture)

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$245,705
Amount of cost share:	\$248,379

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:  
<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/mh-249470-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 current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

## **Project Narrative**

### **1. Project Justification**

The New York Public Library's (NYPL) Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture requests funding to support a three-year Teacher Education Project that will help to increase implementation of Schomburg-created curricula in classrooms. The confluence of the global COVID-19 pandemic and a national reckoning with racial inequality has precipitated an increased demand for high-quality, classroom-ready lesson plans that explore themes relating to Black History. The Schomburg Center is currently producing such curricula as a series of 15 specially designed lesson plans collectively known as the Schomburg Curriculum. The proposed Teacher Education Project aims to expand both the geographical and pedagogical scope of educators' use of the Schomburg Curriculum, while continuing development of the Curriculum as a dynamic educational resource.

Initial development of the Schomburg Curriculum is being supported through the IMLS-funded Schomburg Curriculum Project, currently in its second year of a three-year project period. The newly proposed Teacher Education Project will build directly on this work, with a goal to first expand the scope of teacher adoption of the Curriculum throughout the New York City metropolitan area and New York State, and to lay the groundwork for targeting audiences at a national and global level in the future. This project will establish a new Professional Development Specialist position at the Schomburg Center, whose primary role will be to produce and conduct professional development training workshops for classroom teachers. These workshops will focus on providing educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to integrate the Schomburg Curriculum as part of their classroom lessons. The Teacher Education Project will also support continuing the work of Schomburg's Curriculum Writer, currently funded through the Curriculum Project, for an additional one and half years, in order to continue expanding the Schomburg Curriculum to meet the present needs of teachers.

The Schomburg Curriculum is designed to introduce new knowledge and ideas relating to Black History and the African Diaspora into middle and high school classrooms by utilizing Schomburg archival items that are historically significant and intriguing for young students, as well as the work of contemporary scholars in the field. The Schomburg Center's rich collections consist of more than 11 million items, including manuscript collections, photographic images, artwork, moving image and recorded sound, and a variety of other rare and unique materials related to the Black experience. Among these holdings are the archives of Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Sonny Rollins, and Malcolm X; the records of the Civil Rights Congress; writings in 60 different African indigenous languages; artwork by Aaron Douglas, Jacob Lawrence, and Romare Bearden; photographs by Chester Higgins; and radio broadcasts and recordings by Marcus Garvey and Booker T. Washington.

Each lesson in the Curriculum invites teachers and students to rethink popular narratives about Black History. However, the themes in the Curriculum—which currently include Transatlantic Slavery, Black Power, and Black Women's Stories—are often new not only to students, but to their teachers as well. This project aims to alleviate barriers to adopting the Schomburg Curriculum and effectively incorporating Curriculum themes into classroom lessons. The Professional Development Specialist will address this aim by providing educational workshops for teachers focused on the Schomburg Curriculum. These workshops will serve as collaborative spaces for teachers to hold discussions, ask questions, increase their knowledge of Black History and the Schomburg's collections, and digest Curriculum themes, with the ultimate goal of better equipping these educators to help their students do the same.

To meet the increased demand for curricula, the Schomburg Center has accelerated the Curriculum Project timeline and plans to publicly release each of the three Curriculum themes as they are completed. The staff of Schomburg's Education Department have also found through analysis of feedback from educator surveys and Curriculum-based workshops, that the demand for the Curriculum as a resource, and support for incorporating the Curriculum into lesson plans, exceeds the capacity of the Schomburg's current personnel. While the Curriculum Project was initially intended to provide "interventions" to deepen classroom discussions already in progress, many teachers expressed the need for more comprehensive resources and ideas for how to begin exploring Black History themes with their students.

In the summer of 2020, Schomburg Education staff began testing lessons from the first Curriculum theme of Transatlantic Slavery in virtual workshops with teachers, which were planned and led by the Curriculum Writer. During this testing phase, it became apparent that the scope of work involved in writing the Curriculum concurrently with developing and conducting educator workshops to assist with its implementation was unsustainable, and would necessitate an additional staff position dedicated to working with teachers. The Professional Development Specialist position fills this need by allowing the Schomburg Center to continue growing its curricular resources, while simultaneously engaging deeply with teachers who want to learn how to use them.

The Professional Development Specialist will serve as a knowledgeable and accessible resource for educators—a teacher of teachers—who can fulfill the growing demand for comprehensive assistance with incorporating the Schomburg Curriculum into the classroom. Furthermore, extending the work of the current Curriculum Writer will enable the Schomburg Center to continue building the Curriculum as a dynamic resource that can be adapted to educators' current needs. This two-pronged approach will further enhance the Schomburg Center's ability to serve as a go-to provider of information and high-quality curricula relating to Black and African American history and experiences.

The primary beneficiaries of this project will be Grade 6-12 classroom teachers and their students, beginning with the New York City metropolitan area. Schomburg Education staff have found that classroom teachers across the country frequently contact the Schomburg Center requesting help to effectively use the Center's archives and resources. The Professional Development Specialist will increase the Schomburg's capacity to respond to these queries, follow up with teachers and school leaders in a more sustained and thorough manner, and further develop and adapt the curriculum in response to teachers' needs. The New York Public Library's leadership has identified expanding institutional capacity to provide professional development to teachers as a Library-wide goal, and has designated the Schomburg Center as a prime candidate to spearhead this effort. The Teacher Education Project will serve as the foundation to begin building the institutional knowledge and capacity to scale up this initiative going forward.

This project addresses the goals of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program in several ways. By creating a dedicated Professional Development Specialist to provide professional development for teachers, the project will enhance the Schomburg Center's institutional knowledge and capacity to both systematically conduct this work and to expand its scope over time. Building on the previous work of the Schomburg Curriculum Project, the Professional Development Specialist will help to both enhance teachers' knowledge of Black History and the Schomburg's collections, and facilitate implementation of the Schomburg Curriculum. As the Curriculum Writer continues to work in tandem with the Professional Development Specialist, the Schomburg Curriculum

can be further developed and refined, thereby increasing the Schomburg Center's capacity to more effectively meet educators' classroom needs.

## **2. Project Work Plan**

The first phase of the Teacher Education Project will involve recruiting and hiring a part-time Professional Development Specialist as a member of the Schomburg Education team. The Project Director, Dr. Brian Jones, will conduct a focused search for this position. Working in conjunction with Dr. Jones, the Curriculum Writer, and the rest of the Schomburg Education Department staff, the Professional Development Specialist will develop workshops for educators that are designed to introduce them to the Schomburg Curriculum and provide support to assist with implementing the Curriculum into their classrooms. The majority of workshops will be structured as mock lessons, with the Professional Development Specialist acting as the teacher and educators experiencing each lesson as a student would. At selected moments during the workshops, teachers will be prompted to consider the perspective of their own students, to observe the choices that the workshop facilitator is making, and to contemplate how they might adapt the procedures for their own purposes.

In each lesson, participants will consider a different archival item from the Schomburg Center's collections and reflect on how that item might revise conventional Black History narratives. While most workshops will be one hour in length, longer formats will occasionally be offered as well, allowing for historians and other scholars to make presentations, answer teachers' questions, and support increasing their knowledge of Black History. In surveys following a recent professional development workshop that the Schomburg co-produced with The New-York Historical Society on the history of racism in school discipline, participating teachers overwhelmingly cited a moderated discussion with a historian as a highlight of the session.

In conducting these types of workshops, the Schomburg Education Team has gleaned that when tasked with learning new narratives in Black History, teachers need the opportunity to do so in different modes, including listening to lectures, asking questions, and talking with each other. The Professional Development Specialist will allocate time in each workshop for these multiple modes of learning, as well as time for participants to share insights, ideas, suggestions, and other feedback, which can be analyzed following each workshop's conclusion and used to guide further workshop revisions.

Creating that space for teachers to think and talk about teaching is vital. In summer 2020, for example, Schomburg's Curriculum Writer led a workshop for teachers that centered on the use of a two-page document from the Schomburg's archives that appears to describe a court case brought by "Nancy, a woman of color" against a defendant, Joseph Butler, whom she accused of "restraining her of her liberty" for approximately three months in the Arkansas Territory in 1828. Before viewing this document, participants first used visual thinking strategies to decipher a 19th century abolitionist engraving depicting two elite white men offering freedom to an enslaved woman, who reacts with reluctance. In this lesson, the contrast between the engraving and the document from Schomburg's collections highlights the theme of agency and leadership in the abolitionist movement. Whereas the engraving suggests Black people received freedom as a gift from white people, the letter shows a Black woman advocating in her own interest, taking her enslaver to court (and the second page of the document seems to suggest that she may have prevailed). After reading and discussing the document, participants asked many questions about its historical background, and several remarked that their students would find the story surprising, since enslaved women are not often thought of as having the opportunity or means to take an enslaver to court. Others shared ideas about how best to integrate the document into their current teaching, such as pairing it with historical fiction.

In the Schomburg Teacher Education Project, teachers participating in such a workshop will be surveyed about their own educational gains from the workshop. In addition to increases in their understanding of, interest in, and confidence using the Schomburg Curriculum, teachers will also benefit from the opportunity to take archival reproductions included with each lesson back to their classrooms, with new ideas about how best to use them. Workshops in Year 1 of this project will be based on the three themes of the Schomburg Curriculum Project: Transatlantic Slavery, Black Power, and Black Women's Stories. The Professional Development Specialist will lead these workshops, conduct post-workshop surveys with participants, and further follow up with participants as necessary. Most workshops will be conducted virtually due to COVID-19; limited in-person workshops will be offered if and when the Schomburg Center can safely conduct group events.

Workshops will be advertised through the Schomburg Center's social media accounts, and also via Schomburg's educator database of roughly 6,000 members, most of whom teach in the New York City metropolitan area. This database will serve as a starting point for systematically tracking educators and schools that participate in the workshops and that adopt parts or all of the Curriculum, and also for capturing participant feedback. This feedback will be used to assess the efficacy of the workshops and help the Professional Development Specialist to adapt and refine the workshops to best suit participants' needs. Workshops will be offered iteratively, with assessment and revision taking place throughout the course of the project. At the end of the project's first year, the Schomburg Center will engage an external reviewer to evaluate both the workshops and the Curriculum, and issue a brief written report that can be used for continuous quality improvement.

The most evident risks to this project will be the ability to attract and hire a professional with the appropriate skills and qualifications as the Professional Development Specialist, to attract and sustain a significant amount of educator participation in workshops, and to ensure that the workshops are useful to teachers and facilitate them implementing the Schomburg Curriculum. To ensure that the Professional Development Specialist has the necessary experience and qualifications to conduct educational sessions for teachers, the Project Director, Dr. Brian Jones, will conduct a comprehensive search to hire an experienced educator, who ideally will have a minimum of three years of experience as classroom teacher, a minimum of two years of experience conducting professional development workshops, and demonstrated knowledge and experience teaching Black History. Dr. Jones is well-acquainted with Education and History faculty and with networks of grade 6-12 teachers in the New York metropolitan area, and will make use of these connections in the recruitment of the ideal candidate. In addition to formally listing the position in relevant publications and websites, Dr. Jones will ensure that the hiring announcement is circulated in targeted communities of potential applicants.

Teacher participation in Schomburg's existing professional development programming, as well as incoming teacher queries to the Schomburg Center, both indicate a strong demand for the work proposed in this project. The Schomburg Education staff will be proactive in ensuring sustained interest in the Schomburg Curriculum and participation in the proposed professional development workshops through promotion of the Curriculum, the services of the Professional Development Specialist, and the availability of the workshops. Additionally, the Schomburg Center has two strategic assets for expanding reach among teachers. First, the Schomburg regularly collaborates with partner organizations that are well-established in the field of professional development, such as Facing History and Ourselves and The New-York Historical Society. Second, the State of New York has granted NYPL the ability to distribute Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) credits, which teachers must obtain to maintain their licensure in the state, further incentivizing them to attend Schomburg workshops.

This project is the logical extension of the work the Schomburg Center is already doing with these assets. For example, in each of the past three years, the Schomburg has partnered with The New-York Historical Society to offer CTLE credit-bearing, archive-based workshops for teachers. In December of 2019, the Schomburg also partnered with The New-York Historical Society and Facing History and Ourselves to co-produce a daylong credit-bearing symposium on teaching about school segregation, during which Dr. Jones led a workshop that exposed participating teachers to documents and images from the Schomburg Center's collections that helped them learn about the history of school segregation in New York City.

The Schomburg Center will retain the services of an external evaluator in the first year of the project to assess the extent to which the workshops are useful to educators and the Curriculum is being implemented. This evaluator will be a knowledgeable and experienced professional in education and the pedagogy of Black Studies . The Professional Development Specialist will also regularly survey workshop attendees following their participation to assess their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the workshops. The Professional Development Specialist will be charged with surveying the Schomburg's educator database, following up with teachers who adopt the Schomburg Curriculum, and recording and tracking statistics to quantify the impact of this project, including the number of participating teachers, schools, and students reached by Curriculum-based lessons.

Dr. Brian Jones, Associate Director of Education at the Schomburg Center, will manage this project and conduct the initial project planning. Dr. Jones is an educator with almost two decades of experience teaching in New York City public schools, teaching teachers in the Hunter College School of Education, and conducting professional development workshops at the Schomburg Center. The Professional Development Specialist will work collaboratively with Dr. Jones, the Curriculum Writer, and other Schomburg Education staff to carry out ongoing project development and implementation; the Professional Development Specialist will ultimately be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the workshops.

The Curriculum Writer, Nicole Daniels, will be responsible for writing new lesson plans for the Schomburg Curriculum. The Manager of Education Programs, Kadiatou Tubman, and the Education Coordinator, Zenzele Johnson, will participate in regularly reviewing and offering critical feedback for lesson plans and workshops. They will also oversee the implementation of lessons from the Schomburg Curriculum in the youth programs they respectively manage, the Junior Scholars Program and Teen Curators Program. The current Schomburg Center Director will be leaving NYPL in 2021; if necessary, the interim Director will provide assistance with project planning and oversight until a permanent replacement is hired.

This project will be implemented using a phased approach over the three-year grant period. In July and August of 2021, the Professional Development Specialist position will be advertised for potential applicants. The Schomburg Center is well-positioned to utilize its professional networks to generate a strong pool of qualified applicants, and the Professional Development Specialist position is expected to be filled and the new employee onboarded in September and October of 2021. Planning for the first round of workshops for teachers will happen in October and November of 2021. These workshops will be based on the five lessons completed for the first theme of the Schomburg Curriculum Project, Transatlantic Slavery. This series of workshops will be advertised to the more than 6,000 educators in the Schomburg's database and through the Schomburg's social media accounts. Workshops will begin taking place in December 2021.

All workshop participants will be asked to complete exit surveys (a requirement for CTLE credit-bearing workshops); starting in January 2022, that data will be used to plan a new round of workshops, advertise them, update the participant database, and conduct follow-up with participants. The next round of workshops will focus on the second Curriculum theme, Black Power, and will begin in February 2022, followed by another period of assessment, revision, and planning. In March 2022, an external evaluator will be retained to attend workshops, and in April 2022, workshops will be conducted on the third and final theme from the original Schomburg Curriculum Project, Black Women's Stories. A final round of workshop assessments will be done in May 2022, along with analysis of the external evaluator's program assessment. A new planning phase will then begin for summer workshops to be held June and July of 2022.

In Project Years Two and Three, the Curriculum Writer will develop new content for the Schomburg Curriculum. These new Curriculum themes and units will be guided by educator feedback from the Year One workshops and crafted in response to the needs expressed by teachers to the Schomburg Education Team, while also making use of the strengths of the Schomburg's archival collections. The previously described workshop paradigm, led by the Professional Development Specialist, will progress using these new lesson plans. At each project stage, the Associate Director of Education, the Curriculum Writer, and the Professional Development Specialist will collaborate to determine how best to move the project forward. Other members of the Schomburg Education Department will also review lesson plans and workshops and offer constructive feedback. As in Year One, the approach in Years Two and Three will be an iterative process of planning, executing workshops, followed by assessment, revision, and planning a new round of workshops.

The Professional Development Specialist will be responsible for creating and maintaining a database of workshop participants, which will include collected data on school, location, subject and grade level(s) taught. The Professional Development Specialist will use quantitative and qualitative surveys to track educators' usage and implementation of the Schomburg Curriculum, and other correspondence to record and store qualitative feedback. The Schomburg Curriculum will ultimately be made available on The New York Public Library's website for anyone in the world to access for free. Workshops for educators will also be open to the public, but will be advertised specifically to educators. Highlights and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected regarding the dissemination and use of the curriculum and participation in the workshops will be shared with Schomburg Center and NYPL staff and leadership.

To carry out this project, the Schomburg Center respectfully requests a grant of \$245,705 to be used over three years, from July 2021 through June 2024, to be matched by the Schomburg's investment of \$248,379. The bulk of this funding (\$155,250) is earmarked to support the Professional Development Specialist and the Curriculum Writer as essential project personnel. The Professional Development Specialist will be funded over the full three-year grant period, while the Curriculum Writer will be funded in Year 2 and half of Year 3 to avoid overlap with current IMLS funding for the aforementioned Curriculum Project. Both positions are part-time and will provide 15 hours of work per week. Additional project support will be provided by the Schomburg Education team and funded through NYPL's cost-share investment. Further grant-funded and cost-share expenses are outlined in the Budget Justification, including other professional services required for this project.

### **3. Project Results**

The Schomburg Teacher Education Project aims to fulfill the IMLS Agency-Level Goal of increasing public access to information through libraries and museums. The intended result of this project is to expand the widespread use of Schomburg Center archival resources in Grade 6-12 classrooms in the New York City metropolitan area and beyond by providing educators with increased access to thoughtful and classroom-ready archive-based curriculum and professional development opportunities. To this end, the project will make it significantly easier for teachers to successfully utilize the Schomburg Center's archival materials in their classrooms, particularly at this historical moment when many educators are searching for high-quality resources to help students develop academically sound ways of studying and thinking about Black History and the legacy of racism.

The Teacher Education Project is designed to enable classroom teachers to engage with and absorb new narratives and ideas in Black History, in order to better equip these teachers to share these narratives with their students. Teachers who attend Schomburg's professional development workshops and use the Schomburg Curriculum will become more knowledgeable about contemporary ideas in Black History, and will be adequately prepared with resources to help their students engage with them as well. The Schomburg Teacher Education Project will ultimately make participating teachers and students more aware of the Schomburg Center, its unique and unparalleled collections, and the process of using archival resources to examine and contemplate Black History. The Professional Development Specialist will collect and report the number of attendees to Schomburg's professional development workshops, the location of their schools, and the grade level(s) and subjects that they teach. Staff will also collect and report the number of educators who indicate having used any part of the Schomburg Curriculum in their teaching, the number of students exposed to those lessons, and qualitative data about educators' experience participating in our workshops and about their experience using the curriculum.

The Library's current IMLS-funded Curriculum Project contributes to the ongoing digitization of Schomburg Center archives. Each time permission is acquired to use an item in the curriculum, the item becomes digitized and thus available as part of NYPL's digital collections. This in turn expands overall access to the Schomburg's collections, as well as increases educators' capacity to utilize these resources. The proposed Teacher Education Project will further enhance this accessibility as the Schomburg Curriculum is further developed and use of the curriculum by educators is broadened. This project will also build on the foundational work currently being done to develop the Schomburg Curriculum. The Curriculum will ultimately be made available digitally for open access by educators anywhere in the world. The Teacher Education Project will further support the development of the Curriculum as a virtual resource that expands over time by funding an additional year and a half of time for the Curriculum Writer to work on adding new lesson plans to the Curriculum. These new lessons will be developed in response to feedback from educators on their needs, and in consideration of the strengths of the Schomburg Center's archival collections.

The New York Public Library's leadership is committed to supporting teacher education as an institution-wide strategic initiative, and the Schomburg Center has been identified as an ideal candidate to lead this work. The Schomburg Center has established trust with teachers both as an educational resource capable of delivering high-quality professional development opportunities, and as a reservoir of knowledge and socially relevant ideas that can help to enhance students' educational experiences. Going forward, the Library will seek additional support from multiple funding sources to sustain this effort, building on the valuable experience gained through both the Curriculum Project and the proposed Teacher Education Project to develop and sustain this work as a permanent set of human and intellectual resources that the Library makes available to educators.







