

# **Museums for America**

Sample Application MA-20-18-0015-18 Project Category: Community Anchors

# **Denver Art Museum**

Amount awarded by IMLS:\$198,556Amount of cost share:\$243,832

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 FY2019 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2018 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the FY2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Abstract

The Denver Art Museum (DAM) requests \$198,556 to support a three-year *Creative Aging Project* to provide in-community arts programs that advance Denver's priorities for healthy aging among older adults, a project that aligns with the agency's Community Anchors category. A grant will fund costs for development and evaluation of three program models to be delivered in care facilities and senior centers in Denver:

Ten themed *loan boxes* filled with objects and activities designed to spark conversation and storytelling, shared memories, and group interaction, with associated training for care staff;
Three community-curated exhibitions co-created with older adults; and,
Twenty artist lad associate for art making, conversation, and guided mindful looking.

3) Twenty artist-led sessions for art making, conversation, and guided mindful looking.

The *Creative Aging Project* will address Denver's identified need for arts programs to support wellbeing for a growing aging population, especially those who are unable to travel to the museum either due to physical or mental challenges or a lack of financial resources. Anticipated benefits for participants include improved alertness, reduced stress, development of new interests and skills, increased social contact and sense of community, improved creative thinking, and enjoyment of the arts and art making. Over time, this project has the potential to reduce isolation and loneliness in older adults, improve their physical and mental wellbeing, and establish a community network of arts program providers and trained teaching artists.

Programs will be co-created with community partners serving older adults, including the City of Denver; DAM staff will work with relevant community stakeholders at all stages of program development. A comprehensive evaluation plan will inform program development and refinement, assess outcomes for participants and community partners, and guide development of a framework to evaluate impacts on healthy aging in the community over time. Evaluation will also investigate the museum's unique role in contributing to the well-being of older adults and will inform program model development and delivery at all stages. Project evaluation will include: formative and ongoing evaluation to support program development and refinement, evaluation to assess impacts on older adult participants and community partners during the project period, and development of a framework to evaluate impacts on healthy aging in Denver over time.

The *Creative Aging Project* furthers the IMLS's efforts to promote museums "as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities by leveraging their expertise, knowledge, physical space, technology, and other resources to identify and implement solutions." As the Rocky Mountain region's largest art museum, the DAM is well-positioned to partner with community organizations and the City of Denver to develop arts programming for a growing older adult audience. The DAM has participated with the City of Denver Office of Aging's needs assessment and planning, convened the Creative Aging Forum and Access Advocacy Group to inform program development and facilitate partnerships, and has deep relationships with local artists who co-create and deliver programs. Creative Aging programs will expand the museum's reach and parameters for service; go outside the building and constitute more than outreach; bring art and citizens together; and foster civic engagement for older adultseven when not mobile.

# 1. Project Justification

The Denver Art Museum (DAM) requests \$198,556 to support a three-year *Creative Aging Project* to provide in-community arts programs that advance Denver's priorities for healthy aging among older adults, a project that aligns with the agency's Community Anchors category. A grant will fund costs for development and evaluation of three program models to be delivered in care facilities and senior centers in Denver: 1) Themed *loan boxes* for older adults, with associated training for care staff; 2) Community-curated exhibitions co-created with older adults; and, 3) Artist-led programs with art making, conversation, and guided mindful looking. Programs will be developed with community partners serving older adults, including the City of Denver. A comprehensive evaluation plan will inform project development and refinement, assess impacts on participants and community partners, and guide development of a framework to evaluate impacts on healthy aging in the community over time.

# The DAM as Community Anchor

The proposed project furthers the IMLS's efforts to promote museums "as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities by leveraging their expertise, knowledge, physical space, technology, and other resources to identify and implement solutions." As the Rocky Mountain region's largest art museum, the DAM is well-positioned to partner with community organizations and the City of Denver to develop arts programming for a growing older adult audience. We currently offer participatory programs for older adults onsite, like *Art & About* for visitors with memory loss and their care partners and *Mindful Looking* to encourage visitors to slow down and spend time with a work of art. In addition, we participated with the City of Denver Office of Aging's needs assessment and planning, convened the Creative Aging Forum and Access Advocacy Group to inform program development and facilitate partnerships, and have deep relationships with local artists who co-create and deliver programs. Creative Aging programs will expand the museum's reach and parameters for service; go outside the building and constitute more than outreach; bring art and citizens together; and foster civic engagement among older adults, even when not mobile.

# A National and Local Need

The US is undergoing a rapid demographic shift, with the population of residents 65 and older growing at unprecedented rates. According to US Census projections, this demographic will grow 105.2% between 2015 and 2060.<sup>1</sup> Colorado is the second fastest growing state for this age group, and it is projected that by 2050 almost 20% of the metro Denver population will be older adults.<sup>2</sup> In response, Denver, like other cities across the nation, is developing strategies to support healthy aging, with a key initiative focused on arts, culture, and civic participation.

To address the challenges and opportunities from the growth of the aging population, a White House Conference on Aging in 2015 focused on "arts interventions to improve health and wellbeing outcomes among older adults" and "promoting greater cognition and creativity among older adults by means of social engagement."<sup>3</sup> Participants determined that two of the biggest

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>US Census Bureau, "An Aging Nation," (April 10, 2017). www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2017/comm/cb17-ff08\_older\_americans.html, (accessed October 25, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Age Matters Needs Assessment," Office on Aging, Denver Human Rights and Community Partnerships, 2016.

www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/643/documents/Offices/Aging/Executive%20Summary%20June2016.pdf (accessed October 15, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Report from the Summit on Creativity and Aging in America, Co-presented by the National Endowment of the Arts and the National Center for Creative Aging, NEA, January 2016, 7. https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/summit-on-creative-aging-feb2016.pdf (accessed Oct 26, 2017).

needs related to lifelong learning and the arts for the aging population are building "sustainable lifelong learning models across different settings (such as senior centers, community organizations, and long-term care facilities) and how to quantify the effectiveness of programming.<sup>4</sup> The IMLS has likewise identified as a special interest in the 2018 Museums for America Program guidelines "underserved audiences in the community, including . . . seniors."

As noted in a recent report published by the National Endowment for the Arts, "in study after study, researchers have identified positive changes in health and psychological well-being—or at least slower rates of functional declines—among older adults who engage regularly with arts activities, in contrast to the outcomes for older adults who do not participate in the arts."<sup>5</sup> Although more research is needed, a growing body of evidence indicates a need to expand opportunities for older adults to engage with and create art.

To plan for this demographic change, the City of Denver in 2010 launched the "Age Matters Initiative" and in 2015, Mayor Michael B. Hancock authorized the recognition of Denver as an Age Friendly City as defined by the World Health Organization.<sup>6</sup> Currently, Denver's Office on Aging is conducting a citywide needs assessment to guide decisions regarding local programs, policy, and future investments to support healthy aging. Community Living – Culture and Arts is one of four focus areas, a recognition of arts engagement's role in supporting wellbeing for older adults. To date, the Office on Aging has surveyed local arts and culture providers and is conducting seminars with local partners to discuss findings and shape initiatives. The DAM's coordinator of adult and access programs Danielle Schultz participates in the Community Living – Culture and Arts group.

# Creative Aging at the Denver Art Museum

Recognizing the museum's role in support for healthy aging, the DAM convened the Creative Aging Forum in 2017 to develop programs with community partners, demonstrating strong support in the community for these programs. Representatives from local organizations work together to identify neighborhoods with the greatest need, develop impactful program content, share resources and training, and connect available in-community services. Staff have also researched arts participation and creative aging in preparation for program planning. (See Appendix A: Creative Aging and Access Advocacy for group details and reference bibliography.)

We have heard from older adults that they value and benefit from DAM programs. A caregiver regularly taking part in the *Art & About* program wrote: "I appreciate art much more, with a better understanding of the excitement and joy that art forms have to offer. As for my husband who has Alzheimer's, while he does not remember the programs once we have left, at the moment of the program, he has an opportunity to think, laugh, reflect, and understand something that is interesting and different in his life." And, an older adult participant in a *Mindful Looking* session explained: "I liked the opportunity for reflection and sharing. That opened my mind in a way that a lecture can't." To serve the whole community, however, it is time to move outside our walls with programs that offer high quality art experiences to underserved older adults.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Id. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Kumar B. Rajan, PhD, and Rekha S. Rajan, EdD, "Staying Engaged: Health Patterns of Older Americans Who Participate in the Arts," Weshington DC: NEA Sectomber 2017.1

Washington, DC: NEA, September 2017, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "Age Matters Needs Assessment," Office on Aging, Denver Human Rights and Community Partnerships, 2016.

To better understand older adult audiences, in 2013 the museum engaged consultant Mary Ellen Munley of MEM & Associates to conduct a literature review of museum program models for older adults and their impacts.<sup>7</sup> This research informed Vision 2021 strategic planning and creative aging programs like *Drop in Drawing* and *Drop in Writing*, which joined existing programs for older visitors. To further achieve Vision 2021 goals, *Creative Aging* programs will take museum resources into the community to serve older adults unable to visit the museum due to health, cognitive and/or physical decline, and/or limited financial resources. A grant-funded project would be informed by the DAM's general principles for creative aging programs, developed with the Creative Aging Forum, to:

- Be responsive to the needs of individuals and community partners.
- Enable active participation of older adults as participants and creators, not just as viewers.
- Foster a sense of control and personal empowerment.
- Feature dedicated social time.
- Accommodate and celebrate individual creativity.
- Be delivered by trained professional teaching artists to ensure quality of experience.

The DAM's experience with onsite programs demonstrates staff capacity and experience developing object-based participatory programs, a practice of working closely with community partners and artists, and extensive staff experience with formative and summative evaluation.

# 2. Project Work Plan

The project work plan capitalizes on existing resources and timing related to Vision 2021 activities, specifically North Building capital improvements. The North Building closed in November 2017 to accommodate renovation construction, necessitating a hiatus on programming in that facility. This opportunity to create in-community programs captures staff's available capacities, with the intention to use this time for project planning and deployment.

# Program Models

We have heard from Creative Aging Forum members that they want to be empowered to deliver arts programs and desire training and support from the museum. Leveraging our expertise and resources, DAM learning and engagement staff have begun the initial work of researching possible models to deliver offsite arts programming. (See Appendix B: Logic Model)

<u>Loan boxes</u> feature resources like touchable objects and conversation prompts, that facilitate a "museum experience" in care facilities and senior centers that serve a spectrum of older adults, including those who are experiencing memory loss or disabilities. With our partners, we would co-create ten themed boxes (two of each of five themes) designed to spark conversation and storytelling, shared memories, and group interaction. Care staff will be trained to facilitate the loan box experience, and will have additional contextual content like audio and video on USB drives and iPads included with each box. One theme would be prototyped in year one, two in year two, and two in year three to allow for refinement of prototypes based on user response. At the end of the project period, boxes would be refreshed as needed and made available for community groups and senior centers to check out for a set duration of time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Mary Ellen Munley and Charles Rossiter, Ph.D., "Art Museums and New Perspectives on Active Older Adults: A Review of Literature," Prepared for the Denver Art Museum, September 2013.

Box themes will be inspired by museum collections, which staff and partners will explore to surface resonant themes. Boxes will use objects from the DAM's Education Collection of 1,270 museum-quality touchable world art objects—such as beaded bags and moccasins, Chinese teapots and cups—that has been used successfully in *Art & About* tours to heighten connections to memory and experience. Loan box model development would include:

- Identification of themes during working sessions with museum and community partner staff and older adults (transportation provided).
- Object selection from the Education Collection.
- Development of content to facilitate conversation and understanding of artworks.
- Professional loan box design to spark curiosity and present objects as unique and special.
- DAM-led training of care staff in the use of loan boxes to empower them to deliver their own sessions to stimulate learning, discussion, and reminiscence.

Three <u>community-curated exhibitions</u>—one each year of the grant period—would be developed with and for older adults and installed in care facilities and senior centers for a period of up to one year. Exhibitions might showcase stories related to the participants' own life experiences and reminiscences or be community-specific stories, with the possibility for those participating to lend their own objects. Through this stream of programming, the museum would lend the objects, resources, and professional expertise. Model development would include:

- A series of DAM-led working sessions on- and offsite for care facility staff and older adults to support exhibition development.
- Design and fabrication by the DAM's exhibitions team of flexible and sturdy infrastructure to provide a high-quality experience and support a variety of installations, including labels, stands, Plexiglas cases/bonnets, and dividers for wall text and graphics.
- Video about the program's impacts to be used on the DAM website and by our partners.
- DAM-led training of care staff in how to incorporate art exhibitions into ongoing programs.

An *artist-led arts program* series of 20 art making and art looking sessions will introduce participants and their care partners to artistic techniques, materials, and creative processes. Artists would have access to the Education Collection and high-quality reproductions of artworks from the DAM's collection to provide catalysts for art making and conversations. Model development would include:

- Recruiting a cohort of ten artists through community open call and existing partner artist networks.
- Artist training onsite at the DAM for close-looking and the use of objects to spark conversation; mentoring by artists who are experienced in developing art making programs for older adults; and guidance from health care partners on challenges presented by older adults who may be living with dementia or other challenges.
- DAM-led training for care staff in how to deliver their own in-facility arts programs and empower them to continue as a regular activity.
- Video documentation for use in training care staff.

*Evaluation* will investigate the museum's unique role in contributing to the well-being of older adults and will inform program model development and delivery at all stages. The DAM has spent decades building staff capacity to develop and implement evaluation; museum consultant Mary Ellen Munley brings specialized expertise to the evaluation process. Munley will assist with developing an evaluation plan for each year of the project period; create instruments for information gathering; guide the team through data collection and analysis during the project period; and create summaries for all three years.

Project evaluation will include: formative and ongoing evaluation to support program development and refinement, evaluation to assess impacts on older adult participants and community partners during the project period, and development of a framework to evaluate impacts on healthy aging in Denver over time. A summary of evaluation plans follows:

# Front-end Planning and Formative Evaluation

To kick off the project, the DAM will host convenings with the Creative Aging Forum to begin to map assets and identify needs of older adults, a dynamic process that offers flexibility to respond to the community. At Forum workshops, additional program partners will be identified and asset mapping and needs assessment conducted to identify Denver neighborhoods with greatest need for arts programs to support healthy aging. Subsequent planning sessions will take place in the community and at the museum with Denver agencies and organizations identified during initial planning. These co-planning sessions will allow the DAM to build relationships and identify additional partners to co-create and deliver program models, further assess the needs of partners and older adults, and identify themes for older adults to explore.

In year one, as part of a developmental evaluation approach, Munley will support the DAM and Creative Aging Forum teams in placing the work in the context of research and national discussion about the benefits of arts access and participation for older adults. Work will include:

- Reviewing national and international models for measuring the social, physical, and mental health benefits for older adults in engaging with arts programming.
- Facilitating three evaluation workshops with the DAM and Creative Aging Forum teams to assess where in the community they might work and identify indicators of success.
- Reviewing results of asset mapping and listening sessions to support DAM and community partners to collectively define shared outcomes for the work, and introduce specific prospective instruments and measures for demonstrating success.
- Developing a protocol for and collecting baseline data from museum staff, partner organizations, and older adults on perceptions of the DAM as a trusted resource for cultural experiences and access for older adults, and perceptions of how arts programming can contribute to healthy aging.
- Facilitating analysis and discussion of implications of information gathered to inform innovative program design and maximize impact.
- As co-planning kicks off, Munley will participate in monthly updates on program design and information gathering and advise on evaluation questions and tools refinement.
- Delivering a summary of key findings for Year 1.

As program models are developed and prototyped, the team will conduct formative evaluation and program model improvement, with emphasis on data collection, analysis, and implications of information gathered to date. The project team anticipates meeting three times in the second year to guide data collection and analysis and debrief of findings.

Summative evaluation (impact evaluation) will take place in year three of the project period, and will include evidence of outcomes and impact for individuals and organizations. The team will host two onsite meetings to guide data collection and analysis and debrief of findings. Near the close of the project period, the team will produce a white paper on indicators of well-being and articulation of the museum's role in the community. Project staff will share with the field through an onsite Creative Aging Symposium at the end of the project period, developed with our community partners and the City of Denver to share findings and lessons learned, offer professional development, and share program models. The DAM will also collect data indicating progress toward achieving the IMLS's stated performance measurement goals.

The project is designed to be sustainable after the grant period. Programmatic models will be created with the goal of empowering care facility and senior center staff to integrate programmatic models into their ongoing activities. In addition, resources (loan boxes and exhibition infrastructure) will be created, training models developed, and a cohort of teaching artists trained to deliver ongoing programming.

We recognize the need to anticipate project risks such as trained partner staff and artist turnover. The DAM plans to produce video content that preserves training and program delivery and is easily shared with existing and potential program partners. Program participants are also encouraged to attend period trainings and workshops provided by the DAM. Also, program components like loan boxes and community exhibition components will be refreshed over time in order to ensure continued program quality. The DAM has many years of extensive and relevant experience in this area through its successful backpack programs for family visitors.

#### Communicating About the Creative Aging Programs

Because this program will be delivered in the community, communication will be important for letting caregivers and community centers know about this resource. The DAM will produce an informational rack card that will be shared with the Creative Aging Forum, Access Advocacy Group, and other relevant stakeholders as well as with caregivers and community centers at the heart of the programs. Instructional videos will promote creative aging programs via the DAM's website and social media channels and serve as a training piece that can provide consistent instruction for caregiver staffs in how to access and utilize the programs.

The DAM will host two Creative Aging Open Houses in each of years two and three to introduce additional community stakeholders to the programs and resources, and to spotlight art created by older adults through the programs. During the project period, staff will explore additional means of informing the community about the programs and how to access them. Project staff are also responsible for communicating about the program in the community through their networks.

#### Project Personnel and Resources:

DAM's chief of learning and engagement <u>Melora McDermott-Lewis</u> will oversee the broad institutional objectives of the program. Project director <u>Heather Nielsen</u> will oversee all project activities, with a focus on evaluation and monitoring progress toward goals. <u>Laura Baxter</u> will manage the day-to-day development of programs, facilitate planning sessions with community partners, adapt existing training models for partner staff trainings, and oversee content development by the Adult Programs team. <u>Danielle Schulz</u> will help develop and coordinate artmaking programs and will work with relevant Denver agencies. <u>Molly Medakovich</u> will support the development of art programs with a focus on art looking experiences and resources. <u>Lauren Hegge</u> will coordinate artist open calls and training. A <u>project assistant</u> will manage logistics of program delivery and coordination of evaluation and training schedules.

As a project that relies on the strength of its community collaborations, the DAM is proud to have the strong support of local organizations and the City of Denver whose expertise will inform the work too plan and implement project activities, and will contribute to evaluation throughout. (See Appendix C: Letters of Support.)

# **3. Project Results**

This project supports the IMLS performance goal of strengthening museums as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities. With IMLS support, the DAM and its partners will develop new models to provide high quality arts programs to underserved older adults in the community, playing a vital role in fulfilling Denver's goal to be an Age Friendly City.

The proposed *Creative Aging Project* is designed to address Denver's identified need for arts programs to support wellbeing for a growing aging population, many of whom are unable to travel to the museum either due to physical or mental challenges or a lack of financial resources. Anticipated benefits for older adult participants include improved alertness, reduced stress, development of new interests and skills, increased social contact and sense of community, improved creative thinking, and enjoyment of the arts and artmaking. Over time, this project has the potential to reduce isolation and loneliness of older adults, improve their physical and mental wellbeing, and establish a community network of arts program providers and trained teaching artists. Moreover, the project and its evaluation will respond to a national call for new models of arts interventions for older adults and provide a framework to measure the role of arts engagement programs in healthy aging.

The DAM is invested in developing audiences for onsite engagement but with the current opportunity to develop offsite programs prompted by the closure of the North Building, the DAM is poised to achieve a long-held aspiration – to bring the museum out of its walls and into the community in meaningful ways that respond to the community's needs. We strive to be good stewards of our community, as an anchor in our creative ecosystem and as an institution that invests in improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors. With the *Creative Aging Project*, we are honoring and meeting the purpose of later life, providing meaning, social engagement, and interaction. We believe that by doing so, we are uniquely positioned to contribute to positive health and vitality, and promote well-being among older adults.

	Year One (2018-2019)											
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
OVERALL												
Project Kickoff; Hire Project Assistant												
DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION												
Review national and international models for impact measurement												
Evaluation workshops with DAM team and community partners												
Collect baseline data on perceptions of DAM as an anchor for cultural												
opportunities and how access to arts programming contributes to healthy												
aging												
Data analysis and implications for program development with project team												
Deliver summary of key findings to inform program development												
NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT												
Listening sessions with Creative Aging Forum + potential partners												
Asset mapping												
Identification of partners for yr 1 program development												
LOAN BOXES MODEL												
Co-creation of content with community partners												
Identification of themes for first loan box												
Object selection and resource development												
Design and fabrication												
Development and delivery of training sessions												
Launch first loan box												
COMMUNITY CURATED DISPLAY MODEL												
Design and fabrication of exhibition infrastructure												
Working sessions w/ community partner for exhibition development												
Design and production of exhibition graphics												
Video documentation												
Development and delivery of training sessions												
Install and Launch												
ART PROGRAM MODEL												
Research and develop program components												
Recruit trainers and mentors												
Develop artist training program												
Open call to artists for cohort 1												
Recruit and train cohort 1												

	Year Two (2019-2020)											
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
FORMATIVE EVALUATION												
Evaluation workshops with DAM team and community partners												
Observations and interviews with museum staff, partner organizations and												
older adults on program implementation and impact												
Data analysis with project team												
Deliver summary of key findings												
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT												
Creative Aging forum convenings												
Identification of partners for yr 2 program development and implementation												
LOAN BOXES MODEL												
Introduction and implementation of first loan boxes												
Co-creation of content with community partners for second and third loan												
boxes												
Identification of themes for second and third loan boxes with community												
Object selection for second and third loan boxes												
Design and fabrication												
Delivery of training sessions												
COMMUNITY CURATED DISPLAY MODEL												
Working sessions with community partner for exhibition development												
Design and production of exhibition graphics												
Video documentation												
Delivery of training sessions												
Install and Launch												
ART PROGRAM MODEL												
Deliver 5 programs with cohort 1												
Open call to artists for cohort 2												
Recruit and traing cohort 2												
Deliver 5 programs with cohort 2												

	Year Three (2020-2021)											
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
SUMMATIVE (IMPACT) EVALUATION								Ť				
Evaluation workshops with DAM team and community partners												
Revisit baseline data on perceptons of the museum as an anchor for cultural												
opportunities and how access to arts programming contributes to healthy												
aging												
Addional data collection about impact												
Analysis of data across all three years with project team												
Deliver summary of key findings												
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT												
Creative Aging Forum convenings												
Identification of partners for yr 3 program development and implementation												
LOAN BOXES MODEL												
Introduction and implementation of first, second, and third loan boxes												
Co-creation of content with community partners												
Identification of themes for fourth and fifth loan boxes												
Object selection for fourth and fifth loan boxes												
Design and fabrication												
Delivery of training sessions												
COMMUNITY CURATED DISPLAY MODEL												
Working sessions with community partner for exhibition development												
Design and production of exhibition graphics												
Video documentation												
Delivery of training sessions												
Install and Launch												
ART PROGRAM MODEL												
Deliver 10 programs with cohorts 1 & 2												
Refresher training												
DISSEMINATION												
Plan for Convening												[
1.5 day Convening												
White Paper and Video dissemination												