



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.

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Project Title: Improving Interpretation for 20 Small Humanities-based Museums along Historic Route 66 in Oklahoma

Institution: Oklahoma Museums Association

Project Director: Brenda Granger

Grant Program: Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations

Narrative Summary

The Oklahoma Museums Association (OMA) is pleased to describe our initiative that will spark interpretive improvements among eager small museums across Oklahoma. The principal activities of our project combine an onsite assessment and professional development plan for 20 small humanities-based museums along Historic Route 66. Importantly, we will benchmark their standing of humanities interpretation and storytelling. Our interpretive/museum specialist will visit each museum to learn how they can strengthen and broaden their interpretive narratives, improve interpretive excellence, engage their communities, and expand their public audiences. The report generated from the site visits will strengthen OMA as it designs and implements its future professional development training, specifically in response to the information gained from the museums. This project will strengthen humanities in both the 20 museums and OMA.

Our project incorporates a Route 66 theme, as Oklahoma has the most drivable miles of Route 66 in the country, totaling 400 miles and 172 museums in these communities. Because Route 66 turns 100 years old in 2026 there is much national and international attention being paid to this milestone. As it takes time to develop humanities-based interpretation plans and strategies and for OMA to design and offer training and resources, this project is perfect timing to set up these museums for success. OMA, which is regarded by its peers as one of the most active state museum associations in the country, has the capacity to undertake this important humanities project. This initiative is in line with our strategic plan and will: 1) help our museums prepare for the centennial of Route 66 and 2) help 20 museums advance civil discourse of difficult issues impacting our communities. We relish the chance to advance our museums' interpretive skills.

This project will allow OMA to help 20 museums plan and implement new and improved humanities-based interpretive, practices development of interpretive plans and strategies, broaden audiences, encourage inclusion of diverse voices and partnerships.

Audience

For this assessment our principal audience will be 20 small target museums along Route 66. Statewide, OMA is the primary provider of information, professional development and training to the staff, student interns, volunteers and governing boards for Oklahoma's 500+ museums, historical societies, historic sites, zoos, botanical gardens, living history museums, historic houses, tribal cultural centers and other museum related institutions.

We are proud to be a valuable resource to Oklahoma museums as they serve their communities. OMA regularly helps museums engage visitors through interpretation of their collections, with the largest being humanities-based collections at Oklahoma museums. OMA does this regularly with specialized interpretation training, active links to authoritative resources, and connections to knowledgeable subject experts.

Communities served by Oklahoma museums greatly benefit from our museums' humanities-based exhibitions, diverse programming, and extensive collections which in turn improves the quality of life for their audiences. OMA programs are accessible to all and open to the public regardless of race, income, age, sex, disability, geographic location or social barriers. Our programs can be utilized by all Oklahoma museums regardless of the museum's discipline, size or location. OMA regularly serves rural and small museums.

OMA serves the general public as it relates to promoting Oklahoma museums. OMA also serves the state museum association industry nationwide as a role model and leader. OMA's principal audience is a majority of diverse adults and university students. OMA also serves middle and high school students by offering an Exhibit Award at the Oklahoma National History Day Competition.

Each year via dozens of convenings, training initiatives, and online events, OMA actively encourages the use of the humanities disciplines in their primary sources found at museums and to employ the spectrum of humanities disciplines to validate and enrich their exhibitions and public programs. We support scholarly research and engaging design which allows the humanities to shine and to spark public engagement and learning.

This project's impact will advance further 20 Oklahoma museums' ability to employ and enrich their humanities to expand and improve their humanities collections interpretation as OMA identifies their training and resource needs in regards to interpretation. OMA is impacted as they have guidance on their training offerings. Another impact is the tourist dollars which will arrive in the communities once the museums have developed and implemented an improved humanities interpretive plan to broaden and serve their audience and attract visitors.

The specific audience identified for this project are 20 small museums along Route 66 in Oklahoma. There are a total of 172 museums in Oklahoma's Route 66 museums, the majority of them being small history museums. Of these museums, 69 are actually on the route or within two blocks of the historic route. The reason OMA selected this target audience is two-fold. First, Route 66 will be celebrating its centennial in 2026 and our state and museums are gearing up for a huge inflow of activities and visitors. Second, Oklahoma's Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell has been busy visiting Route 66 communities over the last year, inspiring municipalities, businesses and museums to get ready for this once-in-a-lifetime event. Notably, the Lt. Governor is reporting his findings to OMA directly and is noting that museums are needing assistance with their visioning and interpretation.,

OMA is selecting 20 small museums with a strong humanities focus for this project representing 14 different communities. Many of these museums represent underserved populations including rural, tribal, military/veterans and African-Americans. We understand there are interpretive needs and challenges among Oklahoma museums statewide, hearing from our members regularly. We believe the select group for this project must navigate complicated issues daily and will have enriching and sometimes difficult interpretation obstacles to navigate, small town gripes or dark episodes of racial discrimination. The 20 selected small museums invited to participate are Sapulpa Historical Society Museum and Waite Phillips Filling Station, Canadian County Historical Society Museum, Catoosa Historical Society & Museum, Quapaw Tribal Museum, Arcadia Historical Society & Round Barn, Bristow Historical Museum and Train Depot, D.W. Correll Museum, Eastern Trails Museum, Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum, Heartland of America Heritage Museum, Historic Fort Reno, Lincoln County Historical Society Museum of Pioneer History, Oklahoma Black Museum and Performing Arts Center/ National African American Jazz Legacy Museum, Route 66 Interpretive Center, Route 66 Spirit of America, Cherokee Nation Anna Mitchell Cultural & Welcome Center, Threath Filling Station, Western Oklahoma Historical Center and Yukon Veterans Museum.

Activities and Outcomes

The activities of our project combine an interpretive assessment and uncovering the professional development needs of 20 small humanities-based museums along Route 66 in Oklahoma. In addition, we will benchmark where they stand regarding humanities-based research and interpretation. Site visits will be conducted at each museum where extensive conversation will be held and discovery will be made on what the museums want and need to elevate the interpretation and storytelling. OMA will take this information, devise an interpretive plan, and subsequently offer training and resources which will allow the museums to succeed in their ambitions to improve professionally. The main focus of the project is undertaking an assessment of their needs in order to strengthen their humanities interpretation. Each museum, regardless of resources, are eager to develop Interpretive plans designed expressly for their size, collections, stories, and strategic goals. This step will prove beneficial to their overall museum professionalism. This grant will help OMA develop a plan that goes along with its strategic plan that will enhance Oklahoma museums interpretation skills of their humanities collections.

OMA is a strong organization that has the credentials and experience to undertake this project. We were established in 1972 and are known as a well-respected museum service leader throughout our state and nation. OMA is particularly known for our members' devotion to their practice and regularly and eagerly participation in our many professional training opportunities. The Project Director, Brenda Granger is the Executive Director of OMA. She has over 31 years in the museum sector, and has extensive leadership experience. The Project Assistant is Stacy O'Daniel, the Senior Manager of Operations for OMA and has been with the organization for 29 years. Both are qualified for the project.

OMA will contract Brian Crocket as the interpretive/museum consultant who will be responsible for the bulk of the project. He has over 30 years of experience in nonprofit administration and museum training initiatives nationwide. Brian has served as a State Humanities Council program officer in Utah and has a storied history of developing and assisting with humanities initiatives nation-wide. Over his career, Brian has developed several high profile national and multi-state training initiatives for museums and other cultural organizations. Among these, Brian is the co-founder of Museum on Main Street, a traveling exhibition initiative of the Smithsonian Institution serving small and rural museums nationwide. Alongside partners at the National Endowment for the Humanities, Brian helped establish NEH on the Road, a national initiative that reformatted large-scale NEH-funded exhibitions. With IMLS funding Brian directed a ten-year project, the Hands-on Experiential Learning Program (HELP) designed for small, rural museums across six states to assess and implement improvements in exhibition development, public programming, and good governance.

Brian will conduct site visits to each of the 20 museums, meeting the museum face to face. It will be organized as an observational "listening tour" to ask what the museums need to improve their humanities interpretation. He will look at ways the museums are currently delivering their interpretation through exhibitions and programs to their audience and community. As part of this, he will note how the museum's perspective of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion are part of, or lack of, the humanities interpretation.

Two weeks of travel time will be necessary for these visits. Brian will learn about what the museums are currently doing with their humanities interpretation as well as what they want to do to improve their interpretation, and what challenges they have to make it happen. Brian with input from our community advisor who is skilled in interpretation and education and holds a membership in with the National Association for Interpretation, Amy Stephens, will draft an assessment tool that he will use uniformly on the site visits to gauge need.

Although the grant is thematic in nature, small museums in Oklahoma on Route 66, it is believed the humanities interpretation and storytelling will transcend the theme and be applicable to their entire museum interpretation.

As part of his report, Brian will look at successful strategies that other museums of similar size are doing and how they have increased their humanities interpretation in hopes the 20 museums might be able to replicate various industry successful strategies.

After the research is conducted and synthesized, a report will be generated addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 20 museums, collectively, to enhance their humanities interpretation. OMA will then take that information and develop its own professional development humanities interpretive plan which will be implemented subsequent to the grant. As part of the implementation, it is expected OMA will offer needed training in humanities interpretation, access to interpretation experts and lists of financial resources available, but this will be decided once the final report is submitted with listed needs of the museums. The implementation is not part of this grant request and will be included in OMA's regular annual budget. This grant does fill a void and need to help these small museums develop their interpretation now and make a huge impact as part of the Route 66 centennial in 2026. The impact will be immediate and long-term into the future. In fact, Oklahoma does have immediate competitive funding opportunities available for such projects as improving museums on Route 66 in the amount of \$6.6 million a year which the Oklahoma legislature has approved for the Route 66 Commission to distribute annually through 2026. In addition, Oklahoma Humanities will have funding opportunities available for Route 66 humanities-based projects too. The time is right for OMA to undertake this important and impactful project. At the conclusion of the project, it will be evaluated for efficiency, attainability, and impact of humanities interpretation.

The audience and institutional impact of the project is far reaching. First, it reaches 20 small museums that are need of professional assistance when it comes to storytelling and interpreting their humanities collection in ways, they might not have ever thought of doing before through exhibitions, programming and more. Second, it strengthens OMA's interpretive plan and impact as it guides the organization on what their audience of small museums on Route 66 needs to success with their interpretation plan. Third, the museums' audience of community and visitors are impacted as they view the museum's exhibitions and/or programming in a new light with the new stories and interpretation presented. It is OMA's goal to inspire museums to look at their stories and interpretation in a new way with their public audience being for real beneficiaries.

The outcomes of the project include: OMA discovery of unknown interpretive needs of the humanities collections of small museums along Route 66; more diverse storytelling by the participating museums; organizing the project thematically there is commonality that can lead to strong partnerships and possible funding of the interpretation plans; strengthen

museums overall humanities interpretive plan; strengthen OMA's interpretive training schedule; and better public audience museum experiences.

Relationship to the Humanities

Issues of interpretation are at the core of effective, truthful, and engaging museums. This project uses the advent of the Route 66 anniversary to spark 20 small museums to review, improve, and apply professional interpretation standards. Each of these museums are rooted in the humanities disciplines with various interpretation tactics and devices. Our museum interpretation project relates to the humanities on several levels. First, the most obvious is history. Each of the 20 small museums that will be part of the project are humanities based, and as such, their collections and interpretation are mainly US history related. As mentioned, these small, mostly rural, museums cross several humanities disciplines daily as part of their research, exhibitions and programming. History, particularly Native American and African American, require sophistication, credible research and ethical applications of their findings. This interpretive assessment will document need and allow onsite opportunities to underscore each museum's obligation to tell the truth.

This project will expand and enrich 20 Oklahoma small museums' understanding and utility of the public humanities. While each museum regularly utilizes humanities content daily, by way of historical research, care of collections, and public educational events this is a unique opportunity for them to consider the museum's role in Interpretation, thus challenging them to employ multiple humanities disciplines beyond just history. Via reviews of their interpretation practices we will likely uncover their daily use of art history criticism, theology/philosophy, ethics, anthropology and languages. As OMA has a longstanding record of cooperating with Oklahoma museums, we anticipate uncovering interpretive excellence and need. We are eager for the chance to view our small museums through a humanities lens.

Other humanities fields of study will play a role as well according to each museum's mission and collection. As community museums, many will hold collections crisscrossing history with literature is also a part of the humanities-based and interpretation, as there is much written on Route 66, including Steinbeck's, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and OMA believes several museums will want to include literature as part of their interpretation. Another aspect is the human experience of African Americans on Route 66. In fact, one of the museums selected for this project is the Threatt Filling which was built in 1915 and served African American travelers and locals. This business is one that would typically be included in "The Traveler' Green Book." Art criticism might be included in a few of the museums interpretive plans, especially the Oklahoma Black Museum and Performing Arts Center/ National African American Jazz Legacy Museum. As part of the tribal museums interpretation, we expect their native languages will be part of their interpretive plan.

No matter the museum's interpretation, storytelling by using the museum's humanities objects and collections will be without judgement. Humanities-based museums generally tell the story in a one directional way and this grant will help them look at new ways of storytelling and learning that will lead to a deeper interpretive component and broader public audience while remaining responsive, truthful, relevant, respectful, and also fun.

Organizational Profile – Oklahoma Museums Association

1. Relevant facts and statistics about the Oklahoma Museums Association

- a. OMA was founded in 1972
- b. The mission of OMA is to Empower Oklahoma Museums
- c. OMA's budget is \$276,690
- d. OMA has 2 Full-time staff; 2 Part-time staff; 1 Contractor
- e. OMA has 75 volunteers – volunteers include 23 board members; Oklahoma Museum Conference volunteers; Oklahoma Museums Association newsletter designer and regular contributors; Marketing, PR and designer; Office help; and Museum subject experts as speakers and consultants
- f. OMA accreditations: Oklahoma Center for Nonprofit Standards for Excellence 2.0 which is a nationally accredited curriculum that teaches best practices for nonprofit management, governance, and legal compliance.
GuideStar/Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency
Affiliated through memberships with American Alliance of Museums, Association for State and Local History, Coalition of State Museum Associations, Oklahoma Society of Association Executives, Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, Oklahoma Travel Industry Association
- g. OMA is open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

2. Audience data

- a. OMA serves the entire state of Oklahoma, all 77 counties. Oklahoma has a population of 4 million people. Oklahoma is home to 516 museums.
- b. OMA serves approximately 30,000 individuals annually which includes those who utilize the resources on OKMuseums.org
- c. OMA serves all 516 museums across the state of Oklahoma with the majority (72%) of them being small, history museums. Race and ethnic demographics of Oklahoma, which is in line with the audience OMA serves. White: 71.15%, Two or more races: 8.73%, Native American: 7.69%, Black or African American: 7.29%, Other race: 2.78%, Asian: 2.2% and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.16%.
- d. OMA does not have data on its audience's economics, but this is the data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for Oklahoma -

Oklahoma's per capita personal income was \$54,998 in 2022, ranking 43rd among all states. In 2021, nearly 1 in 6 Oklahomans lived in poverty, but it was concentrated in children and families. In 2021, 1 in 5 (20.9%) Oklahoma children, and 1 in 10 (11.5%) Oklahoma families, lived at or below the federal poverty level. For a family of three, this means that they earned \$21,960 or less in 2021. Oklahoma had the tenth-highest overall poverty rate in 2021 out of all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

- e. Oklahoma has the most drivable miles, 400 miles, of Route 66 out of all eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. There are 172 museums located in towns located on Route 66 in Oklahoma.
- f. There is no cost for the museums to participate in this project.

Oklahoma Museums Association Work Plan

<p>Goal 1: Develop Assessment Tool to Collect Data on humanities interpretation needs at 20 small museums on Route 66 in Oklahoma</p>			
<p>Objective 1 Have an assessment tool that will be used uniformly on the site visits to the 20 small museums to gauge their need. This tool will allow the interpretive/museum consultant to better will learn about what the museums are currently doing with their humanities interpretation as well as what they want to do to improve their interpretation, and what challenges they have to make it happen.</p>			
<p>Rationale for Objective 1 In order to gather the needed humanities interpretation data, a tool needs to be used that gathers the same data from each museum so the information can be compared including similar needs. This will allow the data to be synthesized and streamlined into a report that can be used by OMA to make an interpretive plan for the needed professional development and training.</p>			
<p>Measures of Accomplishment for Objective 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety of assessment tools are viewed on the topic of best practices of humanities-based interpretation in small museums 2. Assessment tool is designed and reviewed for content 3. Final draft of assessment tool is ready for use 			
<p><u>Activities in support of Objective 1</u></p> <p>A. Research best data to collect for assessment on humanities interpretation at small museums</p> <p>B. Develop/design assessment tool</p> <p>C. Assessment tool vetted</p>	<p><u>Individual(s) Responsible for Activity</u></p> <p>A. Brian Crockett, Interpretive/Museum Consultant</p> <p>B. Brian Crockett, Interpretive/Museum Consultant</p> <p>C. Amy Stephens, Community Advisor; Brenda Granger, Project Director and Stacy O’Daniel, Project Assistant</p>	<p><u>Activity Timeline</u></p> <p>A. March 2024</p> <p>B. March 2024</p> <p>C. March 2024</p>	

<p>Goal 2: Site visits will be conducted at 20 small museums on Route 66 where extensive conversation will be held and discovery will be made on what the museums want and need to elevate the interpretation and storytelling. A report will be made from the data gathered.</p>			
<p>Objective 1 The main activities of the project are undertaking an assessment of their needs in order to strengthen their humanities interpretation. It will be organized as an observational “listening tour” to ask what the museums need to improve their humanities interpretation The activities of the project combine an interpretive assessment and uncovering the professional development needs of 20 small humanities-based museums along Route 66 in Oklahoma. In addition, we will benchmark where they stand regarding humanities-based research and interpretation.</p>			
<p>Rationale for Objective 1 We need to know where the museums are collectively on their current humanities interpretation of their exhibitions, programs, and collections and what they want and need to improve.</p>			
<p>Measures of Accomplishment for Objective 1</p> <p>1.20 museums confirm their interest in the project and confirm visit with Brian Crockett, Interpretive/Museum Consultant 2.Brian Crockett makes two trips to Oklahoma for 20 museums visits, each trip being one week in length to collect humanities interpretive needs for the museums in exhibitions, programs and collections. 3.Report is developed from data of needs of the 20 museums visits in regards to the humanities interpretation</p>			
<p>Activities in support of Objective 1</p> <p>A. Contact the 20 museums to explain the project and ask for an appointment with Brian Crockett to visit with them about the humanities-based interpretive needs</p> <p>B. Visit 20 small museums on Route 66 in Oklahoma to discuss their humanities interpretive needs in exhibitions, programs and collections.</p> <p>C. Synthesize data collected from the 20 museums into a report of their needs to help them develop an improved humanities-based interpretive plan</p>	<p>Individual(s) Responsible for Activity</p> <p>A. Brenda Granger, Project Director and Stacy O’Daniel, Project Assistant</p> <p>B. Brian Crockett, Interpretive/Museum Consultant</p> <p>C. Brian Crockett, Interpretive/Museum Consultant and Amy Stephens, Community Advisor</p>	<p>Activity Timeline</p> <p>A. March 2024</p> <p>B. March – April 2024</p> <p>C. May – June 2024</p>	Empty cell

<p>Goal 3: Oklahoma Museums Association develops a humanities-based interpretive training plan based on the report of the 20 small museums on Route 66 in Oklahoma interpretive needs and evaluates project.</p>			
<p>Objective 1 Use the report generated from the site visits to strengthen OMA as it designs and implements its professional development training, specifically in response to the information gained from the museums. OMA will then take that information and develop its own professional development humanities interpretive plan which will be implemented at the conclusion of the grant. As part of the implementation, it is expected OMA will offer needed training in humanities interpretation, access to interpretation experts and lists of financial resources available, but this will be decided once the final report is submitted with listed needs of the museums. OMA evaluates overall project.</p>			
<p>Rationale for Objective 1 Small museums located on Route 66 have a great opportunity to evaluate their current interpretation and look at how to improve it with the upcoming centennial Route 66 celebration. OMA will offer training to help the museums succeed in their ambitions to improve professionally in interpretation of their humanities exhibitions, programs and collections.</p>			
<p>Measures of Accomplishment for Objective 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OMA receives completed and detailed report of the humanities-based interpretive training needs of the 20 museums 2. OMA develops an interpretive plan of humanities-based interpretive training for Spring 2025 (these trainings are not part of this project or grant) 3. Final evaluation completed and final reports submitted to NEH on the project. 			
<p>Activities in support of Objective 1</p> <p>A. OMA analyses report of the humanities-based interpretive needs of the 20 small museums on Route 66 in Oklahoma</p> <p>B. OMA develops humanities-based interpretive plan with training scheduled Spring 2025 based on the report findings.</p> <p>C. Evaluation is conducted on the project and final reports submitted to NEH</p>	<p>Individual(s) Responsible for Activity</p> <p>A. Brenda Granger, Project Director and Stacy O’Daniel, Project Assistant</p> <p>B. Brenda Granger, Project Director, Stacy O’Daniel, Project Assistant, and Amy Stephens, Community Advisor</p> <p>C. Brenda Granger, Project Director and Stacy O’Daniel, Project Assistant</p>	<p>Activity Timeline</p> <p>A. July–October 2024</p> <p>B. October-December 2024</p> <p>C. January–February 2025</p>	

Biographies

KEY PERSONNEL

BRENDA GRANGER – Project Director

Brenda Granger is the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Museums Association. She started in that capacity in January 2005. From 1994-2005, Brenda served as Executive Director of the Edmond History Museum in Edmond, Oklahoma. Prior to that, she was Volunteer Coordinator/Promotions Manager at the Harn Homestead Museum in Oklahoma City. Following her graduate work, she was employed by the University of Oklahoma College of Architecture and Meacham and Associates Resource Planning and Design in Norman, Oklahoma where she conducted research, completed preservation surveys and wrote historical contexts for National Register Nominations. Brenda grew up in Oklahoma and received her bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and a master's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma in History/Museum Studies. She received museum training at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. She serves on several boards, commissions and committees.

STACY O'DANIEL – Project Assistant

As Senior Manager of Operations, Stacy O'Daniel is responsible for the association's membership program and donor database; assists with website, social media, newsletter and other marketing materials; conference and event planning and a myriad of additional tasks. Stacy has worked for OMA since 1994. She previously served as a Curatorial Assistant for the Red Earth Museum and was a volunteer at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. Stacy graduated in 1991 from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in art history.

CONSULTANTS

BRIAN C CROCKETT – Project Interpretive/Museum Consultant

Brian Crockett has 30 years of small museum experience in community engagement, exhibition development, interpretation, nonprofit administration, good governance, strategic planning, and in building cooperative cultural initiatives nationwide. Brian is committed to ensuring that all museums (no matter type, size, or place) have ample opportunities to improve their public services. An early advocate for the improvement of small, rural, and all-volunteer museums. Brian is a noted speaker and regularly works nationwide with humanities, arts, and museum service providers. Brian is the co-founder of "Museum on Main Street," a national

exhibition initiative of the Smithsonian Institution. He executed the nation-wide needs assessment, piloted the program , and forged the cooperative initiative with the Federation of State Humanities Councils to ensure its longevity. In concert with the Mid-America Arts Alliance, he was the instigator/planner for the National Endowment for the Humanities' "NEH on the Road" initiative to broaden public opportunities for federally- funded museum exhibitions. Each year Brian works individually with diverse cultural nonprofits and assists small, rural museums. From 2019 - 2022 he helped implement "Finding Alternative Futures," an initiative of the Texas Association of Museums. He coached ten museums in utilizing new interpretive technologies, introduced fresh governance practices, and amplified audience engagement. Brian regularly accepts consultancies with individual museums focusing on exhibition development, governance, and audience engagement. At present he is advising grant recipients of Ocean County Arts and History in New Jersey and he continues to assist with the completion of the Eternal Gandhi Museum Houston, the first museum in North America dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi's lessons of nonviolence. Brian attended Hanover College and the University of Utah, receiving bachelor and master's degrees in English and Arts Administration.

AMY STEPHENS – Project Community Advisor

Amy Stephens, the Executive Director at the Edmond History Museum, loves telling stories through creating museum exhibits, teaching programs and writing. She has won multiple educational honors from the National Association for Interpretation, having been a member for 20+ years. Amy is the author of three award-winning history books about the Oklahoma City Zoo and over 300 magazine articles. Amy also has received many awards from the Oklahoma Museum Association for her museum work, and she was named the 2021 Edmond Woman of the Year.