



## **Museums Empowered**

Sample Application MA-41-17-0644-17

Project Category: Diversity & Inclusion

Funding Level: \$5,000 - \$25,001

### **Orlando Science Center Orlando, FL**

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$24,750
Amount of cost share:	\$0

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

## **Orlando Science Center Abstract**

Orlando Science Center plans to host a series of professional development workshops that will be deployed to the entire organization's staff. We have partnered with Aletheia Wittman from the Inluseum and inclusion consultant Margaret Middleton to lead workshops that specifically address areas of diversity, inclusion, equitable access to the museum, and other key aspects of cultural competency. Wittman and Middleton, use an interactive workshop style that empowers the staff to identify areas of need; develop strategies for identifying action items beyond the workshop itself; and explains what inclusion, diversity, and access actually means to the museum community. Overall, the professional development program is meant to increase the cultural competency of our staff, and increase our organization's awareness of the diverse needs in our community. We believe increasing our staff's cultural competency and equipping them with the tools necessary to promote inclusion and accessibility will ultimately encourage diverse populations to visit the Science Center, feel comfortable while here, and inspire them to keep coming back.

As Science Centers and museums begin to play larger roles in public education and supplementing the education many children receive in the classroom, it is becoming increasingly important to make sure that these organization are accessible to groups outside of their traditional audience. In fact, many organizations point to the diversification of audience and staff as keys to success for the museum of the future. For now, we continue to see large gaps in attendance to and employment in cultural organizations for non-white populations. These gaps have not gone unnoticed by the public, the academic community, and the organizations themselves. According to the US Census, the Orlando MSA is currently: 28.7% Hispanic and 16.1% black, while our current audience is only 16% Hispanic and just over 4% black.

This new professional development initiative is just one of the steps that we are currently taking to increase access to the Science Center, promote participation from audiences we do not traditionally reach, and contribute to a more equitable informal learning landscape in Central Florida. We recognize that to address inclusion and accessibility we have to go beyond simply offering opportunities to attend the center for free or at a reduced rate.

## 2017 IMLS Museums Empowered

### 1. Project Justification:

#### A. What do you propose to do?

Orlando Science Center is requesting funds from IMLS to host a series of professional development workshops that will be deployed to the entire organization's staff. We have partnered with Aletheia Wittman from the Inclusion and inclusion consultant Margaret Middleton to lead workshops that specifically address areas of diversity, inclusion, equitable access to the museum, and other key aspects of cultural competency. Wittman and Middleton, use an interactive workshop style that empowers the staff to identify areas of need; develop strategies for identifying action items beyond the workshop itself; and explains what inclusion, diversity, and access actually means to the museum community. Overall, the professional development program is meant to increase the cultural competency of our staff, and increase our organization's awareness of the diverse needs in our community. We believe increasing our staff's cultural competency and equipping them with the tools necessary to promote inclusion and accessibility will ultimately encourage diverse populations to visit the Science Center, feel comfortable while here, and inspire them to keep coming back.

This new professional development initiative is just one of the steps that we are currently taking to increase access to the Science Center, promote participation from audiences we do not traditionally reach, and contribute to a more equitable informal learning landscape in Central Florida. We recognize that to address inclusion and accessibility we have to go beyond simply offering opportunities to attend the center for free or at a reduced rate.

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

As Central Florida continues to grow in population and diversity, it is imperative that museums, libraries, and public services step up to assess and meet the varying needs of our community. At the Orlando Science Center, we have recognized this growth, and as an organization have begun to take steps for us to better serve our guests, and to bring in new visitors. As Science Centers and museums begin to play larger roles in public education and supplementing the education many children receive in the classroom, it is becoming increasingly important to make sure that these organization are accessible to groups outside of their traditional audience. In fact, many organizations point to the diversification of audience and staff as keys to success for the museum of the future (Schwartz et al. 4). For now, we continue to see large gaps in attendance to and employment in cultural organizations for non-white populations.

These gaps have not gone unnoticed by the public, the academic community, and the organizations themselves. According to the US Census, the Orlando MSA is currently: 28.7% Hispanic and 16.1% black, while our current audience is only 16% Hispanic and just over 4% black. We noticed our own attendance shortfalls thanks to an IMLS Museums for America grant that allowed for us to commission audience research done by the firm Reach Advisors. Using this research, over time, our attendance has moved closer to meeting the population makeup of our entire community, and we have made coordinated efforts to do this. For example, our marketing department has made strong connections with the Hispanic/Latino media in Central Florida, and works with Hernan Tagliani, a Hispanic audience consultant with The Group Advertising, to better understand the community and how to reach its people. We have also begun to incorporate Spanish signage into all of our new exhibits, with KidsTown, our newest early childhood learning space, being the best example. These efforts, while valuable, are not going far enough for us to ensure equitable participation from the Hispanic/Latino community. Nor has what we have done so far addressed the inequitable access to the Science Center we experience across all racial, ethnic, and social groups in our service area.

## Orlando Science Center: Diversity and Inclusion Professional Development

The disparity between community composition and museum attendance is a persistent problem for the entire field (Feinstein and Meshoulam 369). There are many ways to address the inequity in attendance, such as overcoming financial and transportation barriers, being a relevant source of education in the community, and acting as a conduit for social inclusion (Hartman and Hines-Begmeier 294). We have worked hard to address many of these barriers by offering \$3 admission to EBT cardholders through the IMLS Museums for All program, which has been utilized by over 26,000 visitors this year; establishing a Science for All fund to provide scholarships, transportation, admission, and memberships to those with financial need; and promoting social inclusion for a variety of groups through staff professional development sessions. These training sessions have been geared toward better accessibility for seniors, people with autism, and people with physical disabilities; sessions were run by the Orange County Office of Aging, the Center for Independent Living, the Autism and Disability Ministry, and the Monarch Center for Autism, respectively. Additionally, we have created an internal Accessibility Advisory Board that meets regularly to brainstorm how to increase access to the Science Center. We have begun to distribute tickets to diverse groups, as part of this Advisory Board, in order to obtain direct feedback from the community. However, all of these efforts can only go so far without a proper understanding of the people and cultures that we are trying to reach. To be socially inclusive, we first need to have staff that are aware of the varying needs of our visitors and have developed strategies to meet those needs.

Without a culturally competent staff—front line, back of house, admin, and leadership—we risk alienating a substantial segment of our community. Unequal access and participation could lead to reinforcing stereotypes about who visits museums, and risk perpetuating inequality as informal science education continues to be accessed by the dominant social group and those in higher economic quintiles (Feinstein and Meshoulam 369). Given that Science Centers are beginning to play a larger role in the community’s science education—OSC, for example, operates after school programs, a preschool, and summer camps—it is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure that we reach beyond our traditional population, so that we do not bolster the already burgeoning achievement gap. Sean Reardon in his recent article, *The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor*, recognizes that since 2001 this gap has actually grown between 30 and 40 percent (4). While income is just one measurement that illustrates the achievement gap, it is worth noting that a disproportionate number of people from communities of color make up the lower economic quintiles, or are in poverty. If we continue to attract only our traditional audience—white, middle class, and educated—we are aiding in perpetuating an inequitable society by not preparing and reaching those who are in the most need.

The need to diversify our audience has presented itself in numerous ways during the last few years. Most notably, in 2015 OSC recommissioned the audience research firm Reach Advisors to do a comprehensive survey of our attendance. Currently, Hispanic and black attendance only account for just over 16% and 4% total guests served, respectively. Given that Hispanic people account for 28.7% of the population, and black people account for 16.1%, we are obviously falling short of providing equitable access to the Science Center. This need has also been evident through the academic and industry research that calls for diversity in the museum workforce and more equitable access to museums and science centers. For example, the American Alliance of Museums has contributed to this work with their report *Equity and Excellence* (2008), and the Association of Science and Technology Centers has started a Diversity and Leadership Development Fellowship, in addition to hosting many inclusion and diversity related resources on their website. We ultimately identified the need based on our data, and the clear trends being signaled by our peers, the entire industry, and the academic community. Because of this, we have also incorporated accessibility and eliminating barriers to participation—financial, logistical or cultural—into our 2020 Strategic Plan.

**C. Who will benefit from your project?**

Many different groups will benefit from this professional development project. We expect the greatest impact to be on all guests who visit our center, both new and returning. Additionally, we expect a greater benefit to the racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse guests who visit the center. New diverse guests who are attracted to the Science Center will benefit by having access to informal science education that is operated by a culturally competent staff, and housed in an environment meant to be comfortable and inclusive for all people. Our returning guests, and those who make up our traditional audience, will benefit from being exposed to a science center that accurately represents the diversity within Central Florida.

Additionally, the entire staff will benefit from this professional development program. Leadership staff will learn more effective strategies for promoting an inclusive organization, strengthen their relationships with their employees and the visitors, and gain a better understanding of emerging industry standards and best practices. Museum employees in each department will better understand their own contributions to accessibility and inclusion needs. Increasing organization cultural competency and providing all employees with the resources needed to promote a more inclusive space will give us the chance to bring our mission to more people from our community.

**D. How will your project advance your institution's strategic plan?**

In December 2014, the OSC board approved the new Strategic Plan 2020. This new plan laid out many important goals for the Science Center in the coming years, and two of which specifically relate to this professional development project. Goal #1: Make the Science Center a Recognized Essential Resource to the Community, and Goal #3: Eliminate Barriers for Participation to the Science Center. By training our staff in emerging industry standards, and guiding our approach with the latest academic research, we aim to create an attendance pool that closely resembles the Central Florida community. We have begun to work toward these goals in a variety of ways as outlined in **Section 1B**, and have seen success so far. Going further, this training will help us to eliminate the cultural barriers that are stopping many families from coming into the center. In fact, eliminating cultural barriers, compared to logistical and financial, is often cited by museums professionals as the most difficult to overcome (Feinstein and Meshoulam 378). Without specifically addressing the barriers in Goal #3, we would not be able to accomplish our overall goal of being an essential resource to the community. Central Florida is much more diverse than our traditional audience, and we can only be considered essential if we are actually providing to the underserved and underrepresented.

**E. How will your project address the goals of the special initiative and the Museums Empowered project category? (Professional Development and Capacity Building, Diversity and Inclusion)**

This special initiative, in conjunction with the Museums Empowered project category, supports professional development and capacity building with regards to Diversity and Inclusion (D+I). Our project is closely aligned with both of these objectives. Our professional development workshops will be run by D+I experts, Aletheia Wittman and Margaret Middleton, and specifically focus on assessing and addressing how our organization could better serve the diverse needs of our visitors. Professional development that raises the cultural competency and awareness and knowledge of diversity for the entire staff increases our own capacity to address the continuously evolving needs and challenges that our community faces.

**2. Project Work Plan**

**A. What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements will you carry out?**

## Orlando Science Center: Diversity and Inclusion Professional Development

The 12 month work plan encompasses the entirety of the professional development project: multiple Diversity and Inclusion workshops during the year, evaluation of the program, and development of short and long term goals for the organization.

### **Workshops and Implementation:**

Aletheia Wittman, of the Inluseum, will provide a series of Diversity and Inclusion workshops that focus on racial equity, family inclusion, and diversity more generally. These workshops will take place over the course of two days and will have multiple sessions per day to accommodate our large staff. Wittman will conduct two sets of workshops throughout the year. Key aspects of the first round of professional development will focus around:

- Brainstorming areas of need as identified by staff member during interactive workshops
- Developing strategies to find actionable items for inclusion and diversity, both departmentally and organization wide
- Defining inclusion and diversity as it pertains to our organization and community

Margaret Middleton, similarly, will provide a series of workshops to our entire staff at two different periods throughout the year. Middleton's work has focused on family inclusion and the intersections of the museum and social justice. Her workshops will follow these topics and speak to inclusion more generally. Her approach takes a top down assessment of the organization by first working closely with leadership to brainstorm major areas that need work, and then expanding training to include the entire staff. In addition, Middleton has developed a model for using family inclusive language within the museum that will provide a starting place for revising written copy, signage, and collateral materials.

After the first set of workshops, the organization, as a whole, will have six months to implement the strategies developed and knowledge gained during the training. During this time, all employees will be asked to holistically assess their own behaviors, their department, and the organization in regard to inclusion and diversity. All employees will then have the opportunity, and, most importantly, the ability to enact change based on their new cultural competency.

After the staff has had time to implement the strategies they learned during professional development, and the organization as a whole has had time to adjust to any changes, Wittman and Middleton will return to the Science Center after six months to deploy another set of training. These workshops will focus on:

- Organization wide assessment of progress on action items
- Developing new action items based on areas of need identified by a more culturally competent and aware staff
- Brainstorming ways to sustain results of professional development

### **Evaluation:**

Evaluation of this professional development will happen in multiple phases throughout the entirety of the grant period. All staff members take a pre-participation survey that assesses awareness of cultural practices, our community's diversity, and current industry best practices. Through written reflection, employees will have the opportunity to self-assess their own role in developing inclusive practices, what they believe they are already doing well in their own position, and how they feel the organization is doing as a whole.

Similarly, staff will be surveyed during the time in between both sets of workshops, and then again at the end of the program. Participants will, again, have the opportunity to provide written reflections of their experiences during and after the workshops. All reflection prompts and evaluative questions will be developed between key

## Orlando Science Center: Diversity and Inclusion Professional Development

OSC staff members such as: Leslie Warhurst, VP of Human Resources; Heather Norton, VP of Education; Zach Lynn, Director of Volunteers; and Middleton and Wittman, our two Diversity and Inclusion consultants.

Additionally, continuous evaluation of the program's results will also occur during yearly all staff meetings. Prior to at least one meeting per year, every employee participates in a survey that assess large organizational issues like working climate, pay, health, etc. These surveys will now include questions assessing how well we are deploying the diversity and inclusion strategies and knowledge we have learned.

### **B. Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?**

Margaret Middleton, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant, will plan and deploy workshops to all staff members during the course of the grant period. She will also assist in developing program evaluation questions and strategies. Additionally, Middleton will identify action items and areas of organizational need.

Aletheia Wittman, Director of the Inluseum, like Middleton, will plan and deploy two sets of workshops to all staff members during the grant period. Wittman will aid OSC staff in developing evaluation questions and strategies. She will also work with OSC staff to identify areas of need for the organization and strategies to address inequitable access to the Science Center.

Leslie Warhurst, VP of Human Resources, will work with Middleton and Wittman to shape workshops to best fit our organization's culture and tone and will aid in developing evaluative methods for the entire program. Warhurst will also work with OSC staff to develop implementation plans, and materials for supporting project results into the future. Additionally Warhurst will manage the diversity and inclusion training for new employees, organize additional professional development programs, and bring diversity and inclusion topics into our current Lunch and Learn HR program.

Zach Lynn, Director of Volunteers, has been key in managing contact and travel for Wittman and Middleton. Lynn will also manage implementing diversity and inclusion training into our mandatory new staff orientation along with Warhurst.

Senior Team, CEO and all Vice Presidents, will be responsible for managing diversity and inclusion efforts within their own departments, and will discuss strategies and implementation during leadership meetings. Senior team buy-in will also be essential to cultivating an inclusive atmosphere throughout our organization's culture.

All Staff will have a role in implementing the results of this program. Front line and back of house staff members will be empowered and encouraged to enact change at the level of their own job function. Without sufficient buy-in from the entire staff we will not be able to reach our ultimate goal of equitable representation in the Science Center.

### **C. When and in what sequence will your activities occur?**

This one year project will start off with the entire staff taking pre-participation surveys in order to assess a baseline of where the staff sees themselves and the organization in terms of diversity and inclusion. This step will occur at the start of the grant period in November and continue through January 2018, in addition to any and all planning OSC may need to undertake. Following pre-evaluation, both consultants will deploy their separate workshops to our entire staff in February. During the six months between the first set of workshops and the second set, we will work on implementing the strategies learned during professional development in order to satisfy our identified action items. Additionally, another round of evaluation will occur, and will focus on the

## Orlando Science Center: Diversity and Inclusion Professional Development

organization's growth since the training. The second set of workshops will occur in August, and will address our progress toward our goals and developing new action items based on our work so far. OSC will collect final evaluations and reflections from staff after the second set of training. Finally, from after the workshops until November 2018, we will work toward developing strategies to implement evaluation into our all staff meetings, and additional training into our already existing professional development opportunities.

### **D. What financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?**

This professional development program will require funding from IMLS to support travel, lodging, and consulting fees for both Wittman and Middleton, in addition to OSC staff time. OSC will also require all personnel listed in **2B** for this program to be both operational and successful.

### **E. How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?**

We will track the progress of this program through continuous evaluation led by the OSC Education department. Evaluations will consist of surveys administered before, during, and after, the workshops. Additionally, critical reflections will provide the staff the opportunity to assess how they believe the organization is doing in their current diversity and inclusion efforts. We will specifically evaluate cultural competency, organizational and personal awareness of diversity and inclusion best practices. We will also track our progress, long term, through our attendance. Presumably, with an explicit focus on increasing accessibility through deploying strategies around addressing diverse needs and developing a more inclusive space, our attendance will begin to be more representative of the community that we serve.

### **F. How and with whom will you share your project's results?**

OSC will share the project results in a variety of ways, and to a range of audiences. The results of each evaluation will be shared with all staff, and Wittman and Middleton. Additionally, all data will be shared with IMLS through reporting. Finally, OSC will submit a proposal to the ASTC conference in order to present our program and findings to our peers.

## **3. Project Results**

### **A. Choose one or more Performance Measure Statement(s) appropriate for your project and describe how you will collect and report the corresponding data.**

The Performance Goal for this project is *Learning: Train and develop museum and library professionals*. There are two relevant Performance Measure Statements for this project: 1) *My understanding has increased as a result of this training* and 2) *I am confident I can apply what I learned in this training*. OSC will employ a variety of evaluation methods throughout the entirety of the program. First, we will conduct surveys before, during, and after the professional development training that will assess staff based on the Performance Measure Statements, and other questions that will gauge their own performance in implementing what they learned during the workshops. Additionally, we will also collect critical reflections from staff members, so that they may better react to the training, assess their own contributions, and offer their opinion on how the organization has changed since the professional development. During this process, we will tabulate answers and develop datasets. Data will be reported through a potential conference presentation at ASTC, and to IMLS for regular reporting requirements.

### **B. Describe your project's intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified.**



This professional development training has a few intended results that will benefit our staff and organization, our traditional and non-traditional guests, and our community at large. This project looks to address the inequity in attendance and participation at our science center across various racial and social groups. Within the academic literature (see **1B** for details), cultural barriers are often the most difficult to overcome for any museum trying to attract populations outside of their traditional audience. By training our entire staff—leadership, admin, front line and back of the house—to be more culturally aware, sensitive and competent we will be taking an important step in better understanding how to meet the needs of those we currently underserve.

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

OSC expects that this professional development will have various related impacts on our staff. They will:

- Understand what diversity, inclusion, and accessibility mean to our organization and to museums more generally
- Gain an awareness of the current levels of diversity represented in our community, staff, and attendance
- Feel more able and comfortable in addressing and interacting with diverse guests
- Be able to adapt job functions and materials, across the organization, to promote inclusion, accessibility, and diversity

**D. What tangible products will result from your project?**

There is currently a range of products that will result for this professional development opportunity:

1. Internal Training Opportunities: OSC will use the results of this training to support current, and new, internal professional development sessions such as: our HR Lunch and Learn for Leadership, mandatory employee orientation, and new workshops designed to support our results over time.
2. Comprehensive Evaluation Report: When both evaluation phases are complete, we will develop a report to document findings, so that we may inform future OSC projects and share with our peers.
3. Results and Insights Presentation: OSC will create a presentation based on our evaluations and, our hopeful, results to be distributed among our entire staff, and to be shared at industry conferences, with board members, and other stakeholders.

**E. How will you sustain the benefits of your project?**

We intend to sustain the increased cultural competency, awareness, and sensitivity through a variety of internal trainings and professional development opportunities. Results of this training will be used to develop a new portion of our mandatory staff orientation, will be integrated into our current HR Lunch and Learn for Leadership, and will be the focus of continuing workshops. One intention of this project is to develop a training framework that can be implemented across the organization and into perpetuity.

**Diversity and Inclusion Professional Development Schedule of Completion**

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	
<b>Planning</b>	████████████████████												
<b>Wittman Workshops</b>				████████						████████			
<b>Middleton Workshops</b>				████████						████████			
<b>Implementation</b>					██							████████	████████
<b>Evaluation</b>		████████████████			████████████████████████████████████								████████