



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

Sample Application MH-00-17-0030-17

Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000

### **Robbins House Concord, MA**

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$149,835

Amount of cost share: \$172,700

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion



**Lead Applicant:** The Robbins House, Inc.      **Abstract**

**The Robbins House, Inc.** (TRH) is both an early 19<sup>th</sup> century home and the name of our nonprofit 501c3 organization. TRH commemorates the legacy of Caesar Robbins, a previously enslaved Revolutionary War veteran. Robbins's descendants inhabited the historic Robbins House, and included a refugee ("fugitive slave") from New Jersey, a founding member of the Concord Female Antislavery Society, and a Freedmen teacher who initiated a legal test of the nation's first Civil Rights Act in 1866. We seek grant support to promote civic engagement on the Long Civil Rights Movement (LCRM) as told through Robbins House supporting stories, from slavery to today; rarely-told aspects of American history.

**Need/Urgency & Problem.** The Robbins House provides a unique and much needed opportunity for audiences and visitors to Concord, MA who seek the grand story of America's Revolutionary fight for freedom from Britain to discover the crucial role of African Americans in that struggle. For African Americans, however, the struggle for freedom – the long Civil Rights struggle – has taken more than two hundred and fifty years, has encompassed the entire nation, and continues today. The lives of the African American occupants of the Robbins House mirror this struggle. The current environment of escalating racial conflict in our country makes our interpretive narrative, "the LCRM" with supporting Robbins House stories, urgent.

**Challenge.** Too often the only exposure blacks and whites have of each other is through media portrayals<sup>i</sup>, particularly as communities divide by race, such as our African American historic site located in a 97% white town, with >75% white global visitors. Our challenge is to expose and connect African American history, through the Robbins House, to diverse audiences and contemporary themes. Our location, across the street from Concord's North Bridge, brings many visitors not expecting to learn about African American pathways to independence, analogous to C. Christensen's theory of disruptive Innovation (DI). By exposing audiences to information they weren't expecting and often have never heard, we're impacting their views on race and society.

**Problem Identification** occurred through various means including onsite feedback, surveys, and stakeholders' information. Visitors, audiences, staff, and board members consistently request additional information on details as well as the broader themes represented through TRH.

**Activities.** Our program includes three major areas: Continued Research on Robbins House history. "Toolbox Talks" to meaningfully interpret the history we have amassed to date under the theme of the LCRM. The Toolbox Talks will include 8 brochures, each presenting a core subtheme within the longer movement, to be handed out as well as providing the outline for professional development workshops (2/yr.), Panel Discussions (1/yr.), and enriched tours, programs and exhibits. We will amend school curriculum to incorporate this information.

**Timeframe.** We propose to implement the program from August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2020.

**Beneficiaries** include interpreters, teachers, students, program participants and >7000 visitors/yr.

**The intended outcome** is that learning about the long civil rights movement through the lives of the Robbins House inhabitants increases individuals' empathy and respect for black history and its relevancy to contemporary issues of equality. Equally, the intended outcome is that visitors and participants develop a reverence for black resilience despite a legacy of civil rights obstacles.

**Measuring success.** We will follow-up on 2016 baseline surveys, including logic model inputs, outputs, and outcomes using entry and exit surveys for tours, and pre- and post-tests for programs and school groups. Measurement variables include beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs or intentions regarding black history, stereotypic views, race bias and contemporary social justice topics. We will integrate IMLS Performance Goals for 'Learning' into our evaluations along with 'Net Promoter Scores,' measuring whether respondents would recommend our programs.

## 1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

### a) *Introduction and Proposal*

The Robbins House (TRH) is both an early 19<sup>th</sup> century home and the name of our nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. TRH commemorates the legacy of Caesar Robbins, a Revolutionary War veteran who had been enslaved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Generations of his descendants inhabited the house, including a refugee ('fugitive slave' from New Jersey), a founding member of the Concord Female Antislavery Society, and a freedmen schoolteacher who initiated a legal test of the nation's first Civil Rights Act in 1866. Our 2015-2017 IMLS grant enabled us to discover critical information about these individuals and how, in the words of one of our senior historians, "This house will take you across the continent." With those words our historian connected the path from the door of the Robbins House to the broad sweep of America's westward surge in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. From a modest one-and-a-half-story house in Concord to the streets of Boston and on to Baltimore. From the dirt roads of Virginia to a dusty corner of Kansas and on to Pasadena, California. All of the stories we've recently uncovered with IMLS support taken together, from Caesar Robbins' enslavement to the present, have inspired our most compelling theme, the Long Civil Rights Movement (LCRM) from slavery to today. Our **conceptual framework** suggests that conversation about the LCRM through the Robbins House stories promotes greater civic engagement, stronger multiethnic respect and more inclusive communities by increasing racial understanding and empathy – with the goal of reducing race bias.

With continued IMLS support we will interpret the **Long Civil Rights Movement** through the lens of the inhabitants of the Robbins House and their journeys across the continent, over generations and centuries, connecting with contemporary social justice themes. We propose to:

- **Research** the lives of Robbins House inhabitants and their communities, with assistance from historians/scholars on, for example, the Freedmen's Bureau in the Upper Chesapeake, Kansas Exodusters, and westward migration to Pasadena, California.
- **Create Toolbox Talks** for civic engagement on the Long Civil Rights Movement. The Toolbox Talks include eight brochures (fact sheets), with suggested reading, discussion guide questions, supporting exhibits, online links and activities. Brochures cover one subtheme each within the LCRM, such as: 1) Northern slavery; 2) Patriots of color in the American Revolution; 3) Free people of color in antebellum New England; 4) Black antislavery activism then and today; 5) the Civil War and Civil Rights Acts over time; 6) New England African Americans in the Reconstruction South; 7) New England Exodusters; and 8) Dispersion: New England African Americans around the nation and the globe. [A sample brochure is provided in Supporting Documents]. Toolbox Talks would be used in Charrettes, Panel Discussions and Interpreter Tours and Programs, as presented in **Table 1**. The resulting text and illustrations will be used to create physical and interactive online exhibits.
- **Develop Curriculum** for both on- and off-site public and private school students on the Long Civil Rights Movement and its relevance today. Emphasis will be on online curriculum tools. [See Letters of Commitment from public and private school teachers and professors.]

**Table 1. Toolbox Talks on the Long Civil Rights Movement**

8 Brochures (Fact Sheets; 3-4/yr.)		Targeted Audience	Freq.	Where
a)	Charrettes/Workshops	Professional Development	2/yr.	Off-site
b)	Panel Discussion	General Public	1/yr.	Off-site
c)	Enriched Tours/Programs/Exhibits	Visitors (Individuals/Groups/Schools)	Open	On-site

***b) Need, Problems and Challenge, and How We Identified Them***

**Need/Urgency and Problem:** The Robbins House provides a rare and badly needed opportunity for audiences and visitors to Concord, MA, who come seeking the grand story of America's Revolutionary fight for freedom from Britain to discover the crucial role of African Americans in that struggle. For African Americans, the struggle for freedom – the long Civil Rights struggle – has taken more than two hundred and fifty years, has encompassed the entire nation, and continues today. The lives of the African American occupants of the Robbins House uniquely mirror this struggle, from the 1770s to the 1920s and from Concord to California. In the current environment of escalating racial conflict in our country today, as reported by such groups as the Southern Poverty Law Center, anti-black incidents have been the most reported at schools (K-12) and universities. Confederate flags were reported at a Boston suburban high school after the election. Our proposed interpretive narrative of “The Long Civil Rights Movement” is urgent.

**Challenge:** Martin Luther King stated, “Men hate each other because they fear each other... don't know each other...don't communicate with each other, and are increasingly separated from each other.” Too often the only exposure blacks and whites have of each other is through media portrayals<sup>i</sup>, particularly as communities divide by race, such as our African American historic site located in a 97% white town, with >75% white global visitors. Our challenge is to expose and connect African American history, through the Robbins House, to diverse audiences and contemporary themes. By exposing audiences to information they weren't expecting and often have never heard, we're impacting their views on race and society.

**How Identified:** At the Robbins House, we see more than 7,000 individuals each summer. Visitors and program participants are repeatedly requesting more information. Visitor and audience surveys reveal we are challenging common beliefs. Robbins House visitors strongly agreed that the experience expanded their knowledge and understanding of slavery in the North, reconstruction and its demise, and contemporary social justice issues. Most had no knowledge of the first Civil Rights Act, 1866. Often audiences view contemporary social unrest as artificial or superficial. One man left a self-guided tour stating, “I can't believe it has been over 100 years and you all still don't have equal rights.” Audiences are requesting brochures on the Long Civil Rights Movement, including struggles, rebellions, African American individual and collective achievements, and people persevering and advancing despite adversity. Our interpreters and teachers need further training and educational materials to help meet these needs.

***c) Who will benefit***

The beneficiaries of this project will be our audiences at the center of our efforts. We aim to prepare participants to be increasingly knowledgeable, and perhaps active in their local communities and our global society, consistent with IMLS agency-level goals. Among our beneficiaries will be board members and staff who helped develop the project. Visitors who come from all over the world. Our audiences include special groups such as 80 boys and girls Harlem Lacrosse Leadership players who visit annually, private and public school groups, and university students (e.g., last month we hosted 40 art students from Lesley University). Our on-site visitors include special groups from religious and historical organizations, (e.g., we recently hosted 60 visitors from the African American Historical and Genealogical Society, as well as the Women's Association of the First Parish in Concord Unitarian church). Our presentations at senior living communities and other community locations have helped us foster partnerships with various organizations throughout the state and country. Our audiences also include participants at annual gatherings of the Association for African American Museums, the National Association for Interpretation, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

Audience evaluations reveal that we are making an impact: over 85% of individuals reported being “very satisfied” with their visit or program. The majority reported their visit “influenced their perception of conditions of African American in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Freedmen and reconstruction, antislavery activity, slavery in the North and contemporary social justice issues.”

***d) How the grant will enhance the capacity of our institution***

With this grant, we will enhance our capacity to **specifically focus on education**, including **professional development** for board, staff (particularly interpreters), and teachers about the Long Civil Rights Movement. We will **measure** impact by documenting changes in audience knowledge, attitudes, behaviors or practices. We will assess what is **achievable** by comparing results from our 2016 visitor surveys with subsequent annual evaluations. Our literature reviews and book club provide support for developing **realistic**, tested and innovative approaches, and opportunities for continuous learning. With our certified interpreters, we amend programs and tours to reach Freeman Tilden’s principles of relating, revealing, and provoking thought with staff and audiences. We include artistic, holistic and age-appropriate approaches addressing the needs of adult audiences vs. young adults and children. Our theme, The Long Civil Rights Movement, connects our research findings under a singular, poignant and **timely** message relevant today.

e) ***We address the goals of Museum Grants for AAHC projects*** by placing our staff and audiences at the center of our conceptual framework as the learners, beneficiaries and messengers of themes and stories that have the potential to impact individuals’ implicit and explicit race bias. We do this through charrettes/workshops, book club/literature reviews, and continuous training and participation at professional meetings, with diverse audiences. These activities promote civic engagement, cultural opportunities and economic vitality by broadening our base of supporters, and promoting access to our information for a global public.

## 2. PROJECT WORKPLAN – THEORY and PRACTICE

***a) Activities and Sequence***

Project activities cover a three-year period and include Planning and Implementation phases as well as transitioning toward sustainability. Our work considers Disruptive Innovation (DI, per C. Christensen), Transtheoretical Stages of Change (Prochaska and DeClemente), and race bias theories (Devine, Monteith, Plant, etc.)<sup>i</sup>. As our site is located across the road from the well-known historic Old North Bridge, site of the first successful battle in the Revolutionary War, many of our visitors come asking for directions. Our DI is to entice visitors to stay, and others to visit, experiencing something new and unexpected. With this grant we would see which brochures from our ‘Toolbox Talks’ (a concept adopted from Harvard University) pique the visitor’s interest, and tailor a discussion accordingly. Though audience contact time is often limited (average tour time can be 15-20 minutes) our hope would be to increase repeat visitorship, referrals or programs, increasing opportunities to assist individuals in moving toward new ways of thinking, as discussed by Prochaska and DeClemente, with increased opportunities to reduce race bias. Our work plan outline is presented in Table 2:

\*Evaluation includes comparing 2016 baseline metrics. [See 2.e Methods for tracking progress.]



**Table 2. Work Plan Activities and Sequence**

Activity	Phase	Responsibilities
<b><u>Planning (3 mtgs./year):</u></b> <i>Convene Oversight Committee {3 Sr. Consultants/Historians; 2 Writers; 1 Project Mgr. and 1 Board Rep.}</i>	I	<b>Reaffirm work plan:</b> subthemes, timeline, schedule of events, roles and responsibilities, evaluation plan*
Oversight Committee meets with full team, including curriculum consultants/teachers	Ia	<b>Establish Toolbox Talks Division of Labor</b> (Brochures and Resource Materials)
2 Writers meet with curriculum and exhibits consultants 1 Teacher and Professor Consult/yr.	Ib	<b>Draft/Produce 2-3 Toolbox Talks</b> (including 2-3 brochures created/year) <b>Curriculum plan</b> (Schools/ University)
<b><u>Implementation:</u></b> <b>2 Trainings/yr.</b> Professional Development Charrettes	II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train Interpreters and Teachers</li> <li>• Project Mgr. at partner locations</li> <li>• Conduct pre/post surveys*</li> </ul>
<b>On-site</b> Themed discussions with tourists	Iia	<b>Use a Toolbox Talk</b> Conduct visitor surveys*
<b>On-site</b> Themed discussion w/ students	Iib	<b>Use a Toolbox Talk</b> Adapted for children. Conduct surveys*
<b>Off-site</b> Themed discussions at schools, etc.	Iic	<b>Use a Toolbox Talk</b> (‘as is’ or integrated in curriculum); Evaluate
<b>1 Panel Discussion/year</b> With the general public (e.g., yr. 2 invite police dept., etc.)	Iid	<b>Use Toolbox Talks themes</b> with Guest Speaker/Civic Engagement on the Long Civil Rights Movement; Evaluate
<b><u>Sustainability:</u></b> Year 3 Final Workshop	III	<b>Board:</b> Program assessment and integration into long range Strategic Plan

**b) Who will plan, implement, and manage your project**

The project will be planned by the oversight committee which includes **3 Lead Consultant Professors**, Robert Bellinger, Joanne Pope Melish, and Robert Gross; Executive Board Representative Maria Madison and Project Manager Liz Clayton. The project will be implemented by **2 Consultants/Historians** as lead writers, John Hannigan (for before and during the Civil War history), and Kerri Greenidge (for after the Civil War history to today) with educational resource/curriculum development from Johanna Glazer (public schools), Kim Frederick (private schools), Maura Clark (on-site childrens’ programming) and Professor Danett Day (college level teacher training). Professional graphic design and exhibit support will be provided by Linda Ziemba and Lorell Gifford. Co-hosts of workshops and panel discussions include The Concord Museum, Concord Free Public Library, and the Minute Man National Historical Park. [See Letters of Commitment and CVs]

**c) Risks and Contingencies**

The project may experience delays in consensus building on interpretive subthemes or adoption/acceptance of concepts by audiences. To mitigate these potential risks we have included three senior consultants for tie breaking, two writers/historians to help focus on separate areas of their own expertise, and evaluation at key milestones along the critical path of implementation. If audiences are not receptive to subthemes we are able to amend our Toolbox Talks more easily than

amending books, more expensive pamphlets and untested exhibits. We will revise and adapt our talks and resources as new facts arise.

**d) Financial, personnel and other resources needs (including travel)**

Our budget will be overseen by our bookkeeper, audited by our pro bono accountant and the TRH treasurer. We seek \$149,835 from IMLS over three years to complete this project. This covers fees for our consultants, historians and writers, project manager, consulting teachers, professors, graphics/exhibit and web designers, as well as brochures and adapted curriculum development (including electronic aspects), travel to professional meetings and research.

**e) Methods for tracking progress**

Our evaluation process follows a logic model approach of measuring the relationship between our inputs, outputs and outcomes. We will compare our baseline 2016 audience pre- and post-surveys with subsequent-year survey results, including longer-term follow-up, where possible (i.e., through our website). We will continue to measure changes in audience knowledge, beliefs, behaviors or practices and self-reports of impacts (adopting IMLS agency level goals and measurements for ‘Learning’ [See Supporting Documents].) We will amend our approach to include basic high Net Promoter Scores (NPS), asking for example “Will you recommend this tour or program to others?” NPS is calculated by the number of people who will do this minus the ones who won’t, giving us a simplified Net Promoter Score. We will designate an intern to hand out, explain and collect surveys during our visitor season.

**f) Dissemination of progress and DISCOVERIES with stakeholders**

We distribute electronic monthly newsletters to stakeholders. These include progress milestones and project outcomes. We provide updates at workshops and in one-on-one communications.

### **3. PROJECT RESULTS**

**a) Collection and reporting of corresponding Program Information Sheet data:**

We will assess the level of ‘learning’ among our staff from pre- and post-tests administered at professional development workshops and from inclusive, accessible tours and program participants. We will apply the methods described in tracking progress in section 2e.

**b) Project intended results (s.m.a.r.t.)**

Loftily, we aim to increase understanding/empathy (and reduce audience race bias) through the experience of discussing themes within the Long Civil Rights Movement from slavery to today. We aim to measure this through pre- and post-survey questions such as “What was the Civil War about?” “What did Reconstruction reconstruct?” “Who benefitted?” “Who didn’t, and why?” etc.

**c) Desired audience impact on knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and practices**

Our goal is to promote greater civic engagement, stronger multiethnic respect and more inclusive communities by increasing understanding and reducing race bias.

**d) Tangible Products**

We will provide on-going resources through our Toolbox Talks Civil Rights series, accessible on-line, on-site or through the mail to all global audiences. From these tested brochures and tours, we will create exhibits, including interactive and online programs, for visitors to our historic house, schools and our website. [For contents see page 1 and Supporting Documents]

**e) Sustainability**

Our products will not be proprietary, and will help increase our net promoter score, drawing new audiences, new donors, and new opportunities for sustainability.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3603687/> – Long Term reduction in implicit bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention.



TRH: The Long Civil Rights Movement, Grant Proposal for 8/1/2017-7/31/2020

**Year 1 of 3: 8/1/2017-7/31/2018**

Schedule of Completion		August 1, 2017 - July 31, 2018											
		2017					2018						
Activities		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1	Research lives of Robbins House inhabitants												
	Defining Research Plan Priorities & Check In calls w/ consultants												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning meeting (assignments by geography or descendant)												
	Implement												
	Manager tracking & monitoring field researchers												
	Report												
	Interim report(s)												
	Final report												
2	Toolbox Talks												
	Workplan												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning meeting (finalize list of 8 brochure topics & design)												
	Implementation												
	Consultants create 3-4 brochures (draft & final versions)												
	Charrette/Workshops - Professional Development on Long Civil Rights Movement												
	Creation of enhanced on-site tours & supportive exhibits												
	Panel discussion (1/yr.; honorarium for 2 speakers, e.g., Mimi Jones & Lois Brown)												
3	Amend School Curriculum (i.e., supportive text & lesson plans available on line)												
	Workplan												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning - with school representatives (Public, Private and University input)												
	Implementation												
	Teacher Charrettes/Writing & Workshop												
	Web site curriculum & materials												
	Development												
	Hosting												
4	Evaluation												

**Legend:** ★ = Milestone. Note: TRH is open on Apr. 19<sup>th</sup>, then Memorial Day - Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, or by appointment throughout the year.



**Year 2 of 3: 8/1/2018-7/31/2019**

Schedule of Completion		August 1, 2018 - July 31, 2019											
		2018					2019						
Activities		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1	Research lives of Robbins House inhabitants												
	Research Plan priorities check in calls w/ consultants												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning meeting (assignments by geography or descendant)												
	Implement												
	Manager tracking & monitoring field researchers						★						
	Report												
	Interim report(s)									★			
	Final report												
2	Toolbox Talks												
	Workplan												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning meeting (finalize list of 8 brochure topics & design)												
	Implementation												
	Consultants create 3-4 brochures (draft & final versions)	Final 4		Draft	Final 5		Draft 6	Final 6	★	Draft 7	Final 7		Draft 8
	Charrette/Workshops - Professional Development on Long Civil Rights Movement												
	Creation of enhanced on-site tours & supportive exhibits									★			
	Panel discussion (1/yr.; honorarium for 2 speakers)												
3	Amend School Curriculum (i.e., supportive text & lesson plans available on line)												
	Workplan												
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)												
	Planning - with school representatives (Public, Private and University input)												
	Implementation												
	Teacher Charrettes/Writing & Workshop				★								
	School bus on-site at the Robbins House: Pilot Test LCRM program								★				
	Web site curriculum & materials												
	Development												
	Hosting								★				
4	Evaluation												

**Year 3 of 3: 8/1/2019-7/31/2020**

Schedule of Completion					August 1, 2019 - July 31, 2020											
					2019						2020					
				Activities	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1	Research lives of Robbins House inhabitants															
	Research Plan priorities check in calls w/ consultants															
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)															
	Planning meeting (assignments by geography or descendant)															
	Implement															
	Manager tracking & monitoring field research									★						
	Report															
	Interim report(s)															★
	Final report															★
2	Toolbox Talks															
	Workplan															
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)															
	Planning meeting (finalize list of 8 brochure topics & design)															
	Implentation															
	Graphics designer create final brochure from historians draft				Final 8											
	Charrette/Workshops - Professional Development on Long Civil Rights Movement											★				
	Creation of enhanced on-site tours & supportive exhibits															
	Panel discussion (1/yr.; honorarium for 2 speakers)												★			
3	Amend School Curriculum (i.e., supportive text & lesson plans available on line)															
	Workplan															
	Contracting consultants (draft and final scopes of work agreements)															
	Planning - with school representatives (Public, Private and University input)															
	Implementation															
	Teacher Charrettes/Writing & Workshop															★
	Web site curriculum & materials															
	Development															
	Hosting															
4	Evaluation															