Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture

Sample Application ALHC-258092-OMS-25

Friends of the Tubac Presidio and Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS: $168,286
Amount of cost share: $0

The Friends of the Tubac Presidio Park and Museum will redevelop two exhibits that interpret the history of the American Latino in Southern Arizona, redesign communications, and support professional development and training activities for early-career museum professionals within their organization.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Narrative
Friends of the Tubac Presidio and Museum
Santa Cruz Latino Legacies

Project Justification

o Which program goal and associated objective of ALHC will your project address?

The Friends of the Tubac Presidio Park and Museum requests $149,360.00 for its project, *Santa Cruz Latino Legacies*. This project will address the ALHC first program goal to build the capacity of American Latino museums to serve their communities. Through our project plan, we will address Objective 1.1 by redeveloping and enhancing key exhibitions that interpret the history and cultural heritage of American Latinos. Additionally, our project will address Objective 1.2 by providing additional support for museum professionals at our museum, both for early-career museum professionals of Hispanic or Latino descent as well as for non-Hispanic or Latino staff and volunteers to better understand and engage diverse audiences.

As a whole, this project will address the agency-level goals to champion lifelong learning through the professional development of early-career Latino museum professionals, and to strengthen community engagement by developing relationships within the community to support bridge-building between audiences and center community collaboration in exhibit development.

o What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified? Describe how you have used demographic information, economic circumstances, condition assessments, and other relevant data from reliable sources to define the need, problem, or challenge and develop the scope for the project.

Since its inception as Arizona's first State Park in 1958, the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park has reflected the community's belief that the history preserved here is central to understanding the history, culture, and identity of the Southwest United States. The Friends of the Tubac Presidio Park and Museum, Inc. was founded in 2013 to operate the park on behalf of Arizona State Parks and Trails when the park was threatened with closure as a result of budget cuts. Since then, steps have been taken by the Friends to expand the narrative of history that is interpreted in the park; in only the last year, we have increased the representation of American Latinos in our organization significantly.

These efforts came as the result of an informal demographic survey that alerted us to a gap in our practices. Santa Cruz County has the highest population of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino in the state of Arizona, with over 70% of whom speak a language other than English at home.[1] Despite this overwhelming presence of American Latinos in our community, our informal survey found that very few were visiting our museum.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, "Santa Cruz County, Arizona," QuickFacts Date, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santacruzcountyarizona/>, accessed on November 10, 2024.

This gap in our visitorship is unfortunately not unique to us, and has been recognized as a recurring problem across the museum field. Historically, museums have been established by colonizing powers to justify their colonization of an occupied place.[2] The biases of colonial establishments like this not only affect what is included in a collection of ethnographic artifacts, but extend into the display of these artifacts as well.[3] While American Latinos are represented in our collections and in the history that is interpreted within our museum, clearly something was missing. Indeed, Latinos are an audience waiting for a product; the American Association of Museums found in 2010 that many Latinos seek to use museum exhibits to convey their cultural heritage to younger generations[4], a finding that persisted in 2015[5]. There was little benefit for Latino visitors to gain, because the Latino perspective was not present behind the scenes.

Key changes to fundamental museum operations must take place in order for American Latinos to feel welcome and represented within the museum. Diverse, representative front-line staff and bilingual accessibility for Spanish-speaking visitors reoccur in studies as two of the most impactful factors in supporting American Latino experiences in museums [5,6], so these were the first changes made to the organization. The Friends hired the organization's first Executive Director of Latino descent in 2023, and as of November 2024, four of the five paid staff members are of Latino descent, and three of the five paid staff members are bilingual in English and Spanish. Additionally, in 2024, the organization implemented its first fully bilingual museum exhibit, the majority of programs hosted throughout the year were presented in both languages, and all social media posts are published in English and Spanish.

There are still many more strides to be taken to improve the experience of American Latinos at the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park. In a field that can sometimes be slow to evolve, museum professionals of Latino descent can face many challenges. Financial barriers to critical professional development opportunities and lack of access to a network of other Latino museum professionals are key challenges that staff face[7] which we aim to address through this project.

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[2] Ray, Sugata. 2014. "Colonial Frames, 'Native' Claims: The Jaipur Economic and Industrial Museum." *The Art Bulletin* 96 (2): 196–212. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2014.899180.
[3] Kreps, Christina. 2006. "Non-Western Models of Museums and Curation in Cross-cultural Perspective." *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Sharon Macdonald (ed.) Blackwell, MA
[4] Farrell, Betty, and Maria Medvedeva. 2010. "Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums." *Center for the Future of Museums*, January. https://doi.org/10.6082/uchicago.1272.
[5] Acevedo, Salvador, and Monique Madara. 2015. "The Latino Experience in Museums: An Exploratory Audience Research Study." Contemporanea. Accessed November 7, 2024. https://blog.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Latino-Experience-in-Museums-Report-Contemporanea.pdf.
[6] Gutierrez Vasquez, Dulce V. 2024. "Fostering Belonging at Latino Cultural Institutions." MA thesis, University of Washington. https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstreams/04d027be-0462-4cee-8f3b-597f077e96f5/download.
[7] Cabrera, Melayna. 2024. "En comunidad: understanding barriers faced by Latino/a/x museum professionals as they navigate their careers." MA Thesis, University of Washington.

2025 and 2026 are key years to embark on this project, as anniversary years of two major historic events. 2025 marks the 250th anniversary of the Anza Expedition, the colonizing expedition led by the captain of the Tubac Presidio, which passed through this town on its way to establish the mission and presidio in what is now San Francisco. Reinterpreting the history of this expedition will support our American Latino visitors to see themselves reflected in the history that shaped the modern United States[8], and build empathy and solidarity with Indigenous peoples who were impacted by Spanish colonization, responses which are critical for interpreting difficult histories in a way that is reflective and healing rather than divisive[9]. Being located less than 30 miles from the US/Mexico border, reinterpreting the Anza Expedition allows us to learn about the long history of migration in the Southwest and foster awareness and understanding of present-day issues in the borderlands.

Additionally, 2026 will mark the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. In our project, we seek to link these major events in the history of the United States to emphasize the Hispanic, Latino, and Afro-Latino heritage of the Southwest and the impact of American Latinos on the social and cultural landscape of modern America.

To address the needs in our community, we have three key project goals:

1. To redevelop two exhibits which interpret the history of the American Latino in Southern Arizona and throughout the Southwest.
2. To redesign our communications to be fully bilingual.
3. To support early-career American Latino museum professionals within our organization to build a sustainable career through professional development.

This is a key time in America's history for the museum field as a whole to reexamine their practices to determine how to become better stewards and interpreters of American Latino history and culture. During a time where deep misunderstandings about the nature of immigration and the history and culture of American Latinos is widespread, it's critical for even the smallest of organizations to have the opportunity to confront and remedy these misgivings.

o Who is the primary audience for your project and how have they been involved in the planning? "Primary audience" refers to those who will be most immediately and positively affected by your project. Identify the number of individuals in the primary audience or in each primary audience, if you identify more than one.

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https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstreams/0368ce13-b2bd-4cca-b0a6-34d8334b6326/download

[8] Beddow, Maggie, Ph.D., and Mimi Coughlin [Ph.D.]. 2017. "Teaching About the Enduring Legacy of North America's Spanish Colonies: Juan Bautista De Anza." California Council for the Social Studies.
[9] Lindauer, Margaret. 2007. "Critical Museum Pedagogy and Exhibition Development: A Conceptual First Step." In *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, edited by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod, and Sheila E. R. Watson. Routledge: NY.

Our first primary audience is Santa Cruz County residents of Hispanic or Latino descent, whose culture and history is represented by our organization. Members of descendant communities, specifically descendants of the Otero family which received the first Spanish land grant in what is now the state of Arizona, have been key contributors to identifying the need for this project and supporting the development of project goals.

Our second primary audience is non-Latino visitors, both from Santa Cruz County and beyond, who may have misunderstandings or misconceptions about life in the borderlands and Mexican and Latino communities, and who may be unaware of or undereducated about the Latino influence on the culture and history of the Southwest.

Finally, a significant audience of this project is our staff and volunteers, who will benefit from professional development to better serve American Latino audiences and, in the case of our American Latino staff, will have the opportunity to become more well-rounded museum professionals with access to a network of museum professionals from similar backgrounds.

o Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project? "Beneficiaries" refers to those who are likely to be aided in the long-term by your project. They may or may not be the same as your "primary audience." Identify the number of individuals who will benefit from your project in the long term, if reliable and defensible counts are possible. Otherwise describe the characteristics of the beneficiaries you expect to be served eventually by your project.

Ultimately, we hope that this project will benefit Latino residents of Santa Cruz County in several ways: firstly, by providing them with a welcoming and representative space where they can contribute to the interpretation of their own cultural heritage and history and share it with family and friends; secondly, by educating non-Latino visitors about the history of Latino influence in American history and encouraging appreciation and advocacy for issues that affect American Latinos and others living in the borderlands region.

Project Work Plan

o What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

Because of the impending 250th anniversary of the Anza Expedition's departure from Tubac Presidio in October of 2025, our first priority will be to engage key community partners in redeveloping our exhibit about Spanish colonization and the Anza Expedition. From **January - March 2025**, we will identify community partners and begin conversations to collaboratively develop an exhibit narrative, learning goals, and interpretation strategies. From **April - June 2025**, we will engage in exhibit design and fabrication planning. **July - October 2024** will see the fabrication and installation of the exhibit, with its launch aligning with the park's annual Anza Day commemoration at the end of October.

Following the installation of the redeveloped Spanish period exhibit, we will embark on the re-development of the Mexican period exhibit, which will follow the same timeline as above in 2026.

In **July 2025**, we will engage in a survey of our communications, including but not limited to our website, social media, newsletter, and onsite signage. As a result of this survey, we will develop a phased approach to redeveloping our communications to be fully bilingual in English and Spanish. A proposed timeline for this leg of the project may be:

- Phase 1 - July 2025 - Communication survey
- Phase 2 - September 2025 - Website and newsletter translation
- Phase 3 - December 2025 - Entryway and directional signage translation
- Phase 4 - March 2026 - Park interpretive signage translation
- Phase 5 - June 2026 - Garden interpretive signage translation

Concurrent with these projects, we will increase professional development opportunities for staff, including but not limited to attending the American Association of State and Local History and Western Museums Association conferences in **September 2025**. Throughout the life of the project, we will provide financial support for language-learning activities for non-Spanish-speaking staff and volunteers to ensure that as many representatives of our organization as possible can effectively engage with our primary audience.

o What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

As a small organization, time and people are often our biggest challenges. We often find that day-to-day operations keep our staff prohibitively busy. Volunteer support will be critical to the success of this project to ensure that staff is available to engage in professional development and prioritize project goals.

Especially while reinterpreting the Anza Expedition and Spanish colonization of Arizona, there may be some uncomfortable conversations as we grapple with this history. However, there is a wealth of research and literature on how to best approach the interpretation of contentious or difficult topics that we will follow

o Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

- Grace Auclair-Lee, Executive Director
- Tom Walsh, Board President

The Executive Director and Board President will oversee the planning and execution of this project, including work done by consultants, contractors, and/or other staff.

o What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

The project is expected to be implemented over the course of 18 months. The Friends of the Tubac Presidio and Museum request $149,360.00 to support the staff, community experts/cultural representatives, exhibit development, and physical exhibit materials. This support will also cover costs associated with professional development, including conference fees and travel.

o How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

With several concurrent projects, tracking will be undertaken on a monthly basis to review progress on exhibit development and translations on communications. Staff will report back in monthly meetings what professional development they have undertaken, their takeaways for their colleagues, and any barriers they may have encountered to accessing professional development. Additionally, marking how many Spanish language self-guided tour booklets are loaned out per day will help us track whether or not there is an increase in Spanish-speaking visitors.

Project Results

o What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified? Be sure to address this question from the dual perspectives of advancing knowledge and understanding and ensuring that the federal investment made through this grant generates benefits to society.

Overall, the intended result of this project is to make an impact in the museum industry through the development of early career American Latino museum professionals, and by reinterpreting a timely and relevant historical topic in an innovative way. By developing a workforce of American Latino museum professionals who are involved in every level of our museum's operations, we will create more meaningful museum experiences for visitors of all backgrounds, and create stronger connections with our American Latino audience. Being able to reinterpret the history and culture of American Latinos at this time and location gives us the opportunity to impact how the general public perceives and understands issues of immigration, border security, and other issues that inform day-to-day life in the American borderlands.

With the opportunity to develop our staff into highly trained, confident professionals, their expertise will move outside of the organization to support a transformation in how American Latino history and culture is interpreted throughout the industry. Working together with other museums in Santa Cruz County, this project will demonstrate how small museums, community partnerships, and grassroots efforts can have a transformative impact nationwide.

o How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the primary audience change because of your project?

With the opportunity to see themselves and their history represented truthfully in our exhibits, and with the opportunity to contribute their own perspectives to the complex narrative of history, our audience of American Latinos in Santa Cruz County will have a better understanding of the impact of American Latinos in the country's history and feel more agency over their impact in the country's future.

Visitors, regardless of heritage or cultural background, who visit the museum will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for American Latino culture and history, and of life in the borderlands region of the United States.

The confidence and expertise resulting from greater professional development will support our staff and volunteers to be better stewards of American Latino history and culture, and will be able to support visitors through their understanding of the history and perspectives interpreted by our organization.

o If applicable, how will your project improve the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records that are the focus of your project?

N/A

o What products will result from your project and how will you make them accessible to the primary audience?

The Friends of the Tubac Presidio and Museum will install two re-developed exhibits which will be available for public view. Bilingual communications will be available on our website and onsite throughout the park and museum. Additionally, lessons learned from this project will be shared with other museums in Santa Cruz County and beyond, ensuring that this project will have cascading benefits across the museum field in Arizona and the Southwest.

o How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

The lessons learned in the redevelopment of the two exhibits in this project will be applied to the redevelopment of future exhibits, with the intention of eventually having a fully bilingual park and museum. Relationships built with community consultants and cultural experts will also help us sustain the benefits of our project, as these relationships can be fostered to create further change in our operations to continue benefiting the community.

For our staff, the support of this project will give us the opportunity to understand how to shuffle workloads to ensure that staff are able to access professional development without an undue burden on their work. We will develop a structure of professional development that can be implemented for all of our staff, with a better understanding of which professional development opportunities will be most beneficial to our staff and visitors.

		2025						2026											
		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spanish period exhibit	Exhibit installation																		
Mexican period exhibit	Narrative development																		
	Exhibit design																		
	Exhibit installation																		
Communications	Communications survey																		
	Website and newsletter translation																		
	Entryway and directional signage																		
	Park interp signage																		
	Garden interp signage																		
Professional Development	AASLH Conference																		
	WMA Conference																		
	Ongoing opportunities																		