



Inspire! Grants for Small Museums

Sample Application IGSM-259814-OMS-26
Project Category: Collections Stewardship and Access
Project Type: Large Project (\$25,001-\$75,000)

Springville Museum of Art

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$48,000
Amount of cost share:	\$97,346

The Springville Museum of Art will undertake a two-year project to enhance the stewardship and accessibility of its permanent collection. The project will address the pressing need for comprehensive inventory and assessment of approximately 2,700 artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. To address current challenges to the long-term care of their collections, the museum will use IMLS funds to hire a part-time Collections Stewardship Fellow who will oversee the physical inventory of the collection, document object conditions, track locations, and update the online collection database. This will include a full assessment of storage conditions, identification of works requiring additional conservation, and a review for potential deaccessioning based on the museum's collections management policy.

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.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The Springville Museum of Art (SMA) is seeking \$48,000 to fund a two-year part-time position for a Collections Stewardship Fellow. This role will oversee a comprehensive inventory and assessment of our 2,700 Permanent Collection artworks, alongside abandoned pieces and Found in Collections (FICs). This position will coordinate with our dedicated staff and volunteers to achieve several essential objectives: updating object locations and conditions, assessing storage safety, identifying items needing conservation or updated photography, recommending deaccessions, and establishing a disposal plan for deaccessioned and abandoned artworks in accordance with SMA's Collections Management Policy (CMP).

By improving our stewardship of this historic collection—originating from the efforts of Springville High School students beginning in 1903—we aim to preserve the cultural heartbeat of "Art City" for future generations. This project is not merely an inventory task; it's an investment in our community's legacy and artistic heritage.

Our initiatives directly align with the Inspire! Grants for Small Museums Objective 2: Collections Stewardship and Access, advancing goals of SMA's strategic plan in 3 key areas:

- 1. Enhancing facilities**

Limited storage space has become a significant barrier to the museum's ability to care for the Permanent Collection effectively, especially large works and sculptures. This project addresses the need for sustainable storage solutions, a vital part of our strategic goal to enhance and expand facilities.

- 2. Improving relevance and community pride**

SMA's Permanent Collection is a key part of Springville's cultural heritage. Our project allows us to responsibly preserve this collection, which is not only valued by museum members but also by local families, students, and artists statewide. We are committed to preserving these works for the benefit of Utah's community and future generations, instilling a sense of pride and identity among residents.

- 3. Contributing to mental and emotional wellness**

Through better-managed and accessible collections, SMA will expand its wellness-focused programs, helping visitors engage with art that supports connection, empathy, and reflection. SMA's commitment to advancing mental health and wellness through new, diverse programs would benefit from a well-organized collections database.

Identified Need

The Museum faces critical storage challenges, including inadequate space for oversized works and sculptures. This project emerged as a top priority through internal assessments, staff and Board consultations, and feedback from our community advisory boards. A detailed inventory would provide valuable insights into the state of our collection. This inventory would allow us to identify and eliminate unsafe storage conditions while relocating works, pinpoint potential works for deaccession, and guide future decisions on disposal. The successful completion of this project would maximize storage and maintain the collections need for long-term preservation and sustainability. If this project is not funded, SMA will continue facing critical storage challenges that hinder our ability to care for and manage the growing collection. Without addressing these conditions and conducting an inventory, valuable artworks may be vulnerable to deterioration, leading to irreversible damage. Additionally, unless we are able to reallocate

space through deaccessioning and other means, we risk overcrowding and disorganization in storage, limiting our ability to properly care for current and future acquisitions.

Currently, SMA has limited collections staff with only one full-time registrar and collections manager for the permanent collection. Without the added capacity from this fellowship, there is a lack of time and resources to carry out the necessary inventory and collections management tasks. This fellowship will provide the crucial aid needed to ensure that our collection is responsibly managed, preserved, and made accessible to the public.

Primary Audience and Their Role

The primary audience includes Springville residents, Utah County families, statewide students and teachers, artists, and art enthusiasts. In particular, the project benefits local community members, who see SMA as a cultural asset and have a vested interest in the preservation of this collection. The SMA Board of Trustees, which includes community stakeholders, has overseen project planning and will continue its involvement in project oversight. Our primary audiences are the main beneficiaries and those evolving audiences will be impacted long-term.

Our broader audiences are comprised of over 100 members, 35,000 Springville residents, 95,000 annual visitors, and 39,000 students and teachers statewide, in addition to 4,000 active Utah artists. These groups will benefit as users of the collection, and their engagement ensures that the collection remains relevant and accessible for years to come.

Collections Overview

The inventory will include:

- Approximately 2,700 Permanent Collection artworks (paintings, sculptures, and works on paper)
- Around 135 long-term loans
- Approximately 150 FIC objects
- 100-200 abandoned artworks from juried exhibitions
- 38 deaccessioned objects still stored onsite

While our current collection is in relatively good condition with adequate documentation, this inventory will be the first since 2018-2020 and aims to update object conditions and locations, and strategically identify preservation and storage needs.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

1. Hire a Collections Fellow

This individual will manage the project and receive a detailed orientation on project goals and timelines.

2. Vision Alignment Session

SMA leadership, including the Collections team and the new Fellow, will hold an initial planning meeting to set clear goals, timelines, and standards for the project.

3. Process Definition and Training

The Collections Fellow will design inventory workflows and procedures, develop timelines, and create volunteer and staff training protocols and materials.

4. Conduct Physical Inventory

The team, under the direction of the Fellow, will document object conditions, track locations, and make real-time updates to the collections database.

5. Report Findings and Recommendations

Findings will be analyzed to produce recommendations and reports on the following:

- a. Storage risks, hazards, and mitigation factors including the relocation of objects.
- b. Recommendations for potential deaccessions, according to the Museum's current Collections Management Policy, including its deaccession guidelines and policy, and current collections strategy.
- c. Other preservation recommendations including recommendations for photography, conservation, location tracking, or other needs uncovered by the inventory process.

6. Disposal Planning and Coordination

The Fellow, in coordination with the project team and Museum leadership, will make recommendations and implement disposal plans for legally appropriate deaccessioned items, abandoned artworks, and FIC objects, following SMA's Collections Management Policy guidelines.

Risk Management and Mitigation

Potential risks include:

- **Damage During Inventory:** All staff and volunteers will undergo training in object handling to minimize risks.
- **Time Constraints:** Realistic milestones and prioritization of feasible deaccessions will be established. Regular meetings will allow for quick adjustments and resource allocation to keep the project on track.

SMA has not previously employed a dedicated project manager for inventory projects. With the Collections Fellow concentrating solely on this project, we are confident in its successful impact and completion.

Project Leadership and Resources

The Collections Fellow will report directly to SMA's Head of Exhibitions and Programs, Allison Pinegar, and collaborate with Registrar, Angela Watts, Museum Director, Emily Larsen, Board Chair and Conservator, Chris McAfee, as well as museum volunteers. The project's budget includes \$48,000 for the Fellow's two-year part-time position, supported by approximately 20-30 weekly volunteer hours, institutional resources, and access to SMA's EMBARK database.

Progress Tracking

To ensure the project's progress and alignment with SMA's strategic goals, we will establish a system of monthly reporting and check-ins with SMA leadership and the Board of Trustees. These check-ins will provide an opportunity to assess the project's trajectory, identify potential roadblocks, and make necessary adjustments to the project plan. By maintaining open communication and proactive monitoring, we can optimize the project's efficiency and maximize its impact.

PROJECT RESULTS

This project will provide crucial insights and actionable steps to improve the storage, preservation, and accessibility of SMA's Permanent Collection, all while ensuring that our museum remains a cultural asset for the Springville community and beyond.

Key results will include:

- 1. Improving Storage Conditions and Preparing for Capital Updates**

A core aspect of this project is identifying artworks currently in precarious storage conditions and developing a plan for addressing these issues. This effort is critical as we prepare for a capital project that potentially involves moving artworks to new storage areas and upgrading existing spaces to meet modern preservation standards. By assessing the current conditions and documenting any risks, we will create a detailed roadmap for improving our storage practices and ensuring the overall safety of our collection.

- 2. Deaccessioning to Improve Collection Stewardship**

As part of our ongoing commitment to responsible stewardship, this project will help us identify which works no longer fit within our collection's scope or goals. For the first time in 15 years, we'll assess which objects may qualify for deaccession—whether due to inadequate care standards or because they no longer align with our evolving collection strategy. Deaccessioning will free up essential storage space and ensure we focus on preserving and caring for the pieces that are most valuable to our mission. This positions us for future success, allowing us to make space for new acquisitions that align with SMA's strategic goals and community needs.

- 3. Laying the Groundwork for Future Growth**

This project is about more than just improving storage; it's about positioning SMA to continue growing and evolving. By evaluating the collection's strengths and weaknesses, we will ensure that we are maintaining a collection that serves the needs of our audiences, aligns with our mission, and can be properly cared for in the long term. These improvements will also lay the groundwork for us to acquire and care for new pieces, ensuring the collection remains relevant and accessible for future generations.

Through these actions, we will not only improve the management of our existing collection, but also strengthen our capacity to preserve and share the art that is so integral to Utah's cultural heritage, providing a lasting legacy for Springville and its residents.

This project will create a more accessible and relevant collection for our primary audiences. Springville residents, students, artists, and visitors will benefit from better access to the collection through improved exhibitions, public programs, and online resources. The improvements in storage and collection management will help SMA continue offering transformative art experiences and contribute to the community's cultural pride.

The key outcomes will include several reports and recommendations, which will be made publicly available on our website and shared via email. Additionally, the increase in resources will benefit our audiences through its impact on future exhibitions and programs offered at the museum, as well as allow for greater access to digital records and resources. To sustain the benefits, we will provide regular updates to Museum leadership and the Board of Trustees, ensuring that the project's recommendations are integrated into ongoing practices. The final

reports will be retained by staff and used as a foundation for long-term improvements in our collections care and accessibility.

For the collection itself, this project will ensure more accurate cataloging and better preservation. We will address key preservation and storage needs, ensuring that these objects remain a valuable resource for the community. By improving storage conditions and maximizing space, we can better care for existing works and future acquisitions. We will also be able to identify conservation, photography and record keeping needs, ensuring that these objects are well preserved and easily accessible for years to come.

Schedule of Completion – IMLS Grant, Springville Museum of Art

YEAR ONE (2026-2027)												
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Hire Fellow and Onboarding												
Align Vision with Stakeholders												
Define Process and Procedures												
Onsite Inventory & Data Entry												
Inventory Vault Rooms 1-4 (~500 objects)												
Inventory Vault Room 5 (~1,000 objects)												
Inventory Vault Room 6 (~600 objects)												
Inventory Temp Storage, Registration, Galleries, upstairs storage (~700 objects)												
Offsite Inventory												
Inventory Art Shop												
City Building												
State Capitol												
Utah County Bldg												
Inventory & Data Entry Catch-up												
YEAR TWO (2027-2028)												
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Analyze Findings												
Create Reports & Recommendations												
Present Reports & Recommendations												
Disposal Planning & Coordination												
Assumes Fellow and team can do about 600-800 objects per month (8-12 objects/hr). 100 hrs/month for fellow includes 15-20 hrs/admin, 60-80 hrs/inventory, 10-25 hrs/data entry.												