



Inspire! Grants for Small Museums

Sample Application MA-15-19-0045-19
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Katonah Museum of Art

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$50,000
Amount of cost share: \$74,962

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2020 Inspire! Grants for Small Museums grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2019 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the [FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Abstract

The Katonah Museum of Art (KMA) will expand *ArteJuntos/ArtTogether*, the Museum's bilingual family literacy program for Westchester County's growing Latino immigrant community, by strengthening existing partnerships with First Steps Early Literacy in Ossining and Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco and adding a third community organization partner, thereby increasing the number of people served and the program's impact. Taught in both Spanish and English and provided at no cost to participants, the program promotes school readiness for children ages three to five while fostering social inclusion through parent engagement and access to informal learning experiences.

Immigrant children and children of immigrants frequently start kindergarten with a skills gap that sets them apart from their better-prepared peers, thus reinforcing barriers to education and social integration. It is imperative to provide greater access to informal learning experiences in museums that support parent engagement and the development of 21st-century learning skills for every child, but particularly for those most in need. In addition, immigrant parents' involvement in their children's education is often challenged by obstacles including work commitments, language, uncertainty about their role, and their previous experiences with learning and formal education. To empower parents to become resourceful facilitators of their children's learning, *ArteJuntos* includes parents as participants who work side by side with their children.

ArteJuntos utilizes artwork from the KMA's current exhibition as source material for inquiry-based discussions and collaborative art-making activities. Each *ArteJuntos* program includes approximately 10 sessions, taking place both in the classrooms at partners' sites and at the Museum. At the end of each program, participants share what they have accomplished with their family and friends through an exhibition and community celebration.

The project will commence in July 2019, with KMA educators meeting with partners and developing the curriculum around the fall 2019 exhibition. From October 2019 to June 2020, the KMA will offer the *ArteJuntos* program separately to each partnering organization. In early 2020, KMA staff will develop curriculum around the exhibition opening in March 2020. The second year of activities will closely resemble the first.

The project will benefit Latino preschool children ages three to five and their parents, most of whom are recent immigrants, low-income, and English Language Learners. Based on past participation, the KMA anticipates that parents will be mostly female and most comfortable speaking Spanish. During the project period, 200 families will participate directly in *ArteJuntos* and many more individuals will be engaged through take-home projects and community-based events.

To address the gap in school readiness among county's the immigrant Latino community, the KMA will deepen the impact of *ArteJuntos* through an increased number of sessions and the addition of a third partner. Based on past evaluations, the KMA anticipates participation in the program will support the development of participating children's emergent literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving skills, all foundational elements for academic success. In addition, parents will become confident facilitators of their children's learning and feel greater confidence in utilizing informal learning resources in their communities.

For each program, the KMA will measure progress with pre- and post-program parent surveys, two observations of participating children (December and May), post-program parent focus groups, and regular meetings with staff from partner organizations. Results will be shared internally and with partners at the end of each program year (June 2020 and June 2021), and disseminated more widely at the end of the project period in June 2021.

Narrative

Project Justification:

What do you propose to do?

The KMA will expand *ArteJuntos/ArtTogether*, the Museum's bilingual family literacy program for Westchester County's growing Latino immigrant community, by strengthening existing partnerships with First Steps Early Literacy in Ossining and Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco and adding a third community organization partner, thereby increasing the number of people served and the program's impact. Taught in both Spanish and English and provided at no cost to participants, the program promotes school readiness for children ages three to five while fostering social inclusion through parent engagement and access to informal learning experiences. *ArteJuntos* utilizes artwork from the KMA's current exhibition as source material for inquiry-based discussions and collaborative art-making activities, both of which help to develop preschool children's emergent literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.

To empower parents to become resourceful facilitators of their children's learning, the program includes parents as participants who work side by side with their children. *ArteJuntos* educators introduce parents to effective strategies to engage their child in informal learning experiences that build their capacity to become intermediaries for their children's academic success. The program utilizes an asset-based approach, with educators honoring the home language, using open-ended inquiry and shared authority to promote an exchange of ideas and validate the knowledge and perspectives of all participants.

IMLS support will enable the KMA to deepen existing partnerships and establish a new partnership, thus increasing our impact and the opportunity to engage more families in informal learning opportunities that will support school readiness, parent engagement and inclusion, and build the cultural competency of the KMA's staff and volunteers.

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

Neighboring towns such as Mount Kisco and Ossining have rapidly become more diverse, with 30% or more of their populations born in another country, primarily in Latin America. Immigrant children and children of immigrants frequently start kindergarten with a skills gap that sets them apart from their better-prepared peers, thus reinforcing barriers to education and social integration. Many do not receive a formal preschool education because of cuts to Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs and the prohibitively high cost of private preschool tuition. It is imperative to provide greater access to informal learning experiences in museums that support parent engagement and the development of 21st-century learning skills for every child, but particularly for those most in need. The museum environment provides vocabulary-rich interactions for families and develops background knowledge—key elements for literacy that complement classroom learning. Yet, children from low-income families and under-resourced communities are less likely to visit museums with their schools or families. In addition, immigrant parents' involvement in their children's education is often challenged by obstacles including work commitments, language, uncertainty about their role, and their previous experiences with learning and formal education. Studies demonstrate that the successful integration of immigrant parents within a community leads to improved school readiness outcomes for their children, as the development of cultural capital and social inclusion leads to greater participation in all the civic, social, economic, and cultural resources of a community.

Who or what will benefit from your project?

The project will benefit Latino preschool children ages three to five and their parents, most of whom are low-income as well as English Language Learners. Based on past participation, the KMA anticipates that parents will be mostly female and most comfortable speaking Spanish. During the project, 200 families will participate directly in *ArteJuntos* and many more individuals will be engaged through take-home projects and community-based events.

How will your project advance your institution’s strategic plan?

In its strategic plan, *The Forward Edge: Four Frontiers (2016-2020)*, the KMA recognizes the county’s changing demographics, including the increase of Latino residents. In response, the KMA made the commitment to “be sensitive to evolving ethnic, racial, and socio-economic constituencies among the local museum-going public,” specifically, to “respond to [the] growing Hispanic demographic by refining and expanding *ArteJuntos*.” (See Strategic Plan Summary)

How will your project address the goals of the Inspire! Grants for Small Museums?

The project will address the IMLS agency-level goal of promoting lifelong learning. Using an inquiry-based methodology, *ArteJuntos* supports learning and literacy for both preschool children and their parents by encouraging exploration, observation, and dialogue. Activities such as art-making and responding to art foster discovery, critical thinking, and creativity. The program helps to develop children’s visual literacy, critical thinking, and emergent literacy skills through art-based exploration, foundational elements of academic success. It provides parents with the needed strategies, tools, and confidence as their children’s first teachers both at home and as facilitators of their child’s experience using informal education institutions. When parents and children are able to learn together in informal learning environments, greater gains can take place for children. As social and familial bonds are strengthened by shared informal education opportunities, these experiences also support a lifelong love of learning (Musco, Miriam. “Disparity of Informal Education Between Low- and High-Income Neighborhoods.” *The Museum Scholar*, Vol. 1 2018, http://articles.themuseum scholar.org/tp_vol1musco).

How will your proposed project increase your museum’s capability to meet the project category goals you have chosen?

The project will enable the KMA to better respond to the need amongst the county’s growing Latino population for informal learning opportunities. By expanding the number of program sessions from six to 10, adding a third partner, and offering an additional opportunity for engagement at the KMA or another museum, the KMA is increasing opportunities to foster early childhood learning, parent engagement, social inclusion, and the development of cultural capital, as families become more comfortable using these community resources.

Project Work Plan:

What specific activities, including evaluation and performance measurements, will you carry out?

Each *ArteJuntos* program includes approximately 10 sessions, taking place both in the classroom and at the Museum. Staff will gather feedback at the beginning and end of each program year, and will disseminate results at the end of the project period. While the structure of the program is tailored to each partner, each program will include the following activities:

1. A parents-only session which includes a discussion of cultural institutions as informal learning resources, designed to support immigrants who may not yet feel that museums are a space created for them. This session includes activities to demystify the perceived need of background knowledge or a learned code of behavior for entering and using the museum space. The role of parent support at home, the importance of play, and the use of dialogue to develop observation, critical thinking, and emergent literacy skills is also introduced. The educator models an inquiry-based teaching methodology, giving parents tools to engage children in discussions about works of art, books, and the world around them. The educator demonstrates art activities, then parents practice skills with peers.
2. A session with parents and children introduces the concept of museums as spaces for learning about objects from past and contemporary cultures. Through observation and discussion, participants begin to respond to works of art, developing their oral and receptive language; shape, color, and line recognition; and making meaning from artworks. A collaborative, open-ended art activity follows. Families also receive bilingual “Art at Home” activities and art supplies.

3. In preparation for the first visit to the KMA, this session introduces parents and children to the exhibition's themes and concepts, using open-ended inquiry and art-making activities. A related "Art at Home" activity reinforces classroom learning.
4. Following, is the families' first visit to the KMA, and for many, a first museum experience. Through modeled inquiry-based discussion, led by the facilitators, interaction between the parent and child in response to the artworks on view, and a hands-on portion in which the parents and children work together exploring techniques seen in the exhibition, the parents gain strategies and confidence in experiencing a museum together. Throughout, school readiness skills such as color and shape recognition, language development, and visual observation are developed.
5. In an additional session held in the classroom, parents and children continue to explore concepts and techniques introduced during the KMA visit. After the educator models inquiry with selected works of art, and demonstrates the project, the parents are empowered to take the lead, facilitating the art making together with their children.
6. As the KMA's exhibition changes, there are additional sessions to introduce parents and children to the new exhibition prior to the second visit to the Museum. Works of art in the exhibition are explored using inquiry with parents and children, and new art materials and concepts are introduced.
7. A second KMA visit includes a facilitated bilingual experience in the galleries, then parents demonstrate their increased confidence and skills, leading discussions and activities with their children.
8. Museum educators return to the classroom, to lead a post-visit discussion and art making project with parents and children.
9. Participants share what they have accomplished with their family and friends through an exhibition. (See Supportingdoc5 for 2017-2018 Exhibition Brochure)
10. In response to participant requests, each program will include a special event, either a visit to a second local museum, a parent-only visit to the KMA, or a guided, bilingual experience at the KMA's spring Family Day, with transportation included.

What is your project's maturity level?

This project will be a scaling up. *ArteJuntos* is rooted in the KMA's commitment to engaging Latino families, which began over a decade ago. The structure of the program, with regard to the number of partnerships and sessions, has been adjusted recently due to changes in funding, but the KMA has remained committed to offering it annually. With IMLS support, the KMA will be able to deepen the program's impact through a greater number of sessions and the addition of a third partner.

What are the risks to the project and how are they accounted for in the work plan?

Losing a partner would pose a risk to the project. To address this, the KMA has identified Neighbors Link and First Steps Early Literacy as anchor partners; both have strong ties to the county's Latino immigrant community and long histories of working with the KMA to deliver *ArteJuntos*. In turn, the KMA understands the need to be flexible in its programming with these organizations, as they work to respond to the changing needs of their constituents. (See Supportingdoc1 for letters from partners)

The KMA is in the midst of a two-year process to select a third partner with the capacity to form a long-term partnership around *ArteJuntos*. KMA staff began conversations with neighboring community organizations in 2017-2018 to better understand these organizations and their constituents. In 2018-2019, the KMA will continue to cultivate these relationships through a series of short-format pilot programs, with the intention of identifying a third partner for *ArteJuntos*. (See Supportingdoc4 for overview of 2017-2018 planning activities)

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

The project will be collaboratively planned, implemented, and managed by Margaret Adasko, Curator of Education, and Helena Vidal, Project Manager / Educator, who together have over 35 years of experience in

museum education and community outreach. (See Resumes, See Supportingdoc3 for article co-authored by Helena Vidal)

When and in what sequence will your activities occur?

In summer/early fall 2019, KMA staff will meet with partners to discuss outcomes and indicators, share teaching strategies, introduce the evaluation plan, and develop the curriculum around the fall 2019 exhibition. From October 2019 to June 2020, the KMA will offer the *ArteJuntos* program separately to each partnering organization. In early 2020, KMA staff will develop curriculum around the exhibition opening in March 2020. KMA staff will track progress throughout the year, sharing results internally and with partners in summer 2020. The second year of activities will closely resemble the first. At the end of the project period, KMA staff will disseminate results. (See Schedule of Completion)

What resources will you need to carry out your activities?

Project activities utilize artwork in the KMA's current exhibition as prompts for discussions and art-making. The KMA underwrites the cost of art supplies and bus transportation for participants to travel to and from the Museum. Beyond these resources, the project primarily requires experienced and dedicated personnel. (See Budget)

How will you track your progress?

At the beginning of each *ArteJuntos* program, parents complete a survey (see Supportingdoc7 for bilingual survey). After most sessions, KMA staff meet with staff from partner organizations to discuss progress and next steps. KMA staff will conduct mid-year progress meetings with partners. In December and May, children will be observed at the KMA by trained volunteers (see Supportingdoc8 for assessment rubric). At the end of each program, participants complete a survey and parents take part in focus groups.

How and with whom will you share your project's results?

At the end of each program year, results will be shared internally with KMA staff and board members as well as with partnering organizations. At the end of the project period, project staff will host a meeting of the Mount Kisco Latino Providers Group to share results. In addition, in order to share project results more widely within the constraints of the budget, project staff will find opportunities to be featured by organizations such as the Inclusion (blog focused on inclusion in museums) and the NYC Museum Educators Roundtable. (See Supportingdoc2 for example of past dissemination)

If your project involves working with the community, how will they be involved?

Through a series of listening sessions conducted with neighboring community organizations during 2017-2018 (see Supportingdoc4), the KMA deepened its efforts to respond to the needs and interests of Latino residents as identified by those who provide direct services to this community. These valuable relationships will continue to be cultivated, in addition to our involvement with the Mount Kisco Latino Providers Group. These relationships will inform program design as well as providing insight on issues impacting Latino residents and the overall accessibility of the museum and the relevance of its programs for all of its audiences.

Project Results:

How will you collect and report the data required for the performance measurement(s) you have chosen?

Project staff will distribute and collect surveys, conduct progress meetings, and facilitate focus groups. Trained volunteers will observe participating children. Data will be compiled and shared by project staff.

What are your intended results that will address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?

To address the gap in school readiness among immigrant children and children of immigrants, the KMA will deepen the impact of *ArteJuntos* through an increased number of sessions and the addition of a third partner. Past evaluations have demonstrated that participation in *ArteJuntos* supports the development of children's

emergent literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving skills, all foundational elements for academic success. In addition, parents will become confident facilitators of their children's learning and feel greater confidence in utilizing informal learning resources in their communities.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the intended audience change as a result of your project?

With funding support from the National Endowment of the Arts, the KMA enlisted Randi Korn & Associates to evaluate the program in 2014-2015. The evaluation confirmed that *ArteJuntos* positively impacts children's school readiness as evidenced by growth in their critical thinking skills and confidence as learners, including an increased ability to name and label objects in works of art; describe and provide interpretations of artwork; and present their ideas in front of a group. For parents, the study noted a significant increase in their understanding of their role as facilitators of their children's learning and an appreciation of their children's learning needs; an increased comfort with museums overall and an awareness of this resource for family learning. Outcomes for participating teachers from partner organizations include increased confidence using open-ended inquiry to explore artworks; exploring new art materials and processes; and involving parents in creative activities at school and at home. Teachers will value the role of museums and informal learning for early childhood development and will seek opportunities to integrate museums as resources for arts learning in their classroom. (See Supportingdoc6 for evaluation summary)

What tangible products will result?

Each program culminates in an exhibition of participants' artwork. The project will also result in the compiled feedback of participants and the observations of participating children.

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project?

Understanding the important role community partners play in sustaining *ArteJuntos*, the KMA is selecting a third partner after two years of exploration, while strengthening its relationships with current partners. In addition, KMA staff have built a roster of volunteers, foundations, and individuals who provide over \$30,000 in annual support for *ArteJuntos*, and will continue to seek out new funding sources.

How do you define success for your project?

The KMA defines success as approximately 200 families taking part in *ArteJuntos* during the project period. Success also means participating children will demonstrate gains in their early literacy skills and confidence as learners. In addition, parents will demonstrate strategies they have developed to engage their children in informal learning activities. Parents will also demonstrate increased comfort in museum settings.

How will your organization change as a result of the project?

While the program's outcomes focus on the family participants, the Museum will continue to evolve and change as a result of conducting the program. The KMA will benefit from the connection with immigrant participants over a sustained period of time. Using works of art as springboards for discussion, immigrant families share knowledge of their unique cultural backgrounds and reflect on similarities and differences across cultures, resulting in greater cultural understanding for all participants, including the KMA educators. These interactions, as well as those with our partner organizations and teachers, will strengthen the capacity of KMA staff and the institution's cultural competency and responsiveness. As a result of these experiences, there will be a greater recognition of the strengths and valuable contributions of immigrants in our community.

How will your organization better accomplish its mission?

The KMA's ability to carry out its mission of being a vital cultural hub for the community depends on it being relevant to the broadest cross-section of residents, including Latino residents, who make up 22% of the county's population. Scaling up programs such as *ArteJuntos*, which introduce the KMA to Latino families as a welcoming destination for informal learning, is critical to the organization's relevance as a community resource.



