



Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture

Sample Application ALHC-260163-OMS-26

Comunidad y Herencia Cultural

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$397,391

Amount of cost share: \$0

The Comunidad y Herencia Cultural will create a series of traveling exhibits to engage with rural communities across Oregon where participants can learn about the Mexican equestrian tradition known as Charrería. The traveling exhibition will feature authentic attire, saddlery, ropes, books, photographs, and multimedia displays that illustrate the rich cultural legacy of Charrería rooted in history, family, artistry, connection to land and animals, and community identity. Project activities include developing exhibition materials, collaborating with local schools to plan interactive educational programming, and installing the traveling exhibit in partnership with up to six local communities each year. This project will enhance the care and use of the museum collections by implementing professional handling protocols, using protective display cases, and maintaining secure transport methods to ensure the preservation of fragile materials. The project includes public programming with live demonstrations and storytelling emphasizing that Charrería is a living tradition actively sustained by families today. As a result of this project, students, families, and community members will gain increased historical understanding of the story of Charrería and Latino Americans in Oregon while strengthening cross-cultural connections in rural communities.

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.

Comunidad y Herencia Cultural

Charro and Escaramuza Museum and Traveling Exhibition

Project Narrative

Project Justification

Our program will address the program objective 1.1 Develop, enhance or expand public programs, exhibitions, and/or school programs.

For generations, horsemanship has represented far more than an equestrian discipline for Latino American communities. Charrería embodies a rich cultural legacy rooted in history, family, artistry, connection to land and animals, and community identity. For Latino American families in Oregon, particularly in rural areas, Charrería connects them to the way of life of their ancestors dating to the colonial period of the Americas, fostering heritage, community and belonging. Since 2016, Comunidad y Herencia Cultural has presented attire exhibitions and educational programs highlighting Charrería's history, significance, and enduring relevance, ensuring Latino American stories are visible and celebrated across the state.

Through our project, Charro and Escaramuza Museum and Traveling Exhibitions, we seek to bring this rich cultural tradition to a minimum of six rural communities per year across Oregon. Our exhibitions trace Charrería's origins to colonial-era vaqueros and charros who developed cattle-management techniques on large haciendas. Over time, these ranching skills evolved into a formalized tradition celebrating horsemanship, teamwork, and craftsmanship. Exhibits explore Charro culture, symbolism of traditional attire, and the role of music, family participation, and community gatherings. Special attention is given to the artistry of charro outfits, embroidery, silver adornments, and the elegant dresses worn by escaramuzas, women performing synchronized equestrian routines that reflect grace, discipline, and cultural pride.

Through curated exhibitions that include outfits, saddlery, photographs, books, and storytelling, our exhibitions bring Charrería to life for audiences with limited exposure to Latino American cultural history. Students and families gain insight into migration, identity, and cultural continuity. For Latino youth, seeing their heritage represented in schools, libraries, and community spaces fosters cultural pride and a sense of belonging.

A central focus is bringing exhibitions directly to rural communities where representation of Latino American history is scarce. Programs are interactive and educational: students examine attire, learn about ranching traditions, explore craftsmanship, and reflect on teamwork, respect, and discipline within Charrería. Public programming includes live demonstrations, storytelling, and dialogue with Charros and Escaramuzas, emphasizing that Charrería is a living tradition actively sustained by families today.

Funding will allow us to extend programming in rural communities, enhance exhibition content, and strengthen partnerships with schools, libraries, museums and cultural organizations. This ensures students and families across Oregon continue to engage with and learn from this vital aspect of Latino American history.

Ultimately, the project makes the story of Charrería, and Latino Americans in Oregon visible, valued, and widely shared, fostering inclusive historical understanding, inspiring cultural pride, and strengthening cross-cultural connections in rural communities.

Statement of Need

Across rural regions of Oregon, Latino American families play a vital role in the agricultural economy and cultural life of their communities, yet their stories and traditions are often absent from schools, museums, and public programming. This lack of representation creates a gap in

cultural education, limiting opportunities for Latino American youth and families to see their heritage reflected in public spaces. Our project addresses this gap by expanding culturally relevant exhibitions and programs that highlight the history and significance of Charrería, recognized internationally as a living heritage of Latino American communities.

Demographic data underscore the growing importance of Latino communities, particularly in rural counties where agriculture is a primary industry. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latino Americans comprise nearly 14% of Oregon's population, with higher concentrations in rural areas. In several agricultural regions, they represent 30–50% of the population, and Latino students are among the fastest-growing groups in many districts. Oregon Department of Education data indicate Latino American students account for roughly one quarter of the statewide K–12 population, with higher percentages in rural and agricultural districts. Despite these demographics, educational resources and cultural programming reflecting Latino American heritage remain limited outside urban centers.

Economic factors further highlight the need for accessible programming. Many families work in agriculture, seasonal labor, or service industries, facing economic barriers to arts and cultural engagement. Transportation challenges, limited school arts funding, and geographic isolation further restrict opportunities to experience cultural heritage.

Comunidad y Herencia Cultural identified this need through years of direct community engagement. Since 2016, we have produced cultural events, exhibitions, and educational programs celebrating Latino American heritage, hosting an average of 80 programs annually over the past five years. Feedback from educators, parents, and community leaders consistently emphasizes the demand for programming that connects history, art, and culture in meaningful ways for students and families.

Informal assessments confirm that many rural towns and school districts lack resources to host traveling exhibitions. Museums and cultural institutions are often concentrated in urban centers, leaving students with little exposure to Latino American cultural history beyond family experiences.

Our exhibitions address this gap by bringing high-quality, culturally relevant programming directly to schools, libraries, and community centers. Focusing on Charrería's history, traditions, attire, equestrian practices, and family-centered performances, these interactive experiences foster engagement with history, culture, and identity. Students and families explore craftsmanship, teamwork, and cultural values while learning about migration, agricultural labor, and Latino American contributions to Oregon's social and economic development.

This project is both cultural and educational. By expanding access, we ensure Latino American heritage is visible in rural schools and communities, strengthen partnerships, and celebrate Latino American stories and traditions across Oregon.

Primary Audience and Community Involvement

The primary audience for this project is Latino American youth and families in rural Oregon communities, particularly where access to culturally relevant educational programming is limited. Many of these families are connected to the agricultural economy, including migrant and seasonal farmworker communities. Through exhibitions and educational programs highlighting the history and cultural significance of Charrería, we seek to reach students, families, and community members who have historically had few opportunities to see their heritage represented in schools, museums, and public spaces.

The largest segment of our audience is K–12 students in rural districts with significant Latino American enrollment. According to the Oregon Department of Education, Latino American students account for roughly one quarter of the statewide student population, with higher percentages in agricultural regions. Through school-based exhibitions, classroom presentations, and interactive workshops, we anticipate serving 15,000–20,000 students and families annually. Programs engage students in history, art, craftsmanship, and cultural traditions while strengthening identity, community and belonging.

A second audience includes Latino American families and community members attending public exhibitions at libraries, community centers, and local events. Many rural areas have limited arts and cultural programming, particularly content reflecting Latino American heritage. Exhibitions are expected to reach 10,000–15,000 additional participants annually across generations, fostering intergenerational learning as families share stories, traditions, and cultural knowledge. The project also engages educators, students, and community members from diverse backgrounds, promoting cross-cultural understanding and strengthening relationships across communities.

The primary audience has been deeply involved in planning this project. Comunidad y Herencia Cultural has collaborated with families, educators, and community leaders for over a decade. Teachers, administrators, and migrant education coordinators provide input on culturally relevant content that connects students to their heritage while supporting educational goals. Local charro and escaramuza practitioners contribute expertise and lived experience to ensure exhibitions are authentic, educational, and reflective of contemporary practice.

This collaborative process ensures the project meets the needs of rural communities while preserving and sharing Latino American cultural heritage. By working directly with families, educators, and cultural practitioners, the program uplifts community voices, strengthens youth cultural pride, and provides lasting educational and cultural learning opportunities throughout Oregon.

Ultimate Beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project are Latino American youth, families, educators, and rural communities across Oregon, who will gain long-term access to culturally relevant educational resources and public programming. While students and community members who attend exhibitions and school programs are the immediate audience, the broader impact will extend to thousands of individuals who will benefit from increased cultural awareness, educational opportunities, and community connection as these programs continue to grow.

Latino American youth in rural Oregon are a primary long-term beneficiary group. Many come from families with deep cultural traditions connected to Mexico and Latin America but rarely see their heritage represented in school curricula, museums, or public programming. By expanding exhibitions highlighting the history and significance of Charrería, the project provides youth opportunities to connect with their heritage while learning about history, art, and craftsmanship. This representation strengthens cultural identity, confidence, and engagement in educational and community activities. As exhibitions reach additional schools and organizations, thousands of students across rural Oregon will benefit over time.

Latino American families and agricultural communities also benefit long-term. In many rural towns, Latino American families form a substantial portion of the population and workforce, yet their history and cultural contributions are often underrepresented. By bringing exhibitions and

programming directly to these communities, families can celebrate heritage, share traditions with younger generations, and see their cultural contributions recognized.

Educators and schools benefit as well. Teachers and administrators often seek culturally relevant materials reflecting students' diverse backgrounds. This project provides exhibitions, presentations, events and interactive learning experiences that can be incorporated into classroom instruction and reused over time, supporting culturally inclusive education across multiple districts.

Broader communities benefit from public exhibitions that foster cross-cultural understanding and strengthen connections among diverse audiences. By sharing Charrería's history, symbolism, and values, the project encourages dialogue about migration, cultural exchange, and Latino American contributions to Oregon's social and economic life.

Ultimately, long-term beneficiaries include both Latino American communities whose stories are being shared and the wider public who gain deeper understanding of Oregon's cultural diversity. As we expand exhibitions, school programs, and community partnerships, these efforts will ensure Latino American heritage is visible, respected, and integrated into the state's cultural and educational landscape for generations to come.

Project Work Plan

Our project will follow a structured sequence of activities to bring the history and culture of Charrería to rural communities across Oregon.

The first phase focuses on preparation and development. Comunidad y Herencia Cultural will refine exhibition materials, including traditional Charro and Escaramuza attire, saddlery, photographs, books, artifacts and bilingual panels. This phase ensures that all displays are culturally accurate, engaging, and accessible to both Spanish- and English-speaking audiences.

The second phase emphasizes outreach and coordination. We will collaborate with rural schools, libraries, community centers, and migrant education programs to schedule exhibition dates, confirm venues, and plan interactive educational presentations. Community partners will help promote events to ensure strong participation from students, families and other stakeholders.

The third phase is the public presentation of exhibitions. Traveling exhibitions will be installed in partner communities, accompanied by guided tours, classroom presentations, and hands-on activities where participants can explore traditional clothing, craftsmanship, and the symbolism of Charrería.

The final phase focuses on evaluation and documentation. We will collect feedback from educators, students, and community participants to assess program effectiveness and identify improvements. Insights from this evaluation will guide future exhibitions and support the continued expansion of culturally relevant educational programs throughout rural Oregon.

The primary risks to this project include low community participation, logistical challenges in rural locations, and potential damage to delicate exhibition materials. Rural communities may face transportation or scheduling barriers, limiting attendance at school or public events. To mitigate this, Comunidad y Herencia Cultural partners with local schools, libraries, and migrant education programs to coordinate convenient dates, provide bilingual outreach, and leverage existing community networks to ensure strong participation.

Logistical risks, such as venue availability or setup delays, are addressed through early site coordination, detailed event planning, and use of portable, adaptable exhibition materials designed for easy transport and installation.

Finally, to protect fragile items and artifacts, we will use protective display cases, proper handling protocols, and trained staff or volunteers during transport and installation. These combined strategies reduce the likelihood of disruptions, safeguard materials, and maximize accessibility, ensuring the project successfully reaches rural audiences and achieves its educational and cultural goals.

The project will be led by Jose Antonio Huerta, who brings extensive experience in Charrería programming and community engagement. He will oversee planning, exhibition development, and partnerships with schools, libraries, museums and community organizations. Program staff and trained volunteers will assist with implementation, including exhibition setup, guided tours, classroom presentations, and hands-on activities. Administrative staff will manage scheduling, outreach, and documentation, while collaborating with local educators and community leaders. Together, this team ensures that the project is delivered efficiently, safely, and with cultural authenticity, reaching rural audiences and fostering meaningful engagement.

To successfully carry out this project, we will require a combination of time, financial resources, personnel, and materials. Time will be allocated across four key phases: preparation and exhibition development, outreach and coordination with schools and community organizations, public presentation of exhibitions and educational programs, and evaluation/documentation. Financial resources will support staffing, honoraria for cultural practitioners such as Charros and Escaramuzas, travel, supplies and materials, and culture and knowledge bearers who will lead and participate in some of the activities.

Personnel needs include the project director, program staff, trained volunteers, and administrative staff to manage scheduling, logistics, and community partnerships. We will also engage educators and local community leaders to assist with outreach and program facilitation.

Additional resources include audiovisual equipment for multimedia components, hands-on activity materials for students, and supplies for interactive activities.

Progress will be tracked through multiple methods. Attendance will be recorded at all activities. Surveys and feedback forms will be collected from participants to assess engagement and learning outcomes. Staff and volunteer debriefs after each event will identify successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Data will be compiled to measure participation, community reach, and educational impact, ensuring the project meets its goals and informs future program expansion.

Project Results

The intended results of this project are both educational and cultural, addressing the lack of representation of Latino American heritage in rural Oregon communities. From an educational perspective, the project will increase knowledge and understanding of Charrería, its historical origins, and its cultural significance. Students, families, and community members will gain hands-on experience with traditional Charro and Escaramuza attire, craftsmanship, and equestrian traditions, fostering greater cultural literacy and appreciation. By providing bilingual materials and interactive learning opportunities, the project ensures accessibility and strengthens engagement for both Spanish- and English-speaking audiences.

From a societal perspective, the project generates long-term benefits by promoting inclusion, representation, and cultural understanding. By bringing exhibitions and educational programs to rural communities where Latino American history is often overlooked, we validate and celebrate

the contributions of Latino Americans, fostering pride and belonging among youth and families. The project also encourages cross-cultural understanding for broader audiences, strengthening community cohesion.

Ultimately, the project addresses identified gaps in cultural education while leveraging federal investment to create lasting societal benefits. It advances knowledge, preserves cultural heritage, and supports equitable access to educational and cultural experiences for historically underserved communities in Oregon.

Participation in this project will result in meaningful changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes among our primary audience, Latino American youth, families, and community members in rural Oregon. Students and youth will gain increased knowledge of Charrería, including its historical origins, cultural symbolism, and the craftsmanship involved in traditional attire and related exhibit materials. Through hands-on learning, guided tours, and interactive presentations, they will develop skills in cultural observation, historical inquiry, and appreciation for artistic and equestrian traditions.

In addition to knowledge and skills, the project will positively influence attitudes and behaviors. Exposure to culturally relevant exhibitions will strengthen cultural pride and identity among Latino American youth, helping them see their heritage reflected in public educational settings. Families and community members will gain a deeper appreciation for Charrería and its role in Latino American history, which may encourage continued participation in cultural practices, storytelling, and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

For broader audiences, including educators and non-Latino American students, the project will foster curiosity, respect, and understanding of Latino American cultural contributions to Oregon's communities. By combining experiential learning with community engagement, the project nurtures inclusive attitudes and a lasting commitment to valuing cultural diversity. Over time, these changes reinforce both personal growth and stronger sense of community.

This project will significantly enhance the care, condition, management, access, and use of the museum-quality collections associated with Charrería. Many of the items included in our traveling exhibitions such as traditional charro outfits, escaramuza dresses, saddlery, ropes and handcrafted accessories are delicate, historically significant, and culturally valuable. To ensure their preservation, we will implement professional handling protocols, use protective display cases, and maintain secure transport methods specifically designed for fragile textiles and leather goods. Staff and trained volunteers will receive specialized training in artifact care, ensuring that each item is handled safely during installation, transportation, and presentations.

Beyond physical preservation, the project will improve management and documentation of the collections. All items will be cataloged with detailed descriptions, provenance information, and care notes, creating a comprehensive record that can be used for future exhibitions, educational programs, and research.

Importantly, the project also expands access to these collections for communities that rarely can engage with them. By traveling to rural schools, libraries, and community centers, we make the collections accessible to thousands of students, families, and educators, creating opportunities for hands-on learning, cultural engagement, and broader appreciation of Latino American heritage. This approach ensures that the collections are not only preserved but actively used to educate and inspire diverse audiences throughout Oregon.

The primary products resulting from this project will be more polished and curated traveling exhibitions, educational materials, and interactive programming designed to highlight the history, culture and significance of Charrería. The exhibitions will feature authentic Charro and Escaramuza attire, saddlery, ropes, books, photographs, multimedia displays, and bilingual interpretive panels. These materials will be carefully curated to provide a visually engaging and educational experience that communicates both the artistry and cultural relevance of Charrería. These materials will enable students and educators to explore the symbolism, craftsmanship, and historical context of Charrería through interactive learning experiences. All educational resources will be bilingual to ensure accessibility for Spanish- and English-speaking audiences, reflecting the diverse communities we serve.

To make these products accessible, we will bring exhibitions and educational programming directly to rural schools, libraries, museums and community centers, overcoming barriers such as geographic isolation and limited local resources. Public events will include guided tours, demonstrations, and opportunities for audience engagement with the artifacts. Digital documentation, including photographs and educational resources, will also be made available to educators and community partners for continued use. By combining physical, interactive, and digital access, we ensure that primary audiences can engage fully with these cultural and educational products.

The benefits of this project will be sustained beyond the grant period through a combination of continued community engagement, capacity building and resource development. By establishing partnerships with rural schools, libraries, museums and community centers, Comunidad y Herencia Cultural ensures that exhibitions and educational materials can continue to circulate and be reused for future programs. Teachers and educators will receive curated bilingual grade appropriate materials that can be integrated into their curricula, allowing students to engage with the cultural heritage of Charrería long after the initial exhibitions and presentations.

The project also builds local capacity by involving trained volunteers, community leaders, and Charro and Escaramuza practitioners, who can continue to share knowledge and lead cultural demonstrations within their communities.

Finally, digital documentation of exhibitions, photographs, and educational materials will be archived and shared with partner schools and organizations, extending access to audiences who may not attend in-person events. Collectively, these strategies ensure that the educational, cultural, and community impacts of the project are lasting, fostering continued cultural awareness, knowledge, and cross-cultural understanding throughout rural Oregon beyond the grant period.

