Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture

Sample Application ALHC-258428-OMS-25

El Museo Latino

Amount awarded by IMLS: $499,999
Amount of cost share: $0

El Museo Latino will advance and improve the management and care of the museum's collection. The museum will hire a Curator of Collections and a Curatorial Assistant to update current records and to complete cataloguing of the collection. The museum will also upgrade the collection management software for improved capabilities, increased storage, and accessibility. Project activities will include hiring a Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and a Curatorial Assistant, purchasing collection storage cabinets, acquiring software to upgrade the collection management system, providing archival supplies for the museum to ensure the preservation of the collection, and cataloguing the collection in an updated system that will make the collection accessible to the staff and public.

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.

1. Project Justification

Program Goals:

El Museo Latino's project aligns with ALHC Program Goal 1: Build the capacity of American Latino museums to serve their communities, specifically addressing Objective 1.4: Support the management and care of collections in American Latino museums.

Through this project, El Museo Latino intends to strengthen its ability to care for and manage its collection, which is essential to our mission of preserving and sharing the history, culture, and art of the American Latino community. To meet this objective, our project will focus on several key activities: 1) Hiring a Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and a Curatorial Assistant will ensure that our collection is cataloged, organized, and cared for according to the highest standards, enabling us to better preserve and interpret Latino cultural heritage for current and future generations. 2) Purchasing collection storage cabinets will provide high-quality storage solutions, including cabinets designed to protect our artifacts, and implement a comprehensive collection storage system that will utilize the collection storage space to preserve our collection most efficiently. 3) Purchasing an upgraded version of PastPerfect collection management system will upgrade our current PastPerfect system to a web-based version, allowing for improved access to collection records, better long-term management, and increased public access to the collection. The upgrade fees included in this request are for the upgrade and maintenance fees for the first year, and maintenance and fees for the second and third years to ensure ongoing system support. 4) Acquiring Archival Supplies will ensure the preservation of fragile items in our collection. We will purchase acid-free archival supplies to properly store and protect objects from deterioration and environmental damage.

These activities are designed to significantly enhance El Museo Latino's operational capacity, improve the preservation of our collection, and ensure that we are well-equipped to serve our community with high-quality exhibitions and educational programs that highlight the contributions of the American Latino community.

El Museo Latino's project will address a critical challenge in the effective management and preservation of our collection, which is essential to our ability to serve the public and fulfill our mission to preserve and share the rich history, culture, and art of the American Latino community. Specifically, the need we aim to address is the complete cataloguing the current collection and to prepare for the continued growth in appropriate museum collection storge cabinets and systems, which poses risks to the long-term preservation of our artifacts and limits our capacity to serve a growing audience.

Statement of Need:

The need was identified through a combination of internal assessments, feedback from museum staff, and an external assessment and evaluations of our collection by an outside consultant. Key factors include: 1) A recent internal evaluation of our collection revealed that many of our artifacts require better storage solutions and updated preservation methods to protect them from deterioration. Our current storage system is not equipped to meet the standards for long-term care and EML needs assistance with support for staff to address this need. 2) Our current collection management system is a standard PastPerfect program that is a one desktop, is outdated, and limits access and efficiency. We researched management systems and identified that an upgrade to a web-based version of PastPerfect would significantly improve the management of our collection, making it easier to catalog, track, and maintain records. Additionally, the lack of regular professional support has created gaps in our ability to manage our collection efficiently. 3) Demographic data shows a significant increase in the Latino population in our region, as well as growing interest in American Latino culture and history among broader audiences. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Latino population is projected to continue expanding, particularly in areas where El Museo Latino is located. This demographic shift underscores the importance of our museum in preserving and sharing Latino culture. To meet the needs of a

growing and diverse audience, we must ensure our collection is properly managed, complete, and accessible. 4) As a small, nonprofit institution, El Museo Latino has limited financial resources to invest in the necessary infrastructure and staffing. While we have received some support through grants that assessed our collection and identified needs, and to make small purchases of archival materials and supplies, our collection management capabilities have not kept pace with the increasing demands of both our collection's growth and public interest. This funding gap has made it challenging to adequately care for our collection and ensure its sustainability.

Project Target Group & Beneficiaries:

The primary audience for our project includes museum visitors, staff members, and students or interns participating in our educational and professional development programs. These groups will be the most immediately and positively impacted by the improvements in our collection management practices and the increased capacity of the museum to serve the community. 1) Museum Visitors: The local community, particularly the Latino population in our region, as well as general museum supporters, represent our primary audience. According to demographic data, the Latino population in Omaha and in the State of Nebraska is growing rapidly, which makes our museum's collection and educational offerings especially relevant. We anticipate that the number of visitors impacted by the improved collection management will impact the more than 60,000 annual visitors, including those who will benefit from more accessible exhibitions, educational programming, and enhanced artifacts that are better preserved and displayed. 2)Museum Staff: Our staff will directly benefit from the new hires (Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and Curatorial Assistant) and the upgraded collection management system. These positions and systems will streamline operations and improve the efficiency of day-to-day work, benefiting every area of the museum. 3) Students and Interns: As part of our commitment to professional development, the project will support internships and fellowships for students, especially those from Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) or those pursuing careers in museum studies and curatorial practices. Through the new positions and expanded resources, we expect to offer hands-on experience and mentoring opportunities to approximately 4-10 students and interns annually. These individuals will gain valuable skills in collections management, archival practices, and museum operations, strengthening the next generation of museum professionals, particularly in American Latino cultural institutions. 4) Educators and Researchers: Finally, also directly benefiting from the completed cataloguing and collection management system upgrade are educators and researchers who will have access to conduct studies and research of our collection.

Involvement in Planning

The primary audiences that have been actively involved in the planning process to ensure the project addresses their specific needs and interests include: 1) Museum visitors engaged with staff through surveys and informal feedback sessions, both in-person at the museum and through digital channels. This allowed us to understand the types of exhibits and collections they most want to engage with and the importance they place on the preservation of cultural artifacts. Their feedback has helped guide our priorities for collection care and accessibility improvements. 2) Museum staff members have been closely involved in the planning and decision-making process. We conducted internal meetings with our curatorial, education, and collections management teams to identify specific needs in terms of staffing, storage solutions, and technology upgrades. Staff input has been crucial in shaping the project's scope, particularly regarding the collection management system and archival supplies. 3) We have consulted with students and faculty at local universities and institutions, especially Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), to ensure that the professional development opportunities we are creating are aligned with the needs of students pursuing museum-related careers. We have also gathered input from previous interns, who shared their insights on what would enhance their experience at El Museo Latino, particularly in the areas of curatorial work and collections management.

By directly involving these primary audiences in the planning process, we have ensured that the project addresses their needs and will have a meaningful, positive impact on their experience at El Museo Latino.

Beneficiaries:

The ultimate beneficiaries of El Museo Latino's project are the broader community, future generations, and the museum field at large, particularly those with an interest in preserving and sharing American Latino history, culture and the arts. These groups will benefit from the long-term impacts of the improvements in collection management, preservation, and accessibility that our project will enable.
1) The broader community is the ultimate beneficiary of this project and include local, regional, and national community members who will have access to a more robust and preserved collection of American Latino art, history, and culture. While our primary audience includes those who will benefit immediately, such as current museum visitors, the long-term beneficiaries will include the thousands of individuals who will engage with the museum's enhanced exhibits, educational programs, and outreach initiatives over the years. We expect that our collection improvements will help us increase public access to Latino cultural history, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of Latino contributions to American society. Educators, students, and researchers will also benefit from improved access to our collection for study and educational purposes. 2) Future generations will benefit by ensuring that culturally significant objects are maintained, conserved, and accessible for decades to come. The improved archival storage and updated collection management system will make it easier to track and preserve artifacts, allowing future generations to engage with these materials in the context of ongoing exhibitions, research, and educational programs. This is particularly important in ensuring that younger generations of Latinos and other community members can connect with their cultural heritage. 3) The project will also impact the museum workforce at large, particularly through internships, fellowships, and the training of emerging museum professionals. Interns and students from Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) or other academic programs related to museum studies will benefit from the hands-on experience and mentorship provided by the project. This project will contribute to a more diverse and skilled professional workforce in the museum sector, especially in the field of American Latino cultural institutions. 4) Beyond our immediate stakeholders, the project will also benefit cultural heritage preservationists, curators, and historians who will benefit from the enhanced practices and methodologies adopted by El Museo Latino. As we improve our collection management system and share our knowledge and best practices, we will contribute to the broader field of Latino cultural preservation. This can have ripple effects throughout other museums, archives, and cultural institutions working to preserve Latino heritage.

While it is difficult to provide an exact count of all individuals who will benefit in the future, we estimate that the ultimate beneficiaries will include: 1) Tens of thousands of community members will visit the museum over the years with over 60,000 visitors annually. 2) Hundreds of students and emerging museum professionals who will gain practical experience through internships and fellowships at El Museo Latino. 3) Dozens of cultural heritage professionals who will be exposed to or benefit from the best practices in collection management, preservation, and curatorial work developed by our museum. 4) Generations of educators, researchers, and scholars will engage with the museum's collections and materials for educational and research purposes in the future.

2. Project Work Plan

Specific Activities
El Museo Latino's project will involve the following key activities, carried out in a logical sequence to ensure effective implementation of the proposed improvements in collection management:
Hiring of Key Personnel (Months 1-3):
Activity: Recruit and hire a Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and a Curatorial Assistant. These roles are essential for cataloging, managing, and preserving the museum's collection.
Outcome: The museum will have dedicated, qualified staff to handle collections management.

Purchase of Collection Storage System and Archival Supplies (Months 4-6):
Activity: Procure appropriate storage solutions, such as collection storage cabinets, acid-free archival supplies and other necessary materials for object preservation.
Outcome: The collection will be stored in a secure, climate-controlled environment, reducing the risk of deterioration.

Purchase and install the upgrade web-based version of PastPerfect System (Months 4-6):
Activity: Transition from the current desktop version of PastPerfect to the web-based version.
Outcome: The collection management system will be upgraded for improved accessibility, record-keeping, and long-term data storage.

Cataloging and Documentation of Collection (Months 4-24):
Activity: The Curator of Collections and Curatorial Assistant will begin cataloging the complete records for the objects already in the existing collection and cataloguing the remaining objects into the upgraded PastPerfect system and ensuring proper storage and conservation methods are applied.
Outcome: An updated, comprehensive inventory of the museum's collection, ensuring that all items are properly documented and tracked.

Ongoing Training and Professional Development (Months 4-36):
Activity: The Curator and Curatorial Assistant will participate in training related to best practices in collections care and management.
Outcome: Increased competency in collections management and curation practices.

Risks

While we anticipate successful project implementation, there are potential risks to consider: 1) Delays in Hiring Key Personnel: Risk: Difficulty in recruiting qualified staff within the desired timeline may delay the planned start of the project. Mitigation: Begin recruitment as early as possible and work with local staffing agencies and networks to identify qualified candidates. Ensure flexibility in timelines and build in buffer periods for recruitment.
2) Budget Overruns: Risk: The costs of archival supplies, storage cabinets, or the PastPerfect upgrade may exceed the budget. Mitigation: Obtain quotes and plan for contingencies in the budget. Regularly monitor expenditures and adjust as necessary. Work with trusted vendors who can guarantee competitive pricing and quality.
3) Technology Implementation Challenges: Risk: The transition to the web-based PastPerfect system may encounter technical difficulties or delays. Mitigation: Work with the PastPerfect technical support team early in the process. Ensure that necessary IT resources and staff training are available.
4) Staff Overload: Risk: Current staff may become overwhelmed with their regular duties and the additional responsibilities of this project. Mitigation: Hire the Curatorial Assistant early in the project and offer additional temporary staff support if necessary. Provide adequate training and resources to ensure the staff can efficiently manage both new and existing responsibilities.

Key Project Personnel

The following individuals and teams will be responsible for planning, implementing, and managing the project: 1) The Executive Director of El Museo Latino will serve as the Project Manager, overseeing all activities, coordinating staff, and ensuring the project remains on schedule and within budget. 2) Curator of Collections will oversee the cataloging process, manage the collection, and ensure proper care and conservation methods are applied. 3) The Curatorial Assistant will assist in cataloging and organizing the collection, helping to maintain accurate records and oversee the storage and preservation of objects. 4) An IT Support consultant will be responsible for implementing the PastPerfect system upgrade and ensuring it functions properly. 5) A

Finance Manager will be responsible for tracking the budget, managing expenses, and ensuring financial accountability.

Project Resources

Project Resources include time resources, financial resources, personnel resources, and other resources. 1)The project will span 3-years, with major milestones in hiring, procurement, system upgrade, and cataloging completed by the end of the project. Ongoing activities such as cataloging, training, and maintenance will continue through the end of the project.

2) Financial Resources include a) Personnel Costs in the Salary for the Curator of Collections and Curatorial Assistant. b) Purchase of collection storage cabinets, archival supplies. and software upgrade. c) System software costs and maintenance costs for the upgraded web-based version of the PastPerfect upgrade during the first year and service/maintenance for the second and third years. d) A percentage of the Project Director's salary for time on this project. e) An IT consultant will be responsible for implementing the PastPerfect system upgrade and ensuring it functions properly. f) The Finance Manager will be responsible for tracking the budget, managing expenses, and ensuring financial accountability. g) Professional development opportunities and training for museum staff.

3) Personnel Resources include: a) Curator of Collections (Full-time, 36 months). b) Curatorial Assistant (Full-time, 36 months). c) Executive Director (Percentage salary - time overseeing project). 4) Finance Manager (Consultant-managing budget). 5) IT Support (Consultant or internal IT team for the system upgrade)

4) Other Resources: a) Equipment: Collection storage cabinets, archival supplies, and software. b) Technology: Web-based PastPerfect system and necessary IT infrastructure.

Evaluation and Tracking Progress

To ensure the project stays on track and achieves the intended results, we will use the following methods to track progress:

Project Timeline and Milestones: We will track progress using a detailed Gantt chart, marking key milestones such as hiring staff, purchasing supplies, system upgrades, and cataloging completion. Regular team meetings (bi-weekly and monthly) will review the timeline and adjust activities as necessary.

Budget Monitoring: Regular budget monitoring and reviews will ensure expenses are aligned with the planned costs. The Finance Manager will provide monthly updates on spending, with quarterly reviews to assess the financial status of the project.

Performance Metrics: Success will be measured by achieving the following key outcomes: 1) Completion of the hiring process for the Curator and Curatorial Assistant. 2) Successful purchase and installation of storage solutions and archival supplies. 3) Completion of the PastPerfect system upgrade. 4) Cataloging of 33% of the collection by the end of Month 12 and 66% by the end of Month 24, and 100% by end of Month 36. 5) Successful training of staff in best practices for collections management.

Feedback from Stakeholders: Regular feedback from museum staff, interns, and community members will be collected through surveys and informal meetings to ensure the project is meeting its goals and to make adjustments as needed.

3. Project Results

Intended Results

The intended results of this project are to significantly enhance the management, preservation, and accessibility of El Museo Latino's collection, with a focus on improving the museum's operational capacity and its ability to serve the growing and diverse Latino community. The project will directly address the identified challenges of inadequate storage and archival supplies, outdated collection management systems, and insufficient staff support for collections management.

By upgrading our collection management systems (PastPerfect), improving storage solutions for the collection, and hiring additional qualified staff (Curator of Collections and Curatorial Assistant), we will create a more efficient and sustainable infrastructure for preserving and sharing the rich cultural heritage of the American Latino community. These changes will enhance the museum's ability to serve the public through better exhibitions, more accessible collections, and educational programming, directly aligning with the grant's goal to build capacity and support collections management in American Latino museums.

From a broader perspective, the project will also advance knowledge about the American Latino experience by providing improved access to the museum's artifacts, thus fostering a deeper understanding of Latino history and culture within our community and beyond. Public engagement will be strengthened, particularly with young people, educators, and researchers interested in learning more about the Latino experience in America.

The project will generate tangible benefits by improving the museum's ability to serve its mission—to preserve and interpret Latino culture and history—and enhancing the professional workforce in the museum field, particularly in the areas of curatorial and collection management.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes:
The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of our primary audience will undergo significant changes as a result of this project will be changed through this project and includes museum visitors, museum staff and interns and students. Museum visitors will gain knowledge and a deeper understanding of American Latino history and culture as they engage with enhanced, well-preserved collections that will be more accessible and more effectively curated. The public's attitudes will be changed toward American Latino culture will be positively influenced through exposure to carefully preserved and thoughtfully interpreted exhibits. This will help foster greater respect and appreciation for Latino heritage, while also creating a stronger sense of cultural pride among Latino community members. The skills for educators and students who engage with our collection, their skills in research and historical analysis will be enhanced as they gain access to a well-documented, accessible collection. Staff skills will be significantly advanced through professional development. They will gain experience with best practices in collections management, preservation, and curatorial work. This will help them develop better organizational and technical skills related to the care of cultural objects, as well as broader management skills. In addition, staff will adopt a more efficient, organized approach to managing the museum's collection, implementing modern techniques in archival storage, cataloging, and digital record-keeping. Interns and Students who participate in this project will gain hands-on experience in collections management and museum operations, learning directly from seasoned professionals in the field. They will also develop an understanding of how to properly handle and preserve cultural artifacts, ensuring that these practices are carried forward in their future careers.

Overall, these changes will strengthen the museum's ability to offer high-quality, accessible exhibitions and educational programming, leading to a deeper engagement with Latino cultural heritage and fostering a professional workforce skilled in collections management and curatorial practices.

This project will result in several improvements in the care, condition, and management of El Museo Latino's collection: 1) Improved Storage and Preservation will be possible with the purchase of new storage cabinets and archival supplies, that will ensure that the collection is stored in an optimal environment, reducing risks of deterioration. The use of acid-free archival materials and specialized storage will preserve the integrity of the artifacts for future generations. 2) The upgraded collection management system PastPerfect web-based version will allow for more efficient cataloging, tracking, and management of the collection. The upgraded system will improve the accessibility and integrity of our records, making it easier for staff to update and manage collection information in real time. 3) The digitization of collection records and objects will also improve public access to these materials, whether through online collections databases or digital archives that can be accessed remotely. This increases the visibility and accessibility of our collection beyond physical visits. 4) The hiring of a Curator of Collections and Curatorial Assistant will enable us to catalog and document the entire collection, improving the organization of our objects and records. This process will ensure that each item is properly accounted for, documented, and cared for in line with industry standards.

These improvements will ensure that the collection is more effectively managed, well-preserved, and easily accessible to both the public and museum staff.

Several tangible products will result from this project: Once the cataloguing has been completed, the museum's collection will be able to be used by the museum to access, research, and exhibit objects from the collection with the proper documentation, provenance, and condition of the object, EML will be able to use more the collection to create exhibitions and for consideration as loans to other institutions. The updated collection management system (PastPerfect) will also make the collection available and accessible to visitors, students, scholars, and researchers. Through improved storage and archival methods, the museum's collection will be in a better condition to withstand the test of time. This will result in an increase in the number of exhibits and educational programs that feature well-preserved objects. Finally, with enhanced access to the collection, we will be able to develop educational materials and programming that will allow the primary audience—community members, students, and educators—to learn more about the significance of the collection.

These products will be made accessible to the primary audience through in-person exhibits, online access to the collection and through educational programming that showcases the collection's significance. We will also ensure that information about the improvements and new resources is shared through the museum's website, newsletters, and social media channels.

The sustainability of the benefits from this project will be ensured through the following strategies: 1) with the ongoing collection care will make improvements in the storage and cataloguing and care of the collection. The Curator of Collections and Curatorial Assistant will continue to oversee the care and management of the collection, ensuring that long-term preservation practices are maintained. 2) Staff Training and Capacity Building through professional development will be provided for museum staff to ensure they continue to follow best practices in collections management. Interns and new staff will be trained in the upgraded systems and processes, ensuring that the museum's operational capacity remains strong. 3) With digital access, the upgraded web version of the collection management system (PastPerfect) and digital cataloging will provide long-term access to the collection. The digital platform can be continuously updated and expanded as new collections are acquired, ensuring that future audiences can engage with the museum's holdings. 4) El Museo Latino will seek additional funding through grants, donations, and partnerships to maintain the upgraded systems, purchase supplies as needed, and fund future staff positions related to collections care. Additionally, the museum will engage with our community through outreach programs to ensure continued public support and interests. 5) With Partnerships and Collaboration, we will seek to collaborate with other institutions, academic partners, and cultural organizations to ensure the continued growth and accessibility of the collection and educational resources. This will help us build a network of support to keep the collection and programming vibrant. By implementing these strategies, the benefits of the project will be sustained, allowing the museum to continue serving the community and preserving American Latino culture for generations to come.

EL MUSEO LATINO **Schedule of Completion**

YEAR - 1	YEAR 1 - July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026											
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Recruit and Hire a Curator of Collections												
Recruit and Hire a Curatorial Assistant												
Acquire and Implement Collection Storage System												
Upgrade and Migrate Data to PastPerfect												
Cataloging and Documentation of Collection												
Identify and Open Select Collections for Students												
Periodic Grant Reporting												
Manage Budget and Operations of Program												
Ongoing Training and Professional Development												

YEAR - 2	YEAR 2 - July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027											
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Recruit and Hire a Curator of Collections												
Recruit and Hire a Curatorial Assistant												
Acquire and Implement Collection Storage System												
Upgrade and Migrate Data to PastPerfect												
Cataloging and Documentation of Collection												
Identify and Open Select Collections for Students												
Periodic Grant Reporting												
Manage Budget and Operations of Program												
Ongoing Training and Professional Development												

EL MUSEO LATINO	**Schedule of Completion**											
YEAR - 3												
	YEAR 3 - July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028											
Recruit and Hire a Curator of Collections	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Recruit and Hire a Curatorial Assistant												
Acquire and Implement Collection Storage System												
Upgrade and Migrate Data to PastPerfect												
Cataloging and Documentation of Collection												
Identify and Open Select Collections for Students												
Periodic Grant Reporting												`
Manage Budget and Operations of Program												`
Ongoing Training and Professional Development												