



Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

**Sample Application MH-00-16-0014-16
Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000**

Jazz Museum in Harlem

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$35,428
Amount of cost share:	\$35,428

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2017 applications differ from those that guided the preparation of previous applications. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Abstract

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, a Smithsonian Affiliate, seeks funding for a Digital Asset Management System and Interface Design project. This customized system will create an infrastructure for managing and curating our digital assets, which include audio, video, photographs, manuscripts and sheet music. Currently, the Museum cannot easily organize and retrieve content from its vast and expanding digital archive of collections and past programs. When a patron or researcher is interested in viewing or listening to assets from our digital collections, it is extremely labor intensive to access the content. Further, the Museum lacks the ability to make these collections available to our website visitors. By creating a digital asset management system, the Museum will join the ranks of museums that have transformed the way they deliver content. This system will allow in-person visitors to learn about and experience jazz and its rich history in Harlem by using new interactive touchscreens in our Visitors Center to interact with curated digital content that complements our exhibits. The system also will maximize the Museum's ability to provide a diverse and global audience with online access to our collections via mobile and web applications, including the Museum's website.

An IMLS grant for the one-year period from August 2016 through July 2017 will enable the Museum to work with the consultants at Zero Defect Design. These consultants have extensive experience creating digital asset infrastructure and interface design for other museums and cultural organizations. During the first half of the grant period, the consultants will identify an established, off-the-shelf software package and build a digital asset management system tailored to the Museum's needs. An initial batch of digital files will be tested on the system, first through internal beta testing with the Museum's Board and staff members, volunteers and peers in the museum field, and later with Visitors Center patrons. After making modifications to the touchscreens and integrating the website into the asset management system, the consultants will train the Museum's staff to use and maintain the asset management system. Staff will then upload a significant amount of digitized content and tag assets with imbedded keywords and metadata. The content will be searchable by keyword, and curated content will be made available on Visitors Center touchscreens and on our website. The Museum's Director of Education and Programming will train the Visitors Center staff and docents to provide visitors with touchscreen tutorials and assistance. During the second half of the grant period from February through July 2017, the Museum's staff will fully implement the asset management system into its website, exhibits and internal systems, and obtain ongoing evaluations from in-person and virtual visitors that will lead to enhancements.

The Museum's collections include countless rare items that position our institution as one of the world's most significant facilities documenting the rich history of jazz, its musicians and their global contributions. As a result of the project, each year thousands of in-person and virtual visitors of all ages and backgrounds will enhance their knowledge by exploring to the Museum's unique digital content. With an institutional archive that includes over 500 audio and video recordings of past events, concerts and programs – most significantly our *Harlem Speaks* oral history collection and our *Savory Collection*, which features 1935 to 1941 radio broadcasts by renowned jazz musicians – there are hundreds of hours of important content that will contribute greatly to the ever-expanding dialogue on jazz and Harlem's impact on African-American culture. Visitors will have unprecedented access to thought provoking content that illuminates the fascinating culture of Harlem and the truly American art form of jazz. The project also will enable the Museum's staff to improve the management and care of our priceless collections, and create easy access to digital assets that will be used to promote the Museum, build exhibition content, and share educational and outreach programming with the world.

To assess the impact of the digital assets, in-person visitors will be asked to complete electronic surveys using iPads at the Museum. These surveys will elicit comments about visitors' experiences using the touchscreens, and responses will be compiled through Google Forms. Museum staff and docents will track the number of visitors and time spent using touchscreens, and note the most popular content. To assess the impact on our virtual visitors, website users will be invited to complete online surveys to provide feedback about the digital collections. Museum staff will use Google Analytics each week to review comments and analyze trends in click rates, engaged screen time, website pages viewed, and numbers of visitors exploring our online collection. The Museum's staff will continue to modify the asset management system to provide the greatest user experience.

Project Narrative

1. Statement of Need

The National Jazz Museum of Harlem's collections, programs and performances stimulate creativity and excitement about jazz, our nation's original musical art form, from its inception to its expansion in Harlem to the present day. The proposed Digital Asset Management System and Interface Design project will create a much needed infrastructure for managing and curating our digital assets, which include audio, video, photographs, manuscripts and sheet music. These digital assets then will be made available through new interactive touchscreens in our Visitors Center and will enhance the virtual Museum experience by allowing us to deliver collections content via our website.

Currently, the Museum cannot easily organize and access content from its vast and expanding digital archive of collections and past programs. When a patron or researcher is interested in viewing or listening to assets from our digital collections, it is extremely labor intensive to pull together the content. Further, the Museum lacks the ability to make these collections available to our website visitors. By introducing a digital asset management system, the Museum will join the ranks of museums that have transformed the way they deliver content. This system will allow in-person visitors to learn about and experience jazz and its rich history in Harlem by using touchscreens to interact with curated digital content that complements our exhibits. The system also will maximize the Museum's ability to provide a diverse and global virtual audience with access to our collections.

IMLS funding will enable the Museum to work with Zero Defect Design consultants who have extensive experience creating digital asset infrastructure and interface design for other museums and cultural organizations. They will identify an established, off-the-shelf software package and customize it for the Museum's needs. The Museum will use resource materials from OpenExhibits.org, including findings from the "Creating Museum Media for Everyone" workshops. The National Association for Museum Exhibition's journals also will inform our planning and research as we work with Zero Defect Design to create the digital asset management system and interface design.

The Zero Defect Design consultants will upload and publish a portion of the Museum's digital content, including photos and audio recordings of past Museum events, along with assets from one of our special collections, such as our *Harlem Speaks* oral history collection or recordings from our noteworthy *Savory Collection*, which features 1935 to 1941 radio broadcasts by renowned jazz musicians. Thanks to a recent grant from the GRAMMY Foundation, the *Savory Collection* has been digitized and is ready to be included in the digital asset management system. Museum staff will be trained to upload and deliver content to various sources so the process can be brought in-house. Staff will then upload a significant amount of digitized content and tag assets with appropriate imbedded keywords and metadata. The content will be searchable by keyword, and curated content will be made available on new Visitors Center touchscreens and on our website. Collections for which the Museum developed the content or can claim intellectual property rights or permissions will be made available externally; other digitized Museum content will be used internally for exhibits and education programs.

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem's collections document the history of jazz, beginning in the early 20th century through today. The collections consist of personal papers, recordings, photographs, instruments, ephemera and our own event audio and visual archive. Elements of each collection have informed every branch of our public outreach, exhibits and scholarly endeavors. The collections have placed the Museum within the international realm of first-class archives due to their unique content. Our programs, exhibits and educational efforts all make use of these materials, and continue to garner acclaim. The Museum regularly provides access to our holdings to scholars, researchers and institutions, both locally and internationally. This has resulted in contributions to many publications, exhibits and films.

The Museum's collections include countless rare items that position our institution as one of the most significant facilities in the world documenting the rich history of jazz, its musicians and their global contributions. The collections feature more than 30,000 audio recordings, including many rare and unreleased

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recordings on acetate, open reel tape, cassette and 16 inch transcription discs; big band arrangements from the great big bands led by Benny Goodman, Benny Carter, Count Basie and other noted musicians; various music periodicals including *Ebony*, *JazzTimes*, *Mississippi Rag*, *Jazz Journal* and a nearly complete collection of *DownBeat* magazines dating back to the 1930s; the full or partial personal collections of musicians including Dr. Billy Taylor, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis and Benny Carter; 15 years of photos, audio and video of Museum events; and more than 200 compelling video oral histories of leading figures in jazz, including National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Clark Terry, Marian McPartland, Cedar Walton and Roy Haynes.

As part of this project, Museum staff will upload digital content from two of our upcoming special exhibitions: “Duke and the New American Music” and “The Spirit of the Jam Session.” “Duke and the New American Music,” scheduled to run from January 2016 to March 2017, will include rare Duke Ellington recordings, books, photos and other memorabilia from the Morris Hodara Collection. Portions of this collection will be digitized and made available on the Museum’s website to visitors worldwide, and special, curated content, including Ellington-related content from our permanent collection, will be included on the touchscreens. Morris Hodara fell in love with jazz as a teenager in Brooklyn and went on to amass one of the world’s greatest collections of Ellingtonia, which the Museum acquired in 2006. Hodara, now in his 90s, and his wife were friends of Ellington and his band members from the 1940s to 1960s. During these decades, Harlem was abuzz with talk about class, race, economics, art and the transcendence of jazz across social and cultural barriers. After Ellington’s death in 1974, Hodara went on to become President of the Duke Ellington Society and continued building his collection of more than 2,500 records including LPs, 78s, photos, books and other items.

In April 2017 the Museum will open “The Spirit of the Jam Session.” This exhibition will showcase artifacts from two distinguished jazz artists: pianist and educator Billy Taylor and tenor saxophonist Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis. Portions of these collections will be digitized and made available on the Museum’s website and interactive touchscreens. Taylor moved to New York in 1944 and got his first big break at a jam session at Minton’s Playhouse in Harlem on his very first night in the city. The birthplace of bebop, Minton’s was the setting for the most popular jam session in town, and Taylor caught the attention of one of his idols, saxophonist Ben Webster. A few days later, Taylor began his professional career with Webster’s quartet. Taylor’s widow, Theodora Castion Taylor, donated the collection in 2011. It includes recordings, correspondence, business files, awards and photos. This partial collection of Taylor’s work focuses on his early years in New York City and Harlem. Davis is also a key figure in Harlem’s jazz scene. He performed with Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Sonny Stitt and Johnny Griffin; led his own bands; and made many recordings as a leader. Two decades after Taylor made his Minton’s debut, Davis was the bandleader-in-residence and regularly hosted jam sessions. The depth and quality of this collection is rare, as it includes not only recordings, but also copious materials rarely saved and curated with such care. For instance, Davis’ mother created scrapbooks containing performance photos by date and other materials that add greatly to setting her son’s life in a broad cultural and social context. Davis himself kept this tradition going by saving matchbooks, club cards, clothes, photos, contracts and other items. This is precisely what a museum needs to paint a picture of an artist’s life and times. The collection, donated in 2014 by Davis’ widow, Sheila Dozier, includes his last saxophone, a truly iconic instrument.

Many items in the Museum’s collections have considerable preservation issues. Scrapbooks, correspondence, photos, concert programs and newspaper clippings are in various stages of deterioration. Proper conservation techniques continue to be taken, including creating digital scans of these sensitive materials. Multiple copies of digital files are stored on an on-site Network Attached Storage server, an off-site server, and DVDs in two off-site locations. These systems work together to maintain a high level of redundancy, dependability and security. Once the digital materials are loaded into the new asset management system, the Museum will have yet another level of security, and will be able to easily draw upon these resources for exhibit, education and online use.

The need to improve and enhance exhibitions is critical for the Museum at this period of our development. Our current and past exhibitions have been one-dimensional without interactive or digital elements. In order for the Museum to remain relevant and on par with other museums, technology must be integrated to attract visitors and significantly improve their experience. As the Museum prepares to relocate in December 2015 to its new,

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highly visible location in the heart of Harlem's arts and culture corridor, we are making plans to showcase more of our collections in a contemporary way and attract new, younger, and repeat visitors. The interactive touchscreens will be an important new feature for our Visitors Center.

The Museum serves visitors of all ages and ethnicities. Weekly evening programs at the Museum are attended by jazz enthusiasts and new, curious listeners, some of whom have become regulars. Jonathan Batiste, the Museum's dynamic Artistic Director-at-Large and bandleader for "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," leads programs that help the Museum reach patrons in their 20s and 30s. Our education programs for young people reach mostly African-American and Hispanic/Latino K-12 students from schools in Central and East Harlem. The Museum also reaches elderly African-American and Hispanic/Latino residents through its *Drop Me Off in Harlem* series, which brings live performances and lectures to local senior centers and offers special programming at the Museum. The Museum has welcomed visitors from across the United States and more than 30 different countries; many tourists make it a priority to visit the Museum when they come to New York City.

We consistently receive inquiries from scholars, writers and historians to access our collections. The top requests are for access to our *Savory Collection* recordings and our extensive collection of *Harlem Speaks* oral histories, which include more than 200 interviews. The Museum has collected oral histories not only from leading jazz figures, but also from non-musicians who have been heavily involved in the music. This includes stage managers, wives of jazz musicians, writers, dancers, and employees from many of Harlem's historic jazz venues. As a result, many of these interviews are the only one of their kind in existence. They include incredible content and stories that help to fill in gaps in our understanding of the cultural and musical history of jazz.

The Museum is a charter member of the Harlem Tourism Ready Committee, spearheaded by NYC & Company, which works to expand tourism in the community. The Museum is developing business-to-business tourism trade materials that include half- and full-day itineraries to help drive global tourism traffic to Harlem and our Museum. Partnering organizations include the Apollo Theater, Aloft Hotel, Maysles Documentary Center, Harlem Arts Alliance, Harlem Week, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Dance Theatre of Harlem and many restaurants and cafés.

Experts in the field with knowledge of the Museum's operations have advised us on the development of this project. Ed Berger, the Special Projects Consultant and former Associate Director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University, has stressed the importance of this type of project and explained how it will greatly improve the Museum's reach and contributions to the field. Additionally, Mr. Berger has noted, "I've attended countless programs since the inception of the Museum, and have always been impressed with the high quality, historical integrity, and originality of the presentations." Ricky Riccardi, archivist at the Louis Armstrong House Museum, a National Historic Landmark in New York City, has shared with the Museum how his upgraded asset management system has greatly increased the Armstrong Museum's capacity.

With the asset management system in place, Museum staff will no longer need to spend hours navigating hard drives and DVDs for photos, video files and other assets. We will be able to make available event audio and video for online use, greatly improving our ability to serve an international audience. This project will address the goals of this IMLS program by reducing staff time, caring for and better managing our collections through a digital system, using best practices in data management and security, following a sequential work plan, and better accomplishing our mission by enhancing the visitor experience for our in-person and virtual audiences.

2. Impact

This project will address all three of the grant program's Content and Collections performance goals: Broaden access and expand use of the nation's content and collections; improve management of the nation's content and collections; and improve preservation, conservation and care of the nation's content and collections. Access to the Museum's collection will be broadened substantially, as it will be made easily available to the public through interactive touchscreens at the Museum and through our website. The asset management system will

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allow the Museum to easily present online exhibits that can exist on their own or complement and enhance our permanent and temporary exhibits. In all cases, the information will be accessible free of charge.

Management of our collection will be vastly improved, as digital versions of items in our collection will be catalogued with embedded metadata, which will allow staff and visitors to search by keyword and quickly locate the materials they seek. With no current centralized database for Museum items, the digital asset management system will greatly improve our entire collection management system. This will allow the Museum to better archive and catalog its current and future collections, as the system will be designed specifically for our unique collections, needs and applications. The grant also will help the Museum improve preservation, conservation and care of our collection, as collections staff will be able to create digital scans and copies of items in our collections. Many of these items are currently stored at our off-site, climate controlled archive. Having digital copies of items our collections will provide yet another level of preservation and security in the event that the original artifacts deteriorate or are damaged by any unforeseen disaster.

As a result of the project, thousands of in-person and virtual visitors each year will have access to the Museum's unique digital content. With an institutional archive of more than 500 audio and video recordings of past events, concerts and programs, most significantly our *Harlem Speaks* oral history collection, there are hundreds of hours of important content that will contribute greatly to the ever-expanding dialogue on jazz and Harlem's vital contributions to African-American culture. Additionally, the project will enable the Museum's staff to create easy access to assets that will be used to promote the Museum, build new exhibition content, and share educational and outreach programming with the world.

The tangible product that will result from the project is a digital asset management system customized for our Museum's specific needs. This will include a customized digital interface for use in the Museum's touchscreen and mobile and web applications, including the Museum's website at www.jmih.org. The information that will then be available to visitors from all walks of life will be useful and thought provoking, as they explore the fascinating culture of Harlem and the lives of the many jazz greats who called Harlem their home. The project will enable the Museum to truly serve as a national – and even international – museum, as we will be able to make our extraordinary collections available through our website. The Museum's marketing and membership strategies will reflect these new capabilities.

The benefits of this project will be sustained, as Museum staff will be trained by the consultants to maintain and use this system. Beyond the initial cost of building, testing and implementing the system, the ongoing maintenance costs will be modest. Software, hardware and storage systems with superior functionality will be purchased from reputable companies that provide support, updates, and ongoing security for their products to ensure as long a life as possible. This system will be an integral part of the Museum's collections management strategy, and our staff will focus on its upkeep to ensure it maintains the highest level of functionality and usability for all parties.

3. Project Design

Ryan Maloney, the Museum's Director of Education and Programming, will plan, implement and evaluate the project, and represent the Museum at IMLS meetings. Managing Director Jasna Radonjic will oversee the project and be actively involved in its execution. Both Maloney and Radonjic will monitor the timeline to ensure that the consultants complete their work within the time frame and according to the budget. From August 2016 through January 2017, Maloney and Radonjic will work with the Zero Defect Design consultants to design and build the digital asset management system, and purchase the hardware and interactive touchscreen monitors. Maloney will support the consultants by ensuring that the initial batch of digital files that will be tested on the digital asset management system is complete and ready to be uploaded. Internal beta testing will take place with a diverse test group made up of Museum Board and staff members, volunteers and peers in the museum field, and modifications will be made. Once the touchscreen user interface and user experience has been designed and configured, the touchscreens will be beta tested with patrons at our Visitors Center. The consultants also will configure the website integration of the asset management system. As the last part of their work, the consultants will train the Museum's staff to use and maintain the digital asset management system.

Maloney will be responsible for training the Museum's Visitors Center staff and docents to provide visitors with touchscreen tutorials and assistance. During the second half of the grant period from February through July 2017, the Museum's staff will fully implement the asset management system into its website, exhibits and internal systems, and obtain ongoing evaluations from in-person and virtual visitors that will lead to enhancements. Docents and Museum staff will track the number of visitors and time spent using the touchscreens, and note the most popular content. The Museum's staff will continue to modify this highly customizable system to ensure an impactful, manageable and sustainable tool that will provide the greatest experience for both internal and external users.

Ryan Maloney is a saxophonist, archivist, historian and music educator. He develops and oversees the Museum's collections, exhibits, education programs, and public programs for visitors of all ages. Prior to joining the Museum, he worked for eight years as Director of Education & Programming at Jazz House Kids. A professional educator, Maloney has taught music at all grade levels, from pre-K to college in the United States and Ireland. He has worked as a research consultant on several books, articles and documentary films on jazz artists including Herbie Nichols, Benny Goodman, Dexter Gordon and Elmo Hope, and contributed to a documentary film on musician and producer Teo Macero. A noted resource himself, Maloney has served as Reference Librarian and Assistant Archivist at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University-Newark. Maloney received his master's degree in jazz history and research from Rutgers University-Newark and his undergraduate degree in music education and saxophone performance from the University of Minnesota-Morris.

Jasna Radonjic is an arts administrator with more than 15 years of experience with nonprofit arts organizations and programs. She was Administrator of the Jazz Studies Program at the Juilliard School and Program Manager for American Music Abroad, a cultural diplomacy program at Jazz at Lincoln Center, sponsored by the U.S. State Department. Radonjic was an advocate for American classical music as Executive Director of the American Composers Alliance, where she revitalized and restructured the organization, created and produced a Festival of American Music to critical acclaim, and digitized the collection of more than 10,000 manuscripts of American composers. Based on her dedication to preserving and promoting American music, she was awarded permanent residence in the U.S. in the category of "individuals of extraordinary ability who have had significant impact in an area of national interest." Radonjic holds a master's degree in musicology from New York University, and a master's degree in music and theater studies from Copenhagen University, Denmark.

The Museum places a strong emphasis on evaluation, and all visitors are encouraged to complete surveys. To assess the impact of the digital assets, in-person visitors will be asked to complete electronic surveys using iPads at the Museum. These surveys will be updated to elicit comments about visitors' experiences using the touchscreens. Their responses will be compiled through Google Forms. We will be especially interested to learn whether touchscreen users were able to find what they were looking for using the search features. The survey also will ask respondents to indicate which portions of their visit were most impactful, what they learned that they did not know previously, and what they would like to see more of at the Museum. Responses will help the Museum determine content for future programs and exhibits as well as the complementary touchscreen content. For our visiting school groups, teachers and parents will be asked to indicate the Museum's impact on the students and provide suggestions for improvement. Data will be reviewed weekly and will help the Museum refine the user experience and enhance the touchscreen user interface, content and search features.

To assess the impact of the digital assets on our virtual users, website visitors will be invited to complete brief online surveys to provide feedback about our website, particularly the digital collections and user experience. Each week, Museum staff will use Google Analytics to review specific comments and analyze trends in click rates, engaged screen time, website pages viewed, and numbers of visitors exploring our online digital collection. This data will be used to influence future content to be delivered via this system. Results, discoveries and lessons learned will be shared with our Board members, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and other interested parties including our partner venues and colleagues at museums doing similar work.

