



# Basic Guidelines for Museum Interpretation Grants

A Collaboration of the Utah Humanities Council, the Utah Division of Arts & Museums, and the Utah Museums Association

*NOTE: These guidelines are updated occasionally as part of an ongoing evaluation of this grant program. Please check the UHC website to make sure you have the most up-to-date version. This set of guidelines was updated **15 July 2010**.*

## **An Ongoing Collaboration**

The Utah Humanities Council (UHC) and the Utah Division of Arts & Museums (A&M) with input and advice from the Utah Museums Association (UMA), are pleased to offer a joint grant program to aid Utah's museum professionals and volunteers in taking the next step toward telling their museum's story and strengthening their interpretive programs.

In the context of museum work, to interpret an object means to tell a story through labels, brochures, docent tours, public programming, and other means. Inanimate objects dropped into a display case cannot tell museum-goers about themselves. Instead, they need human interpreters—museum volunteers and professionals—to explain their meaning to human visitors.

Funds for Museum Interpretation Grants are made possible through state appropriations made to the Utah Division of Arts & Museums and a National Endowment for the Humanities grant made to the Utah Humanities Council.

Museum Interpretation Grants are meant to fund year-long projects. Multi-year projects are not eligible for funding through this grant program.

## **What are Museum Interpretation Grants?**

Museum Interpretation Grants provide financial support for projects that relate to museum interpretation, such as:

- developing docent/volunteer training programs
- researching and interpreting objects
- planning and hosting public programs
- writing exhibit text, labels and other interpretive materials

## **Who is eligible for a Museum Interpretation Grant?**

To be eligible for a Museum Interpretation Grant, a museum must:

- be located in Utah
- have an annual budget under \$200,000
- have as a primary purpose the exhibition or use of collections and exhibits
- have at least one paid or unpaid staff member (or the equivalent) whose primary duty is the care, exhibition, and/or interpretation to the public of the objects owned / used by the museum
- have tax-exempt status (501)(c)(3) with the Internal Revenue Service, or be operated by a government entity

### **What projects don't qualify for Museum Interpretation Grant funding?**

Museum Interpretation Grants will not be awarded for:

- acquisition of objects for a collection
- endowments
- salaries for permanent full-time or part-time staff positions
- creative or performing arts, unless directly associated with museum interpretation
- projects completed prior to application
- professional conferences or invitational meetings
- political action or advocacy
- receptions, food, or entertainment
- indirect costs/overhead
- building construction, maintenance, renovation, or preservation
- property, building, or equipment purchase
- international travel
- regular school activities or student projects
- scholarships or tuition for college or training courses
- deficits
- fund-raising events/products
- multi-year projects

### **How much money can we receive through the Museum Interpretation Grant program?**

\$2,000 maximum per year per museum applicant. Smaller requests are encouraged.

### **What matching cash and in-kind contributions are required?**

A Museum Interpretation Grant may provide no more than 50% of a project's total cost. Each applicant must be able to show at least one dollar in in-kind contributions or cash to match each Museum Interpretation Grant dollar requested. This information must be entered into the Budget Chart on the application form, as well as in your written Budget Explanation. We strongly encourage applicants to cover as many administrative costs (personnel, space, etc.) as possible with matching contributions. Although cash match is encouraged, it is not required. The required match may be entirely in-kind.

"In-kind match" refers to contributions for which the applicant does not pay cash, such as services, facilities, publicity, and volunteer time, including services or expenses paid by a third party.

"Cash match" refers to direct project expenses—the applicant organization's cash expenditures for activities of this specific project, such as paying honoraria and travel expenses or printing posters. Employee salaries also fall into the category of cash match.

### **What is the Museum Interpretation Grant application deadline?**

The deadline for grant applications is September 1, 2010. This is not a postmark deadline. Applications must be received in the UHC office (Attn: Museum Grants, 202 West 300 North, Salt Lake City, UT 84103) by **September 1, 2010**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Please note that deadlines are subject to change.

### **Can I get help with the application process?**

UHC staff members are happy to advise you as you complete the Museum Interpretation Grant application. We strongly encourage potential applicants to call in the early stages of project planning in order to get staff help.

### **How are funding decisions made?**

The grant committee will make final decisions on awards based on the following criteria:

- need for the project
- level of interpretation in the proposed project
- merit and significance of the project
- long-term benefits of the project for the museum and public
- involvement of humanities scholars (local historians/archaeologists, art critics, etc.) in the project
- evidence of sound organizational planning (i.e., clear plan demonstrating how project is to be accomplished within specified timeframe).

### **If we receive a Museum Interpretation Grant, what types of publicity will UHC and A&M require as part of our grant agreement?**

Grantees are expected to publicize the events or projects for which they receive Museum Interpretation Grant funding, and to credit the Utah Humanities Council and the Division of Arts & Museums in that publicity. Without this credit, UHC and A&M are invisible to the people of Utah, to potential donors, to state and federal legislators who decide on our appropriations each year, and to the audiences we provide with thousands of dollars worth of grants. Exhibits and printed materials that benefit from a Museum Interpretation Grant should contain the following credit line: “Funds to support this (exhibit/project/program/brochure) have been provided by the Utah Humanities Council and the Utah Division of Arts & Museums as part of the Utah Museum Interpretation Initiative, a collaboration of UHC, A&M, and the Utah Museums Association.” UHC and A&M must be credited orally—using this same language—at public programs that have benefited from a Museum Interpretation Grant.

### **What will UHC and A&M expect from us in terms of project evaluation?**

The success of this grant program relies on grantees to help us measure the impact of our programs. Without audience feedback, our ability to make a case for the importance of our programs to government and private funders is hampered. The project director's written report *does not* satisfy the requirement of collecting and returning visitor evaluations for projects funded with a Museum Interpretation Grant. Alternative means of evaluation may be acceptable, as long as they are described clearly and compellingly in the grant proposal.

### **What process must I follow in making changes to my project after an award is made?**

If you are awarded a grant, you will enter onto an agreement with UHC and A&M, the terms of which state that you must notify UHC (the organization that is administering this program) in writing prior to making any changes to your original proposal. Significant changes to your project must be approved by UHC staff. Changes that, in UHC's opinion, significantly alter the project as originally proposed could result in rescission of the grant. Examples of changes that require approval include:

- redirection of grant funds
- replacement of project director or fiscal agent
- change in the scope, purpose, activities, or duration of the project

### **What may we request for per diem and travel costs?**

A Museum Interpretation Grant may cover up to \$80 per night for lodging, coach rate airfare, and \$.40 per mile if traveling by car. The maximum per diem is \$30. All maximums are per person.

**What documentation will we be required to maintain for our grant project?**

Grant recipients must maintain documentation of their expenditure of Museum Interpretation Grant funds. Records must be available for federal, state, or UHC audit for seven (7) years following submission of the final report.

**What are the project director's responsibilities if we receive a Museum Interpretation Grant?**

The project director's signature on the application form indicates that the project director agrees to:

- notify UHC immediately of any change in the schedule or scope of your project
- credit UHC and A&M using the language provided above
- include web links to UHC, A&M, and UMA on your website
- return the grant final report form promptly after your program or activities
- send copies of publicity, promotional materials, and photographs of the project with the final report form
- submit evaluation materials with your final report form

For more information about the Museum Interpretation Grant program, please contact:

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