

## Centrality of the Humanities to your Organization\*

Please describe how the humanities is central to your organization's mission and programming.

The National Endowment for the Humanities' definition of the humanities *"includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."*

History and its interpretation through the stories of the people who lived it lies at the heart of the mission and programs. These stories challenge visitors to draw their own conclusions and to interact with docents to learn more. The stories put a face on a fact and associate a real person with the abstract labels we use to conceptualize things such as slavery, segregation, Jim Crow, Civil Rights. Many are previously untold stories and many visitors are surprised to know the details of these individuals' stories, shocked at the hardships they endured and that so much activity took place right here in [REDACTED]

The Civil War was a bloody, traumatic reckoning with the stated but unenacted principles in the founding documents of the Nation, necessary but not sufficient. Without the Civil War there would have been no subsequent evolution in the battle for Civil Rights and for the long delayed equity initiatives that are beginning to be addressed today. Here the stories of those who were willing to give their lives and limbs to maintain the institution of slavery are told, as well as those who fought to end it. These stories are told without editorializing and many times with information from primary documents. So the history is both diverse and conflicted but hopefully gives background and context that is relevant to understanding the current conditions of national life and contemporary issues.

Architectural history and its historic preservation are also sub-themes: [REDACTED] is unique and was the first of its kind- its truss system was considered highly innovative at the time of its construction. Most people have no idea [REDACTED] once encompassed three full city blocks.

Reviewer 1 Score: 9/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 9/10

## Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion in Organizational Culture\*

Please describe how your organization prioritizes Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) principles within your organization's culture.

### Definition of these Terms From The American Alliance of Museums

**Diversity** is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

**Equity** is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.

**Accessibility** encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

**Inclusion** refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.

### Questions to Consider:

- Does your organization employ a diversity and equity lens in its hiring and recruitment processes?
- Does your organization invest in DEAI training and programming for its staff and board members?
- Does your organization provide adequate compensation for its staff and interns?

██████████ places Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) at the core of its critical values and objectives. Striving to realize the goals of DEAI, ██████████ integrates these principles into its services and advocacy efforts, internal culture, and operational policies.

Through its three categories of core services: Family & Youth Education, Community Outreach, and Civic Engagement, ██████████ champions underrepresented residents or immigrants by providing equitable access to resources, services, and programs. Its achievements bear witness to how racial equity has been integrated into the fabric of the organization's services, with dedicated programs aimed at serving disadvantaged and minority community members.

The ██████████ program, spanning seven years, offers equitable academic opportunities to 600+ low-income and ESOL students. It addresses achievement gaps with STEM workshops, tutoring, and peer support, earning recognition like the 2020 Governor's Service Award.

██████████ empowers limited English proficiency immigrants, partnering with local entities for resources and info access. Over 30 small businesses gained support, while seminars spread awareness of available social resources.

██████████ Internship Program grooms minority youth for public service through connections with officials and leaders. ██████████ provides internships and mentoring, amplifying its advocacy role while nurturing ██████████ youth.

██████████ aids during crises using member contributions, community donations, and GoFundMe, supporting frontline workers, local businesses, and vulnerable populations, including low-income elderly minorities and immigrants.

In local governance, ██████████ influences diversity committees, leading the ██████████ Workgroup and advocating for

DEAI efforts alongside partner organizations.

██████ not only champions DEAI through its community initiatives but also lives these values within its own operations. Our organization actively cultivates a diverse volunteer network and supports member-driven initiatives that align with our mission. When it comes to recruiting for various roles, ██████ goes the extra mile to engage with diverse communities. We collaborate with community organizations, leverage social media platforms, and tap into public advertising channels to ensure our outreach is inclusive and far-reaching.

██████ leadership team has enthusiastically taken part in DEAI training provided by esteemed institutions. They actively disseminate their learnings to both the board and the executive team, fostering a culture of shared understanding and commitment to DEAI.

██████'s belief in the importance of listening to and respecting voices from underrepresented communities stems from a profound understanding of the societal benefits of DEAI. These principles empower innovation, connect underrepresented groups with opportunities, and foster norms that benefit society as a whole. By promoting equal opportunity and fundamental rights across all racial and ethnic groups in ██████ County, ██████ reinforces its position as a community organization that embodies these values as its focal point and core value.

Reviewer 1 Score: 9/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 8/10

# Programming

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## Quality and Impact of Programming

### History of Organization's Programming\*

Please describe up to five of your organization's most successful programs of the last few years. In addition, please describe the collaborative practices, like partnerships, involved in these programs.

█'s recent successes are exemplified through the following five impactful programs:

**Community Support Amid the Pandemic: Mental Health Workshop and Food Bank** In response to the adversities posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, █ played a pivotal role in providing vital community assistance. By collaborating with local nonprofit partners, we initiated programs that facilitated the seamless transition to remote work, ensured access to unemployment benefits, and extended essential financial aid. Our global reach was evident as we rallied support for disaster relief efforts. Furthermore, we orchestrated a significant Mental Health Workshop and established a self-sustained food bank within the █ community center.

**Cultural Galas: Summer Picnic and Fall Street Festival** Our unwavering commitment to celebrating cultural heritage came to life through the triumphant orchestration of the Summer Picnic and Fall Street Festival. These events seamlessly melded diverse American communities with the richness of █ culture through cuisine, music, and dance. Collaborative partnerships with local businesses, accomplished artists, and enthusiastic volunteers heightened the inclusiveness and vibrancy of these festivities.

**COVID-19 Response: Testing and Vaccination** With an acute awareness of the pandemic's urgency, █ established a dedicated Community Resource Center in █, Maryland. Through a cooperative alliance with Baltimore County and the state of Maryland, we swiftly administered critical COVID-19 tests and hundreds of life-saving vaccinations. This collective endeavor tangibly fortified community health and safety during a pivotal juncture.

**Empowering the Community: Comprehensive Development Initiatives** At the heart of █'s endeavors are community empowerment programs. These initiatives span a broad spectrum, encompassing everything from engaging sports initiatives such as the █ football league and inter-state volleyball tournaments to providing dance and language classes, vital mental health workshops, and essential immigration support. Collaborative efforts with seasoned experts, educators, and community leaders have created holistic programs that nurture personal and professional growth.

**Building Bridges: Unifying through Diverse Activities** Recognizing the transformative potential of unity, █ embarked on a visionary bridge-building initiative. This multifaceted program seeks to surmount linguistic barriers and cultural divides through diverse activities, including community art projects, environmental cleanups, cultural exchanges, and health-focused classes. Through constructive collaboration with local leaders, organizations, and institutions, we aspire to weave a tapestry of inclusivity and harmony.

The achievements of these programs are fundamentally rooted in collaboration. We collectively address challenges and cultivate a shared vision of unity, comprehension, and trust by engaging with elected officials, community entities, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and local businesses. As we look ahead, our unwavering commitment to constructing bridges remains steadfast. We extend heartfelt gratitude for your enduring support, dedication, and unwavering belief in the transformative power of unity. Together, we foster bonds that transcend time, leaving a legacy of harmony that resonates far beyond the boundaries of Baltimore.

Reviewer 1 Score: 8/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 9/10



## Representation of Diverse Narratives in Programming\*

Please describe how the narratives of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Disabled, and/or LGBTQ+ communities are represented within your organization's programming.

Our program explores and reflects on the experiences of all Americans in U.S. history and civic life. This is particularly important at a time when students are demanding a fuller telling of the American story, even as some adults seek to erase or silence certain narratives.

Students learn the stories and read the writings of poets and historical figures of color. As part of their unit on civility and peaceful conflict resolution ( ), for example, they learn not only about George Washington's 110 "Rules of Civility," but also about George Washington Carver (the African American artist, scientist and teacher) and his "Eight Cardinal Virtues."

As part of their unit on service-learning and volunteering ( ), students learn about the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and use his exhortation that "Everybody can be great ... because anyone can serve," as a jumping off point for their own artistic expression. Students also read and listen to recordings of such poets as Maya Angelou, James Berry, Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes and Amanda Gorman.

Our civic songs on the seven "steps to democracy," which are woven into our curriculum, are written in a variety of ethnic styles, with some verses and phrases in English and Spanish. We have a diverse cast of teaching artists, creating a natural connection with our intended audience. These include award-winning singer-songwriter Lea Morris, Ethiopian singer Munit Mesfin, West African composer and drummer Uasuf

Gueye, African American poets Gayle Danley and Malachi Byrd, and storyteller and American griot Janice Greene.

Some of the BIPOC narratives explored in our workshops are written by students themselves. A key element of our workshops is always a mini-residency with a teaching artist, who helps students create and showcase their own civic story, song, poem or visual art piece on one of the seven "steps to democracy." By inviting students to create their own art pieces, which sometimes include words or phrases in the languages spoken at home (from Amharic to Wolof), we honor their cultures of heritage.

"Respect for Youth" is a core value, and students make important choices about what volunteer activities to do and what art pieces to write. They also fill out surveys and evaluations both in the middle and at the end of the program so that we can hear what they liked or would like to see changed.

Writing and creating their own art pieces builds students' self-assurance and self-efficacy. Service-learning activities also advance students' sense of well-being, positive self-identity and connection with their diverse communities. Lifting up youth voices in communities of color is a central aspect of our mission.

In our organization, we have made every effort to build a diverse Board, Advisory Council, teaching artist roster, and teaching and volunteer team. Though we launched as a mostly volunteer-run organization, we are committed to advancing diversity as we build a staff.

Of our three AmeriCorps VISTA team members since 2020, two are members of the LGBTQ+ community. (We are in the second year of a three-year VISTA assignment sponsored by Transform Mid-Atlantic, formerly Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic.)

Our part-time program manager is African American, as are our two classroom teachers. Our part-time fundraising manager is a first-generation American of Middle Eastern descent and member of the LGBTQ+ community.

We had 14 volunteers in the past year, including guest speakers who addressed our workshop participants, high school and college interns who assisted with social media, and graphic and web design, and event volunteers. Of these, 12 (86 percent) were people of color: four (4) were African American, two (2) were Hispanic/Latino/Latina, five (5) were South Asian/Asian, one (1) was Arabic, and two (2) were Caucasian.

Our stakeholders reflect the full diversity of County, and one of our ongoing priorities is to build a team and a program that do the same.

Reviewer 1 Score: 10/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 8/10

## Organizational Goals\*

Please describe your organization's long-term and short term goals, and how general operating support funding would help you accomplish these goals.

██████████ operates with three central goals for ██████████ students who participate in our programs. All three goals are both short and long-term goals.

Goal #1: Students will be prepared and motivated learners ready to enter high school with enhanced language arts skills, project ownership skills; mature resiliency, self-governance, planning and adult and peer relationship skills; knowledge of academic and career options.

Goal #2: Students will develop a newfound interest in literature that propels them to greater interest in learning in general, improving overall grades and attendance, and sparking interest in higher education.

Goal #3: Students will come to see themselves as writers and readers with voices worthy of being heard, and feel they belong to a community of supportive writers.

General operating funding will enable ██████████ to deepen its work in helping all student participants reach these goals. As we will discuss in the funding section below, general operating funding will enable ██████████ to hire a part-time program assistant whose work will focus on a) evaluation (tracking student participation and progress), b) student outreach (to deepen ██████████'s relationship with students' families, as to work to keep students involved for years to come).

Long-term, ██████████ has a goal of increasing the number of partner schools and students served in Baltimore City. Our part-time program assistant will help build both tracking and outreach structures that will be critical to helping ██████████ scale its operations.

Reviewer 1 Score: 7/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 9/10

## Outreach Strategies\*

Describe the strategies and approaches your organization is utilizing to expand your current audience. Please include the ways in which your organization engages with communities traditionally underserved by the humanities.

Communities traditionally underserved by the humanities include, but are not limited to:

- Veterans
- Rural Populations
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- Low-income Individuals
- Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Persons
- LGBTQ+ Individuals
- Currently and/or Formerly Unhoused People
- Disabled People

One goal of our new Program Manager will be to increase the school/geographic diversity of the students involved in programming and published in our magazines. We track geographic diversity because we see schools as primary audience for outreach.

We believe after a student engages with [REDACTED] once—whether by having a poem published in our magazine, attending a workshop or serving on our editorial board—they will be connected to programming and opportunities to support them as a writer for years to come. If students begin with [REDACTED] in middle school, they can see us through their high school journey, increasingly participating in activities that require more and more responsibility. Alums of our program that are currently in college or beyond, still return as volunteers, contractors or ambassadors to support and further the work they started as students.

The expansion of our programming into a formal summer publishing internship is another opportunity for students to grow with us and continue to gain valuable skills that will help them excel in a career they are already passionate about. Our first cohort wrapped up in summer 2022. All 15 first cohort interns said they are glad they participated in the program and that they learned new skills as a result. All eight sites agreed they would participate again and would recommend the program to a colleague in their field.

In January 2023, we officially moved into a new space at [REDACTED]. We are fully furnished and operational in this 1,179 sq ft space and have started to bring editors, students, volunteers and the community together physically. We are realizing our vision of creating a literary arts hub: a place for Baltimore's young people to know they are welcome exactly as they are, that their voices matter, and their stories need to be written.

Reviewer 1 Score: 8/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 9/10

## Intended Use of Funding\*

Describe how your organization intends to use all of the funding that would be provided through this grant within the 2024 calendar year. Please elaborate on the impact this funding would have on your organization, and the communities you serve.

Please note: This is in no way binding. After the funds are distributed, your organization will have the flexibility to use the funds for any of the authorized general operating expenses.

The funding provided through this grant will support the creation of a part-time Executive Assistant (EA) position. The new EA will assume various administrative tasks, including website maintenance, membership designations, status renewals, creation of reports, and production of the [redacted] newsletter.

This will allow the DSC Executive Director (ED) to focus on enhancing [redacted] accessibility for all as a priority:

- Enhancing physical accessibility to places:

- \* By improving physical accommodations, sign language interpreters, and assistive technologies such as LDOT, a newly and locally developed application that allows visually impaired and blind people to quickly and confidently navigate their surroundings

- \* By supporting infrastructure retrofitting and aging-in-place projects through State grant awards for allocations to downtown property owners.

- Emotional accessibility to programs and services:

- \* By expanding programming and enhancing the quality and diversity of the [redacted]'s offerings to engage more community members and enrich cultural and educational experiences.

- \* By establishing venues welcoming to all, regardless of their economic background, ethnic heritage, age, or gender identity.

- \* By nurturing the emotional connection between residents, visitors, business owners and their downtown and cultivating a sense of belonging.

- Enhancing overall accessibility:

- \* By improving targeted outreach, partnerships with community organizations, and initiatives tailored to their needs and interests.

- \* By ensuring that the [redacted] events and programs reach a wider audience through marketing and promotional efforts, increasing visibility.

Overall, this funding will catalyze positive change, allowing the [redacted] to execute its mission with greater effectiveness and broadening its footprint in the community. The funding will underscore the [redacted]

commitment to delivering meaningful programs, promoting inclusivity, and fostering a deeper understanding of the humanities among all individuals.

Reviewer 1 Score: 10/10

Reviewer 2 Score: 10/10