

Museums Empowered

Sample Application MA-40-18-0549-18 "Philbrook Integrated Evaluation Program"

Philbrook Museum of Art

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$234,080 Amount of cost share: \$234,551

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

Lead Applicant: Philbrook Museum of Art

Project Need: Philbrook has laid necessary groundwork to increasingly align mission and institutional impact, yet the Museum recognizes that building institutional knowledge and staff capacity around evaluation is a critical step toward better understanding and serving visitors. In order to become dynamic and resourceful in responding to changing demographics and psychographics, Philbrook must provide a large team of interdepartmental and multilevel staff with professional development that will help them: identify and articulate outcomes, understand outcomes-based evaluation, understand diverse audiences, develop a culture of evaluation, operationalize evaluation in daily processes, develop a set of tools to employ in evaluation, and understand methods of demonstrating and sharing impact.

Project Activities: Philbrook will research, develop, and implement a three-year initiative to build institutional capacity around evaluation and integrate evaluation into sustained institutional planning and processes in order to better serve audiences. *Philbrook Integrated Evaluation Program (PIEP)* will grow staff capacity and competency around evaluation and develop necessary tools to embed evaluation deeply and broadly throughout the institution. Over the three-year project, working collaboratively with and under the guidance of Audience Focus, a consulting team of evaluation experts, Philbrook staff will: (1) develop shared knowledge of and skills in evaluation; (2) conduct evaluation iteratively within existing institutional processes; and (3) build a strategic evaluation plan and develop pathways to share learning internally across the institution and externally with the field.

Project Duration: October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2021

Target Audiences: Philbrook staff is the immediate audience and beneficiary. Sixteen staff members will be engaged on the project team to: receive training in evaluation; practice evaluation on exhibitions, interpretive projects, and programs taking place in real time; and build sustaining processes and practices around evaluation.

Intended Outcomes: Project staff will: increase their understanding of what evaluation is and is not; increase their understanding of the process of evaluation; increase their understanding of core audiences' needs, values, and motivations; value evaluation as an essential process of their work; value the evaluative process as important to creating and demonstrating impact; and increase their ability to conceptualize and implement practitioner-led evaluation studies. Philbrook will: embed evaluation in institutional processes; involve cross-departmental and multilevel staff in developing and implementing evaluation studies; use evaluation findings for decision-making purposes; share evaluation results with stakeholders; and continue training in evaluation for staff.

Measuring Success: To measure the project's success, the Museum will work with an external evaluator who will conduct a baseline evaluation at the beginning of the project, a process evaluation at the close of year one, and a summative evaluation at the close of the project. The evaluator will collect post-project data corresponding to the baseline data as a way to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors related to evaluation and evaluative thinking. Methods for collecting data will include individual and/or group interviews, online questionnaires that contain both close-ended (scaled) and open-ended (exploratory) lines of questioning, onsite observations of meetings or other events, and review of embedded assessment pieces (e.g. staff written reflections, strategic plan, evaluation plan).

1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Project Description

Philbrook Museum of Art (Philbrook) proposes to research, develop, and implement a three-year initiative to build institutional capacity around evaluation and integrate evaluation into sustained institutional planning and processes in order to better serve audiences. *Philbrook Integrated Evaluation Program (PIEP)* will grow staff capacity and competency around evaluation and develop necessary tools to embed evaluation deeply and broadly throughout the institution. Over the three-year project, working collaboratively with and under the guidance of Audience Focus, a consulting team of museum evaluation experts, Philbrook staff will: (1) develop shared knowledge of and skills in evaluation; (2) conduct evaluation iteratively within existing institutional processes; and (3) build a strategic evaluation plan and develop pathways to share learning internally across the institution and externally with the field (see *Supportingdoc1* for guiding references). Staff from across the institution, including curators, educators, and communications and guest experience staff – from frontline staff to the leadership team – will be engaged through the proposed knowledge-building exercises (Kubarek 2015). In alignment with both IMLS and Philbrook strategic goals, this initiative enhances the Museum's ability to serve as a cultural community anchor, better equipped to promote constituents' lifelong and "life-wide" learning.

Need Addressed

Need to Engage Staff in Evaluative Practice to Increase Institutional Impact

Over the last decade, and with greater intensity since Director Scott Stulen took the helm in 2016, Philbrook has laid necessary groundwork to increasingly align mission and institutional impact. This includes establishing institutional values that guide how Philbrook will grow its relationship with the community, execute its strategic plan, develop an interpretive plan, and create cross-departmental teams and processes for planning. Staff and stakeholders have identified crucial next steps to enable Philbrook to more intentionally serve visitors, including building institutional capacity for outcomes-based evaluation, identifying a framework for understanding audiences, establishing an institutional theory of change, and developing a set of tools staff can use for a range of evaluative methods. *PIEP* will shift organizational thought around visitor experience. By engaging an expanded interdepartmental team in professional development around evaluation, Philbrook will better understand visitor experience and use data to inform decision-making to: measure and articulate success and impact based on evidence; increase institutional impact to better serve the community; support institutional sustainability; and demonstrate institutional impact to stakeholders.

How Philbrook has Addressed this Need to Date

Over the past three years, Philbrook has taken focused steps toward thinking and acting evaluatively (Stein 2007, *Indicators* 2010) and to becoming more audience-centric, including:

- consulting with Jeanine Ancelet of Audience Focus on a three-year outcomes-based evaluation of the Kennedy Center's *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child* program as implemented locally;
- conducting visitor observations and exit interviews in select exhibitions;
- creating "talk-back stations" within exhibitions and collection galleries to gain visitor input;
- installing a "test-it station" to incorporate visitor feedback in the redesign of object labels;
- training with Silvia Filippini-Fantoni, an evaluation and interpretation expert, on cross-departmental exhibition development using a design-thinking process;
- conducting audience research of visitors based on John Falk's Visitor Identity Related Motivations;
- developing an exhibition, *Museum Confidential*, around visitors' commonly asked questions about how museums work;
- and conducting visitor testing of interpretive design prototypes and upcoming exhibition titles. See *Supportingdoc2* for sample activities.

Beneficiaries

While long-term beneficiaries of *PIEP* include Philbrook's diverse audiences and stakeholders, Philbrook staff is the immediate audience and beneficiary. Fifteen staff members will be engaged on the project team to: receive training in evaluation; practice evaluation on exhibitions, interpretive projects, and programs taking place in real time; and build sustaining processes and practices around evaluation. By building a project team that is cross-departmental and multi-level, including the Director, this integrated program will bridge evaluation theory to evaluation application in a model that secures staff buy-in and is sustainable.

PIEP Advances the Philbrook Strategic Plan

Philbrook's strategic initiatives include generating new ideas and knowledge, and making them broadly accessible through excellence in visitor experience. Not only is building evaluative capacity outlined as a critical step itself in the strategic plan, but *PIEP* is crucial to advancing each of Philbrook's core values by equipping staff with tools to identify how to improve audience experience of those values. Institutional sustainability is key to the strategic plan, as well as to day-to-day operations. *PIEP* proposes to increase staff capacity to track evidence-based data and thoroughly measure outcomes in order to strengthen the case for support to various stake-holders and open doors to increased funding in areas of greatest impact. At the conclusion of this three-year project, Philbrook will be able to demonstrate increased staff and institutional capacity around evaluation.

PIEP Addresses the Goals of IMLS Museums Empowered Evaluation Category

The proposed project supports the Museums Empowered Evaluation goal to implement robust evaluation in order to best serve intended audiences and demonstrate impact to stakeholders. This project leverages Philbrook's strong commitment to responding to the changing needs of today's audiences—as well as the institution's open-mindedness to multi-level, cross-departmental team-building and developing the skills of the next generation of museum professionals—to develop and implement an institution-wide evaluation framework that builds staff capacity to think evaluatively, gather and respond to outcomes-based data, and share data with stakeholders. *PIEP* will empower Philbrook to be dynamic and resourceful in responding to changing demographics and psychographics, and will propel Philbrook forward as it becomes more audience-centric.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN

Project Activities, Evaluation, and Performance Measurements

The project will be implemented over a three-year period beginning October 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2021. Project activities will occur in the sequence detailed below; also see *Scheduleofcompletion*.

Planning with Evaluation Consultants (Pre-Grant Period – October 2018)

Philbrook staff has engaged in preliminary discussions with museum evaluation consultancy Audience Focus to develop a proposed model of evaluation training and practice. Upon notification of funding, Philbrook will work with Audience Focus to identify dates for project activities and will also engage a third-party evaluator to assess the overall project.

PIEP will be organized into three interrelated phases grounded in a model of evaluation capacity building (Preskill 2008) including: 1) Training—developing shared evaluation knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills;

- 2) Practicing—conducting evaluation iteratively within the context of institutional processes and systems; and
- 3) Sustaining—building an evaluation strategic plan, developing mechanisms for communicating, and sharing evaluation across the institution and with the field.

Year One: Training and Practicing (October 2018 – September 2019)

Philbrook cross-departmental project staff will be trained in evaluation theory and practice.

Training Model: Three core strategies will be used within the training model in year one.

Workshops (6; *Bi-monthly*)

Marianna Adams, Jeanine Ancelet, and Jessica Luke of the museum evaluation consultancy Audience Focus will facilitate a total of six, one-and-a-half-day Workshops with the cross-departmental project staff on a bimonthly basis throughout year one. Workshops will be practically grounded and focus on building evaluation attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Nimbleness will be key to responding to specific staff questions and training needs, but prospective Workshop topics have been identified as follows:

- 1. *Evaluative Thinking*: What does it mean to "think evaluatively" and what is its value? How can Philbrook use evaluation and evaluative thinking to create engaging, audience-centered experiences?
- 2. Logic Models and Institutional Theory of Change: What is a logic model? How can logic models be used to ensure alignment between mission and values, programming, and intended audience outcomes?
- 3. *Identifying Audiences & Intended Outcomes:* How can evaluation be used to better understand the needs, values, and motivations of visitors? Why is identifying visitor outcomes critical for achieving project success and demonstrating the public value of Philbrook? How does staff define meaningful, realistic, and measurable outcomes for the visitor experience?
- 4. *Designing a "Good" Evaluation Plan:* What is a well-designed evaluation plan? What is the importance of articulating meaningful evaluation questions? How can staff identify measures and methods?
- 5. Evaluation Methods: What are the conceptual and practical aspects of different evaluation methods? What are innovative techniques that can be used in museum settings? What are the strengths and limitations of different methods? Once methods are selected, how is data collected from visitors?
- 6. *Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis:* How are data analyzed once collected? How is an analysis plan established before collecting data?

Coaching Meetings (12; Monthly)

A smaller core team of cross-departmental staff will be identified to participate in monthly, 90-minute long Coaching Meetings with Audience Focus. During these monthly meetings, topics covered in the larger workshops will be explored in greater depth. The core team will receive additional coaching and mentoring in evaluation through these meetings in preparation to assume leadership roles in institutional evaluation in years two and three of the project and beyond.

Technical Assistance (As Needed)

As needed, Philbrook project staff will receive individual, one-on-one coaching from Audience Focus to address specific questions that may arise related to evaluation. Audience Focus will provide four hours of individual technical assistance training or coaching each month.

Practicing: Philbrook project staff will apply evaluation methods to institutional projects and programs.

Test-it Space

During the first six months of the project, Philbrook will create and run a "test-it" space within the permanent collection galleries. The "test-it" space will provide a dedicated area for project staff to practice evaluative strategies and methods learned through the training curriculum and continue honing skills in collecting and responding to feedback.

Evaluation Labs (3)

Toward the close of year one of the project, Philbrook project staff will begin to engage in Evaluation Labs, a conceptual framework for practicing evaluation in real-life settings, such as exhibitions or programs. Audience Focus will facilitate three simultaneous Evaluation Labs, each led by one Audience Focus evaluator and one core team leader working with a small group of cross-departmental staff. The focus of each Lab will be determined by the core team leaders and will be integrated into one or more institutional processes. If an Evaluation Lab were to focus on a front-end evaluation of an upcoming exhibition, for example, Audience Focus will work with that Lab team to identify questions for and methods of evaluation, develop instruments, collect and analyze data, and then will work with the team to incorporate data and learning into the exhibition development process. This method allows staff to practice and hone their evaluation skills within relevant institutional contexts and under the guidance of experts.

Year Two: Practicing and Training (October 2019 – September 2020)

In project year two, the primary focus will be on conducting evaluation iteratively within the context of institutional processes and systems, while training in evaluation theory and practice will continue.

Workshops (3)

Audience Focus will facilitate three Workshops in year two. Prospective evaluation practice topics include:

• Interpreting Data and Making Evaluation Results Useful: How is data interpreted into actionable findings? How can evaluation results lead to change in practice? What is the best way to share evaluation results with stakeholders?

Evaluation Labs (3)

Audience Focus will facilitate three additional Evaluation Labs in year two of the project. Workshops in year two will allot sufficient time for Evaluation Lab teams to come together and share results from their individual Labs, reflect on lessons learned, share challenges and accomplishments, and discuss changes to their practice.

Coaching Meetings (12; Monthly)

Monthly coaching meetings with Audience Focus will continue for the smaller core evaluation team.

Technical Assistance (As Needed)

Audience Focus will continue to provide up to four hours of individual technical assistance monthly.

Year Three: Practicing and Sustaining (October 2020 – September 2021)

In the final year, the primary focus will be on building institutional mechanisms and a culture of evaluation that will sustain the increased staff competency and capacity in evaluation beyond the life of the project.

Evaluation Labs (3)

Practicing evaluation will continue with Audience Focus facilitating three additional Evaluation Labs.

Coaching Meetings (12; Monthly)

Monthly coaching meetings with Audience Focus will continue for the smaller core evaluation team.

Technical Assistance (As Needed)

Audience Focus will continue to provide up to four hours of individual technical assistance monthly.

Sustainable Practices

Audience Focus will collaborate with the project team to integrate evaluation processes, systems, policies, and procedures into daily staff operations while ingraining the new iterative evaluation practices as habits will make them self-sustaining and dynamic. The specific shape of this integration will be identified in years one and two, but prospective activities to build sustainability beyond the project include the development of:

- a core evaluation team responsible for mentoring staff in evaluation and overseeing the implementation of evaluative processes and practices at Philbrook;
- shared platforms for evaluation tools and sharing of results;
- plans and policies for dedicating resources to evaluation, including financial support and staff time;
- stakeholder buy-in to support a permanent evaluation position;
- and procedures for how evaluation results will be used to improve practice and visitor experiences.

Dissemination (October 2020 – Post-Grant Period)

Philbrook staff will disseminate project information through conference presentations in year three; project findings will be presented post-grant at conferences and online, and communicated to stakeholders.

Project Risks

PIEP requires a certain amount of flexibility as specific topics and institutional projects that will be incorporated into the program will be identified throughout the course of the project in response to staff needs and knowledge. In order to mitigate risks inherent to this flexibility, such as deviations from the timeline, the project provides structural safeguards to ensure timeliness and clarity of communication throughout the process, including: monthly meetings with Audience Focus, monthly technical assistance from Audience Focus, and set timeframes (as outlined in the Schedule of Completion) within which the project team identifies and refines plans for practice of evaluation in upcoming Evaluation Labs.

Project Management and Staff

Jessimi Jones will serve as project director. Jones is the Bernsen Director of Education and Public Programs at Philbrook and has vast experience leading professional development for educators, leading staff through outcomes-based program planning, and working closely with evaluation specialists in the evaluation of programs. Jones will oversee project planning and management and supervise project goals and deliverables. A core project team representative of all departments will help plan, implement, and manage the initiative, including:

- Scott Stulen, Director and President
- Rachel Keith, Director of Collections and Exhibitions
- Catherine Whitney, Chief Curator
- Amanda Hodges, Director of Communications
- Jessica Upson, Guest Experience Manager

In order to secure systemic change within Philbrook, additional staff from across departments and at various levels will be engaged in *PIEP*, including: Susan Green, Associate Curator for Special Collections, Archives, & Research; Tim Abel, Creative Engagement Lead; Rachel Ann Dennis, Creative Engagement Lead; Roselle Tyner, Museum Educator for Touring and Docent Programs; Zach Roth, Guest Experience Coordinator; Kamakshi Nittala, Communications Coordinator; Jeff Martin, Communications Manager; Bhadri Verduzco, Graphic Designer; and Mark Brown, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director.

Philbrook project staff will work with the consulting team at Audience Focus, specifically Marianna Adams, Jeanine Ancelet, and Jessica Luke. All three have consulted with numerous museums on evaluation, professional development, and interpretive planning, including the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. All three also teach evaluation at the graduate level. *See Resumes*.

Project Resources

Philbrook respectfully requests \$234,080 to support the *Philbrook Integrated Evaluation Program*; the project budget totals \$468,631. Grant funds would directly underwrite consulting evaluator fees; consultant travel; supplies, materials, equipment, and image right costs related to evaluation practice activities; and conference travel and registration for staff. Philbrook will demonstrate its commitment to the project by providing cost share of \$234,551. Please see *Budget* and *Budgetjustification* for a detailed breakdown of expenditures.

Progress, Evaluation, and Dissemination of Results

The Philbrook project team will hold regular team meetings to ensure all project activities, expenses, and goals are on track to be met as planned. Smartsheet, Philbrook's digital project management system, will be utilized for document sharing, task assignments, and deliverables among the project team. Philbrook and Audience Focus will select an external evaluator to conduct three assessments of the overall project as follows:

Baseline Evaluation (October – November 2018)

In the early months of the project, the selected external evaluator will visit Philbrook to establish baseline data documenting project staff's existing knowledge of, attitudes toward, and skills in evaluation theory and practice, as well as assess the degree to which evaluation thinking and practices exist at Philbrook prior to *PIEP*.

Process Evaluation (August – September 2019)

A process evaluation will be conducted at the close of year one to assess project efficacy, including whether project partners (both Philbrook staff and Audience Focus evaluators) are collaborating and communicating effectively and efficiently, if expected outputs are being produced, and if the project is on track to meet intended outcomes. These findings will inform changes that need to be made to the project model in years two and three. The evaluator will use methods such as reviewing process documents and other outputs, conducting individual interviews with Philbrook staff and Audience Focus researchers, and administering questionnaires with the project team.

Summative Evaluation (August 2021 – Post-Grant Period)

Summative evaluation will be conducted in the final months of the project and post-grant to assess project outcomes, focusing on the extent to which evaluation competencies and capacity increased among staff and the degree to which institutional culture around evaluation changed. The evaluator will collect post-project data corresponding to the baseline data as a way to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors related to evaluation and evaluative thinking. Methods for collecting post-program data will include individual and/or group interviews, online questionnaires that contain both close-ended (scaled) and open-ended (exploratory) lines of questioning, onsite observations of meetings or other events, and review of embedded assessment pieces (e.g. staff written reflections, strategic plan, evaluation plan).

Methods of Dissemination

Project results will be shared internally through presentations of evaluation reports to the project team, as well as all staff. Project staff will share findings and anecdotal project information with institutional stakeholders, including the Board and community partners. Project staff plans to disseminate project methodology, results, and lessons learned in capacity-building to similar- and smaller-sized institutions in the region through conference presentations and one-on-one meetings. Identified conferences include National Art Education Association Conference and American Alliance of Museums' Annual Meeting.

3. PROJECT RESULTS

IMLS Performance Goals and Measure Statements

PIEP supports the IMLS Agency-Level Goal of Learning:

- Performance Goal: Train and develop museum and library professionals
 - o Measure Statement: My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training
 - o Measure Statement: My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training
 - o Measure Statement: I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training
- Performance Goal: Support communities of practice
 - o Measure Statement: My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training
 - o Measure Statement: My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training
 - o Measure Statement: I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training
- Performance Goal: Develop and provide inclusive and accessible learning opportunities
 - o Measure Statement: My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training
 - o Measure Statement: My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training

Corresponding data will be collected through a post-project survey conducted by an external evaluator. Results will be shared in the final grant report and through presentation and publication as outlined previously.

Intended Results

In meeting the need to engage staff in evaluative practice, *PIEP* will:

- build staff capacity and competency around evaluation;
- operationalize an institutional culture of evaluation;
- develop a set of evaluative tools that can be employed by staff across the institution;
- and establish institutional metrics for success in alignment with values and strategic plan.

Intended Audience Changes

The immediate primary audience for *PIEP* is Philbrook staff. The intended outcomes listed below will also support institutional change (see *Supportingdoc3* for preliminary logic model).

Knowledge Outcomes

• Philbrook staff increase their understanding of what evaluation is and is not

Philbrook Integrated Evaluation Program

- Philbrook staff increase their understanding of the process of evaluation (e.g. how to design and implement an evaluation study; evaluation approaches and methods; quantitative and qualitative analysis)
- Philbrook staff increase their understanding of core audiences' needs, values, and motivations

Attitude Outcomes

- Philbrook staff value evaluation as an essential process of their work
- Philbrook staff value the evaluative process as important to creating and demonstrating impact
- Philbrook staff believe evaluation contributes to project success
- Philbrook staff value outcomes over outputs
- Philbrook staff believe evaluation can be a positive experience
- Philbrook will embrace a shared theory of change
- Philbrook staff believe it is worth the time and money to invest in evaluation

Skill Outcomes

- Philbrook staff increase their ability to conceptualize and implement practitioner-led evaluation studies, including designing the study, collecting data, analyzing data, and reporting findings
- Philbrook staff increase their ability to develop logic models
- Philbrook staff increase their ability to ask important questions

Behavior Outcomes

- Evaluation is embedded in institutional processes
- Cross-departmental staff at all levels are involved in developing and implementing evaluation studies
- Evaluation findings are used more often for decision-making purposes, including current and future program and exhibition improvement, resource allocations, and accountability demonstrations
- Results of evaluations are shared with stakeholders (Museum leadership and staff, board members, funders, public audiences, and the museum field at large)
- Continued training in evaluation is available for program staff

Tangible Products

- Integrated Philbrook Evaluation Process: Evaluation will be integrated into the process of developing exhibitions, programs, and interpretive projects and into the determination of their success. A clear process for evaluation will be outlined and included in a staff handbook.
- *Philbrook Logic Model:* An institutional logic model will clearly articulate and ensure alignment between Philbrook's mission and values, programming, and intended audience outcomes.
- *Philbrook Audience Framework:* An institutional audience framework will identify current audiences, prospective audiences, audience needs, and strategies for attracting and retaining various audiences.
- Evaluation Toolkit: A toolkit will include the above three resources, as well as articles, evaluation methods, samples of evaluation tools used to gather data, and sample studies developed through Evaluation Labs.
- Evaluation Plan: An action plan will identify priority evaluation projects to be undertaken following the project period.

Sustainability

PIEP calls for cross-departmental, multilevel staff training that secures staff buy-in and builds institutional capacity to sustain the benefits of this initiative beyond the project period. Through the development of tangible products, presentations of project findings to all staff, and operationalization of evaluation within institutional processes, this initiative lays the groundwork for all Philbrook staff - not just project staff - to build competency and capacity around evaluation. Through presentation of project findings to stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees and other key funders, Philbrook anticipates demonstrating the value of evaluation in order to secure support for a permanent evaluation position to guide evaluative efforts for the institution.

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