



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-20-18-0026-18
Project Category: Community Anchors

Chicago Historical Society

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$237,050
Amount of cost share:	\$666,051

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2019 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2018 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the FY2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

The Chicago History Museum (CHM) is requesting support from the IMLS Museums for America Program for the Muslim Chicago Project. Co-created with individuals and organizations from the Muslim community, the project centers on collecting and sharing oral histories from diverse Muslim narrators. This will form the foundation of a major exhibition to be held at the Museum in the fall of 2019. The goals of the project are:

1. To share the stories of Muslim Chicagoans, providing a platform for the Muslim community to achieve a greater voice and assert themselves as an active part of the history and future of our city.
2. To help Museum visitors learn more about the Muslim community, hear directly from Chicago Muslims, and understand the diverse practices of Islam.
3. CHM staff deepen their understanding of Chicago's Muslims and develop their capacity to engage and serve this community.

Muslim Chicago began in 2016 as project of CHM's Studs Terkel Center for Oral History, which uses models of shared authority, collective inquiry, reflective practice, and trauma intervention to build stronger relationships between the Museum and the city's communities. Through interviewing and networking with Muslim Americans throughout Chicago, CHM has identified a need for Muslims to have a greater voice in sharing their own stories and claim their status in Chicago history. The need is borne out in the national social landscape; according to a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Center, 75% of American Muslims feel there is "a lot" of discrimination against them, and 62% feel they are not treated as part of mainstream society.

The Museum seeks to apply its capacity to share Chicago's stories as a way to inspire empathy and encourage audiences to see themselves and others in a different light. Muslim Chicago will move beyond documentation and begin to disseminate stories, sharing authority with Chicago's diverse Muslim communities. With its Muslim partners, CHM will utilize recorded oral history interviews, a multimedia exhibition, public programs, and innovative K-12 education programs to invite all Chicagoans to encounter the Muslim community.

In year one, Muslim Chicago will assemble a Community Advisory Council (CAC), hire a Curatorial Assistant from the community, and recruit and train Muslim Teen Historians. Together with CHM staff, they will have completed and transcribed more than 50 oral history interviews by the end of the year. The interviews will be added to the museum's permanent collection and accessible on the Museum's online portal. Select narratives will become the central feature of a multi-media exhibition at the Museum, running from the fall of 2019 through the end of 2020. This exhibition will be developed with the input and expertise of the CAC and a front-end audience study. Concurrently, co-created public programs and education activities for K-12 students and teachers will provide a more in-depth learning experience about the contributions of Muslims and the challenges they face. Training for staff and contributors has begun and will continue. It includes interview trainings for volunteers and Teen Historians, as well as sessions for staff on the fundamentals of Islam, systemic racism, trauma-informed practices, and Christian normativity as it relates to Islam in Chicago.

Muslim Chicago's intended outcomes are: Muslims have increased opportunities to share their voice and history with new audiences; youth have increased oral history interview and communication skills; visitors and program participants gain understanding and appreciation of the Muslim community in Chicago; educators and students gain knowledge about documenting community history; CHM staff improve their knowledge of Islam and capacity to serve the Muslim community; CHM establishes and maintains ongoing relationships with diverse Muslim community partners; the Museum's archives better represent Muslim Chicagoans; and CHM has improved capacity to share stories of Chicago Muslims and welcome Muslim visitors.

The Museum will conduct a thorough summative analysis of the exhibition that uses exit surveys, intercept interviews, and targeted feedback sessions in collaboration with Muslim partners. Education and public programming will measure impact with surveys, pre and post-assessments, reflection journals, project rubrics, and a documented plan for continued engagement with the Muslim community.

1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The Chicago History Museum (CHM) requests \$237,050 from the IMLS Museums for America Program to support the Muslim Chicago Project. This Community Anchors proposal outlines the activities to be carried out in conjunction with the Chicago area Muslim community in the creation and presentation of the Muslim Chicago exhibition, public programs, and educational offerings. The overall goals of the project are:

1. To share the stories of Muslim Chicagoans, providing a platform for the Muslim community to achieve a greater voice and assert themselves as an active part of the history and future of our city.
2. To help Museum visitors learn more about the Muslim community, hear directly from Chicago Muslims, and understand the diverse practices of Islam.
3. CHM staff deepen their understanding of Chicago’s Muslim community and develop their capacity to engage and serve them.

Muslim Chicago continues the Museum’s legacy of crafting exhibitions, such as *Catholic Chicago* (2008) and *Shalom Chicago* (2012) that focus on religious and cultural communities. It began in 2016 as an oral history project of the Museum’s Studs Terkel Center for Oral History, which develops collaborative oral history projects with community partners that use history as a tool for social justice. The Center uses models of shared authority, collective inquiry, reflective practice, and trauma intervention to build stronger relationships between the Museum and the city’s communities. Like previous community-based projects, including *My Chinatown* and *Out In Chicago*, the Muslim Chicago oral history interviews will help communities share their voices as well as form the foundation of a multimedia exhibition in the fall of 2019. This exhibition and its programs, developed with community advisors, will represent the breadth of Chicago’s Muslim communities.

According to a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Center, 75% of American Muslims feel there is “a lot” of discrimination against them, and 62% do not feel treated as part of mainstream society. These trends are highly relevant in Chicago, where the Council on American-Islamic Relations estimates the Muslim population between 300,000 and 500,000 people. A 2015 poll from the Public Religion Research Institute reveals that 60% of Americans have seldom or never had a conversation with a Muslim. This disconnect affects their views toward Muslims; among those who had conversations with Muslims at least occasionally, 67% believe them to be an important part of the American religious landscape. Only 45% of those who have never spoken to a Muslim believe this.

Many Chicago Muslims express concern about their place in American society. In an oral history interview with CHM, Dr. Tasneema Ghazi remarked, “We [American Muslims] are not being put like the Japanese were in a camp, but at the same time you are in this open camp. Everybody is looking at you. Should I cover my head or should I not cover my head?” The Museum seeks to address rising tensions at this critical time, applying its capacity to share Chicago’s stories as a way to inspire empathy and encourage audiences to see themselves and others in a different light. Muslim Chicago will move beyond documentation and begin to collaboratively share stories and authority with Chicago’s diverse Muslim communities. With the informed input of a Curatorial Assistant from the faith, a group of Muslim Teen Historians, and a Muslim Community Advisory Council, CHM will utilize recorded interviews, a multimedia exhibition, public programs, and innovative K-12 education programs to invite all Chicagoans to encounter our Muslim neighbors.

Community Benefits

Starting with the oral history project in 2016, Muslim Chicago is a co-created initiative between Chicagoland’s American Muslim communities and the Museum. At the project’s outset, several local Muslim organizations and individuals endorsed it and described its direct benefits, detailed below.

Muslim Chicago provides the resources and space for Muslim leaders to realize a shared goal: to record and share the histories of their community members. Our conversations with collaborators, from imams to

academics and artists, revealed a common desire to capture the stories of Muslims to bring diverse, unheard voices to the fore. For example, Dr. Tasneema Ghazi, co-founder of IQRA' International Educational Foundation, has long planned to interview local Muslim leaders. The imam at Masjid al-Faatir, a South Side mosque co-founded by Muhammad Ali, mentioned that many older members of his mosque have been waiting to share their faith journeys.

Muslim Chicago offers a rare opportunity to highlight the diversity of Muslim experiences and share unique aspects of their faith. Some local American Muslims have expressed that specific aspects of the project will benefit people within their communities. Farrah Qazi, a member of the Chicago area's Ahmadiyya Muslim community, stated her surprise at Muslim Chicago embracing her specific faith tradition. Ahmadis, Ms. Qazi said, very rarely have an opportunity to talk about their beliefs to Muslim or non-Muslim audiences.

Muslim Chicago amplifies the voices of communities that feel misunderstood. Some local Muslims, like Laila Muhammad, have taken the interview session as an opportunity to make a specific statement to dispel a significant misunderstanding. "... I'm not a scholar so I'm sure it's written someplace, but people know Muslims have, we say *jihad*. I think the true *jihad* is the individual *jihad* – that struggle to reach your potential and become who Allah has created you to be, and to strive for perfection."

Muslim Chicago helps young people shape and express their identities in a positive way. A local Muslim philanthropist described her approval of the Teen Historians component of the *Muslim Chicago* project. She pointed out that Muslim youth rarely have the chance to express their religious identities in a positive way outside the *masjid*. A Teen Historians group, in which Muslim teens would be studying the history of Islam in the area and conducting intergenerational oral histories, would foster affirming expression and interaction.

Muslim Chicago brings the stories and experiences of Muslim communities to non-Muslims. The *Muslim Chicago* project tells stories that are largely unknown to many Chicagoans. It will have a significant impact because it will provide a platform for Muslims and non-Muslims to engage with 21st century issues, such as Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism: issues that resonate in our city and throughout our nation.

Muslim Chicago creates new scholarship and a lasting archive for future generations to explore. Overall, it will create deeper levels of engagement around issues of faith, community, and identity for non-Muslims and Muslims alike. It is critical that institutions like the Chicago History Museum collaborate, document, display, and engage citizens in our shared history and the inter-connectedness of our communities.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The "Stepping Up to Serve Chicago" strategic plan boldly prioritizes civic education, including connecting with Chicago area communities. Muslim Chicago has community outreach and authority at its core, with a co-creation process that engages Muslims and affirms their significant status in Chicago history. The project's culminating exhibition, along with its education and public programs, will create a space for cross-cultural understanding. The project also enhances CHM's collections with the addition of Muslim oral histories, advancing the strategic goal to "build up our foundation" through building and modernizing the Museum's holdings. The strategic plan features guiding principles that Muslim Chicago follows closely, including being a destination and center for civic engagement, making meaningful connections with constituents, and inspiring students and developing teachers. Finally, the strategic plan promotes collaboration with diverse stakeholders and inclusive practices to make CHM a place for all Chicagoans, primary aspects to Muslim Chicago.

Museums for America Community Anchors Alignment

As an institution that strives to share the stories of all Chicagoans, CHM can best serve its public through exploration and exhibition of the communities that make up this diverse city. Muslim Chicago is an

opportunity to share the experiences of a religious and cultural group that has helped shape Chicago, yet remains unfamiliar to and misunderstood by the majority of the population. In that sense, it has been underserved by the city's major cultural providers. Muslim Chicago also addresses the Museums for America goal to encourage a more inclusive and diverse museum. Aside from making CHM a more welcoming and representative place for our Muslim neighbors, a young Muslim who is tied to the community will serve as the project's Curatorial Assistant. This is a career-building opportunity for an emerging museum professional.

Community Anchors projects seek to use museum resources to create positive change for communities in need. CHM has identified a profound need for Chicago Muslims to have an increased voice as a way to claim their status in our city's history and to deter prejudice and Islamophobia. As a collaborative effort, Muslim Chicago will unfold authentically and share authority with the Muslim community, leading to collective impact that is sustained through ongoing relationships and the Museum's permanent collection.

Importantly, Muslim Chicago will employ a robust evaluation process that includes front-end audience studies and summative impact analysis. This will not only help ensure the positive reception and effectiveness of the exhibition and adjacent programming, but it will inform future community collaborations.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN

To accomplish the stated goals of the Muslim Chicago Project, CHM has planned extensive activities, detailed in sequence below with corresponding dates:

ORAL HISTORIES: 2016 – 2021 The oral history project has been co-created since its inception. Project staff has worked side-by-side with community members in choosing subjects and crafting interview questions. Partnering organizations and individuals have continually helped the project network so that the pool of narrators will be as diverse as possible in terms of country of origin, race, immigration status, faith traditions, and relationships to Islam, gender, and sexuality. The goal is to have 30 additional oral history interviews recorded and transcribed by the end of 2018 for a total of more than 50. The project will also look to acquire objects, photos, and archives from narrators or other community members to add to the collection. The interview content and other newly acquired material will form the basis of the Muslim Chicago exhibition. Since exhibitions often inspire people to step forward for interviews, we anticipate continuing to collect oral histories during its run. The oral histories will be added to CHM's collection and shared via the exhibition, CHM's website and blog, public events, education programs, and potentially at conventions and on the radio.

STAFF TRAINING: APRIL 2017 - DECEMBER 2020 Training of staff and collaborators has been ongoing and will continue. The Studs Terkel Center has conducted six group and individual interview trainings for volunteers and interns. The Curatorial Assistant (see below) will receive this training in addition to attending the Oral History Summer School, an eight-week intensive, when it meets in Chicago in 2018. In April 2017, Ta'leef Collective Chicago gave its "Introducing Islam" workshop to the project team. Similar sessions about the fundamentals of Islam from Ta'leef and others will occur as the project moves forward. The project team will also engage a local scholar on Christian normativity as it relates to Islam in the Chicago context. In the wake of an all-staff "Introduction to Systemic Racism" workshop provided by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training, project team members will explore white privilege and how that relates to understanding American Muslims. Museum staff have also had trauma-informed training, but need further understanding of the distress Muslims experience as a result of persecution, racism, and refugee status.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL: JANUARY 2018 – DECEMBER 2020 To strengthen the foundation of co-creation, the project team will recruit a Community Advisory Council (CAC) composed of leaders in the Muslim community. The CAC will meet quarterly at the outset in early 2018 and monthly when the project is further along and the CAC has grown. The CAC and project staff will begin by addressing such issues as staff training and knowledge, faith traditions, gender, sexuality, and current geopolitics. Their input will inform the content

of discussions, selection of oral history narrators, methods of inclusion, exhibition development, and problem solving. The CAC will give the Muslim Chicago exhibition, public programs, and community outreach an authentic first voice, allowing the project to effectively engage both the Muslim community and wider public. This group will also play a key role in evaluating the project, providing critical feedback on its impact. The CAC will inform a continued engagement plan that identifies ways the community can continue to engage with the Museum once the project concludes.

CURATORIAL ASSISTANT: APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2020 CHM will hire a full-time Curatorial Assistant who will be an indispensable member of the project, bringing knowledge, understanding, and rootedness in Chicago’s Muslim communities. The Curatorial Assistant will receive training in oral history methods and work with CHM staff and volunteers, college interns, and oral history narrators to complete up to 30 new recorded oral histories by the end of 2018. Along with the Community Advisory Council, he or she will develop and maintain strong relationships with Chicago area Muslim communities. He or she will help recruit and manage the Teen Historians. Finally, the Curatorial Assistant will help CHM staff develop plans for the Muslim Chicago exhibition and programs and advise on strategies to make the Museum a more welcoming environment for Muslims.

TEEN HISTORIANS: SUMMER 2018 Project staff, including the Curatorial Assistant, will recruit, hire, and train as many as 10 middle school and high school students to conduct oral history interviews for the project. These young people will come from the Muslim community and build on their connection to Islam through research, interviews, and mentorships. They will develop life-long communication skills by conversing with and interviewing oral history narrators. There will be ample opportunities for intergenerational learning experiences in which younger and older people interact. Working in teams of two to four with mentors, including near-peer college interns, American Muslim and other media professionals, Teen Historians (TH) will conduct research, prepare questions, lead interviews, and present their work to various audiences online and in person. The project will host interview days on-site at masjids, community centers, and other institutions. The TH will participate in the project’s summative evaluation, providing valuable insights on their experience.

FRONT-END AUDIENCE STUDY: OCTOBER 2018- MARCH 2019 Front-end research, led by Garibay Group, will focus on informing the exhibition development process as well as related programming. Using a combination of focus groups and a simulated walk-through experience of the exhibition, researchers will focus on understanding Muslim community members’ lived experiences, understandings of and response to the exhibition ideas and themes, and perceived relevance. *See the attached evaluation description for more detail.*

CREATING A WELCOMING PLACE: OCTOBER 2018 – ONGOING The project team will work with our partners to assess the Museum and identify barriers to welcoming the Muslim community. This could result in revising the Museum’s North & Clark Café menu to include *halal* foods; working with *halal* caterers for Museum events; adjusting Museum hours to accommodate Muslim Sunday school field trips; establishing a designated prayer space in the building; and creating public programs that address key community issues. Beyond the Museum’s walls, the project team will examine how CHM can effectively bring related programs and exhibition content to the community through neighborhood meetings, pop-up displays, and the internet. The Museum will deliver the Muslim Chicago interviews through its oral history portal and create a separate in-depth web experience, expanding access by welcoming virtual visitors.

EXHIBITION: OCTOBER 2019 - DECEMBER 2020 A major product of Muslim Chicago oral histories will be an exhibition driven by the narratives acquired from the community. The project team will analyze stories, looking for common themes and compelling storytellers. They will edit and assemble diverse selections into an impactful gallery experience. Past projects at CHM that have used oral history will inspire this exhibition.

The co-creation of the exhibition is a key aspect to the Muslim Chicago project, so its structure has not been determined. We imagine a production that emphasizes individual voices representing Muslim diversity while touching on common themes. Each story could have a discreet visual setting for an immersive experience. Visitors could access audio directly in the Muslim Chicago exhibition galleries, using CHM's iPod touches or by downloading the CHM Media app on their phones. The display might also use CHM's theatrical control technology for lighting effects and film projections, prompted by visitors' actions or locations in the gallery.

The exhibition may also display objects acquired on loan from oral history narrators and other community members as supporting visual material for the stories and themes. A portion of the gallery will be devoted to facilitated conversations and visitor reflection. We estimate exhibition attendance to be at least 130,000.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS: SPRING 2019 - DECEMBER 2020 Education staff will collaborate with the CAC and community educators to develop curricular resources and learning experiences for teachers and students. CHM will use its current platforms, such as museum field trips, student symposia, student writing competitions, teacher professional development seminars and workshops. It will also establish partnerships with educators that embed the exhibition and its resources in a more extensive learning experience. Participating teachers and students will gain knowledge and appreciation of Chicago's Muslim community and the individual and collective issues they face. The goal is to engage 5,000 youth through field trips and another 1,000 with more in-depth programs.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS: OCTOBER 2019 - DECEMBER 2020 The CAC, TH, and partnering educators will be critical to the public engagement aspects of the project. These focused community groups will help staff develop and implement programs aligned to stakeholders' priorities during the run of the exhibition. The CAC and TH will inform the topics and formats of wider public engagement and identify targeted program audiences. The planning groups can use existing platforms, such as on-site civic talk series, free commemorative family days, and off-site tours to frame or inspire new programs. This type of collaboration and inclusion will further help members of the Muslim community share their first-voice stories and help non-Muslim Chicagoans connect with their experiences. CHM staff plans to collaborate with both groups on three to four program events, reaching at least 1,000 participants during the exhibition's run.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION: JANUARY 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2020 Summative evaluation by Garibay Group will focus on assessing overall project outcomes. The IMLS goal and performance measure statements will be integrated into the evaluation and measured through a mixed-methods approach. Evaluation of the exhibition will include exit surveys and interviews with visitors. Programmatic efforts will be assessed through exit surveys. A critical aspect of the summative will be data collection with Muslim community members to assess overall outcomes. It will include surveys and reflective group discussions. CHM staff outcomes will be assessed using surveys and a reflection session. *See the attached evaluation description for more detail.*

Addressing Risks

Muslim Chicago has begun identifying and addressing risks inherent in the project through conversations with community members. The primary foreseeable risks lie mainly in navigating faith questions and common misperceptions. Exploration of Muslim groups outside the mainstream, including those who identify as LGBTQ, Ahmadis and members of other persecuted Muslim faith traditions, and those who consider themselves "unmosqued" will be part of the project and are not without controversy. The current political climate that includes Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism presents challenges to the project. The project also anticipates concerns with dissemination of interviews and will ensure that narrators feel comfortable sharing their stories through the various outlets.

Overall, extensive staff training, working closely with the Curatorial Assistant, and solid relationships with members of the CAC will allow the project to confront risks and respond to problems. The CAC will be the ultimate sounding board, counselor, and door opener. Muslim Chicago is committed to facing the risks and will address them thoughtfully, honestly, and directly.

Project Team (See the Project Staff list for individual names and the Resumes document for qualifications)

Under the supervision of the Vice President for Interpretation and Education, the project will primarily be a combined effort of CHM's curatorial affairs, exhibitions, and education departments.

Curatorial affairs, primarily the Director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral history and the Curatorial Assistant, will oversee staff training, oral history collection, the Teen Historians, and the Community Advisory Council. They will lead the intellectual development of the exhibition, with the CAC playing a key role in developing content, providing interpretation, fostering partnerships, and measuring impact. The project has already identified core members of the CAC, listed on the Project Staff and Key Consultants document.

Exhibitions, led by the Director of Exhibitions and the Senior Exhibition Designer, will use the oral histories, research, and input from curatorial affairs and the CAC to create the Muslim Chicago exhibition that will open in the fall of 2019 at the Museum.

Education, led by the Director of Education, will design public programming, K-12 education experiences, and teacher development to promote a deeper and wider engagement with the Muslim Chicago exhibition and Chicago's Muslim communities.

CHM's collections staff will ultimately manage and provide access to the oral histories and any acquired objects from the Muslim community. The publications team will oversee the project's online presence. We will use an outside evaluator, the Garibay Group, to do a front-end audience study to inform the exhibition and conduct a summative analysis to determine impact.

3. PROJECT RESULTS

CHM has identified the following outcomes to support the Community Anchors performance goal to

“strengthen museums and libraries as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities”:

Grantee-level: 1) My organization is better prepared to engage my community. 2) My organization is better prepared to develop and maintain ongoing relationships with community partners.

Community-level: 3) The museum offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs.

As part of the project work plan, the Museum will conduct a thorough summative analysis that uses exit surveys, intercept interviews, and targeted feedback sessions in collaboration with Muslim partners and Museum staff. The data will be shared with internal and external stakeholders.

Goal 1. To share the stories of Muslim Chicagoans, providing a platform for the Muslim community to achieve a greater voice and assert themselves as an active part of the history and future of our city.

Related outcomes:

A) *Increase opportunities and platforms for Muslims to share their voice and history with new audiences.* The CAC will provide input for the exhibition, educational curriculum, and public programs. On surveys and in a reflective discussion session, CAC members report that they feel they meaningfully contributed to the development of the project plan and the community voice was authentically reflected in project products and deliverables. Teen Historians will present their oral history work in 3-4 engagement opportunities. Reflection journals will document that they feel the project allowed for their positive self-expression.

B) *Increase oral history interview and communication skills of Teen Historians* as measured by pre and post assessments conducted by CHM's education staff. Teens will demonstrate knowledge gains in the oral history interview process and identify further applications of this new skill.

Goal 2. To help Museum visitors learn more about the Muslim community, hear directly from Chicago Muslims, and understand the diverse practices of Islam.

Related outcomes:

- A) *Visitors and program participants gain understanding and appreciation of the Muslim community in Chicago, including the contributions they make and challenges they face.* In exit surveys and intercept interviews, they: 1) report a deepened understanding of Chicago’s Muslim Community and Islam and name specific insights gained from the exhibition; 2) report that the exhibition helped them reflect on issues of exclusion/inclusion of certain communities.
- B) *Educators and students in the in-depth and longer-term programs will additionally gain knowledge about documenting community history.* Museum staff will use surveys, assessments, and final project rubric scores to assess participants’ knowledge about oral histories and community archives and why these skills are valuable.

Goal 3. CHM staff deepen their understanding of Chicago’s Muslim community and develop their capacity to engage and serve them.

Related outcomes:

- A) *CHM staff improve their knowledge of Islam, Christian normativity, systemic racism, and trauma-informed practice,* measured through surveys and a reflective dialogue session during the summative evaluation.
- B) *CHM establishes and maintains ongoing relationships with diverse Muslim community partners.* In reflective interviews and discussions, partners report: 1) the project gave the Muslim community a meaningful platform and opportunities to represent their community as an active part of the history and future of Chicago; and 2) they feel connected to CHM and would consider future collaborations. In addition, CHM and the CAC will create a continued engagement plan that proposes ways they can work together after the project ends.
- C) *The Museum’s archives better represent Muslim Chicagoans* with the addition of more than 50 oral histories from Muslim narrators, available on CHM’s online oral history portal.
- D) *The Museum has improved capacity to share stories of Chicago Muslims and welcome Muslim visitors.* In surveys and interviews, Muslims visiting the exhibition will report: 1) they were satisfied with the exhibition and the ways in which it represented Muslim Chicago and Islam; and 2) they found the exhibition relevant for them and their community 3) their accessibility to the Museum is increased with CHM’s improved amenities.

Tangible Products

The tangible products from this project include: 1) an oral history archive of over 50 American Muslim voices that represents new scholarship about the history of Islam and Muslims in Chicago and will influence generations of scholars of all ages; 2) an engaging, multi-media Muslim Chicago exhibition with oral histories at its core; 3) public programming and educational offerings for adult and K-12 audiences that will explore issues of identity, community, and faith; and 4) a summative evaluation to inform future projects.

Sustainable Benefits

Muslim Chicago will have a lasting impact for a variety of stakeholders. Foremost, the project will give a first-voice platform to the Muslim community and an opportunity to learn about and celebrate their diverse cultures. The Muslim Chicago oral history archive is a significant sustained benefit, accessible online in audio and transcript form. It will serve as a testament to the individuals interviewed, the various communities represented, and the history documented. Muslim youth working as Teen Historians will develop life skills that benefit them in their personal lives and academic and professional careers. The Museum will establish ongoing practices to make it more welcoming to the Muslim Community, diversifying our audiences and promoting wider-spread civic engagement. CHM staff will have improved knowledge related to Islam, Christian normativity, systemic racism, and trauma-informed approaches. These skills will help staff develop and sustain stronger ties with Chicago communities. Relationships formed during the project can inform and strengthen future initiatives and offer ongoing learning opportunities.

