



## **Museum Grants for African American History and Culture**

Sample Application MH-00-17-0027-17  
Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000

### **North Carolina African American Heritage Commission Raleigh, NC**

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$148,570
Amount of cost share:	\$215,046

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

## ABSTRACT

The NC African American Heritage Commission (AAHC) proposes to partner with the NC Division of Historical Resources (DHR) to complete the mapping of sites listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. The *Green Book* was an annual guidebook for African-American travelers, published from 1936 – 1966, to help them avoid business owners who refused to serve them.

Today, many of these safe spaces have been lost to urban renewal and sites still standing are rarely recognized for the important role they played. Mapping these sites will preserve historically significant information and honor the resilience of previous generations of African Americans. **There is a need for greater understanding and appreciation of these historical sites so a more complete picture of the past emerges and the important remains of that past can be better preserved.**

Over the course of 18-months, **this project will educate communities across NC about the history and importance of these often-overlooked historical sites while encouraging the preservation of the few remaining structures left.** The project will include **1) an online database of 327 North Carolina Green Book Sites, 2) community discussions and 3) travelling exhibits.** The AAHC will identify the status of all sites, write brief entries on each location, and present them to the public via a web portal. In addition, two identical traveling exhibitions will be developed, made up of the same six panels (one panel for each region of the state, and an intro panel), one table top case for artifacts, and a computer to display the *Green Book* database. The exhibit will tour museums and historic sites, archive sites and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and will include at least one stop in each region, as well as being displayed at the African American Cultural Celebration at the NC Museum of History. Finally, a series of community engagement meetings will be held to preview the exhibit and generate publicity of the exhibit and portal.

This project is designed to benefit the public. Once mapping is complete and data is uploaded, historical information becomes accessible to a broader audience, especially those in underserved, low-wealth counties who may not have the means to travel to a museum. Both the portal and the exhibit will include a number of accessibility features. The portal will also link to Google Translate so that non-English speakers can access the information as well.

By the end of this project, the applicants will have made more North Carolinians aware of the struggles African Americans faced during its era of segregation, document the strategies oppressed people used to navigate this systemic segregation, and celebrate this community's resiliency and through this heightened awareness, help prevent the further loss of the state's "oasis spaces."

Success will be measured by completing the mapping of all 327 sites in 18 months (basic information like location and name of business) and when available, photos, news articles and other documentation will be uploaded. A minimum of 65 of these locations will feature in-depth essays. By Spring 2019, a projected 10% increase from baseline "hits" to NCR's website over course of 12 months (April 2020) is expected and will document the site's popularity.

Success will also be measured through the creation of two identical exhibits to tour state and be displayed at different venues. The number of sites that host the exhibit and the number of visitors who see the exhibit will be used to document the success.

## 1. Project Justification

**Need.** While most are familiar with Jim Crow laws, legislation that enforced racial segregation in the U.S. through 1965, few are aware of the strategies African Americans used to navigate systemic segregation. *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (the *Green Book*) was an annual guidebook for African-American travelers, published from 1936 – 1966, to help them avoid business owners who refused to serve them. The guidebook compiled listings of “oasis spaces,” welcoming hotels, restaurants, auto repair shops, gas stations and other businesses from throughout most of the U.S. and even parts of Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. Today, many of these safe spaces have been lost to urban renewal and sites still standing are rarely recognized for the important role they played. **This project seeks to educate communities across NC about the history and importance of these often-overlooked historical sites while encouraging the preservation of the few remaining structures left.** Through the *creation of 1) an online database, 2) community discussions and 3) travelling exhibits*, this project will preserve and honor the resilience of previous generations of African Americans. **There is a need for greater understanding and appreciation of these historical sites so a more complete picture of the past emerges and the important remains of that past can be better preserved.**

**Proposal.** Approximately 327 NC establishments were listed in the *Green Book*. Ongoing research that began at NC State University and continued at the NC State Historic Preservation Office has revealed at least 65 of these sites are still standing and the status of 45 of the sites has yet to be determined (*see SupportingDoc1.pdf for initial mapping data*). The NC African American Heritage Commission (AAHC) proposes to partner with the NC Division of Historical Resources (DHR) to complete the mapping of NC “*Green Book*” sites by identifying the status of all sites, writing brief entries on each location, and presenting them to the public via a web portal. A portion of site entries will include essays, photos, news articles and other records. Curriculum correlated information contextualizing sites for use in schools will be included. Three regional, public meetings with local partners and African American community leaders will allow staff to seek local knowledge about *Green Book* sites from residents. Care will be taken to attract to these meetings individuals who have personal associations with structures under study. Two identical traveling exhibitions will be developed, made up of the same six panels (one panel for each region of the state, and an intro panel), one table top case for artifacts, and a computer to display the *Green Book* database. The exhibit will tour museums and historic sites, archive sites and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and will include at least one stop in each region, as well as being displayed at the African American Cultural Celebration at the NC Museum of History. Five community engagement meetings will be held to preview the exhibit and generate publicity. These community meetings will leverage exhibit openings to attain more local knowledge on *Green Book* sites from attendees for the online database. The exhibit will travel the state after the project’s end as a part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources’ (NCR) travelling exhibit program. Site hosts will receive support and professional development via readings and online presentations, offered three times during the exhibition’s run.

**Beneficiaries.** This project is designed to benefit the public. Once mapping is complete and data is uploaded, historical information becomes accessible to a broader audience, especially those in underserved, low-wealth counties who may not have the means to travel to a museum. The portal will include accessibility features, such as large font, text-to-speech narration, use of images and associated alt tags for use with screen readers, closed-captioned videos (when available), easy navigation, and specialized font for individuals with reading disabilities. Individuals with special needs will also benefit from the digitized mapping of the *Green Book*. The web portal supports K-12 teachers (including the homeschool network) who are teaching about the Reconstruction Period, Jim Crow laws and the Civil Rights movement. NCR will provide contextualizing information and a series of activities aligned to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade NC Standard Course of Study (the years when students study state history). Through the use of Google Translate links, the portal will be made available in the top ten most spoken foreign languages throughout NC (Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Vietnamese,

Arabic, Korean, Tagalog, Hindi and Russian). Non-English speaking users can simply press a button and access educational material the same way their English-speaking counterparts can.

The traveling exhibit on the *Green Book* is designed to benefit the public. Like the website, text panels will incorporate various accessibility features, such as large font and related images, proper lighting and pre-recorded interactives. The exhibit will tour State historic sites with a focus on African American history (including Charlotte Hawkins Brown State Historic Site, Historic Stagville and Somerset Place), as well as private cultural sites with a focus on African American history and HBCUs (such as NC Central University, Bennett College, John C. Smith University and others). The exhibit will be displayed at the NC Museum of History's African American Cultural Celebration, the second largest annual event held by that institution. Following the initial run, the exhibit will join NCR's travelling exhibit program and be made available to partner institutions for free upon request such as community colleges, historical societies, and public libraries.

**Institutional Capacity.** The AAHC was created in 2008 to assist NCR in the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of African American history, arts, and culture. It consists of ten commissioners appointed by the Governor and has one paid staff member, assisted by other members of NCR as required. The Division of Historical Resources (DHR) consists of the State Historic Preservation Office (the office that began initial mapping), Office of State Archaeology, and Office of Historical Research. Both agencies are subunits of NCR, the Cabinet-level state agency that oversees 39 parks, 27 historic sites (including the Charlotte Hawkins Brown State Historic Site, Historic Stagville and Somerset Place), 7 history museums, 3 aquariums, 2 art museums, 2 science museums, the State Library, Archives, Symphony, Zoo, and other divisions dedicated to non-formal education and cultural/natural heritage tourism. AAHC works across NCR to achieve its mission of preserving, protecting, and promoting NC's African American history, art and culture for all people. The AAHC helps its parent organization identify African American Heritage practitioners, such as curators, docents, and museum directors, as priority service populations. DHR's mission is to collect, preserve and promote state historic resources. NCR's mission is to improve quality of life by creating opportunities that promote economic development, stimulate learning, preserve the state's history and spark creativity to experience excellence in the arts, history and libraries in NC. This project advances AAHC's, DHR, and NCR's respective missions and enhances each institution's capacity to fulfill its mission by charting *Green Book* sites and aggregating data into an online, educational resource. The exhibit supports the website by interpreting history via informative text panels, historical photographs and other imagery, and tangible artifacts. The project promotes NC's African American history while stimulating learning and expanding resources for learners of all ages and backgrounds.

**Alignment with Goals of the African American History and Culture program.** AAHC will work with sister divisions, external museums and HBCUs. This project improves operations at these sites by providing new content (the portal and traveling exhibit). Staff at partner sites will receive training on the history of this project, learning how to answer sensitive questions and inspire learners to dig deeper, fulfilling the goal of professional management and strengthening partner sites' roles as strong anchors in the African American community, promoting cultural awareness, improving race relations and stimulating economic vitality.

## 2. Project Work Plan

**Specific activities, evaluation and performance measurements.** The AAHC, together with DHR, will develop an Advisory Board comprised of leaders in the field of diversity and inclusion from NC Central University, Tryon Palace African American Heritage Advisory Committee, the NC Museum of History's African American Heritage Advisory Committee, Johnson C. Smith University, YMI Heritage Center and Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum. These advisors will meet three times to help build local networks in communities where *Green Book* sites are (or were) located to gather local knowledge (accounts, photographs or artifacts) and raise awareness of the project. These meetings will be opened to the public and staff will conduct interviews with attendees who want to share stories. Staff will also bring scanners to digitize historical photos.

The Advisory Board will provide input during the design of the website and the exhibit. Three layers of support and oversight (AAHC, Project Board of Advisors, and local residents) will provide the project with on-going, iterative evaluation from multiple perspectives, especially from local leaders, as well as some of the state's most accomplished scholars of the African American experience. Feedback will also be solicited from K-12 teachers.

The Advisory Board will also help write a job description for and hire a Project Historian who will be charged with gathering information on the approximately 327 places throughout NC identified in the *Green Book*. The Historian will build on existing research to gather data on approximately 45 places for which the status has not been determined and to gather additional information on the 65+ places that have been determined to be extant. The Historian will write entries—including name of business, location and photographs when available—on all 327 NC sites and upload them onto the web portal. Over the course of 18 months, the Project Historian will prepare profiles and collect images for these places. Priority will be given to writing more detailed, research-based essays on the 65 extant structures. These essays will run from 200 to 1,000 words with the longer entries dedicated to multiple properties or community profiles that cover important resources that have been lost. A footnoted intro essay of up to 2,500 words, drawn upon the burgeoning literature on the subject, will introduce the general topic. After a survey of secondary sources—published and online—the Project Historian will use files in the State Historic Preservation Office, published architectural histories, county histories, business/phone directories, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps, online resources ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com), [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), and [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), and printed genealogical resources. Deeds, tax records, and other county records, available in the State Archives and online, will be consulted to resolve ownership and property transfer questions. Interviews with owners, former owners, or descendants, where available, will complete the profiles. During Winter and Summer semesters, college interns will be hired to assist the Project Historian in research/writing essays. Interns will be recruited from HBCUs and will be History majors. Experienced cartographers from DHR will provide mapping expertise for the site. A Web design firm will be hired with grant funds to design the portal, which will be hosted on NCR servers and maintained by the NC Department of Information Technology, as well as staff of NCR's Marketing & Communications unit.

The Project Historian will provide initial images and text, to be reviewed by the Advisory Board and other experts. Departmental graphic designers will provide initial designs which then pass NCR's review and editing process. The project's Advisory Board will be a part of this review process. During the project period, the exhibit will travel to at least five regions of NC and be displayed at the African American Cultural Celebration. Five community engagement meetings will be held in conjunction with the exhibit opening and staff will use this opportunity to collect more information from attendees to add to the portal. The Director of AAHC will conduct three online trainings before and during the run of the exhibit for site hosts. NCR's Education and Outreach staff will aid in the logistics of the exhibit as is standard for NCR's other travelling exhibits.

**Staff. Michelle Lanier**, co-PI, is Director of the AAHC and adjunct professor at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies. She will oversee the project, including managing the Advisory Board, community outreach and hiring the Historian. **Ramona Bartos**, co-PI, is Director of DHR. As co-PI, she will oversee the research of the project, including supervision and approval of research. **Michael Hill** is Director of the Office of Historical Research and the editor-in-chief of the NC Historical Review. He will review and vet entries submitted by the Historian. **Claudia Brown** is the Architectural Survey Coordinator and Supervisor of the Survey and National Register Branch of the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO). She will assist with access to research and selection of images and connect the Historian to Rosenwald school alumni. **Project Historian**. Using IMLS grant funds, a Historian will be hired to research the history of each establishment, write an essay and identify supplemental information (such as photographs or newspaper articles) to include on the web site. The Project Historian will supervise the interns. **Karen Ipock** is the Children's Education Specialist in the Department's Division of Education and Outreach. An accomplished educator in historic sites, parks and museums, she will lead a three-person subcommittee of the department's cross-divisional education

committee to craft associated activities and contextual materials aligned to the Standard Course of Study and to help the site be integrated into the state's classrooms. **Kimberly Kandros** is Manager of Development and Special Projects at NCR. She will serve as the grant contact for this project, complying with reporting requirements, monitoring the project timeline, and managing the project budget. **Kevin Cherry** is the Deputy Secretary of NCR and also serves as the State Historic Preservation Officer and Secretary to the NC Historical Commission, the state's public history policy-making body. He will expedite the project's cross-divisional activities and serve as the project's liaison with the NC Historical Commission. **Two Summer Interns**, enrolled in an HBCU and majoring in History, will be utilized Winter 2018 and Summer 2018 to assist Project Historian.

**Timeline.** **September 2017:** Planning meeting with Advisory Board to approve Historian job description, help promote opportunity and assist with interview process. **October 2017.** Historian Hired. S/He will begin researching the 327 sites across NC. **November 2017:** Advisory Board meets in Wilmington (east) to network with African American community leaders and solicit content. **January 2018.** Two interns hired to assist Historian with research. Advisory Board meets in Raleigh-Durham (central) to network with African American community leaders and solicit content. **March 2018.** Advisory Board meets in Asheville (west) to network with African American community leaders and solicit content. **June 2018.** Two Summer interns are hired to assist the Historian with research. **September 2018:** Web Design contractor begins work on portal to host entries and photographs. **October 2018:** Design of Exhibit panels to interpret story of *Green Books* begins. **December 2018:** AAHC and DHR staff begin reaching out to museum partner sites to book the traveling exhibition. Focus groups will review the website and exhibit prototype/sketches. **February 2019:** Historian begins writing "white paper" detailing process of research so that other states may replicate. Historian, along with AAHC and DHR staff, begin providing professional development training to staff at partner sites that will be hosting traveling exhibition. **March 2019:** Web portal is complete. Focus groups will do final assessment of website and exhibit. **April 2019:** Traveling exhibition is ready to tour state. Five community engagement meetings will be held (Greensboro, Asheville, Raleigh-Durham, New Bern, Charlotte). Historian position ends.

**Risks.** This project seeks to map and document 327 sites within an 18-month period. Priority will be given to the 65 sites still standing. The Project Historian will perform more in-depth research and prepare essays for these sites. Once complete, the Project Historian will continue to perform this level of detailed research on additional properties that no longer exist, selected based upon geographic distribution, type of business, etc. Even with the help of four interns, there are a many sites to document within a short time period. There is a real risk that some of the remaining 262 sites will only receive basic entries (name of the business, location, years listed in the *Green Book*, etc.) and not be thoroughly researched and documented in an essay by the April 2019 end date. If all 327 sites are not researched and documented, the Project Historian will develop a research protocol and template for the essays, which will be used by interns and staff beyond the project end date.

**Resources.** As a state-funded agency, full-time, permanent staff salaries and benefits are paid for by the State of NC. Accordingly, most permanent personnel needs will be met. Grant dollars will pay for a full-time, temporary Project Historian, who will be exclusively assigned to this project for 18-months. Grant dollars will also be used to pay for web design using an external contractor, a traveling exhibition, planning meetings, two sets of interns (one set of two for Winter 2018 and one set of two for summer 2018) and in-state travel.

**Tracking Progress.** Staff will use a project management matrix to assign tasks and deadlines. Using the matrix as a guide, staff will hold monthly meetings to discuss project deliverables, identify obstacles and facilitate communication. Bi-monthly Advisory Board meetings will enable local networking and ensure research is ongoing so the Historian and interns will have a steady flow of information to document.

**Sharing Results.** Results will be shared with professional colleagues and communities. Staff will submit a proposal to speak at the annual conference of American Alliance of Museums and American Association for State and Local History. On a statewide level, a proposal will be submitted to speak at the annual conference of

NC Museums Council and the Preservation NC Conference. The portal will be shared statewide with members of AAHC, Library Commission, Arts Council Board, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and NC Department of Public Instruction. (NCR provides a monthly newsletter of its activities to all educators, public and private.) Project Historian will write a white paper to outline the process of mapping *Green Book* sites, build a portal and create an exhibit for other agencies to replicate. Community meetings will be used to share results with local stakeholders as will “opening night programming” associated with the travelling exhibit.

### 3. Project Results

**Performance Measure Statement.** Through the creation of an inclusive and accessible web-based portal, the AAHC will make historical content on *Green Books* accessible to anyone around the world with Internet access. In this way, the project supports IMLS’ performance goal of Content and Collections by broadening access to collections. Success will be measured by measuring the number of users to the site.

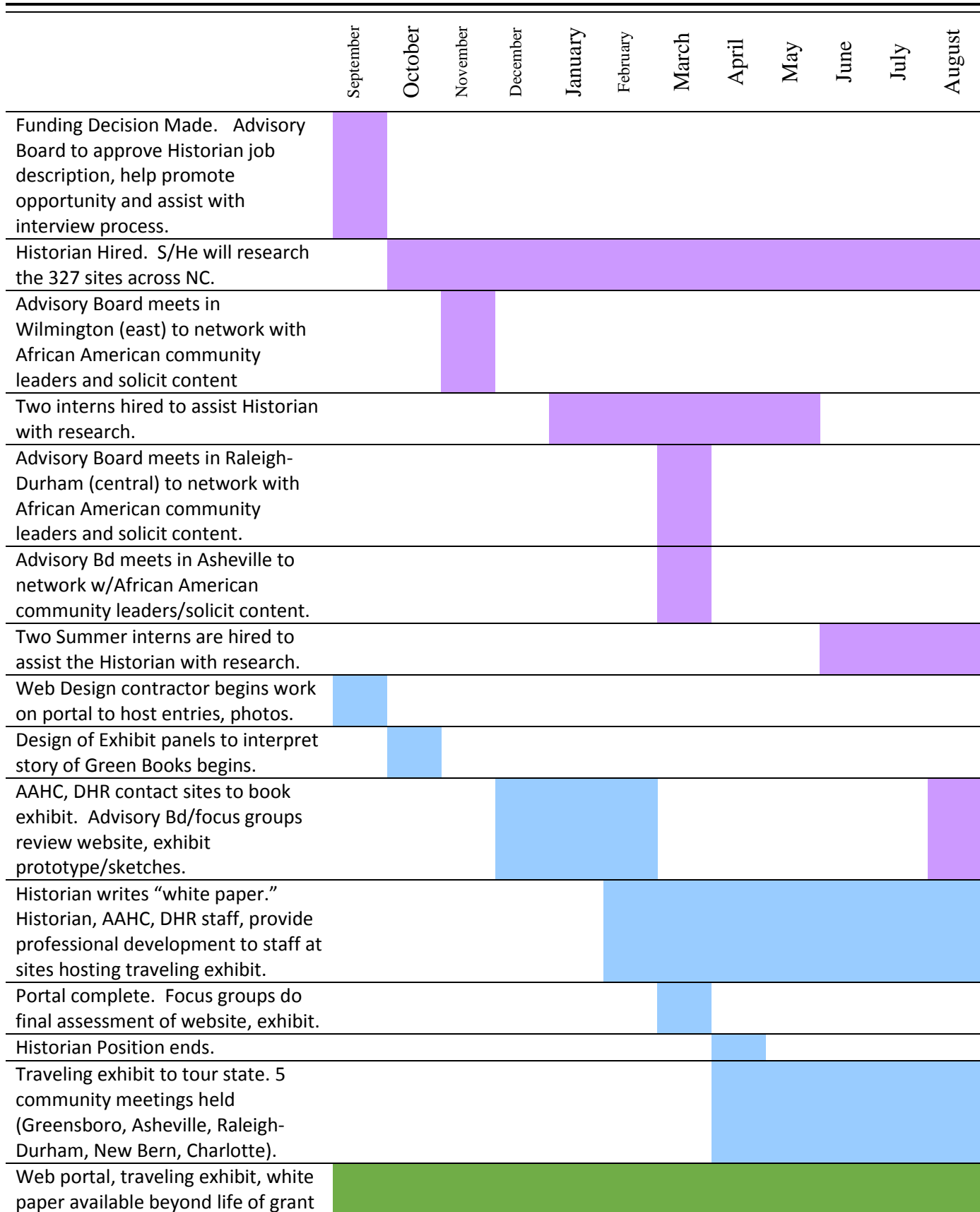
**Intended Results.** By the end of this project, the applicants will have made more North Carolinians aware of the struggles African Americans faced during its era of segregation, document the strategies oppressed people used to navigate this systemic segregation, and celebrate this community’s resiliency and through this heightened awareness, helping to prevent the further loss of the state’s “oasis spaces.”

Knowledge, Skills, or Attitudes	Objectives	Evaluation Methodology
To increase knowledge by providing broadened access to digital content/collections on NC’s history throughout state, including rural areas where accessibility to museums/sites is limited, on <i>Green Book</i> sites.	327 sites to be mapped in 18 mos, and incl basic info & when available, photos, news articles & other info. Minimum of 65 locations will feature in-depth essays. All entries will be uploaded onto portal. By Spring 2019, a projected 10% increase from baseline “hits” to NCR’s website over course of 12 months (April 2020).	Throughout website design, Advisory Bd & focus groups of K-12 teachers, people w/ disabilities, community leaders & parents to assess portal to ensure it is user-friendly. Remediation based on feedback to be part of design process. Staff will track Google Analytics to measure increase of users.
To raise awareness of NC’s segregation history and the role of the <i>Green Book</i> through creation of an inclusive and accessible portal and travelling exhibition.	Portal & 2 identical exhibits created to tour state. Portal & exhibit ready April 2019 to be hosted at ≥5 sites over next 6 months, exceeding life of grant.	3 Advisory Bd mtgs, 5 community mtgs & input from K-12 teachers provide portal & exhibit designers w/ iterative feedback for remediation & refinement.

**Tangible Products** include **1) a portal** containing data on *Green Book* sites; **2) two panel exhibits** to tour NC; **3) a research protocol and template** to continue *Green Book* research after project end date; and **4) a white paper** to assist other cultural agencies with mapping *Green Book* sites as a free download on NCR’s website.

**Sustainability.** This proposal seeks funds to launch virtual infrastructure and create two traveling exhibit that will live on after the project as part of NCR’s travelling exhibit program. The digital project will be maintained as a long-term resource by DHR with support of NCR IT staff and digital preservationists working with the State Archives and State Library. (These two divisions of NCR are national leaders in preservation of digital resources.). The bulk of expenditures will be one-time. Ongoing maintenance will be assumed by NCR’s annual operating budget. NCR, AAHC and DHR, are state-funded organizations and receive operational support from the state of NC. Salaries/benefits for staff responsible for maintenance of the portal are covered by the state of NC. Grant funds from IMLS will provide startup funds that go beyond operational costs to launch this initiative and hire temporary staff and college interns to assume extra work researching and writing entries.

Schedule of Completion for the African American Heritage Commission  
*Green Books' "Oasis Spaces": African American Travel in NC, 1936-1966*



Year 1 2017-2018:       Year 2 2018-2019:       Beyond grant lifecycle: