



Museums Empowered

Sample Application ME-259760-OMS-26

Holocaust Memorial Center

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$299,960
Amount of cost share:	\$327,769

The Holocaust Memorial Center will train staff in program evaluation to measure the impact of programs that address Holocaust history and contemporary antisemitism. Staff will develop skills in evaluation design, qualitative and quantitative data collection, human subject research protections, and ethical data management. After receiving training, staff will implement an evaluation of the Center's teacher training programs to examine how this professional development supports teachers' knowledge and their classroom instruction. The project will produce sustainable evaluation systems within the museum, including an institutional evaluation handbook, replicable evaluation tools, data collection instruments, and a comprehensive evaluation report documenting teacher outcomes and classroom impact. The organization will share project results with educators and peer institutions through conference presentations and reports shared in professional networks online.

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 current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

**EMPOWERING THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTER TO ASSESS IMPACT:
EVALUATION CAPACITY-BUILDING AND PILOT STUDY ON TEACHER TRAININGS TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM**

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Program goal and objective project addresses

Founded in 1982 by Holocaust survivors with broad community support, the Holocaust Memorial Center was established to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and to teach its enduring lessons about human rights, civic responsibility, and the dangers of antisemitism and hatred. Operating from a 55,000-square-foot facility in Farmington Hills, Michigan, The HC serves as the state's leading institution dedicated to Holocaust education. Through permanent and special exhibitions, K–12 student tours, teacher professional development, campus outreach, and professional training initiatives, The HC reaches more than 150,000 individuals annually.

The central purpose of this initiative is to build museum-wide evaluation capacity so that The HC can systematically assess program outcomes and use evidence to improve its full range of education programs. In recent years, demand for Holocaust education has increased significantly due to a state education mandate and rising antisemitism. During the 2024–2025 school year, more than 24,000 students participated in onsite and virtual educational programs. In that same period, 468 unique teachers representing 51 Michigan counties participated in 47 professional development workshops. Based on these participation patterns, the museum expects to engage approximately 1,200 teachers over the three-year grant period. The museum's 2025–2035 strategic plan sets an ambitious goal of educating 1.5 million students and empowering 50,000 frontline influencers.

As leadership assessed this growth trajectory, a critical institutional need emerged. While The HC's Holocaust education programs are grounded in strong pedagogy and scholarship, evaluation practices have not yet been fully institutionalized. Current assessment focuses primarily on participant satisfaction rather than program outcomes, highlighting the need for stronger internal expertise and systems for ongoing evaluation. This includes developing the capacity to conduct in-depth participant research, create standardized instruments, and implement cross-departmental evaluation protocols. As programming expands, the absence of embedded evaluation systems risks limiting the museum's ability to measure instructional impact, refine programs strategically, and allocate resources based on evidence.

This project aligns directly with Museums Empowered Program Goal 2: Evaluation. It advances Objective 2.1 by increasing staff knowledge of evaluation methods, tools, metrics, and data interpretation. It advances Objective 2.2 by equipping staff with strategies to design and adapt evaluation approaches to address a specific institutional priority: Holocaust education teacher professional development.

This project includes training for 23 staff members across departments to learn essential evaluation skills and apply them as they learn them through an ambitious pilot evaluation of The HC's teacher training programs. The pilot study allows staff to practice evaluation across the full lifecycle of an evaluation project while generating evidence on teacher training outcomes. By the end of the project period, evaluation will become a core operational competency across departments. A key project deliverable will be the development of an Institutional Evaluation Handbook that documents evaluation principles, standardized tools, and internal procedures to support the long-term integration of evaluation practices across The HC.

Project's advancement of strategic plan

The Holocaust Memorial Center's strategic plan emphasizes sustainable growth, statewide leadership, and programmatic excellence in Holocaust education. A central goal of the plan is to expand the museum's educational reach while ensuring that programming remains impactful, responsive, and evidence-informed. The plan identifies the museum's role as

serving as a statewide hub for Holocaust education and sets an ambitious goal of reaching 1.5 million students over the next decade through strengthened partnerships with educators and expanded professional development opportunities. Achieving this level of impact requires stronger institutional systems for assessing program effectiveness and using evidence to guide program improvement.

Currently, educational assessment practices vary across program areas. Instruments are not standardized, and data interpretation requires more rigorous training in evaluation methods to produce meaningful evidence-based insights. Findings are also not consistently incorporated into strategic planning discussions. As participation in The HC's broad range of community education programming continues to expand, these limitations become increasingly significant. This project advances The HC strategic plan's requirement for "Impact." By institutionalizing evaluation across the organization, the project will establish standardized tools and protocols, embed evaluation into program design cycles, integrate findings into annual planning processes, and strengthen cross-departmental collaboration around measurable outcomes. By cultivating internal expertise and shared ownership of evaluation processes, the project ensures that the museum's growth is accompanied by quality, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Need, problem, or challenge project addresses and how it was identified

As The HC's educational programming continues to expand, the institution has identified the need to develop stronger internal capacity to systematically evaluate program outcomes and use evidence to guide program improvement. Holocaust education institutions are operating within a context of heightened urgency. Teachers face legislative mandates, increased scrutiny, and rising antisemitism in their communities. The HC has expanded professional development offerings to meet these needs, introducing workshops focused on artifact-based pedagogy, resistance narratives, survivor testimony, and facilitating difficult classroom discussions.

During leadership review sessions, staff discussions, and analysis of the museum's current assessment tools, staff identified several institutional challenges:

- Evaluation practices remain primarily satisfaction-based rather than outcome-based.
- Behavioral change among participants is not systematically assessed.
- Data analysis capacity is limited.
- There is no formal institutional evaluation framework guiding practice.

Taken together, these challenges mean that current evaluation practices primarily document participation and satisfaction rather than measuring impact, including how teachers apply Holocaust education in their classrooms. A review of existing research on Holocaust museum education—provided in the supplemental literature review—indicates that while some impact evaluation has been conducted, significant gaps remain in understanding how professional development influences classroom implementation.

This project addresses the challenge directly by building evaluation competency across 23 staff positions and embedding standardized evaluation systems into the museum's operational structure. The teacher professional development program serves as the applied training laboratory through which staff will practice, refine, and internalize evaluation skills in real time.

Primary audience for project and how they have been involved in planning

The primary audience for this project consists of 23 Holocaust Memorial Center staff members—nearly half of The HC's staff—working in Education, Research, Outreach, Data Management, and Administration. These staff members will participate in structured professional development in evaluation methodology and apply these skills throughout the three-year project. Staff engaged with executive leadership to identify evaluation gaps and shape the project design through internal planning discussions that highlighted the need for stronger outcome-based evaluation of teacher

professional development programs. A secondary audience includes the K–12 educators who participate in the museum’s Holocaust education teacher training programs. Approximately 1,200 teachers will participate in professional development workshops during the three-year grant period. As part of the evaluation pilot study, we anticipate 1,000 teachers completing pre- and post-training surveys, 25 teachers participating in interviews or focus groups, and 15 teachers participating in a paired classroom comparison trial examining instructional practices before and after training. Teacher feedback expressing interest in sustained classroom support helped inform the focus on evaluating classroom implementation of Holocaust instruction.

Beneficiaries for the project

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project will be the students, teachers, and broader educational communities impacted by Holocaust education programming, whose knowledge and experiences will substantially improve through the incorporation of evaluation findings. Each year, the Holocaust Memorial Center provides professional development to approximately 450 teachers each year; collectively, they reach an estimated 29,000 students annually. Strengthening the museum’s evaluation capacity will improve teacher training programs and support the broader network of approximately 38,000 Michigan social studies teachers reached through the museum’s outreach. More broadly, the development of evaluation skills among HC staff will benefit the various audiences we serve through educational programming, including adults and the public.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

Specific activities to be carried out

This three-year initiative unfolds in three phases designed to build staff evaluation capacity through professional development, applied practice, and institutional integration. The project combines structured training in program evaluation methods with an applied evaluation of the museum’s teacher professional development programs, allowing staff to practice evaluation skills as they learn them.

Phase One, Staff Professional Development and Evaluation Design (Months 1–6): During the first six months of the project, 23 Holocaust Memorial Center staff members across multiple departments will complete structured professional development in evaluation methods tailored to their roles and responsibilities. The HC will utilize the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program to complete coursework in Human Subjects Research, qualitative and quantitative methods, survey design, statistical analysis, and ethical evaluation practices. Used by thousands of academic and healthcare institutions worldwide, the CITI Program is the gold standard in online research ethics and compliance training, offering peer-reviewed modules that certify researchers, students, and staff in the ethical conduct of studies involving human subjects. The coursework covers the essentials of research conduct and integrity, including privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, data storage, and project management, all of which are critical for evaluation involving program participants.

Staff will participate in CITI’s online coursework and internally facilitated workshops in which they apply evaluation concepts to the museum’s educational programming. Through these activities, staff will learn to design evaluation plans, develop data collection tools such as surveys, interview protocols, focus group guides, and classroom observation instruments, and analyze and interpret findings to inform program improvement. This training approach reflects research on effective organizational change and professional development, which emphasizes building both commitment and capacity to implement new practices and pairing knowledge acquisition with on-the-job application to support long-term adoption (Weiner, 2009; Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

During this phase, staff will also refine the evaluation design for the teacher training impact assessment and establish internal systems for data collection, storage, and analysis. The HC will develop an Institutional Evaluation Handbook documenting evaluation principles, standardized instruments, and internal procedures to guide future evaluation efforts.

These efforts will ensure a supportive infrastructure throughout the project period for staff to exercise and refine evaluation skills with institutional commitment and resources.

Phase Two, Applied Evaluation Skills Practice Through Teacher Professional Development (Months 7–30): Over the following two years, staff will apply and refine their evaluation skills through an applied evaluation of the museum’s Holocaust education teacher training programs. As an exemplary model of The HC’s education programs, teacher training provides a valuable case study for testing evaluation skills that can be replicated for other audiences. The central evaluation question guiding this work is: How does Holocaust education teacher training influence participating teachers, particularly in the design and delivery of Holocaust instruction in their classrooms?

The evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations to assess teacher outcomes and instructional practices and develop staff expertise in a variety of data collection practices. The evaluation includes three components: (1) analysis of past workshops through surveys and interviews with teachers who previously participated in training; (2) pre- and post-evaluation of upcoming workshops using surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations; and (3) a comparison between teachers who have received HC training and teachers who have not yet participated in the program, with follow-up classroom observation to assess change over time.

Across these components, an estimated 1,000 teachers will complete pre- and post-training surveys designed to measure changes in knowledge, confidence, and instructional practices. A smaller cohort of 25 teachers will participate in interviews or focus groups to provide deeper qualitative insight into how professional development influences classroom teaching. In addition, 15 teachers will participate in a paired classroom comparison trial examining instructional practices before and after Holocaust education training.

Altogether, these data will provide rigorous evidence on the relationship between Holocaust education training and teacher classroom practice. These three components will allow HC staff to triangulate data across multiple sources to verify findings and achieve rigorous results for the impact assessment while developing critical competencies in mixed-methods evaluation.

Throughout this phase, staff will participate in regular cross-departmental meetings to check the progress of the evaluation, troubleshoot unanticipated challenges, and refine evaluation skills throughout the course of data collection and analysis. The Project Director and Senior Project Leads will provide mentorship and oversight to support staff members with feedback and additional resources as they implement the evaluation.

Phase Three, Reporting Findings and Institutionalizing Evaluation Practices (Months 31–36): During the final six months of the project, staff will synthesize findings and produce a comprehensive evaluation report documenting methodology, results, and recommendations. Findings will be shared internally and with external partners, including recommendations for strengthening Holocaust education teacher training. Staff will also finalize documentation and data storage procedures consistent with ethical evaluation practices. Project leadership will connect these findings to The HC’s strategic planning process, ensuring that learnings are incorporated into future programmatic work to maximize impact.

The Institutional Evaluation Handbook developed during the project will be finalized and adopted as an internal guide for evaluation practice for future studies of the HC’s work across audiences and programs. Evaluation planning templates and protocols will be integrated into future program development processes so that evaluation becomes a routine component of educational programming at The HC.

Who will plan, implement, and manage the project

CEO Eli Mayerfeld will provide executive oversight for the project, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and organizational resources. Mayerfeld’s involvement provides high-level institutional commitment to the project and its

outcomes. The project will be led by Project Director Dr. Katie Chaka Parks (Director of Education), who will oversee project implementation, coordinate staff professional development in evaluation methods, and ensure that evaluation findings are integrated into program improvement and institutional planning.

She will be supported by two Senior Project Leads: Rick Schaffner (Senior Education Manager) and Jamie Miskowski (Senior Education Strategy Manager). Schaffner will oversee the implementation of teacher professional development programs and coordinate the Outreach and Training Teams, supporting recruitment of teacher participants and alignment between training activities and evaluation goals. Miskowski will serve as the Principal Investigator overseeing research integrity for the evaluation, including coordinating the Evaluation and Data Teams, and guiding the development of evaluation instruments, data collection processes, and analysis of findings.

Harry Smith (Senior Education Program Manager) will support the staffing, professional development, and coordination of Education Associates assigned to project-related activities, especially the facilitation of teacher training sessions. Rebekkah Bowen (Education Research Specialist) will support the implementation of evaluation activities, including survey administration, interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, and data analysis and reporting.

Together, the project leadership team will coordinate cross-departmental collaboration among staff participating in evaluation training and implementation. They will monitor project progress, facilitate regular team meetings, and ensure that evaluation practices developed during the project are integrated into the Holocaust Memorial Center's ongoing educational programming and institutional operations.

Time, financial, personnel, and other resources needed to carry out the activities

The project will take place over a three-year period, allowing time for staff professional development, implementation of the applied teacher training evaluation, and analysis and integration of findings into institutional practices.

We request a grant of \$299,960 to support staff time, evaluation training, and the tools necessary to conduct and sustain program evaluation activities throughout the project period. As detailed in the attached budget, funding will support 23 staff members whose responsibilities include project management, evaluation implementation, teacher outreach and training facilitation, data management, and operational and administrative support.

Direct project costs include a three-year institutional subscription to the CITI Program to provide staff with training in human subjects research protections and evaluation methodologies. Other resources include evaluation software, such as Qualtrics for survey implementation and quantitative data collection and NVivo for qualitative data analysis. Funds are also allocated for required initial and continuing Institutional Review Board (IRB) review to ensure ethical compliance with human subjects protections.

Additional resources include a subscription to an institutional Learning Management System to support staff training activities and teacher education programming, as well as materials and logistical costs associated with the museum's teacher training workshops, which serve as the applied setting for developing evaluation capacity. These resources will support staff in implementing the full evaluation lifecycle, from design through data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Organization and structure of project team to support engagement of all participants

The project team will be organized into five functional groups that support different aspects of the project while coordinating closely through the Project Director and Senior Project Leads.

The Evaluation Team will design the evaluation methodology, develop instruments, conduct data collection, analyze findings, and translate results into recommendations for strengthening teacher professional development programs. The Outreach Team will recruit teachers for workshops and evaluation participation and manage communications with participants. The Data Team will support survey administration, secure data storage, and quantitative analysis. The

Training Team will facilitate Holocaust education workshops and integrate evaluation insights into their teaching practices. The Administration and Operations Team will support project logistics, scheduling, financial management, and administrative coordination.

Risks to the project and how they will be mitigated

Institutional change initiatives carry inherent risks, including competing workload demands, uneven familiarity with evaluation methods, and potential participant fatigue associated with evaluation activities. To mitigate these risks, evaluation responsibilities will be incorporated into formal staff work plans and supported by regular leadership oversight and cross-departmental coordination meetings.

To ensure institutional continuity, the project will emphasize shared training and the comprehensive documentation of all evaluation processes through a formalized Institutional Evaluation Handbook. This approach ensures that evaluation practices are not dependent on specific individuals but are instead sustained and transferable to new personnel as part of our core operational infrastructure. Training 23 staff members—nearly half of The HC’s staff—across departments distributes evaluation expertise broadly and supports long-term sustainability.

How progress will be tracked toward intended results

Progress will be monitored through regular review of project activities, staff learning outcomes, and participation in teacher training programs. The Holocaust Memorial Center maintains an internal information management system used to track teacher training dates and participants for annual reporting. This system will allow the project team to monitor the number of teachers engaged in professional development and to analyze participation across key geographic and demographic characteristics.

Staff evaluation capacity will be assessed through annual and final self-assessments measuring knowledge, skills, and confidence in program evaluation. Supervisors will also review applied work products, such as survey instruments, interview protocols, coded qualitative data, and summaries of findings.

Progress on the teacher training evaluation will be supported through a structured data collection and storage plan organizing information from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. Regular team meetings will allow staff to review progress, address emerging challenges, and adjust activities as needed to ensure the project remains aligned with the timeline and intended results.

PROJECT RESULTS

Project’s intended results and how they address the need, problem, or challenge identified

The intended results are 1) the establishment of sustainable internal evaluation capacity, processes, and infrastructure within The HC, and 2) the generation of rigorous evidence regarding teacher professional development impact and recommendations for best practices in future programming. Staff will demonstrate increased knowledge of evaluation design, improved mixed-methods research skills, and greater confidence using evaluation findings to guide program improvement and strategic planning. At the programmatic level, the teacher workshop evaluation will produce actionable insights into instructional implementation, classroom integration, and sustained pedagogical change that will enable the improvement of tailored teacher training workshops for future audiences.

How the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the primary audience will change

Through structured training and hands-on implementation of the evaluation activities, Holocaust Memorial Center staff will demonstrate measurable gains in evaluation knowledge, skills, confidence, and institutional practice. Staff will strengthen their understanding of evaluation design, outcome measurement, and qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. They will develop practical skills in designing evaluation instruments aligned with program goals, conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations, and analyzing findings to generate

programmatic recommendations. As a result, staff will gain confidence in using evaluation and will increasingly integrate evaluation planning and outcome data into program design and decision-making processes, contributing to the institutionalization of evaluation practices across the organization.

Teacher participants will also experience changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and classroom practice through participation in Holocaust education professional development programs. Teachers will deepen their historical understanding of the Holocaust and gain greater familiarity with Holocaust-specific pedagogy, resources, and primary source materials. They will strengthen their ability to teach complex and sensitive historical topics, facilitate difficult classroom discussions, and integrate Holocaust content into existing curricula. Teachers will also strengthen their capacity to address contemporary antisemitism by helping students understand how antisemitic ideas and stereotypes have evolved over time, how they appear today (including in online spaces), and how to respond in ways that promote civic responsibility, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue. As a result, teachers will demonstrate increased confidence in teaching about the Holocaust and will incorporate new lessons, materials, and instructional strategies into their classrooms with greater depth and intentionality.

How the proposed activities will result in organizational growth or change

This project represents a structural shift from episodic assessment to embedded evaluation practice. By developing evaluation competencies across departments and embedding standardized tools and protocols into regular operations, the project will transform evaluation into a routine component of program planning and institutional learning. By adopting a formal Institutional Evaluation Handbook, integrating evaluation into planning processes, and distributing competency across departments, The HC strengthens institutional resilience and accountability. Evaluation will become a core institutional value guiding growth and program refinement.

Products that will result from the project, and their accessibility to the primary audience

The project will produce a set of practical evaluation tools and resources that can support ongoing evaluation activities at The HC beyond the grant period. These products will include replicable evaluation designs, survey instruments, and data collection plans that can be used to assess future educational programming for broad audiences beyond teachers. The pilot evaluation will also result in a comprehensive report documenting findings on teacher outcomes and classroom impact, along with evidence-informed recommendations for strengthening Holocaust education teacher training.

These materials will be shared with participating educators through a final summary report and optional follow-up professional development sessions that highlight key findings and instructional strategies. The HC will also share lessons learned and evaluation tools with peer institutions through professional networks, conferences, and publications, contributing to broader field knowledge in museum-based Holocaust education.

Sustained benefits of the project beyond the grant period

Sustainability will be reinforced through the integration of evaluation skills, processes, and infrastructure within The HC at an institutional level. Evaluation planning templates will be available for the development of new educational program proposals. Annual reporting and presentations of evaluation findings will support institutional strategic planning and budgeting discussions. The museum will maintain core evaluation tools and incorporate foundational evaluation training into onboarding for relevant staff roles as part of its ongoing professional development practices. By embedding evaluation expectations into policy, planning, and budgeting processes, The HC ensures that the benefits of this project extend well beyond the grant period.

Holocaust Memorial Center Project Year 1 (2026-2027)

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Holocaust Memorial Center Project Year 2 (2027-2028)

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Holocaust Memorial Center Project Year 3 (2028-2029)

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