



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Sample of a Successful Application

This document contains the narrative and walkthrough of a previously funded grant application. Every successful application is different, and this application may have been prepared to meet a slightly different set of guidelines. Each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations, as well as the requirements in the current notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). Prospective applicants should consult the current Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations NOFO at <https://www.neh.gov/program/public-impact-projects-smaller-organizations> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attached application is incomplete. Portions have been deleted to protect the privacy interests of an individual, and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information, and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

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Project Title: Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area

Institution: Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center, Inc.

Project Director: Gaila C Sims

Grant Program: Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations

The Fredericksburg Area Museum (FAM) seeks funding in the amount of \$24,233 for the development of upcoming exhibition *Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area* (2025). This comprehensive exhibit on African American history will be the pinnacle of a multiyear effort to enhance and expand African American public history efforts at FAM and across the city of Fredericksburg. FAM will combine multiple strategies of supported activities, including professional development for staff members and work with consultants, in the development and implementation of this interpretive exhibit.

Summary

On June 5, 2020, the City of Fredericksburg removed a 1,200-pound piece of sandstone from its prominent location in the center of downtown Fredericksburg. Fredericksburg's Auction Block was originally installed at the corner of William and Charles Streets around 1843 and witnessed at least twenty sales of enslaved people between 1847 and 1862, involving more than three hundred enslaved individuals overall. The Block remained at its original corner for 177 years, a consistent source of pain and suffering for Fredericksburg's African American community.

In 2017, following the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, City Councilor Charlie L. Frye, Jr. brought a vote to his fellow council members to relocate the Block. Though City Council voted 6-1 to leave it where it was, they initiated a citywide conversation about the Block and representation of African American history in the city. Community conversations were facilitated by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) who utilized their expertise in community memory and justice.

The Auction Block proved to be a lightning rod in the Fredericksburg area, prompting many African American residents to participate in larger community conversations about racism, inequality, and the legacies of enslavement. The ICSC conducted focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and public forums to gather feedback, and heard from hundreds of community members of all races, genders, ages, classes, and backgrounds about their opinions on the Auction Block and overall African American public history efforts in the city of Fredericksburg. In the ICSC's findings, area residents often spoke of a need to tell "the complete story" of Fredericksburg. They acknowledged that telling "the complete story" would include detailing the history of enslavement, showing that African American lives in Fredericksburg were not defined by slavery or segregation, and that African Americans have a rich history of accomplishment and contribution in the Fredericksburg region. Further, the ICSC found that the "complete story" would require reaching much further than just the Auction Block corner. The task would involve developing exhibitions, brochures, tours, websites, wayside panels, and other interpretive materials to contextualize the broader history of African American people in the Fredericksburg area.

In addition to the relocation of the Auction Block, the City of Fredericksburg responded to the ICSC findings by partnering with the Fredericksburg Area Museum to financially support and hire a Curator of African American History and Special Projects, who started full-time at the museum in August 2022. The Curator, Dr. Gaila Sims, is responsible for efforts to update, expand, and enhance African American history at the museum and across the city of Fredericksburg.

Since her arrival, Dr. Sims has developed and implemented an array of interpretive projects, including:

1. An exhibition surrounding the Auction Block's new location at the Fredericksburg Area Museum.
2. A series of lectures and presentations at the museum and across the city.
3. Downtown walking tours exploring local African American business owners and entrepreneurship.
4. Web material for the FAM and city websites.

5. Rack cards and brochures for the Visitor Center and other area museums.
6. An inventory of municipal wayside panels.
7. Exhibit tours for museum visitors, local schools, university classes, and professional and social organizations.

Fredericksburg community members have responded positively, and have continued sharing their memories and experiences, along with expectations for the continued expansion of African American public history efforts at the museum and across the city.

Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area will be the culmination of this work. While all other interpretive projects will continue in tandem with the development of this exhibit, *Living Legacies* will be the most significant fulfillment of the museum's commitment to its African American community members. This exhibition will incorporate extensive community involvement and feature compelling objects, images, and stories representing fundamental moments in our local, state, and national history. The physical exhibit will be supported by an accompanying digital exhibition, exhibition catalogue, and considerable programming. The exhibit is scheduled to be open for 3-5 years so that as many community members as possible can visit. The exhibition catalog and archived digital component will function as even longer-term records of this significant step in expanding the narratives of the city.

The exhibition will be divided into four chronological eras. The first, "Slavery and Freedom," will encompass the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Antebellum Periods and cover family and relationships, resistance and revolt, free Black people and entrepreneurship, and women's experiences. This will include information about the Waller Plantation in Spotsylvania County, where Kunta Kinte is believed to have been enslaved, and the trial of Anthony Burns from Stafford County under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The second, "Civil War and Reconstruction," includes Black participation in the war effort as soldiers and spies, along with freedom seekers and the approximately 10,000 who crossed the Rappahannock River around 1862. The third era, "Community and Collaboration," examines the years often referred to by historians as the "nadir" in American racial history (1880-1940), showing how even under segregation and ongoing threats of violence, African Americans founded neighborhoods, built businesses, schools, and churches, and supported their community and one another. Finally, the fourth era, "Protest and Progress" (1950-2020), surveys the area's unique contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, with high schoolers occupying seats at local drugstore chains as part of nationwide sit-ins, school integration, the establishment of the local NAACP branch and other activist organizations, and the story of the Loving family in Caroline County and the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967. This section will extend into the twenty-first century, remarking on later iterations of Black advocacy, including LGBTQ+ community activism in the 1990s with the formation of Fredericksburg Area HIV/AIDS Support Services (which now houses the area's Pride Center) and protests for racial justice that spread across the city in 2016 and 2020. Through centuries of history in this region, the exhibit will foreground individual stories, capturing the unique contributions and connections across generations evident in our incredible community's history.

The FAM's African American History Committee will oversee the development of the exhibition, provide feedback on interpretive text, and facilitate the involvement of the wider Fredericksburg community. The forty-person committee includes representatives from the FAM's staff and Board of Directors, the City of Fredericksburg, the Department of Community Planning, the Economic Development and Tourism Office, K-12 educators, leaders from local businesses and nonprofits, and community members. The committee also benefits from the scholarship and insight of professors from the University of Mary Washington, including Dr. Christine Henry from the Historic Preservation Department, Dr. Will

Mackintosh from the Department of History, Dr. Steve Hanna from the Department of Geography, and Dr. Shavonne Shorter, Associate Provost for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer.

Consulting Scholar Dr. Paula Royster will contribute essential genealogical research on individual Black families, tracing ancestral movement from the continent of Africa, through the Middle Passage, in and around the city of Fredericksburg, and, in many cases, settlement outside of the state due to the rigidity of Virginia's racial order. Research Assistant Alexa McNeil will collect and contribute oral history interviews to the physical and digital exhibitions. Additionally, museum staff members will continue to attend events, address organizations and schools, and connect one-on-one with younger and older African American individuals, ensuring intergenerational investment.

There is no African American museum in the city of Fredericksburg, and while there are some smaller culturally specific sites in neighboring areas, comprehensive African American history interpretation in a museum setting is an essential need for this community, as expressed in the ICSC reports and in conversations with community members. *Living Legacies* will respond to this significant gap and spell the completion of this stage in our ongoing efforts toward sharing diverse stories at the museum and across the city, creating indispensable partnerships and investment toward continuing this vital work.

Audience

The Fredericksburg Area Museum is a beloved cultural institution in the city of Fredericksburg. As a community institution, the museum welcomes thousands through our Sounds of Summer concert series and winter holiday market. By the end of fiscal year 2024, over 30,000 people will have engaged with the museum through admissions, programming, and events.

Historically, the museum has not had a close relationship with African American community members. Until recently, many local Black residents avoided downtown Fredericksburg, partly because of the presence of the Auction Block and partly because of the lasting vestiges of segregation. In the last year, the Curator of African American History and Special Projects has spearheaded focused outreach efforts, gathering the forty-member African American History Committee to serve as the guiding body to ensure the appropriate and expansive incorporation of community feedback and input in project development. The Curator and Committee welcome as many perspectives and voices as possible, prioritizing listening and learning from community members in the development of all interpretive projects. Additionally, with the successful opening and accompanying public programming of the exhibitions *A Monumental Weight: The Auction Block in Fredericksburg, Virginia* in November 2022 and *Seen: Viewing the Work of African American Artists in Fredericksburg, VA* in March 2023, the museum has welcomed hundreds of new visitors from Virginia-based African American communities, demonstrating successful relationship-building with nearby underserved communities.

Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area has three audiences in mind. The first and biggest priority is local African American community members. While the museum has successfully engaged many Black community members in the last several years, there are many more area residents who have yet to visit, not yet convinced that the museum incorporates diverse histories. *Living Legacies* will be a powerful, large-scale signal to African American Fredericksburg residents that the Fredericksburg Area Museum is committed to the full interpretation of African American history. Further, many local African American elders have expressed positive reactions to the current African American interpretive offerings contingent only on the continued expansion of these efforts, with a comprehensive African American history exhibition an oft-repeated request.

The second audience for *Living Legacies* is African American tourists. The Curator is currently working in partnership with local nonprofit Virginia Black Business Directory, city officials, and local business owners on the FXBG Black Tourism Advisory Board, which seeks to increase African American tourism to the Fredericksburg area. *Living Legacies* will provide a draw for Black visitors from the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond, an incredible opportunity to share our community's unique local history and relationship with larger state and national movements.

Finally, *Living Legacies* seeks to promote empathy and understanding in non-Black museum visitors. The FAM is an important destination for local residents and regional tourists, and often serves as the most comprehensive introduction to Fredericksburg's history for schoolchildren and people not from the area. This exhibition will show that African and African-descended people have been deeply and inextricably embedded in the history of this area since the early seventeenth century, proving the influence and contributions of Black people in the development of our shared community. *Living Legacies* will demonstrate the importance of humanities-based museum interpretation in engaging with community members, tourists, and museum visitors from near and far.

Activities and Outcomes

The *Living Legacies* Project will encompass five stages of activities. The first, outside of the scope of the NEH PIP Grant and already well underway, is front-end evaluation. Museum staff have already begun and will continue conducting formative interviews with a variety of community members, engaging in one-on-one and small-group meetings to solicit ideas and thoughts of interest. This stage is key to understanding community needs and addressing the dearth of objects related to African American history in the museum's collection, an organizational challenge front-end evaluation directly addresses.

Starting on March 1, 2024, the NEH Award Period will begin with the second stage: exhibition development. The Curator and Research Assistant will both engage in professional development to enhance their interpretive skills. The Curator will combine the consultation of extensive humanities scholarship with archival research to produce thoughtful, sensitive interpretive content to accompany the images, objects, and individual stories that will be chosen to represent African American history in the Fredericksburg area. Adhering to the tenets of the City of Fredericksburg's African American Interpretive Plan, this stage will foreground community input, methodological flexibility, accessibility, inclusiveness, intersectionality, and care for Black community. Members of the African American History Committee will oversee the development of the exhibition, led by Community Expert Nancy Moore.

Following exhibition development, the Curator will work with local firm Higashi Glaser to design the exhibition. Housed in a historic building constructed between 1814 and 1816, the Fredericksburg Area Museum uses immense care in its exhibition design, and its longstanding relationship with Higashi Glaser will facilitate the arrangement of exhibition materials in recognition of the fragility and constraints of our historic building. The NEH Public Impact Projects Grant will be instrumental in financing the exhibition design services needed for the implementation of this important interpretive project.

The fourth and fifth stages will be project implementation and programming. *Living Legacies* will open on March 1, 2025 with extensive public programming, some of which will be tied to programs already being implemented at the museum. A series of public walking tours will be offered in the spring and fall of 2025: the first, *African American Churches and Cemeteries*, will guide visitors through the religious organizations that have proved so vital to the development and continuance of Black community in the city of Fredericksburg. The second, *African American Education Efforts*, will outline the history of Black education in Fredericksburg and nearby Spotsylvania, commenting on free Black petitions to open

schools in the antebellum period, the first privately- and publicly funded schools for Black youth in the area, and the difficult history of racial integration at nearby University of Mary Washington.

Research Assistant Alexa McNeil will offer a public lecture on the historically Black neighborhood of Mayfield, where she has already engaged in an oral history project capturing the stories of neighborhood elders, some of whom have since passed away. Dr. Sims will offer a public lecture on enslaved resistance in Fredericksburg and nearby Falmouth, including the story of an uprising at Chatham Plantation. The museum will participate in city efforts to collaborate with the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project, a national organization dedicated to commemorations for community healing, to acknowledge Fredericksburg's role as a destination for slave ships as part of the International Slave Trade. Finally, the museum will offer field trip opportunities to engage with local K-12 teachers and students.

Relationship to the Humanities

Trained as a humanities scholar in American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Gaila Sims incorporates humanities scholarship and content in all public-facing projects, including exhibitions. Dr. Sims's first major project at the FAM, *A Monumental Weight: The Auction Block in Fredericksburg, Virginia*, combined archival research and historical documentation with scholarly research. *Living Legacies* will be produced in the same vein, utilizing humanities scholarship, archival collections, and visual art to interpret the history of African Americans in the Fredericksburg area.

The Fredericksburg Area Museum's collection includes several artifacts related to African American history, including documentation related to the sale of enslaved people, photographs of John M. Washington, author of Fredericksburg's best known slave narrative, dishes from local African American entrepreneur Matthew Buckner's seafood restaurant, photographs of Fredericksburg's most prominent Civil Rights activists, including Gaye Adegbalola and Jarine Mercer, original copies of Shiloh Old Site Baptist Church's weekly *Shiloh Herald* from the early twentieth century, and campaign signs for Fredericksburg's first African American mayor, Reverend Lawrence Davies, elected for the first time in 1976. The exhibit will also incorporate loaned artifacts, including free papers for the city's most prominent free Black family, the DeBaptistes, issued in 1808, located in the city archives, and abstract paintings by beloved local African American artist Johnny P. Johnson. During the exhibition's development, museum staff will issue a public call for objects to invite area residents to contribute additional artifacts and images. Finally, the exhibit will incorporate existing oral history interviews, including those conducted as part of the Trail to Freedom project in nearby Stafford and Spotsylvania Counties, those preserved in the local library special collections, those recorded and located in the University of Mary Washington archives, and those related to the Mayfield neighborhood.

The final piece of the larger *Living Legacies* project, outside of the NEH request, will be an exhibition catalogue, capturing the history of African Americans in Fredericksburg and nearby Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline, and King George Counties. The humanities publication will explore the histories of each of the counties in District 16 and provide overviews of the distinct (and related) histories of these different areas, along with meditations on some of the most important themes in Virginia's Black history.

The NEH Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations Grant will be crucial to the implementation of this important project. In his remarks at the *A Monumental Weight* exhibition opening, local African American elder Sonny Holmes shared, "This is just the beginning, but we have more to offer than just an Auction Block in the city of Fredericksburg. I am looking forward to the next part of this exhibit." The Fredericksburg community has asked the city and the museum to expand and enhance its interpretation of African American history, and while the process is already underway, *Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area* will be the decisive answer to this community call.

Organizational Profile

famva.org

1. Relevant facts and statistics about the Fredericksburg Area Museum
 - a. Year Founded: 1988
 - b. Mission Statement: The FAM's mission is to collect, research, interpret, teach, and preserve the history, heritage, and culture of the Fredericksburg region in an ever-evolving context. We serve a diverse community through a commitment to inclusion, integrity, credibility, and relevance. We will facilitate an understanding and appreciation of how the acts of those who preceded us have shaped both this community and nation at large—providing both lessons and inspiration as we work together to forge a greater community.
 - c. Annual Budget: \$530,000
 - d. Number of Staff Members: 5 full-time, 3 part-time
 - e. Number of Volunteers: 20. Volunteers work as museum greeters, support educational programming, especially field trips, help with events, including set up and clean up, conduct research, assist with inventorying collection materials, participate on walking tours, and contribute to interpretive planning.
 - f. Hours of Operation: Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
2. Audience Data
 - a. Population: The Fredericksburg Area Museum serves all of Virginia Planning District 16, encompassing the city of Fredericksburg and the counties of Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline, and King George. Population estimates as of July 1, 2022: City of Fredericksburg: 28,367. Spotsylvania County: 143,957. Caroline County: 27,422. Stafford County: 163,380. King George County: 27,856. Total: 368,062.
 - b. Average Annual Attendance: Over 30,000 (Visitation, Events, Programming)
 - c. According to the 2020 census, the Fredericksburg region has a population of approximately 382,551 people. The city of Fredericksburg itself has a population of 28,367 people. Within this community, 64.1% are white, approximately 19.96% are African American, 9.4% are Hispanic/Latino, .62% are American Indian, 2.58% are Asian, and 3.34% listed as “other”.
 - d. Economic Demographics: According to the U.S. Census, the median household income in the city of Fredericksburg between 2017-2021 was \$72,293. The per capita income was \$40,619. The percentage of people in poverty was 14.3%. In Caroline County, the median household income was \$76,528 and the percentage of people in poverty was 10.9%. In Spotsylvania County, the median household income was \$98,973 and the percentage of people in poverty was 7.2%. In King George County, the median household income was \$101,599 and the percentage of people in poverty was 6.5%. In Stafford County, the media income was \$119,818 and the percentage of people in poverty was 5.4%.
 - e. Additional Information: The Fredericksburg region is a vast landscape of diversity: African American, Indigenous People, White, Hispanic, Immigrant, Refugee, LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, only to name a few. According to the 2020 census, the Fredericksburg region has a population of approximately 382,551 people. The nearly 20% of the population identified as African American have been marginally involved in the shaping of the museum and historical narratives. There is a vast amount of work to be

done as we continue to address African American community members, along with other communities of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and disability communities. The FAM understands that this work will take time, not only to develop relationships and trust with community representatives but also the research to establish scholarship. We also understand the importance of not asserting importance to one group over another; however, the museum has identified the history, culture, and heritage of the African American community as a priority.

In 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, social unrest collided with the pandemic to create a dynamic scene on the streets of Fredericksburg. Dozens of marches originated in Market Square, part of the museum complex. FAM provided a safe space and helped facilitate dialogue between protesters and City officials. In the process, thousands of local young people discovered the museum as a credible place of learning and listening. Subsequently, community organizers sought out the museum when planning events. We continue to build on that progress, and *Living Legacies* will be the culmination of these years of efforts. Our commitment to telling the story of our region's diverse history is apparent in our use of multiple platforms that includes exhibits, public programs, art initiatives, and PreK-12 educational programs. As the region's museum, we stand poised to combine scholarship with our community's conversations to tell these stories.

- f. Cost to Participants*: Admission is \$5 for visitors over 10 years old. Children are free. The museum is free to all visitors every Monday. Walking tours are \$25 for general public, \$20 for members. Most other programming, including lectures, exhibit openings, concert series, and presentations, is free.

*Note that FAM is piloting a program for the Fall of 2023 to test free admission to the majority of its museum. If successful, the museum will re-evaluate its cost structure. FAM believes in reducing barriers to our communities' stories. This pilot program follows this important philosophy.

Work Plan

Stage 1: Front-End Evaluation + Initial Research (Outside of the NEH Award Period)

August 2022: Creation of African American History Committee

September 2022-June 2023: Relationship Building and Community Outreach

Ongoing: Research

The Curator has conducted and will continue to engage in extensive primary and secondary research to accumulate comprehensive knowledge on African American history in service of *Living Legacies*.

Stage 2: Exhibition Development (Start of NEH Award Period)

March-May 2024: Exhibition Writing

Starting on March 1, 2024, the Curator will create a first draft of all exhibition text for *Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area*. Gathering all primary and secondary research already conducted, along with information assembled from front-end evaluation, the Curator will identify objects, images, and stories for inclusion in the exhibition, and draft careful, inclusive, and accessible interpretive text for exhibition panels, labels, and banners. Consulting Scholar Dr. Paula Royster will contribute genealogical research on Fredericksburg's earliest Black families.

April-June 2024: Professional Development

The Curator will attend the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians in New Orleans, Louisiana. The theme, *Public Dialogue, Relevance, and Change: Being in Service to Communities and the Nation*, is directly related to FAM interpretive projects and attendance at this professional conference will allow the Curator to learn from other professionals in the public history field and enhance her interpretive skills. Research Assistant Alexa McNeil will attend the 2024 Oral History Institute, a virtual experience held by the Centre for Oral History and Tradition. This organization has been chosen because it is a virtual experience, which will allow her to maximize her learning in this area without travel and disruption of the exhibition schedule. The Research Assistant will receive training and hands-on experience with oral history project design, recording technology, and interview techniques to continue her ongoing work with Fredericksburg's historically Black Mayfield neighborhood. The skills she will develop and stories she will collect will be incorporated into the larger *Living Legacies* project.

June 2024: First Draft of Exhibition Text to FAM Director and Object List Finalized

On or before June 1, 2024, the Curator will deliver the first draft of exhibit text to FAM President Sam McKelvey for initial review. The President will provide initial edits and feedback by June 22, 2024. The Curator will work with the FAM Curator of Collections and Exhibitions to create and finalize the list of objects for inclusion in the exhibition, including items from the museum's collection and loans from the City Archives, the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center, community members, and other institutions.

July 2024: Second Draft of Exhibition Text to Reviewers

On July 1, 2024, the Curator will incorporate edits and feedback from the President and submit the second draft of interpretive text to the African American History Committee, which includes many of the named consultants in this grant application (Nancy Moore, Dr. Hanna, Dr. Henry, Dr. Macintosh, and Dr. Shorter). This draft will also be shared with the rest of the FAM staff and other interested parties, including African American elders Gaye Adegbalola and Sonny Holmes, and Consulting Scholar Dr. Paula Royster. The Curator will collect edits, suggestions, and feedback until July 20, 2024.

August 2024: Exhibition Text Approved and Sent to Higashi Glaser
The Curator will incorporate reviewer feedback and submit the third draft of the exhibition text to the FAM President and Community Expert Nancy Moore for copy editing and final approval, securing final approval by August 4, 2024. Final exhibition text will be delivered to Higashi Glaser by August 7, 2024.

August 2024: First Draft of Exhibition Catalogue Text to FAM Director (not part of NEH funded project, but significant part of exhibit which will be a lasting document for the community after exhibit closes).

September 2024: Second Draft of Exhibition Catalogue Text to African American History Committee

October 2024: Exhibition Catalogue Text Approved and Sent to Publisher

Stage 3: Exhibition Design

August-December 2025: Exhibit Design

Byron Glaser and Sandra Higashi, Creative Directors and Executive Designers of Higashi Glaser Design, will work with the Curator to create exhibition panels, banners, and labels incorporating the final exhibition text and extensive images. The exhibition design will carefully and thoughtfully consider the unique parameters of the second floor of the museum's historic building.

December 2025: Final Panels Sent to Exhibition Fabricator

Higashi Glaser will deliver the exhibition materials to FAM staff for final approval by November 22, 2024. Upon approval, materials will be sent to Evolution Printing for fabrication by December 1, 2024.

Stage 4: Project Implementation

January-February 2025: Exhibition Installation

The Curator of African American History and Special Projects will work with the FAM Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and the rest of the FAM staff to deinstall the previous exhibition on the second floor of the museum in January 2025. The Curators and FAM staff will work with Evolution Printing, Higashi Glaser, and the African American History Committee to install the exhibition throughout the month of February 2025.

March 1, 2025: Exhibition Opening

Living Legacies: African American History in the Fredericksburg Area will open with a free, public reception inviting members of the community to celebrate with museum staff. Community elders, city officials, and the Curator of African American History and Special Projects will deliver remarks.

March 2025: Exhibition Catalogue Published

Stage 5: Programming

Spring 2025: Ceremony at City Docks in collaboration with Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project; *African American Churches and Cemeteries* Walking Tour; Mayfield Lecture (Alexa McNeil)

Fall 2025: Enslaved Resistance Lecture (Gaila Sims); *African American Education Efforts* Walking Tour

Ongoing: K-12, College, and University Field Trips

Biographies of key personnel, scholars, and consultants

Key Personnel:

Dr. Gaila Sims is the Curator of African American History and Special Projects at the Fredericksburg Area Museum. She will serve as the Project Director of the *Living Legacies* exhibition and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. Dr. Sims is the individual designated responsible for all interpretive and programmatic aspects of the award and for the day-to-day management of the project. She leads the African American History Committee and spearheads African American community outreach efforts at the FAM. She will be responsible for all aspects of the exhibition development, including writing interpretive text, submitting drafts, selecting objects, and working with the exhibition design firm to design and install the exhibition. She will work closely with the Grant Administrator to ensure proper administration of the NEH award. She will also lead some of the accompanying programming, including the walking tours and enslaved resistance lecture, and will write the exhibition catalogue. Dr. Sims received her BA in History and African American Studies from Oberlin College and her MA and PhD in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Sims previously held positions at the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, the Bullock Texas State History Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. She curated *A Monumental Weight: The Auction Block in Fredericksburg, Virginia*, and is responsible for interpretation related to African American History at the Fredericksburg Area Museum and across the city of Fredericksburg.

Sam McElvey is the President and CEO of the Fredericksburg Area Museum. He will serve as the Primary Contact/Grants Administrator of the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. McElvey is the designated representative for the FAM with authority to act on the museum's behalf in matters related to the administration of the NEH award. He will work with the Project Director to create and maintain necessary documentation, including both performance and administrative reports, prepare justifications, appropriately acknowledge NEH support in publications, announcements, news programs, and other media, and ensure compliance with other federal and organizational requirements. McElvey was the Executive Director of the Menokin Foundation in Warsaw, Virginia for nearly seven years. During his tenure, he managed a re-branding of the site including a shift in mission; oversaw the planning and building of the award-winning Remembrance Structure; created new programming and expansion of recreational opportunities on site; and managed the \$9 million Glass House Project. He led Menokin's dedicated research on the enslaved Menokin residents and their descendants, leading to the creation of the Menokin Descendant Collective. Previously McElvey managed multiple museums with Henrico County Historic Preservation and Museum Services, including Meadow Farm Museum, Dabbs House Museum, Clarke-Palmore House, and Walkerton Tavern. McElvey holds a BS in both Geography and History from James Madison University and a MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a board member of the Virginia Association of Museums.

Museum Staff:

Theresa Cramer is the Education and Public Programs Coordinator at the Fredericksburg Area Museum. She will create K-12 educational programs to support the *Living Legacies* exhibition. Using teacher feedback, she will develop field-trip programs for 4th -6th and 9th -12th graders. Programs will meet the Virginia Standards of Learning and will help students develop critical thinking skills. She received her B.A. in Historic Preservation from the University of Mary Washington and her M.A. in Museum Studies from Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis. An educator and evaluator, she has developed

evaluation studies for organizations including the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Nantucket Historical Association, and the Indianapolis Zoo.

Sarah Ernst is the Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the Fredericksburg Area Museum. She will work directly with Dr. Sims on identifying supporting objects in the museum's collection. Ernst will facilitate the inclusion of loaned objects in the *Living Legacies* exhibitions and oversee the exhibition's installation. She received her BFA in Studio Art from the University of Mary Washington and her MFA in Visual Art from Lesley University.

Alexa McNeil is the Research Assistant for the *Living Legacies* exhibition. She is a Fredericksburg native, and her family has lived in the historically Black Mayfield neighborhood for decades. She and her sister, Ashley, began collecting oral histories of African American elders from their neighborhood in 2011, and she has continued to conduct research and collect community stories in the intervening years. McNeil will attend the Oral History Summer Institute at the Centre for Oral History & Tradition and will be responsible for applying that training to oral history efforts in the development of the *Living Legacies* exhibition. She has already started and will continue conducting research related to African American history and culture in the Fredericksburg region. She will also deliver a public lecture on the history of the Mayfield neighborhood as part of the exhibition's accompany programming. McNeil received her B.A. in African American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Consultants and Scholars

Dr. Steve Hanna will serve as an advising scholar for the *Living Legacies* exhibit and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. He is a Professor of Geography at the University of Mary Washington. He holds a Ph.D. (1997) in geography from the University of Kentucky, an M.A. (1992) in geography from the University of Vermont, and a B.A. (1987) in geography from Clark University. He is a human geographer who has been recognized for his research on heritage tourism landscapes, race and the politics of memory, and cartography. His published works on these topics include the co-edited books *Mapping Tourism* (2003) and *Social Memory and Heritage Tourism Research Methodologies* (2015). He has also written or co-written numerous articles, often with UMW students, that have appeared in *Progress in Human Geography*, *Social and Cultural Geography*, *Cartographica*, the *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, *Historical Geography*, *Urban Geography*, and the *Southeastern Geographer*.

Dr. Christine Rae Henry will serve as an advising scholar for the *Living Legacies* exhibit and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Historic Preservation at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg whose research focuses on placemaking and the intersection of the built environment and community identity. Since coming to the Fredericksburg community in 2016, she has been involved with efforts to install two new state historic markers highlighting African American history in the city and the newly unveiled Civil Rights walking trail in the city among other efforts to diversify the interpreted landscape of the city. After nearly 13 years in the Museum Program Office at the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Dr. Henry received her PhD in Urban and Regional Planning and Design from the University of Maryland in 2016.

Higashi Glaser will serve as the exhibition design firm for the *Living Legacies* exhibition and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. Byron Glaser and Sandra Higashi are the Creative Directors and Executive Designers for Higashi Glaser. Both graduated from the ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena. In New York, Glaser served as Art Director for Grey Advertising, while Higashi worked as Senior Designer for the retail design firm Walker Group/CNI. Higashi Glaser is the culmination of their combined years of experience in creating nationally recognized award-winning work in corporate identity,

graphic communications, branding, publications, packaging, exhibition design, advertising, illustration, and product design. Higashi Glaser has a long-standing relationship with the Fredericksburg Area Museum and has designed numerous exhibitions and marketing materials for the museum.

Dr. Will Macintosh will serve as an advising scholar for the *Living Legacies* exhibit and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. He is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Mary Washington. He is a member of the Fredericksburg Area Museum's Board of Directors and Board Chair of the African American History Committee. Dr. Mackintosh is a cultural and social historian of the 19th century United States, with particular interests in the history of leisure, the history of crime, and the cultural history of capitalism. He is author of *Selling the Sights: The Invention of the Tourist in American Culture* (NYU Press 2019) and editor of *The Panorama*, Extensive Views from The Journal of the Early Republic. He holds graduate degrees from the University of Michigan and an undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College.

Nancy Moore will serve as the Community Advisor for the *Living Legacies* exhibition and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. She is a member of the African American History Committee, and participant on the Auction Block Work Group. She will contribute research, copy-editing, and will serve as the chief community liaison for *Living Legacies*. Nancy Moore is a retired newspaper editor who had a 40-year career at the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*. She has continued editing for the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Historic Fredericksburg Foundation and for two books written by local authors. For many years, she supervised the special collections archives in the Virginia Room at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library's Fredericksburg branch, and specializes in research related to the Fredericksburg area. She is Chair of the City of Fredericksburg's nine-member Memorial Advisory Commission, which advises and makes recommendations to the City Council on appropriate means of recognizing and awarding extraordinary contributions made by individuals and organizations to the well-being of the city, the commonwealth, or the nation.

Dr. Paula Royster will serve as Consulting Scholar for the *Living Legacies* exhibition and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. She will contribute research and advise on interpretive content. An expert on the history and culture of the African diaspora and former Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Paula Royster teaches interdisciplinary studies at Southern New Hampshire University. She is the founder and CEO of the Center for African American Genealogical Research, Inc. She graduated from Union Institute and University with an interdisciplinary doctorate degree majoring in humanities and culture, with a secondary major in public policy and social justice and a certificate in creative writing and an interdisciplinary master's in history and culture also from Union Institute and University. Dr. Royster recently published "I.AM.ARAPI: The Journey of Akan Israelites in the Islamic Slave Trade" and is under contract to (b) (4). In addition to being on the roster of the U.S. Department of State Diversity Speaker's Bureau, she served two years as a peer-reviewer for the Fulbright Commission, and is an active member of two Working Group of Experts (WGE) that focus on women empowerment and racial healing. Dr. Royster regularly participates in professional conferences, public speaking engagements, and has won numerous awards for her scholarship.

Dr. Shavonne Shorter will serve as an advising scholar for the *Living Legacies* exhibit and the NEH Public Impact Project Grant, if awarded. She is Associate Provost for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Mary Washington. Dr. Shorter has developed a university-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, and supervises the university's Office of Disability Resources, Office of Title IX, SafeZone and all diversity education and training programs. She received her

bachelor's degree in communication studies at Frostburg State University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Communications from Purdue University.