

IAM Awards Application – Example Answers to Selected Questions

What does a good application look like? They come in many different styles. Here are some examples of answers from award-winning applications from previous years.

Describe your project, Example 1:

Building the Team is a new, ongoing video series that introduces the public to the many individuals that allowed the Lewis & Clark Expedition to succeed. The focus of the series is to celebrate the unique makeup of the Corps of Discovery on their epic journey from May 1804 to September 1806. The series introduces individual soldiers and their skills ranging from blacksmithing to carpentry to interpretation and more. Viewers learn about unique moments on the journey where a specialized skill was critical to survival and success.

The first six videos in the series address the general makeup of most recruits, blacksmiths, carpenters, discipline in camp, Creole-French American engages, and French-American Indian interpreters. Future additions will explore York's experience as an enslaved African American man on the journey. The series will also search into the immigrant experience of multiple members as they participated in an American endeavor for the United States government.

By focusing on Corps members instead of simply Captains Lewis and Clark, viewers will begin to appreciate the complexity of the Expedition while connecting to the very real emotions of excitement, comradery, and fear of the unknown felt by the soldiers. It will dispel the notion of just a few men on a boat ride, while allowing a different focus on the experiences of Creole-French Americans, American Indians, and African Americans on the journey. Viewers should bring from the videos a sense of deeper complexity to the Expedition and an appreciation for more than just martial stories and gear.

Building the Team will remain a useful digital resource for years to come. The stories it shares are relatable and their access online will allow for educators and the general public alike to engage with Lewis & Clark State Historic Site. We expect the educators we partner with already will utilize the videos to prepare students prior to visiting Lewis & Clark State Historic Site. The intention is that other educators unable to visit may utilize the videos to supplement their materials.

Describe your project, Example 2:

Home Grown: Agriculture and Life in DuPage County was a temporary exhibit on display at the Museum from September 21, 2019 through July 26, 2020. Spanning two galleries, the exhibit explored how farming and agriculture impacted the County economically, socially, and culturally. The first gallery explained how farming changed in DuPage County from prehistory to the present day and looked at the historical methods DuPage residents used to farm and raise livestock. The second gallery discussed the dynamics of farm families and the agricultural activities families conducted for sustenance. The exhibit mainly displayed artifacts from the Museum's collection, including farm implements and tools, photographs depicting farm labor over time, documents related to farm work, and garments that farm family members wore.

In addition to viewing artifacts, guests learned about agricultural history through interactive activities. The exhibit included a hands-on corn sheller that guests could use with field corn from a local farm, a raw crop identification game, a game matching baby farm animals with parent farm animals, and two iPads that played videos showing various agricultural methods and activities at recent DuPage County Fairs.

The Museum offered a variety of agriculture-themed programs in conjunction with the exhibit. Programs included a home canning workshop, an heirloom gardening presentation, a brown bag discussion about a staff member's experience professionally and personally studying farms and growing up in a farming family, and a virtual/in-person

hybrid presentation on the history of St. James Farm. In addition, the Museum held several walk-in events for community members to give oral histories on their farming memories. A planned presentation on beekeeping had to be postponed to 2021. Most of the events were free to the public.

Planning process-Tell us about the planning process, Example 1:

Museum staff developed the Home Grown exhibit and associated programming with the aid of several organizations and individuals. The Museum's parent organization, the Wheaton Park District, aided with label design, exhibit fabrication and installation, and marketing. Local farm historian Kevin Davis, Kline Creek Farm, and the Schingoethe Center of Aurora University provided information and loaned artifacts on different aspects of agriculture history. Several organizations partnered to offer the exhibit's associated programs, including the Culinary Historians of Northern Illinois, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, and Wheaton Public Library.

Exhibit timeline:

- July to December 2018: Museum staff began planning all 2019 exhibits and programming. The Wheaton Park District's marketing department created initial advertisements.
- January to June 2019: Staff conducted research, wrote labels, curated artifacts from the Museum's collection, developed interactive activities, and secured loans. Staff also worked with partner organization to schedule programs and book presenters. The Marketing Department designed the labels and created digital and print advertisements.
- July to September 2019: Staff edited and proofread labels, picked up loans, and installed the exhibit. The Wheaton Park District's maintenance department helped fabricate exhibit signage and install heavy artifacts.
- October 2019 to March 2020 – Staff and partner organizations held events as planned.
- March to June 2020 – With the Museum closed, staff developed online videos related to the exhibit with the aid of the Marketing Department.

Planning process-Tell us about the planning process, Example 2:

The process of creating Building the Team came out of a need to engage the public and educators during the closure of the site due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our focus has traditionally been on in person visitors and programs scheduled at schools. We realized the need to develop a digital resource that could be used, accessible by anyone at anytime online. This would create the most impact, given our small staffing limits at the site.

The primary planning was done by Site Interpretive Coordinator Benjamin Pollard drawing on other staff members and volunteers for research and content ideas. Site staff Cindy Upchurch and Brad Winn provided material knowledge, as did the research prepared by former site interpreters Michael Stout and Pam Imes. Pollard did most of the research in hardware and software needed to shoot such a series. Education Director Ramona Puskar from The Nature Institute in Godfrey, Illinois provided advice on preparing the program for filming and editing.

The timeline is considered to be ongoing and updated semi-regularly. Pollard, Winn, and others have created other visual content, while continuing to add to the Building the Team series. This allows for other focuses and interaction and allowing research into the next addition to the series.

Implementation- Describe how the project was produced. – Example 1

This exhibit was curated by Safe Passage staff who worked with their clients through counseling and therapy sessions to create the artwork displayed. Museum staff assisted by developing exhibit design, refining ideas, editing interpretive and

object panels, and installing the exhibit. Graphic design was developed by NIU's graphic and marketing coordinator, Sophia Varcados.

Content was produced by Survivors ranging in ages from 2–65 years old. The youngest survivors, under the age of 18, were provided with canvas and paint and their counselors directed their creation by asking questions including “what do you want the community to know about sexual assault,” “what are your experiences after coming to Safe Passage?” and “how do you feel now that you are here?” For “What Were You Wearing,” clothing was curated in two ways. Survivors could loan the actual articles of clothing they were wearing or, since often those items are not kept by survivors, they were recreated by Safe Passage counselors in consultation with their clients. Those that chose mannequins were given 7 paints colors, each color coordinator to the category of individual to had committed the assault, and a mannequin. Using the paint and their own handprints, Survivors painted the areas of their bodies where these non-consensual touches remain as an embodied memory. Survivors were also provided the opportunity to provide statements for accompanying object panels. The object panels were anonymous and featured the age(s) of assault and a statement if it was provided.

Implementation- Describe how the project was produced. Example 2

As noted previously, initial planning for the project involved the museum's “Interp Club,” working with key members of the Elmhurst Heritage Foundation board of directors. The project committee identified key personnel to interview, including: former Elmhurst Mayor Tom Marcucci, former Elmhurst School Board chair Cathy Jordan, former Elmhurst School District employee and Elmhurst Heritage Foundation board member Val Stewart, Elmhurst Heritage Foundation President Rob Butler, former Museum Director Brian Bergheger, current museum staff, and museum consultant Ken Bartels, who also operated a 10-year series of television interviews out of the schoolhouse.

All work for the project was done in house, largely by Curator of Collections Dan Lund. Lund edited interview footage together into different sections that supported the overall narrative, integrated still images and used slow pan techniques to make them more lively, and added music. The final product has inspired us to develop additional documentaries, which are finding a strong audience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The documentary has been shared via the museum's website and social media platforms, and has been shared with public officials, private donors and key stakeholders involved in the process. It will be used for future fundraising appeals as well.

Implementation- Describe how the project was produced. Example 3

The production of the Building the Team series is one of limited demand on site resources. Most of the work is done by Site Interpretive Coordinator Benjamin Pollard. Research for each video is primarily done by Pollard with assistance from other staff members Staff Development Coordinator Cindy Upchurch and Site Superintendent Brad Winn. While the series would benefit from research and appearances by our valued volunteers, they are restricted from coming to the site for public health reasons in 2020 (one hopes they may become involved as things shift back to opening to the public). Once research is completed, filming of the presentations is done by Pollard, Winn, and Ramona Puskar. Editing and uploading digital materials also is carried out by Pollard.

Filming of the videos and editing is completed on days the Interpretive Center is closed to the public. This allows our focus to be on visitors first when public visitation is allowed under current COVID-19 mitigations. Unfortunately, given the limited staffing and extra time requirements concerning COVID-19 mitigation, the series receives only limited time budgeted to it and has seen slow downs in production when other staff members have been absent for personal reasons.

Evaluation- Did you evaluate your project's success? Were the goals achieved? - Example 1

Feedback of the program was incredibly encouraging. One response noted: "I've gained a broader range of tools on how to do historical research, and a better understanding of the effort required to come to the conclusions we have....I never realized just how many sources of historical documents were available to the public all over America and the rest of the world."

Following the initial delivery, the 61 audience members completed a short survey. Feedback to the question "What are some resources available at Illinois College to address and respond to gaps in the historical record?" demonstrates that the program introduced tools and resources for the audience. Respondents listed resources such as the archives, further conversations with faculty, participating in an internship or research, and enrolling in collections-based courses in the college public history program. Another question asked the audience to consider how, following this program, their actions may be influenced moving ahead. One response noted " Researchers should never give up or be discouraged by obstacles thrown in the way. You should never be afraid to ask questions or use resources such as archivists, librarians...to learn more about the subject you are researching." Another noted "There are so many different versions of the history that we have to pay attention to all the sides, not just the side that we started the research with. Being able to look through the sources and recognize the different view points will be extremely helpful."

Evaluation- Did you evaluate your project's success? Were the goals achieved? - Example 12

Evaluation was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Museum staff members tracked and tabulated demographic information on the number of visitors. In the seven months the exhibit was on display, 2,621 individuals of all ages visited the Museum and over 20 groups took guided and self-guided tours of the exhibit. These groups included school-aged children, college students, adults, and individuals with disabilities. The Museum's front desk staff also recorded guest comments, interesting or insightful questions, and unique visitor stories.

Most of the programs associated with Home Grown were well attended. The canning workshop had 23 participants; the heirloom gardening presentation had 30 participants; the brown bag lunch had two participants, and the history of St. James Farm presentation had 45 participants both in-person and virtually. Additionally, three people participated in oral history interviews at the walk-in events and four families purchased corn kernel art craft kits.

Overall, despite COVID-19 closing the Museum for 16 weeks of the exhibit, the Museum believes Home Grown met its major goals. A wide range of people of all ages, knowledge levels, and ability statuses toured the exhibit and participated in programs. Visitors greatly enjoyed learning about the County's history of farming and seeing various historical agricultural methods illustrated with artifacts.

The exhibit interactives and associated programs showed visitors and participants the amount of labor and expertise that goes into various agricultural activities, including shelling corn, processing raw crops, growing food in a garden, and preserving food through canning.