



## National Leadership Grants for Museums

Sample Application MG-30-17-0043-17  
Project Category: Collections Stewardship  
Funding Level: \$50,000 - \$500,000

### Field Museum of Natural History

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$346,001
Amount of cost share:	\$458,795

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2018 National Leadership Grants for Museums differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2016 and FY2017 applications. Most obviously, project categories have changed and have increased in number from three to four. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

## Abstract — The Field Museum

### **Collaborative Curation: Building a 21st Century Model for the Care of North American Human Remains**

The Field Museum of Natural History respectfully requests \$455,746 to support **Collaborative Curation: Building a 21st Century Model for the Care of North American Human Remains**. This three-year initiative will generate essential, innovative approaches for museums to curate human remains respectfully. We will use The Field Museum's collection as a pilot to address pressing needs for improved documentation and appropriate housing of Canadian and U.S. human remains.

**Challenge:** Currently, more than 175,000 North American indigenous human remains are curated in U.S. and Canadian museums and other repositories. These individuals hold great cultural significance to descendent communities and simultaneously have potential value for substantive scientific research that could benefit a broad public. The Field Museum is among several collections-holding research institutions that struggle to refine, update, and implement ethical standards for the respectful care of human remains that can be sustained over time. Museums must collaborate with descendent communities and other stakeholders to develop flexible solutions that are responsive to the potential needs and outcomes related to the care of North American human remains, including repatriation, scientific research, and long-term curation.

**Activities and Time Frame:** We propose to address these needs through three interrelated and concurrent components. The first involves a two-day invited symposium in year 1, bringing together leaders from Native North American communities, museum professionals, and scientists to identify challenging issues, discuss multiple perspectives, and develop potential solutions. The second will refine and implement a forward-looking standard of ethical care, using the approximately 1,500 North American human remains at The Field Museum as a pilot. The third will be the creation of a web portal by the end of the year 3 to disseminate products of the symposium and lessons-learned from the pilot, including sample inventory sheets, presentations, publications, examples of research and data-collection tools, and designs for boxes and other re-housing essentials.

**Benefit to the Museum Field:** By addressing collaboratively the challenges and opportunities associated with the curation of North American indigenous human remains, this project will be of profound value to the national and international museum community. It will generate discussion and create new networks among stakeholders from wide-ranging perspectives. Our ultimate goal is to research, explore, develop and implement thoughtful and forward-thinking practices for the ethical care of human remains currently under museum stewardship.

**Intended Outcomes:** Expected outcomes include (1) the promotion of improved stewardship of human remains in North America; (2) the creation of guidelines for respectful care informed by open discussions, hands-on implementation, pragmatic considerations, and consultation with specialists; (3) the fostering of an open dialogue about benefits and drawbacks of improved scientific techniques (cf. Tallbear 2013); (4) the demonstrated, greatly improved care of human remains using The Field Museum as a pilot; (5) the dissemination of information to a broad community of collections-holding institutions, universities, descendent communities, and the public through our developed on-line resource; and (6) the training of students and recent graduates in scientific techniques, data collection, and appropriate procedures in human remains curation.

**Measuring Success:** The three-part evaluation will use qualitative and quantitative measures. Phase 1 will consist of developing a semi-structured interview protocol, including an expertise-oriented evaluation to help assess the landscape of current practices and to give stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the potential value and importance of the upcoming symposium. In Phase 2 the Museum's evaluator will develop an anonymous questionnaire—to be circulated to all conference participants—to measure the usefulness of the conference, illustrate concerns about collections, and illuminate next steps. These data, in conjunction with those gathered during the conference, will contribute to the practical guidelines being developed. Phase 3 will consist of another round of semi-structured interviews conducted by the evaluator and the biological anthropologist. This phase will follow up on the usefulness of the conference and its broader impact. The evaluator will draft a final report that covers all phases of the project and defines suggested next steps.

## **Collaborative Curation: Building a 21st Century Model for the Care of North American Human Remains**

### **National Leadership Grant – Collections Stewardship**

*For museums...human remains seem to fall into a zone between artifact and untouchables, especially for universities, where there seems to be an unspoken myth that the less that is done, the less attention such collections draw. (Cassman, Odegaard, and Powell 2007: 21)*

#### **1. STATEMENT OF NEED**

The Field Museum is among several collections-holding institutions that struggle to refine, update, and implement ethical standards for the respectful care of human remains that can be sustained over time. As the volume edited by Cassman, Odegaard, and Powell (2007) highlights, however, museums as a whole have not prioritized, or have been slow to develop better standards of care, documentation, and study of these collections. This is despite the fact that technological developments, scientific advances, and standards of care for human remains have changed dramatically in the past decade. Moreover, museums have not effectively incorporated the needs of the numerous and diverse stakeholders in their thinking about human remains curation. There is little doubt that the problematic, colonial contexts of the removal, study, and retention of indigenous human remains is a root cause of much of the historic inertia evident in museum curation. Hundreds of thousands of Native North American (NNA) human remains were placed in institutional settings for a wide variety of reasons, including legal archaeological excavation, systematic grave looting, land development, and haphazard acquisition. Underlying the intensive collecting efforts and desire to retain these remains into perpetuity was the belief that the remains were scientifically valuable and that genetically ‘pure’ Native Americans would disappear (Tallbear, 2013). Nevertheless, while recognizing the ethical and practical challenges that are manifest and embodied in these collections, museums must collaborate with stakeholders to develop flexible solutions that are responsive to all the potential needs and outcomes related to the care of Native North American human remains, including repatriation, scientific research, and long-term curation.

Before widespread repatriation movements, control over the remains rested with the holding institutions and research scientists. In the United States, the enactment of the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAI) in 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 provided a legal process for the repatriation of human remains and other types of items to federally recognized tribes. In Canada, although no repatriation laws exist, repatriation efforts have been widespread. Yet, even after decades of repatriation and reburial, large numbers of NNA human remains continue to be held in U.S. and Canadian museums. While it is impossible to determine the precise number of NNA human remains, a conservative estimate puts the figure at well over 175,000 sets (Hollinger et al., nd; National NAGPRA, 2015). This reality runs counter to the widely held perception that all or most NNA remains have been or soon will be repatriated or reburied.

The NMAI and NAGPRA Acts instantiated a shift in values towards the recognition that socially related communities have an equal, if not greater, right over the disposition or use of human remains. The responses to this paradigm shift have been multiple. In some cases, researchers and their students changed their focus to the study of human remains from anywhere except North America. Additionally, the stewardship of remains has either been ignored or given only sporadic attention. Collections of NNA human remains have acquired an aura of sensitivity that often renders researchers reluctant to engage stakeholder communities in a nested set of potentially uncomfortable discussions, and museums for their part are left to wonder at the perceived level of sophistication and commitment to inclusiveness of researchers requesting access to such sensitive material. A consequence is that stewardship of remains has not evolved alongside ethical and scientific advances from which these collections might benefit. North American human remains have great cultural and spiritual importance to descendant communities. These

human remains also can have great scientific importance. Museums have the responsibility and privilege to responsibly and responsively curate these collections on behalf of all stakeholders.

Collections of human remains are the subject of profound ambivalences. Although it is understandable that collections-holding institutions may wish to make the ‘problem’ of human remains go away through an effort to repatriate all remains, this is not a practical solution. As Clifford (1997) and others have stated, the possession of these remains carries with it a profound obligation, and, positively, discussion has become more nuanced over time. Tribes and First Nations are taking many different approaches in addressing the historical reality that indigenous populations are housed in museums. This is an ongoing conversation on many levels, but the challenges of sustained and collaborative curation has not been a major component to date. It is time to move beyond either/or discussions. All stakeholders need to work together to establish shared protocols and principles. The Field Museum, along with partners, seeks to bring to light the ethical needs and practical considerations inherent to the collaborative curation and study of North American human remains.

### **1b. What do you propose to do?**

The proposed project has three major, interconnected components. First, we will organize an invited two-day symposium that will address crucial, shared needs of museums that curate NNA human remains alongside those of Native Americans and researchers. We will bring together leaders from Native North American communities, museum professionals, and scientists in fields such as biological anthropology, genetics, and bioethics to discuss diverse perspectives and potential solutions to various challenges. The overarching question we seek to answer is: How might the needs and goals of descendant communities, collections managers, museums, scientists, and the public be met ethically? The symposium will address the practical challenges of safekeeping human remains informed by the recognition that solutions will vary depending upon the needs of the stakeholders and collections. Outcomes may include repatriation, research, and/or long-term stewardship. Further, the symposium will focus on the potential benefits and collaborative opportunities that can be built and enriched over time. Participants will develop methods and options for the respectful care of human remains and the scientifically responsible museum, as well as develop a model for other organizations. These products, in turn, can be used to educate stakeholders, inform collaborative research projects and support the care of collections at The Field Museum and elsewhere. Stakeholder attendees will include biological anthropologists, tribal and first nation leaders, museum professionals, and cultural resource managers. This is a collaborative project with numerous partners. The following institutions have committed to participate: American Museum of Natural History, Canadian Museum of History, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, The Hopi Tribe, Indiana University, Loyola University Chicago, The National Museum of the American Indian, The Osage Nation, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Centre, The University of British Columbia, University of Texas, Austin, and The Wanapum Heritage Center. More partners will be invited when funding is secured.

Second, we request funds to improve the storage, understanding of, and physical and digital access to the NNA human remains located at The Field Museum as a pilot project in order to test best practices. The Museum will hire a biological anthropologist to expand, strengthen and improve upon current efforts to improve inventory and documentation of the remains. In conjunction with extant staff, including Research Associate Anne Grauer, the biological anthropologist will examine all of the human remains from the United States and Canada that have not already been re-inventoried. This person will confirm the minimum number of individuals (MNI) represented by each catalog number, collect data, and make determinations of sex, age, and visible pathologies when possible. The inventory, individuation, and rehousing of remains will be conducted in the human remains storage area located in the Collections Resource Center at the Museum. Observations will be entirely non-destructive in nature. Collected data and photographs will be uploaded into the Museum’s Digital Management System, EMu. Once the human

remains have been individuated, collections staff and interns will re-house the human remains. Depending on size, quantity, and type, the skeletal elements will be placed in custom designed covered boxes and in some cases wrapped in muslin. This prepares the remains for repatriation, study, or long-term curation according to shared standards amongst scientific researchers, descendant communities, and museums.

The third component entails dissemination, providing greater access and communication about indigenous human remains care broadly while simultaneously improving digital access to the Museum's inventory. We will create a web portal as an efficient way to share symposium findings including the model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century curation of human remains. Further, the biological anthropologist, informed by research and the outcomes of the symposium will work with other staff to improve current practices of human remains storage and access including the development of an easily searchable database of the inventories integrated into EMu.

### **1c. What need, problem, or challenge will your project address and how was it identified?**

This project is an outgrowth of The Field Museum's deep commitment to improve the standard of care of human remains and to share these standards with others. Over the past ten years, the Museum has made significant progress in consulting about and curating the Native American human remains in its collections, but there is much more to do. Challenges have been identified over a decade of consulting with descendant communities, attending conferences, talking with colleagues who care and work with remains, and researching diverse perspectives of human remains stewardship and study.

Most of these challenges are due to a number of shortcomings from the Museum's past approaches to the curation of remains. In trying to accommodate the needs of descendant communities and researchers, it became abundantly clear that associated documentation is incomplete, inaccurate, non-existent, or not easily accessible. Moreover, it became evident that The Field Museum was not alone in facing these challenges. Unfortunately, museums as a whole have not taken as active a role as they should in facilitating communication and collaboration between and among stakeholders on the stewardship of human remains (Cassman, Odegaard, and Powell, 2007). Beyond specific collaborative projects, information on stewardship of remains has not been widely disseminated. In recent conversations with many stakeholders it has become obvious that native communities have diverse perspectives on the respectful care of human remains, research, and repatriation. Further, concomitant with the remarkable scientific advances related to genetic studies, collaboration between scientists and first nations and tribes is increasing (i.e. Bolnick et al., 2012; Ciu et al., 2013; Kemp et al, 2007; Malhi et al., 2007).

Simultaneously, it became clear to staff at The Field Museum that all stakeholders from descendant communities, museums, and the scientific community have shared needs that crosscut cultural and disciplinary perspectives. Whether for repatriation, study, or long-term curation, identifying the minimum standards of care must be addressed to improve accessibility to remains and their information. As we improve the stewardship of thousands of human remains at the Museum, we must also collaborate with other individuals, communities, and institutions to address the widespread challenge of sustainable care in the long-term. This pilot project will be a major step in working towards responsible and respectful care of all human remains that addresses the needs of the scientific community and descendant communities.

### **1d. Who or what will benefit from your project?**

This project will benefit a wide spectrum of individuals, communities, and institutions. Collaborative and forward thinking collections management of the NNA remains benefits the museum field by providing greater understanding of these important, but often neglected collections. Susceptible to damage caused by light, temperature, humidity, and unnecessary handling, human biological collections will benefit from improved standards of care. Further, given the large quantity of human remains held in North American

museums, it will only be through partnerships with other institutions, communities, and researchers that museums will be able to effectively address the inherent challenges and garner the necessary resources.

As a result of this project, descendant communities and researchers will have increased confidence that information they request about the NNA human remains will be more accurate and comprehensive. They, in turn, can provide critical advice about proper collections care to museums. The knowledge that ancestral human remains are curated with respect, in consideration of spiritual concerns, and in collaboration will help to build trust among descendant communities—historically, a group excluded access to information and decision-making (Tallbear, 2003; 2007; 2013; and Walker 2000). Collectively, researchers, communities, students and museums will greatly benefit from improved networks of open communication with one another in order to manage ongoing and future needs and issues.

Documentation and rehousing of the NNA human remains at The Field Museum will be completed as the pilot for this project. Stored in acid free boxes, the human remains will be less vulnerable to damage such as abrasion, and collections staff will have less need to handle remains directly. Further, Museum staff will be able to provide descendant communities and scientists (if appropriate) with details about the individual remains including age, sex, and pathologies. The new housing will mean that the remains are organized and stabilized in preparation for repatriation or long-term care. The improved physical access to remains and their digitized information will lead to a more efficient consultation process. Ultimately our goal is to research, explore, develop, and implement thoughtful, practical, and forward-thinking practices for the ethical care of human remains currently under museum stewardship. It will be through these efforts that we will be able to integrate theory and practice. The result will be the creation of sustainable and responsive guidelines for the care of human remains in North America.

**1e. How will your project address the goals of this program (as described above in section A)**

The museum field is faced with a critical challenge with regard to the ongoing stewardship of NNA human remains. Despite widespread recognition of the “archaeological curation crisis” in the United States (i.e. Bawaya, 2007; GAO, 1987), little has been done to thoughtfully address the care of these important collections. Moreover, the increased efforts to repatriate affiliated, or deaccession unaffiliated, remains has not fundamentally changed the curation landscape. Human remains, even those affiliated to contemporary groups, remain in museums and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The reasons for this are multiple and complicated, but, in most cases, inextricably tied to how the remains were removed, curated, and the cultural challenges this disruption has caused (see for example Kuwanwisiwma, 2014). Further, human remains can have great scientific value. Considered research has and will result in increased knowledge about human beings and the environments in which we have lived and has the potential for tangible medical benefits (Matisoo-Smith and Horsburgh, 2012; Walker, 2000). In order to effectively and responsibly address this challenge, museums must partner with descendant communities and other stakeholders.

This project is an important opportunity to greatly improve the stewardship of indigenous human remains throughout North America. Museums have a chance to re-frame their understanding of the curation of human remains that can be consultative, respectful, knowledge-oriented, responsible, and pragmatically achievable. The pilot project together with the symposium will create an opportunity for research, open communication, and discussion about the complexity inherent in ethical care for these collections. The two-day invited symposium will bring together stakeholders to discuss germane issues, diverse perspectives, and possible solutions to problems. Findings and products will be available for access, use, and further development via an online portal. These will include all products of the symposium, such as sample inventory sheets, presentations by invited speakers, publications, examples of research and data collection tools, designs for boxes, and other re-housing essentials.

## 2. IMPACT

**2a. Referring to the Performance Goal(s) selected on the Program Information Sheet choose one or more Performance Measure Statement(s) appropriate for your project and describe how you will collect and report the corresponding data.**

All components described in section 1 will be measurable. With regard to tangible improvements to the curation of the NNA remains, a whole series of measures that include before and after photography, improvements in collections records entered into or augmented in EMu, reorganization of collections based on expanded data other than strictly catalog number, and improvements in access will all be measured and described throughout the project as milestones are achieved.

The symposium provides a tremendous opportunity to bring diverse stakeholders and communities together to discuss shared concerns and next steps. Throughout the symposium, and prior to and after the symposium, the Museum will work with an evaluator to develop a solid understanding of the desires of the community for the symposium, documentation of the symposium experience, and summative interviews and correspondence with stakeholders on the most effective and desired outcomes and resources.

This project will collect and report on performance measures by implementing a three-phase evaluation plan. Logistically, **Phase 1** will take several months and will occur as the inventory pilot begins at The Field Museum. A representative sample of up to 15 stakeholders will be selected for formative interviews. Each interview will last up to 1 hour. Interviews will not be recorded or transcribed in order to encourage interviewees to speak freely about a sensitive subject. Notes will be taken and will help establish a foundation for the symposium. Phase 1 will require eight full days of the evaluator's time for instrument development, interviews, and synthesis of data. The hours will be allotted over a period of 6 months. A write-up of findings from interviews will be circulated internally to the Museum's team in order to prepare for the symposium.

**Phase 2** will be developed by the evaluator. An anonymous self-administered questionnaire about the usefulness of the symposium, pending concerns about collections, and next steps will circulate to all participants. Taken in conjunction with data gathered during the symposium, this will help establish the practicality of proposed guidelines discussed at the symposium. Another eight to ten full-days of the evaluator's time will be required to prepare the questionnaire, attend the symposium, analyze data and report findings.

**Phase 3** will occur several months after the symposium. Similar to Phase 1, it will consist of semi-structured interviews. This phase will follow up on the usefulness of the symposium and its broader impact. Finally, at least ten full days will be required for the evaluator to follow-up with original interviewees and draft a final report of the project's progress, covering all phases and including next steps.

**2b. Referring to your Statement of Need, describe your project's intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified. These may be in addition to, but not instead of, the Performance Goal(s) and Performance Measure Statement(s) referenced above.**

Although specific examples of collaborative research and improved curation exist, these are the exception. This project will trigger substantive and broad based efforts regarding the care and study of human remains. We are confident in this statement because as a result of planning this proposal new relationships are already developing. For example, two project partners have identified qualified Native American students in the biological sciences and recommended them for internships at The Field Museum; Native American communities have expressed interest in working with researchers who have developed non-invasive methods of DNA analysis; in another case, a tribal representative expressed interest in working with The Field Museum on future grant proposals. Despite often widely differing

perspectives, project partners recognize the challenges and understand that we can only move forward by combining our efforts. In certain cases this work will expedite repatriation and reburial, in other cases, long-term co-curation agreements will be developed, and in some, collaborative research projects will be undertaken. The benefits will include a foundation for future efforts and contributions to the next generation of community stakeholders, museum professionals, and researchers.

Ultimately, this project will provide descendant communities and researchers with expanded resources, including increased collaborations amongst individuals, communities, and institutions and better standards of care, documentation, and study of these collections. If done well, an expected outcome is an improved understanding of the concerns of diverse stakeholders as well as an effort to break down barriers that prevent effective contact and communication.

**2c. How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the intended audience change as a result of your project?**

By openly acknowledging that human remains curation is a long-term issue for collections-holding institutions, this project will be a catalyst for a more informed assessment of the needs, opportunities, and responsibilities of museums, descendant communities, and researchers. By opening up a broader discussion about the practical challenges in caring for collections of human remains, we expect to influence current and future stakeholders as they approach this complicated issue. Critically, a move away from ideological discussions and toward more practical considerations of shared needs renders the care of human remains less of an issue of avoidance and more of a regular, if complicated and sensitive, component of museum management, academic interest, and real-world concern for descendant communities.

**2d. What project results will be of value to the field?**

Following on previous contributions (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994; Cassman, Odegaard, and Powell 2007), the project outcomes will contribute towards a re-conceptualized perspective about the stewardship of human remains. Museums must move away from the outmoded, binary thinking of research interests competing with the repatriation of human remains into more integrative, nuanced perspectives. Cross-culturally and almost without exception, people consider the physical remains of other humans to be imbued with special significance (Walker 2000). Cultural responses to the dead and attendant protocols, however, are varied, and museums must take into account that the curation of human remains is an inherently complex issue with no simple solutions. Also of value, will be the increased recognition that cultural importance and scientific value of human remains are not mutually exclusive perspectives. Nevertheless, one viewpoint is not privileged, and all stakeholders should work together to establish collaborations. What will be of benefit are guidelines and models and the opening of networks of communication between stakeholders that can inform the challenges specific to each museum and socially related community.

**2e. How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project?**

Benefits of the *Collaborative Curation* pilot project and symposium will be sustained through the widespread accessibility of its products. The web portal will provide materials and resources for teaching and learning, will archive the results and presentations of the symposium, and will continue as an information-sharing hub that can be accessed by interested communities. For example, new tools available to the community might include a practical data sheet for human remains inventories. In addition, the portal can capture the changing experiences and expectations of descendant communities and researchers. For instance, it can address questions such as what does a good consultative experience look like between a tribal group and either a museum or research project? More broadly, the achievements of the project are directly applicable to human remains from parts of the world other than North America.

This inventory pilot will benefit the NNA human remains at The Field Museum. It will result in the respectful care of the remains in preparation for consultation, repatriation, research, and/or long-term curation. The Museum has the responsibility to improve the standard of care for the remains and in so doing support the efforts of other institutions. Further, our intent is to build on the success of this pilot in order to address the care of human remains from other parts of the world. One of the most important ways that we will be able to sustain the benefits is by continuing to improve the standard of care of all human remains at the Museum and to improve and increase consultation efforts with descendant communities. It is hoped that institutions, communities, and researchers will work together, and share resources to address these challenges.

### 3. PROJECT DESIGN

#### 3a. What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements, will you carry out?

The project activities will be carried out during three interconnected components. In the first, an invited two-day symposium will be organized to address the practical aspects of ethically caring for human remains for both the short and long term. Invited participants will include prominent stakeholders who will speak to the shared needs of descendant communities, museums, and scientists in order to produce collaborative and innovative recommendations. The approximately 30 attendees will include biological anthropologists, tribal and first nation cultural leaders, a bio-ethicist, museum staff, and cultural resource managers.

Each day of the conference will begin with a 50-minute presentation given by an invited speaker followed by four concurrent working sessions. The afternoon schedule will also consist of four concurrent working sessions, but of longer duration. During these break-out sessions, participants will discuss particular designated topics. Toward the end of the day participants will reconvene and each working group will present its findings, challenges, and recommendations. In this way it is expected that all involved can have shared access to the information and participate in a critical discussion of proposed solutions. It is important to have smaller working groups for framing and problem solving, but equally important that the information is communicated widely. In preparation for this proposal several possible working group topics emerged, five of which are briefly summarized here:

- (1) *Collaborative Curation of Sensitive Collections Over Time*. This group will look at options for creating realistic and sustainable practices for human remains curation.
- (2) *Challenges During Physical Inventories*. Participants will consider the recurring challenges of conducting inventories, such as how to individuate and determine MNI when human remains are commingled.
- (3) *The Implications and Impact of Digitization and 3D Modeling*. Participants in this group will examine the pros and cons of increased digital access to collections in light of privacy concerns.
- (4) *A Minimum Standard of Care*. In light of extant guidelines, this group will develop shared standards that reflect the needs of all stakeholders, intentionally including requests for guidance on aspects of care from descendant communities (e.g., segregation of males and females), ethical considerations during necessary handling or survey, guidelines for visiting researchers such that museums standards are maintained by others granted access to the collections.
- (5) *Designing or Retrofitting Storage for Human Remains*. Participants will discuss the challenges specific to the curation of human remains and will be encouraged to bring plans and images of various storage solutions.

The final topics for the working groups will be developed after further consultation with participants.

The second component of the project will be to refine and implement a forward-looking standard of ethical care for human remains that will be broadly applicable to other museums. We will hire a full-time biological anthropologist for three years to develop inventories, conduct non-invasive data collection, and individuate and rehouse commingled human remains. This would entail the improvement of storage of and physical access to NNA human remains as well as data access in the Museum's database, KE EMu. Past experience has demonstrated that, due to earlier excavation and curation practices, each catalog number often represents more than one individual and that those individuals are frequently commingled. During this process, the human remains, representing approximately 1,200 catalog numbers not previously assessed and rehoused, will be clearly separated out by individual and re-associated when possible, and the skeletal elements will be placed in specifically designed boxes and/or wrapped in muslin. All inventories and images from the project will be uploaded into the EMu database. These data will be available to descendant communities and, if appropriate, to scientific researchers.

Further, in order to test the viability of a new protocol that addresses the needs of the scientific community and descendant communities, the biological anthropologist will research and evaluate collections care protocols and standards from other institutions. The resultant protocol will also reflect the actual challenges experienced during the inventory at The Field Museum. In concert with other Museum staff, he or she will incorporate this information with the symposium findings in the development of improved standards of curation that are both achievable and sustainable. The biological anthropologist and project directors will then critically evaluate the outcomes of this pilot and the findings will be shared with participants by making them available on the web portal. The project directors will monitor participants' and other constituents' responses and determine whether the recommendations have been incorporated into other institutional protocols to evaluate the pilot project's long-term success. This pilot project will be a major step in working towards responsible, respectful care of all human remains.

Encompassing evaluation and performance measures, the third component is also integral to the development and dissemination of the previous two project activities. Patience Baach, Exhibitions Evaluator at The Field Museum, has developed a three-phase plan to track the progress of the project. Ms. Baach will conduct and coordinate Phase 1 with the support of Helen Robbins, Jamie Kelly, and the biological anthropologist hired. They will develop a semi-structured interview protocol. The protocol will have two main functions and an ancillary benefit. First, an expertise-oriented evaluation will help assess the landscape of current practices. This will allow for a better understanding of what data points and information are being collected elsewhere and establish what can be combined or modified to streamline accurate, consistent, and reliable data across institutions. Second, it will give stakeholders participating in the symposium an opportunity to discuss the needs and potential value of the project. Interviews prior to the conference will ensure that key areas of concern will be addressed at the formal meeting. Finally, interviews will begin to establish and develop relationships between institutions. Interviews, particularly semi-structured interviews, allow respondents to feel heard and recognized. This is a sensitive subject matter for many involved and establishing trust and partnership is vital to making sure the eventual guidelines are efficient, effective, and practical.

### **3b. Project Management**

This project will be managed by **Helen Robbins, PhD**, Repatriation Director, and **Jamie Kelly, MS**, Head of Anthropology Collections. Dr. Robbins oversees all of the repatriation activities at The Field Museum and actively facilitates communications and collaborations between the Museum and indigenous communities. Dr. Robbins will dedicate approximately 30% of her time over the course of three years to working on this project. Mr. Kelly will contribute approximately 10% of his time over three years to working on this project. He is responsible for the care of the North American human remains and anthropological collections at the Museum and will oversee the activities of the biological anthropologist and laboratory manager. **Anne Grauer, PhD**, is familiar with addressing the challenges of museum

collections, such as conducting inventories of commingled human remains and individuating human remains. She will continue to work with the NNA human remains and will contribute to the symposium and the development of new standards of care. **Brittany Wheeler, MA**, Repatriation Specialist, will oversee the rehousing efforts, coordinate intern and volunteer participation, and be responsible for data cleaning. **Ruth Norton, FIIC FAIC, MS**, Chief Conservator, is responsible for the long-term stability of all anthropological collections. She will advise the project team on best practices in preventative conservation and provide feedback on the housing of the human remains. **Patience Baach, MA**, will be the Evaluator for this project and will oversee the evaluation of project effectiveness through a combination of survey research and semi-structured interview methods. She will work with the project directors and biological anthropologist to ensure that the project goals are met.

### 3c. Project Timeline

Activities for the project will occur in the following timeframe:

#### **First three months (October – December 2016)**

- The Field Museum will advertise position for a biological anthropologist and conduct interviews
- Evaluator and project leaders will begin development of open ended interviews
- Begin planning for invited symposium
- Organize work-flow of inventory and order supplies.

#### **Next five months (January 2017 – May 2017)**

- Museum hires biological anthropologist
- Biological anthropologist begins working with the NNA human remains in conjunction with lab manager and Anne Grauer
- Advertise for and hire first set of interns
- Field Museum staff with interns, students, and volunteers will re-house individuated human remains. This continues all three years
- Biological anthropologist will conduct research and begin formulating plan that includes an improved method of data entry into KE EMu
- Evaluator, project director, and biological anthropologist will contact participants and conduct interviews
- Symposium planning continues

#### **Next seven months (June 2017 – December 2017)**

- Biological anthropologist, Anne Grauer, and Museum staff with interns, students, and volunteers will continue inventory work
- Symposium planning completed
- Evaluator will develop questionnaire
- Symposium held at The Field Museum
- Web portal development begins

#### **Next twelve months (January 2018 – December 2018)**

- Biological anthropologist, Anne Grauer, and Museum staff with interns, students, and volunteers will continue inventory informed by recommendations and findings of symposium
- Web portal development continues with all conference products uploaded
- Advertise for and hire second set of interns
- Rehousing and data entry will continue
- Evaluator will complete Phase 3 of evaluation

#### **Last nine months (January 2019 – September 2019)**

- Advertise for and hire third set of interns
- Complete inventory and re-housing of NNA human remains
- Analyze measures of success

- Biological anthropologist will produce a report summarizing the Museum's pilot project. The report will include a critical assessment of areas of success and need with recommendations for future projects.
- Web portal completed
- Evaluation final report and synthesis

### **3d. What financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?**

Needs for project activities assort into three components (please see budget justification). One component is additional staff to accelerate, augment, and improve the curation of NNA human remains at The Field Museum. For this task one full-time biological anthropology salary is requested for three years. Undergraduate and graduate internships will also assist in improving collections care for the human remains. Internships also provide a bridge between collections care and training the next generation of researchers and collections managers in respectful care. Additional costs include custom acid-free boxes and muslin for collections improvements. One additional license for the Museum's database platform, EMu, along with a laptop is requested for the use of the biological anthropologist.

Another component is the costs associated with the development of a fully realized symposium that is useful and supportive of a diverse group of stakeholders. Travel costs are included that will allow stakeholders to travel to the Museum. The assumption is that all attendees but for local participants will require travel assistance and room and board. Costs include basic travel and subsistence support. A third, but connected, component is dissemination. The web portal is included in this component, as is the evaluation for the project. Associated costs include a small contract with a web development firm and several days of salary support for the evaluator.

### **3e. How will you track your progress toward achieving intended results?**

Project leaders will meet biweekly to plan the project and assess progress. The schedule of completion illustrates several named points during the project that will be used as goals and markers of progress towards completion. Regular consultation with outside stakeholders (please see letters of support in supportingdoc1.pdf) will be used to track progress, build anticipation, and also refine deliverables. The evaluator's research and reporting throughout the project will provide valuable feedback. In addition, it will be relatively easy to determine if the increased consultation with researchers and descendant communities results in an increase in research use or community contact since the Museum tracks all consultation and research on collections already.

### **3f. Project Dissemination**

Project results will be disseminated through an online resource designed as a website that will contain a range of information concerning ethical needs and considerations inherent to the study and curation of human remains. Participants in the symposium will be asked to submit white papers, text, or PowerPoint versions of their presentations, results of their research, and opinion pieces that contribute to our understanding of relevant ethical issues. Research conducted by the biological anthropologist, staff, and interns as well as any and all forms, documents, protocols, assessments, or reflection pieces developed through the hands-on implementation of best practices at the Museum will be placed on the website and made available to the public as a resource. We anticipate that many of the participants in the symposium and pilot project such as the interns hired over the course of the project will present posters or papers at national conferences such as the American Alliance of Museums, American Anthropological Association, American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, & Museums, and the Society for American Archaeology. For project partners it is expected that their participation in the symposium will have a positive impact on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes and will result in the creation of new collaborative networks.

