

NEH Application Cover sheet (PN-293450)

Cultural and Community Resilience

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Field of expertise: Arts, General

INSTITUTION

Detroit Historical Society
Detroit, MI 48202-4009

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project*

Grant period: From 2023-10-01 to 2025-09-30

Project field(s): Urban History

Description of project: The Detroit Historical Society (DHS) seeks to expand its growing oral history collection by capturing stories from Detroit residents and others, with a particular effort on reaching underserved populations in the region. Entitled Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project, DHS will collect new stories from those that have experienced the impacts of the pandemic for its ongoing Detroit Responds: Stories from the Time of Covid-19 collection, and will create a new project area called The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters that focuses on the effects of extreme weather events on individuals living in Detroit.

BUDGET

Outright request	75,000.00	Cost sharing	0.00
Matching request	0.00	Total budget	75,000.00
Total NEH request	75,000.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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Detroit Historical Society
Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience:
An Oral History Project

Project Narrative:

Project goals and humanities content:

The mission of the Detroit Historical Society (DHS) is to tell Detroit's stories and why they matter. The Society advances its mission by 1) curating award-winning exhibitions that chronicle 300 years of the city's history at the Detroit Historical Museum, and exhibitions that explore Detroit's role in maritime history at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum; 2) by collecting, preserving, and sharing the City of Detroit's collection of nearly 300,000 historical artifacts; 3) by educating young people about Detroit's unique place in the past and their emerging role in its future; and 4) through community-based programming and outreach that bring history into the community.

The DHS attracts over 150,000 visitors annually through the exhibits and programming offered at its two museums. Located in the city's cultural center, the Detroit Historical Museum features signature exhibits including *Streets of Old Detroit*; *Detroit: Arsenal of Democracy*; *Doorway to Freedom: Detroit and the Underground Railroad*; *America's Motor City*; *Origins: Life Where the River Bends*, and others. Core exhibitions at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum located on the Detroit River front include the award-winning *Built by the River*; *Outdoor Treasures* featuring the bow anchor from the legendary *S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald*; and *Miss Pepsi*, the first hydroplane to qualify for a race at 100 mph. The Society also opens 8-10 temporary exhibitions at the museums each year. Content in recent exhibitions explored the history of electronic music festivals in Detroit; the experience of Japanese Americans who came to Detroit after World War II; the city's brewing heritage; and legendary songwriter and musician Allee Willis. *Boom Town*, a temporary exhibition commemorating the Society's 100th Anniversary, opened at the Detroit Historical Museum in early 2021. Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the exhibition examines Detroit's population explosion in the 1920's and tells an intentionally inclusive story of twenty Detroiters in that era, including the migrants who came here from the deep South and immigrants who came from around the world.

The Society's work has been recognized for best-in-class status numerous times. Our *Detroit 67: Looking Back to Move Forward* project commemorating the 50th anniversary of the tumultuous events of the summer of 1967 achieved both popular and critical acclaim, earning multiple awards and national and international recognition, including the 2018 National Medal by the Institute for Museum and Library Services; the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History; and the second-place prize at the global 2019 Best in Heritage Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

To produce the *Detroit 67* project, DHS employed a broad community engagement strategy, reaching out to the community to gather their stories to inform our process and our programs. This approach led to the launch of the Society's first comprehensive oral history project. Our team captured the voices of individuals who participated in and were affected by the events of July 1967, assembling a collection of over 500 oral histories that helped to shape the award-winning museum exhibition and all accompanying programming. The resulting *Detroit 67* oral history archive -- which comprises the

largest collection on this subject matter in the world -- has proven to be an invaluable research tool that is widely used to assist in storytelling in media outlets both locally and internationally.

Because of the overwhelming success of the *Detroit 67* effort, DHS expanded the initiative into new oral history projects, building on lessons learned to further establish methods and strategies to expand the primary focus area of stories we collect. *Neighborhoods: Where Detroit Lives*, an ongoing project that began in 2019, seeks to capture the history and identity of the city's rich mosaic of neighborhood through the memories and experiences of its residents. In 2020, DHS launched *Detroit Responds: Stories from the Time of Covid-19*, adapting the oral history project model for a web-based platform to collect narratives from those in the community touched by Covid-19. The project invites participants to contribute their stories digitally via phone, tablet, laptop or desktop, and provides safe and contemporaneous opportunities for Detroiters across the community to share their experiences of this exceptional and historic era in real time. DHS's newest oral history project is an essential part of *The Hustle: Celebrating Detroit's Unsung Entrepreneurs*, a multi-layered 18-month project that documents the history and the current role of Detroit's Black small business owners and merchants.

Through our oral history projects, we invite residents to share their stories in their own words, with their own voices, and through their own understanding of what has happened in the community, and why. The project reaches people from all walks of life – from politicians to barbers to teachers to factory workers and more – providing opportunities for them to contribute their firsthand experiences and recollections of events to the Society's permanent historical collection, ensuring that these valuable historical records are preserved in perpetuity. To date, over 300 oral histories have been collected for these continuing projects, which have been transcribed and are housed in an online archive on the Detroit Historical Society's website to provide public accessibility to the saved and preserved stories. In addition, the Society is working with its community partners to help them utilize the oral histories collected in their neighborhood for exhibits and other programs in local community centers, schools, galleries and other sites. The collection has also been used for DHS exhibitions and programming. Last year, DHS partnered with Design Core Detroit to develop a new QR code-embedded walking tour that incorporates oral histories along with narratives, images, and more to tell the stories of Detroit's famed Black Bottom neighborhood.

With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Detroit Historical Society seeks to expand its growing oral history collection by capturing stories from Detroit residents and others, with a particular effort on reaching underserved populations in the region. Entitled **Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project**, DHS will collect new stories from those that have experienced the impacts of the pandemic for its ongoing *Detroit Responds: Stories from the Time of Covid-19*, and will create a new project area called *The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters* that focuses on the effects of extreme weather events on individuals living in Detroit.

Oral history is among the most powerful methods for documenting and preserving the lived experiences. In spring 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic spread throughout the world, the Detroit Historical Society's oral historians along with public historians and curators across the globe responded by creating and participating in oral history projects. The information that our historians have collected provides valuable insights into how Covid-19 has transformed daily lives in our city. We also know the importance of continuing to collect these stories. DHS's own surveys, and those that we have participated in from across the country, have revealed that a large swath of the public as not yet solidified its perspective because the pandemic is still not over. They have not had an opportunity to reflect.

Additional feedback tells us that those who have lost loved ones have not been allowed to properly grieve and they will not feel comfortable talking about their loss until that has happened.

For many in the Detroit's economically-disadvantaged communities of color, the pandemic and climate change are connected by an historical legacy of racial and environmental injustice and economic inequality. Both crises are global and economically devastating, and both disproportionately impact the poor and deepen existing inequalities in frontline communities. Detroit was an early hotspot for the Covid-19 crisis, with the highest incidence of infected cases and deaths clustered in the city's Black and poor communities. The economic fallout was brutal, and many low-income families who were housing and food-insecure even before the pandemic found it impossible to meet basic needs. At its peak, the unemployment rate in Detroit hit close to 50%, more than four times the unemployment rate in the city prior to the pandemic. Extended quarantines and school closures during the pandemic led to increased social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health outcomes for residents of all ages. These impacts laid painfully bare that Covid-19 cannot be separated from the longstanding crises of economic inequality and environmental injustice that many communities across the country were already facing long before coronavirus made headlines. The communities hardest hit by the pandemic have also experienced the impacts of climate change first and worst, which in Detroit includes increased risks from neighborhood flooding, extended power outages, extreme heat, and air pollution. Even within Detroit, some neighborhoods face more severe climate effects like flooding than others, and resources to weather the impacts are not evenly distributed. Testimonies about the impact of climate change in Detroit will help to capture the community experience of coping and responding to the challenges associated with environmental uncertainty.

The process of sharing oral history accounts can contribute to community resilience. Oral histories empower individuals to render history in their own words, and to offer reflections on the connections between the present and the past by drawing from their unique perspectives. According to Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, the founder of Empowering a Green Environment & Economy, "Low-income communities and people of color are bearing the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the long-term impacts of a changing climate. In this context, resilience must mean more than enduring the unendurable, or bouncing back to 'normal.' Real resilience demands that we recognize structural racism and rectify the injustices that rob black and brown people, and poor people, of agency and power."

The goals of the **Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project** are to provide opportunities for Detroiters impacted by the pandemic and extreme weather events to document their contemporary experiences; to record and preserve the events of history; and to broaden understanding of the intersecting effects of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, and of the social, economic, and emotional impact on individuals and communities. In addition to preserving these stories, the oral histories can be shared and used by scientists, resources managers, policymakers and historians to provide potentially valuable information about the connecting impacts of Covid-19 and environmental change for Detroit residents. Further, by expanding archived narratives into news segments, podcasts, and public conversations, the project can help the community to understand the value of their own knowledge, and how to preserve and access that knowledge to adapt in pandemic and climate crises.

Project Priority:

Since the pandemic began in 2020, the number of deaths linked to Covid-19 has exceeded 40,000 in Michigan. This includes 4,102 deaths in the city of Detroit, disproportionately affecting poor people of color. Almost 80 percent of Detroit residents are African American, and nearly 11 percent are Hispanic. Poverty rates in Detroit are among the highest in the U.S. Prior to Covid-19, jobless rates in Detroit had begun to decrease, but today, the city's unemployment rate remains twice that of the state and national averages. The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index gives the area a score of 0.8723, indicating a high level of vulnerability to the negative effects caused by external stresses on human health.

The majority of census tracts in Detroit are considered disadvantaged because they meet a low socioeconomic threshold and at least one additional associated burden threshold, including those for health and climate change. The Climate and Economic Justice screening tool finds that the share of people in these communities who have asthma, heart disease or diabetes – major risks factors linked to increased Covid-19 deaths -- are at or above the 95th percentile. The screening tool also found projected flood risks to properties in some neighborhoods of the city are in the 98th percentile. These risks are likely to increase as the climate changes. Regional climate change models project increasing frequency, duration and severity of rain events with rising water levels over the next 25 years. In the Midwest, the amount of precipitation falling in the 1% heaviest rain events has increased by 37% since the mid-20th century, according to the National Climate Assessment. Cities like New Orleans sit below sea level, making them naturally prone to flooding. In Detroit's case, however, man-made structures have been a major factor in altering the landscape and increasing flood risk in neighborhoods across the city. Detroit's combined sewer system, which connects sanitary sewers to storm drains, can get overwhelmed even with just a couple of inches of rain. During heavy rainfall, the system's capacity can be exceeded and untreated sewage is frequently discharged into the Rouge River and Detroit River. Since 2016, heavy rains in metro Detroit have caused massive flooding in homes, streets and freeways at least four times, and primarily Black communities were found to be most at risk for household flooding. Responses from a sample of 4,667 Detroit households surveyed between 2012 and 2020 found that 43% reported household flooding.¹ Neighborhoods nearest the Detroit River are often the hardest hit, including Jefferson-Chalmers, Warrendale, Southwest Detroit and neighborhoods near the Rouge River. A study published in 2016 of 164 homes in Detroit's Warrendale neighborhood indicated that 64% of homes experienced at least one flooding event in the past three years, with many experiencing three or four events.² The majority of these residents lack the resources to recover from the devastation, including home insurance needed to relocate or rebuild after a disaster.

In the summer of 2021, historic rainfall hit the area on June 26 dumping about six inches over a five-hour span. This was followed by a second major rain event just three weeks later that dropped as much as three inches of rain, ranking it the ninth highest of all time for one day in the month of July. The extreme rains flooded homes and businesses with water and backed-up sewage; submerged freeways and residential streets leaving more than a thousand cars stranded on the roads; and caused mass power outages. In addition, numerous arts and cultural institutions in the city's Midtown

¹ https://huw.wayne.edu/learning-center/detroit_flood_report_2021.pdf

² Nassauer, J., Dewar, M., McElmurry, S., Sampson, N., Alvarez, A., Burton, A., et al. (2016). *NEW-GI: Neighborhood, Environment & Water Research Collaborations for Green Infrastructure*; Graham Sustainability Institute: Ann Arbor, MI, USA.

neighborhood suffered damage that ranged from minor to significant. Basements flooded, one-of-a-kind artifacts and artworks were damaged, and many buildings shut down temporarily for repairs. The Detroit Historical Museum was affected by both flooding events. In response to the first flood, DHS staff had to uninstall three exhibits and move them to higher ground. Two of the exhibitions had just been reinstalled when the museum flooded again. Elevators originally installed when the museum opened in 1951 were flooded; and carpet, flooring, drywall and more needed to be replaced costing the organization more than \$20,000.

The impacts of climate change on community members are not limited to destructive flooding. Extreme weather events in southeast Michigan also disrupt electrical power, and poorer communities are often most negatively affected. Outages, which are caused by an aging grid and strong storms that occur more often as the climate changes, have become more frequent and longer in Detroit. Data collected by the Citizens Utility Board shows Michigan customers experience the fourth longest average duration of outages in the U.S., and Detroit residents are more vulnerable to extended outages because they live in neighborhoods with antiquated equipment and transformers. While DTE Energy, the private utility serving the area, has begun to make system upgrades that are more resilient and capable of weathering storms, minority and poor customers largely do not get those benefits as quickly as their wealthier peers. Only about 21% of those served by DTE's newest systems are minorities, and just 10% of customers served by the newer systems live beneath the poverty line.³

Climate change also increases the frequency and intensity of heat events in urban environments, and worsens air quality. Heat is one of the principal weather-related causes of mortality in the U.S., taking a disproportionate toll on the poor, the elderly and racial minorities. Warmer temperatures also lead to the creation of more smog, particularly during summer, and Black people are three times more likely to die from air pollution than white people. The 2022 "State of the Air" report from the American Lung Association found Detroit's rankings were worse for some of the most harmful and widespread types of air pollution: particle pollution and ozone. The area is ranked 34th worst in the nation for short-term particle pollution, and 24th for ozone pollution, placing Detroit among the U.S.'s dirtiest cities.⁴ Cumulative exposure to air pollution leads to an increase in medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma or COPD, all of which are significant factors in higher Covid-19 death rates.

In addition to the physical hardships that residents have endured, the stress and anxiety of dealing with the impacts of extreme weather can end up exacerbating mental health problems such as depression, post-traumatic stress, and suicide.

Community participation:

The personal recordings collected through the **Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project** will lift up the voices of Detroit residents who are often underserved by humanities scholarship, and bring to life the environmental and social justice, structural racism and civic rights issues of the past, while also offering context for conditions today.

³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z0C0y6OloXBXlgeMGoBE4zxtDZHqP5QH/view>

⁴ <https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/sota-mi-fy22>

Community participation is key to project success. To inform its award-winning *Detroit 67: Looking Back to Move Forward* project, DHS collected the oral histories of hundreds of Detroiters who were alive in 1967, including residents, business owners, police officers, national guardsmen, judges, government officials, journalists, waitresses and cab drivers that have all helped tell the story, sharing their feelings, recollections, insights and often-varying interpretations of what occurred and why. This level of engagement reflected our efforts to listen to historians, activists, community organizations to ensure that our project was accurate, informative, diverse and inclusive. DHS has worked diligently to develop and maintain authentic relationships with over 100 community groups throughout Detroit, and we are utilizing these important community resources to guide our activities, including new and ongoing oral history programs. This includes partnerships with community development corporations, neighborhood block clubs, local business associations, and similar groups in underserved neighborhoods most affected by recent flooding events. In addition, DHS will conduct the project in coordination with organizations whose work focuses on environmental and climate change issues, such as Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, The Greening of Detroit, the City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability, the Green Door Initiative, and others. DHS will conduct outreach at events hosted by these organizations, such as community engagement meetings or tree planting events designed to mitigate flooding in affected neighborhoods. In addition, DHS will coordinate activities with the City's Office of Sustainability, which has prioritized input from Detroit residents when shaping policies and strategies to increase community resilience to climate change.

The program will help to bridge communities across ethnic, racial, socio-economic and age demographics, and will elevate the experiences of the residents of the neighborhoods involved in the project when their oral histories are utilized in community gallery exhibits and exhibitions with partnering neighborhood associations, and are featured into the Society's own programming and exhibitions. During the last three years, three exhibitions at the Detroit Historical Museum were staged using the oral histories as primary source material, and the organization is developing a series of podcasts this year, which will utilize content from the oral histories archive. In addition, the on-line archive will broaden the reach of the project, serving as a portal for diverse audiences. Teachers and students at all levels will be encouraged to utilize the collection for school projects, National History Day documentaries or other classroom presentations. By connecting the project to the Society's full website and social media outreach, the project has the potential to reach even further, with the capacity to field inquiries from students, scholars and other institutions. Annual reach includes over 1.2 million pageviews for the organization's website, and 8.5 million impressions across DHS's social media platforms. The Society produces a collections blog and hosts a YouTube channel featuring video content that attracts 10,000 views per month, providing new opportunities to share the collected oral histories.

Methodology:

The Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project will build on the Detroit Historical Society's ongoing oral history collection efforts. DHS will create a new full-time curatorial position for the project, who will be responsible for project development and implementation, with support from the organization's Field Curator, Chief of Exhibitions and Engagement, and Manager of Digital Projects.

While DHS will continue to collect oral histories about the pandemic through its website, the project will expand its collection into community settings as well. For collection in both focus areas, the Society will partner with community-based partners including neighborhood associations, block clubs,

community centers and others to promote the project, and to help identify and select residents to participate as oral history narrators. Targeted neighborhoods will include Aviation Sub, Jefferson-Chalmers, Oakman Boulevard community, Southwest Detroit, and the neighborhoods surrounding Rouge Park. These neighborhoods have been badly affected by flooding in the past few years, and moreover have wide geographic coverage to be more representative of the city.

Since 2019, DHS has partnered with the history department at Wayne State University in Detroit, engaging and training undergraduate students from Wayne State University to contribute to the project by assisting staff with community outreach, conducting background research and conducting interviews. In addition to providing practical support for the project team, the partnership with the university has provided dozens of students with opportunities to learn about oral history collection and a chance for students to get off campus and into neighborhoods across the city to see and experience Detroit beyond Midtown. Community volunteers will provide additional support for the project.

The project team often begins their work in each neighborhood with the community elders to build confidence in the wider community. Additional promotion is done through the organization's social media outlets, by word of mouth, and through outreach activities conducted with the community project partners, such as fliers, posters and presentations to block clubs, neighborhood associations, and others. Participating narrators also help to promote the project, helping to identify their neighbors, friends or family members that may be interested in contributing stories.

Once narrators are identified, the interviewer sets up a meeting time, which is often conducted in the interviewee's home as that helps to put interviewees at ease. Interviews are also collected at community sites such as community centers or schools in coordination with community partners. Prior to the interview sessions, the project team will conduct research to prepare questions about the community that is the focus of the interview, as well as broader questions about personal and community impacts of the pandemic, climate change, and the ways that they are weathering and building resilience to ongoing health challenges, flooding, extreme weather, and heat waves.

At the beginning of each session, interviewers describe the aims and anticipated uses of the project to which they are making their contribution. Interviewers use their prepared questionnaire to prompt dialogue, and encourage narrators to bring themes and topics of their own to the conversation, and to address issues that reflect their concerns.

A sample of questions for the *Detroit Responds: Stories from the Time of Covid-19* focus area include:

- When did you first hear about COVID-19 (coronavirus)?
- When did you begin to worry about COVID-19 (if you worried at all)?
- Have you personally been afflicted with COVID-19?
- Has your family or immediate friend group been personally impacted by COVID-19?
- Has your job been affected?
- Do you work in the medical field? How has this crisis been you for?
- What lesson do you hope is learned through this crisis?

Questions for *The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters* will include:

- As you have lived in the neighborhood, has flooding or extreme weather impacted your quality of life or property?
- Have utilities in your neighborhood been affected more in the past few years than before? More downed power lines due to wind or flooding?
- Have you ever thought about moving because of the effects of climate change on your neighborhood?
- What do you think the city should do to support the neighborhood if issues occur?
- Do you think that climate change is affecting your neighborhood? If yes, how?
- Do you think that the City of Detroit should take an active position on climate change?
- If your neighborhood is feeling the effects of climate change, is your neighborhood working to combat it? If yes, what?

The team uses TASCAM DR-22WL audio recorders because they are mobile and versatile, only requiring a quiet space. The interview usually runs from 30 minutes to one hour in length. Upon completion of the interview, participants are asked to sign a legal release and informed consent form. This is done at the end of the interview to ensure the participant is comfortable with everything they have said. The recorded interview is sent to a dedicated transcriber, and the unedited interview is then archived.

A project-specific website has been created to house the entire collection in one place and to provide public accessibility to the saved and preserved stories, which are available as both streaming audio and as transcriptions. Oral histories are all cataloged and searchable through an Omeka-based website (<http://oralhistory.detroithistorical.org/>). Each entry includes relevant metadata, including a full human-generated transcript. The audio is attached to each record, as well as to a YouTube embed. Internally, the oral histories are stored on DHS servers, and backed up weekly. In addition, the metadata from the Omeka database is mirrored on DHS's internal collections management database, which uses the PastPerfect software.

The Society's communication team will promote the availability of the archive through both traditional and social media outreach, and with regular posts to feature notable interviews, as well as more in-depth reports on the organization's blog, highlighting key histories among the newly uploaded material.

Deliverables:

Through **Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project**, the Detroit Historical Society aims to create a platform for authentic information that sparks important conversations about Detroit's past, present and its future.

Project deliverables include:

- 100 oral histories will be collected and transcribed
- Collected histories will be added to the Society's free public archive
- Through the Society's ongoing partnership with Wayne State University, college students will be engaged in the project learning valuable interviewing, archiving and transcription skills.

The permanent archive will remain available as a resource to current and future generations of Detroiters in the Detroit Historical Society's collection. Additionally, the oral histories collected through this project will strengthen and enhance the Society's programming by serving as an essential narrative resource in exhibitions in the Society's two museums, as well as in virtual tours and exhibits, outreach and education events, and community partnership programs.

Work plan:

The Detroit Historical Society will conduct **Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project** over a two-year period (from October 1, 2023 through September 1, 2025), and will collect 100 oral histories, working with block clubs, neighborhood associations and community development corporations in four to six neighborhoods. Oral histories will be transcribed within 60 days of being recorded, and will be archived and available online within 90 days.

To ensure the oral history collection work is on track to meet objectives, the project manager will be responsible for reading transcripts, and listening to all the interviews conducted for the project so that he/she can direct and tutor the interviewers effectively, and monitor the project progress. The project manager will generate quarterly progress assessments and reports to senior staff to confirm the project is on schedule for completion and to make course corrections as needed.

While the grant period is two years, it should be noted that the timelines for *The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters* and *Detroit Responds: Stories from the Time of Covid-19* collection projects will remain intentionally open-ended. DHS plans to collect the stories of the pandemic and climate change for as long as these experiences remains relevant to our constituency. The work requires us, as historians, to shadow their impacts while remaining attuned to the many contemporary events that form "history in the making" in our community.

October-December 2023:

Hire and train the Oral History Manager

Work with Wayne State University, environmental and climate change organizations and other community partners to research issues, develop and test oral history questionnaires

Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities around launch of new *The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters* project

Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 20 contacts with key stakeholders

Create project website landing page for *The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters*

January-December 2024:

Recruit and train first team of students and volunteers

Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 30 contacts each quarter

Collect oral histories from 15 individuals each quarter

Transcribe, archive and post oral histories on website

Work with community partners to develop community exhibits utilizing oral histories

Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities

January-September 2025:

Recruit and train second-year team of students and volunteers
 Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 30 contacts each quarter
 Collect oral histories from 15 individuals each quarter
 Transcribe, archive and post oral histories on website
 Work with community partners to develop community exhibits utilizing oral histories
 Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities

October 2025:

Survey project partners
 Assess objectives and goals
 Write and submit reports to project partners

Project personnel and advisors:

Mr. William Winkel, Field Curator at the Detroit Historical Society, will serve as the primary project supervisor. He will hire, train and supervise the new Oral History Manager, develop project protocols and processes, manage community partnerships, and support student and volunteer interviewers. He served as DHS's first oral history project manager, collected hundreds of oral histories for the organizations four oral history projects. He earned a B.A. in History, and a M.A. in Public History from Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan.

Tracy Irwin, Chief Exhibitions and Enrichment Officer, will serve as Project Director and will oversee project implementation and grant administration, and will coordinate with project staff to ensure effective use of the oral histories project with the Society's exhibitions, education and outreach teams. Ms. Irwin has served the Detroit Historical Society in her current role since 2018, serving previously as DHS's Director of Exhibitions and Collections since 2006. She has served as the Project Manager for multiple award-winning exhibitions at the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, collaborating with multiple stakeholders to develop gallery designs, digital assets and artifact installations; managed million-dollar exhibition budgets; worked with the curatorial team on content development; and managed the day-to-day schedule of the general contractor, fabricator, design team, and audio-visual contractors. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

Brendan Roney, Manager of Digital Projects, will manage the online archive and search system. He joined the Detroit Historical Society as a digitization technician in 2011, having previously as a staff docent for the Society. He has been in his current role since 2013. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Dr. Tracy Neumann, Urban Historian and the Public History Program Coordinator at Wayne State University, will serve as the project liaison between the Detroit Historical Society and Wayne State's History Department, providing opportunities for more than 50 students to participate in the project and help in the oral history collection. Dr. Neumann earned a BA, History and Russian and East European Studies at University of Michigan; an MA, Historic Preservation Planning at Cornell University; and a PhD, History from New York University. She was also a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University, and received a William Lyon Mackenzie King Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

Detroit Historical Society
Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project

Work Plan

TIMELINE	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE STAFF
2023		
Oct, November	Hire and train the Oral History Manager	Tracy Irwin, William Wall-Winkel
Oct-Dec	Work with Wayne State University, environmental and climate change organizations and other community partners to research issues, develop and test oral history questionnaires	Oral History Manager, Irwin, Wall-Winkel, Tracy Neumann
Nov-Dec	Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities around launch of new <i>The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters</i> project	DHS communications and media relations team
Nov-Dec	Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 20 contacts with key stakeholders	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers
Dec	Create project website landing page for <i>The Neighborhoods: Where Climate Change Matters</i>	Brendan Roney
2024		
Jan, February	Recruit and train first team of students and volunteers	Oral History Manager, Tracy Neumann
Jan-Dec	Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 30 contacts each quarter	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers
Jan-Dec	Collect oral histories from 15 individuals each quarter	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers
Jan-Dec	Transcribe, archive and post oral histories on website	Transcriber, Brendan Roney
Jan-Dec	Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers; DHS communications and media relations team
June, Oct Dec	Generate quarterly progress assessments and reports to senior staff to confirm the project is on schedule for completion and to make course corrections as needed	Oral History Manager
Oct-Dec 2023	Work with community partners to develop community exhibits utilizing oral histories	Oral History Manager, Irwin, Wall-Winkel

Detroit Historical Society
Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience: An Oral History Project

Work Plan

2025		
Jan, February	Recruit and train second team of students and volunteers	Oral History Manager, Tracy Neumann
Jan-Sept	Conduct community outreach with partners that results in 30 contacts each quarter	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers
Jan-Sept	Collect oral histories from 15 individuals each quarter	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers
Jan-Sept	Transcribe, archive and post oral histories on website	Transcriber, Brendan Roney
Jan-Sept	Create public awareness of project through community outreach, social media, and traditional media communications activities	Oral History Manager, students, volunteers; DHS communications and media relations team
Aug-Sept	Work with community partners to develop community exhibits utilizing oral histories	Oral History Manager, Irwin, Wall-Winkel
October	Survey project partners , assess objectives and goals, write and submit reports to project partners, develop plans to continue project.	Oral History Manager, Irwin, Wall-Winkel

DETROIT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



**Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience:
An Oral History Project**

Project Team:

- Tracy Irwin, Chief Exhibitions and Enrichment Officer
- Dr. Tracy Neumann, Wayne State University
- Brendan Roney, Manager of Digital Projects
- William Wall-Winkel, Field Curator

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Position: Oral History Manager

Department: Collections and Curatorial

Reports to: Director of Collections and Curatorial

The Oral History Manager is a full-time position that reports to the Director of Collections and Curatorial and works in collaboration with the Field Curator and full Mission team in support of the Society's mission to tell Detroit's stories and why they matter. The Oral History Manager will support Society projects through original research and database development, community collaboration and outreach. The Oral History Manager will serve as they liaison and bring social history perspective to projects related to the oral history collection.

This position requires on-site work at the Collections Resource Center at Historic Fort Wayne as well and at the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum. Additional off-site work throughout the City of Detroit and surrounding suburbs to collect oral histories, artifacts and images is also part of this work. Expanded availability is required including evening and weekend work.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Represent the Society publicly when collaborating with the community.
- Work with curatorial team and the Chief Exhibitions and Enrichment Officer on the development of original exhibition ideas for the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum and offsite locations, using the stories collected from this project.
- Collaborate with the Education and Programs team on public outreach, higher-level school programming needs through use of the oral history database.
- Support the broader Mission team on strategic initiatives.
- Work with the Manager of Public Programs and Outreach to foster strategic partner relationships and assist in the development of pipeline programming related to the department and organizational goals.
- Expand community support for the Society through inclusive and focused engagement and help further develop the reach and impact of Society programming.
- Work with the community and collections team to expand the historical record through the ongoing oral history projects and initiatives and artifact collection.

- Fulfill related research requests submitted to the Society by the community-at-large and peers including local historical societies and museums.
- Be an ambassador for the Society and bring a positive outlook to work both within and beyond the walls of the museums.

Qualifications

- Degree in History, Public History, or extensive equivalent experience in a museum setting.
- 3-5 years of experience working in this field including the collection and dissemination of oral histories.
- Knowledge of Midwest and Michigan history. (Detroit history preferred)
- Intermediate computer skills including Adobe and the digitization of various audio formats.
- Excellent organization skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively as project required.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines and work efficiently on multiple projects is a must.

**WILLIAM
WALL-WINKEL**



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[HTTPS://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/WILLIAM
-WINKEL-B3B722136/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-wall-winkel-b3b722136/)

MISSION

Seek out Detroit stories and
acknowledge they matter

SKILLS

Microsoft Office
Oratory
Adaptability
Communication
Project Management (Basecamp)

EXPERIENCE

**ASSISTANT CURATOR
MANAGER OF ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS
DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
12/18-PRESENT**

Develop, orchestrate, and carry out oral history projects that further the mission of the Detroit Historical Society
Continued prior responsibilities

**MANAGER OF THE DETROIT 67: ORAL AND WRITTEN HISTORY PROJECT
11/15-12/17**

DIRECT THE ORAL HISTORY TEAM
MANAGE THE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
GIVE PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY
HANDLE MEDIA INQUIRIES AND REQUESTS THAT PERTAIN TO THE ORAL HISTORIES
WORK WITH ACADEMIC PARTNERS TO WEAVE ORAL HISTORY INTO CURRICULUMS

EDUCATION

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bachelors of Arts with a Major in History – May 2016
Masters in Public History – Expected 2021
Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management - Expected 2021

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Conducted over 170 oral histories.
 - Contributed two chapters to *Detroit 1967: Origins, Impacts, Legacies*
 - Presented at the Michigan Museums Association Annual Conference and the Michigan: Perspective conference
 - Board Member of the Michigan Oral History Association
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TRACY IRWIN

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MISSION: Tell our community's stories through curated exhibitions, educational programs, events and visual arts.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2018 – Present

Chief Exhibitions and Enrichment Officer, Detroit Historical Society, Detroit, MI

In my current role, I continue to serve as the point person for all exhibition development, implementation and management at the Detroit Historical Museum, Dossin Great Lakes Museum and off-site locations. Additionally, I have the honor of working with and leading the curatorial, collections, outreach, education and programs teams. Together we create outstanding experiences for museum visitors and community partners through the development and execution of exhibitions, school and adult tours, panel discussions, family programs and workshops, collections care and digital collections, oral history collection, youth focused programming and leading all mission related initiatives for the organization.

2006-2018

Director of Exhibitions and Collections, Detroit Historical Society, Detroit, MI

My primary focus was to tell Metro Detroit's stories and why they matter. I did this through the conception, development, implementation and management of all temporary exhibitions for the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum as well as offsite locations. I also maintained and updated of all permanent exhibitions. I worked with the marketing and PR team to update and curate our exhibition online presence as well as contributed to our quarterly newsletter. I also had oversight of the Society's extensive collections of more than 250,000 objects and images, including a more recent online digital collection.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Project Manager for the *Detroit67: Perspectives* exhibition, a recipient of the 2018 Institute of Library and Museum Services National Medal of Honor. In my role, I collaborated with multiple stakeholders to develop the exhibition and I oversaw management of a million-dollar exhibition budget, worked with the curatorial team on content development and managed the day-to-day schedule of the general contractor, fabricator, design team, and audio-visual contractors. I worked on the gallery design, use of digital assets and artifact installation in time for the 50th anniversary of the events of 1967; June 2017.
- Staff Project Manager for Past>Forward Campaign exhibitions. This included the development and installation of six new permanent exhibitions and eight temporary exhibitions which opened in November 2012 and May 2013 at the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum.
- Worked with the Collections Team to develop and produce an online digital database of over 40,000 objects and images as well as audio visual assets.
- Staff liaison to the Board Collections and Exhibitions Committee and Glancy Trains Exhibition affinity group.
- Developed and oversee a Community Gallery which serves to showcase Metro Detroit's community organizations and institutions. This gallery has showcased more than 50 different organizations exhibitions since its creation in 2007.
- Served as the designer and curator for *Fashion D.Fined: past, present and future of detroit design* exhibition in our largest rotating exhibition gallery.

2002 – 2006 **Director of Programs and Events**, Detroit Historical Society, Detroit, MI

During these years, my primary focus was related to Special Events Management, Facility Use Events and Program Development. I developed and facilitated programs and events related to permanent exhibitions at both the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum. I organized all off-site tours through our Behind the Scenes programming as well as our Historic Houses of Worship tours. Additionally, I secured and oversaw all facility use events for outside organizations.

1998-2002 **Exhibitions and Accounting Manager**, Detroit Artists Market, Detroit, MI
I worked with exhibition conception and development, all related communications, and the execution of the exhibitions. Additionally, I developed programs for artist development and young collectors.

2000 **Beginning Drawing Instructor**, Wayne County Community College, Trenton, MI

EDUCATION:

1998 BFA, College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI

1993 – 1994 General History and Art courses at Oakland Community College

Presentations & Outreach:

2018 Michigan Museums Association, panel presentation; *Conveners as Leaders: Coordinating Community Commitment and Consensus*, Dearborn, Michigan

2018 Amer. Assoc. for State and Local History, panel presentation; *Detroit67: Looking Back to Move Forward – Truth Leads to Transformation*, Kansas City, Missouri

2018 Amer. Alliance of Museum Annual Conf., panel presentation; *Detroit67: – An Institutional Model for Transformation*; Phoenix, Arizona

2017 *1967 Detroit Riots Exhibit* – American History TV video tour; July 23, 2017

2017 *Detroit 67: Perspectives* – American Black Journal Detroit Interview; June 2017

2015 Local History Conf. panel; *Kick out the Jams: The Story of the Grande Ballroom*

2014 Michigan Museums Association Conference, panel presentation; *Within the Walls, Beyond the Walls: Detroit Museums and the Underground Railroad*

2014 Local History Conference presentation on the exhibition; *Out on the Town: Drinking and Dining in Detroit Since 1920*

2011 Local History Conference joint presentation; *Saying I Do: Metro Detroit Weddings*

2010 Local History Conference joint presentation on the exhibition; *Hero or Villain? Detroit's Legacy of Leadership*

2009 American Association (now Alliance) of Museums Annual Conference, panel presentation;
Community Curated Exhibit Programs: Activating Public Voice and Audience Outreach

Additional Professional Experience:

2018 – present **Board Vice President**, Detroit Artists Market, Detroit, MI

2015-present **Committee Chair, Programs and Education**, Detroit Artists Market, Detroit, MI

2014-present **Board of Directors**, Detroit Artists Market, Detroit, MI

2010-2013 **Display Consultant**, Detroit Shoppe, Somerset Collection, Troy, MI

2004-2009 **Special Events and Auction Consultant**, Greater Corktown Development Corporation, Detroit, MI

2002-2003 **Media and PR Consultant**, Studio 1650, Kessler/Francis/Cardoza, Detroit, MI

BRENDAN RONEY

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Detroit Historical Society

- Senior Digitization Technician - January 2013 – Present
- Digitization Technician - June 2011 – January 2013
- Dossin Great Lakes Museum Primary Staff Docent - November 2005 – August 2006, August 2007 – June 2011

Projects:

- Detroit Video History Archive - January 2015 – Present
 - o Role: I helped to develop a plan to digitize the museum's collection of over 2000 U-Matic tapes, VHS tapes, film reels, and other formats of dynamic media. As the primary technician on the project, I select and capture tape-based media, then edit and compress materials using a combination of the Adobe suite and open source tools. I also review and select film-based materials for out-sourced capture. I log captured materials into PastPerfect, and make select materials available through the Society's YouTube channel. I have also edited materials from the video collection into promotional materials.
- Re-Documenting Detroit - January 2016 – Present
 - o Role: I proposed a revival of a partnership between the Society and the College for Creative Studies in which student photographers shoot contemporary subjects in the city as part of a class dedicated to the project. The proposal was awarded a Knight Arts Challenge grant, the bulk of which is used to compensate the students. As the primary contact for the partnership, I meet with the instructor about goals and expectations, take part in regular critiques of the students' work, and direct the final selection process of which works will enter the collection.
- Detroit '67 - November 2016 – June 2017
 - o Role: As an off-shoot of the Detroit Video History Archive project, I selected, organized, and captured materials connected to the 1967 Uprising. In addition to using this material as reference, I edited and assembled these materials into videos used both within the exhibition and in web-based promotional materials. I also used GIS software to create animated maps from demographic data. Additionally, I provided technical assistance to the Oral History component of the project in audio editing and clean-up, as well as some minor administrative tasks with the component's Omeka-based website.
- Digitization Initiative - June 2011 – December 2014, Presently On-Going
 - o Role: Retrieving, handling, scanning, photographing, researching, cataloging, and properly reorganizing and re-shelving photos, archival materials, and objects from the museum's collection
 - Ongoing Duties
 - o Training interns and volunteers, helping to maintain the projects' social media presences (<http://detroithistorical.wordpress.com> and <http://detroithistoricalsociety.tumblr.com/>), acting as one of the speakers in the museum's Speakers Bureau community outreach program.
 - o Creation of A/V materials for marketing and educational use. This has included filming our Third Thursday lecture series, creating video elements for our annual fundraiser ball, creating social media

marketing materials, and producing short videos using material from our collection to be screened at special museum events.

- Staff Docent - November 2005 – August 2006, August 2007 – June 2011
 - o Primary history interpreter on site at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. Regular tasks generally included orienting guests, answering questions, providing tours, assisting in the gift shop, maritime research, organizational chores in the museum's archives, and related customer service tasks. I have helped to develop and write training materials for other docents, and promotional materials aimed at attracting regional school groups. I also regularly gave tours at the Detroit Historical Museum, the Detroit Historical Society's other facility. As the Dossin's primary docent, I was a member of the committee that redesigned the museum's core exhibits as part of the Past>Forward campaign.

Barnes and Noble

- Textbook Customer Service and Sales Representative – September 2005 – July 2006
 - o Performed customer service related activities, shelved books, processed returns, and maintained inventory at appropriate levels.

EDUCATION 2000- 2004

2006

Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan Bachelor of Arts, History

- cumulative G.P.A. of 3.93
- graduated Summa Cum Laude

- accepted on the Presidential Scholarship
- received Johannesen Award for outstanding work in a classical subject ● awarded membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Medieval History

- completed first semester in a Master's program, with a G.P.A. of 3.7

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Docent at the Detroit Historical Museum January 2005 – September 2005

PAPERS

2004 - The Black Legion and Detroit in the 1930s

INVITED TALKS

Presenter, "Digital Detroit: Audio, Video, and the MSU Urban Studio," Fall Mid-Michigan Digital Practitioners Meeting, October 20, 2016, East Lansing, MI.

Dr. Tracy Neumann
Urban Historian and the Public History Program Coordinator,
Wayne State University.

Biography

Area of expertise in the humanities:

Dr. Neumann specializes in transnational and global approaches to twentieth-century North American history, with an emphasis on cities and the built environment, and teaches courses on twentieth-century U.S. history, urban history, research methods, and public history. Dr. Neumann's work explores the politics of urban development and how global and local processes interact to shape urban space, public policy, and daily life. She is the author of *Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) and of essays on urban history and public policy. Her current research examines the political, cultural, and intellectual history of the global dissemination of urban design and international development concepts since 1945, with a focus on the role of philanthropic foundations and international organizations. Through an investigation of programs sponsored by organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Ford Foundation, she is reconstructing how ideas about the design and management of North Atlantic cities influenced, and were influenced by, development projects in the global South. She is the winner of many awards and grants including a Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship at Wayne State University, Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award from Wayne State, and Excellence in Teaching Award from the school's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Scholarship and Professional Experience:

Dr. Neumann earned a BA, History and Russian and East European Studies at University of Michigan; an MA, Historic Preservation Planning at Cornell University; and a PhD, History from New York University. She was also a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University, and received a William Lyon Mackenzie King Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Before pursuing a PhD, she worked for several years as a consultant for a cultural resource management firm. Her professional experience as a public history practitioner led her to help develop Wayne State's MA Program in Public History, for which she serves as the coordinator. Neumann also co-edits the *Global Urban History* blog, is an international advisory board member for *Urban History*, and is a collaborator with the North American Cultural Diplomacy Initiative.

Publications:

Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America
University of Pennsylvania Press · Jan 1, 2016

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AND SCIENCES

December 12, 2022

Ms. Elana Rugh
President and CEO
Detroit Historical Society
5401 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202

Dear Ms. Rugh,

Wayne State University's Public History program is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Detroit Historical Society's grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and enthusiastically endorses the "Stories of Resilience" oral histories project.

The pandemic exposed the ways Detroit residents have been disproportionately affected by both Covid-19 and climate change, demonstrating the ways the impacts of these crises are intersected, from public health to economic recessions. Building resilience is critical for helping Detroiters thrive in the face of future crises, and documenting the contemporary experiences of those who live here through the collection of oral histories will help to deepen our understanding of the social, economic, and emotional impact on individuals and communities.

WSU's Public History program, established in 2015, offers advanced academic and professional training to students who wish to pursue careers in public history fields such as archival administration, cultural resource management, museums, documentary filmmaking, and public policy. We have had worked in partnership with the Detroit Historical Society since our program's inception, and we are excited for the opportunity to extend our work together in a new direction, capturing the identity and personality of our community through the memories and experiences of our residents. The oral histories that are gathered here will become an important resource to support the resilience of our community, and will help to ensure that these stories are preserved so future generations can better understand the people, places and events that helped shape this region.

Sincerely,



Tracy Neumann
Associate Professor | Director of Public History
Wayne State University Department of History

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

3094 FACULTY/ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202 • 313-577-2525



CITY OF DETROIT
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

115 ERSKINE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48201
PHONE 313 • 628-0900
FAX 313 • 628-0927

January 11, 2023

Ms. Elana Rugh
President and CEO
Detroit Historical Society
5401 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202

Dear Ms. Rugh,

The Joe Louis Greenway Project on behalf of the City of Detroit is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Detroit Historical Society's grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and enthusiastically endorses the "Stories of Resilience" oral histories project.

The pandemic exposed the ways Detroit residents have been disproportionately affected by both Covid-19 and climate change, demonstrating the ways the impacts of these crises are intersected, from public health to economic recessions. Building resilience is critical for helping Detroiters thrive in the face of future crises, and documenting the contemporary experiences of those who live here through the collection of oral histories will help to deepen our understanding of the social, economic, and emotional impact on individuals and communities.

The Joe Louis Greenway, a 30-mile trail being built on an abandoned rail line, will connect Detroiters in 23 neighborhoods to existing trails like the Dequindre Cut, the Detroit Riverfront, four other cities, and each other. When complete, 40,000 residents as well as visitors will be able to walk to the greenway within 10 minutes, and it will connect to five other cities. In 2022, we launched a "Neighborhood Stories & Signage" pilot project with the support of the Detroit Historical Society. The project requires working with the community to develop signage that recognizes the history and contributions of neighborhoods adjacent to the greenway.

We are excited about this opportunity to work with the Detroit Historical Society to capture the identity and personality of our community through the memories and experiences of our residents. The oral histories that are gathered here will become an important resource to support the resilience of our community and will help to ensure that these stories are preserved so future generations can better understand the people, places, and events that helped shape this region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dara O'Byrne".

Dara O'Byrne
Chief Parks Planner, Public Spaces Planning Unit
General Services Department
City of Detroit



**Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience:
An Oral History Project**

Excerpt from the oral history of Rowena Green – Neighborhoods: Where Detroit Lives
<https://detroit1967.detroithistorical.org/items/show/761>

K.L.: Are there any childhood stories that took place in [Southfield-Plymouth] that you'd like to share with me?

R.G.: I just remember how much fun it was, you know, walking up to the corner store. And I used to go up there with my grandfather, and we'd go up there and get a pop or something or go to the movies. At the time, a bunch of us would go to the movies, and we'd walk to the movies, and we'd see a scary movie and then come home. And I remember too, back then, you could burn your leaves, so you would gather all your leaves up and you could burn your leaves in front of your house.

K.L.: Oh, wow!

R.G.: Yeah, they didn't come by and pick them up. And I know this sounds really crazy, but the street used to flood when it rained a lot, so all of us kids would get in there and run around and ride our bikes through it and things like that.

K.L.: Through puddles and whatnot?

R.G.: Yeah, flooded streets, all that sewer water and stuff. Back then, it was different for us 'cause we didn't have all the chemicals and stuff that they have now, so you'd ride your bikes through it.

K.L.: That's so neat. Do you remember what the movie theater and ice skating rink that you went to, do you recall what they were named?

R.G.: I don't remember what the movie theater was, but I want to say that the community center was Stoepel Park; I could be wrong. It was right at the end of my street, like I said, it's not there anymore. When I went by there the last time, there was all – they have all kinds of solar panels there now.

Excerpt from the oral history of Maxine Jones – Detroit:67
<https://detroit1967.detroithistorical.org/items/show/288>

BB: And then the months following July, after the riot, uprising started and after you finally got your brother-in-law back, how did you see the city change?

MJ: A lot of places that were burned out, like I said, the riots to me began the loss of black owned businesses because some were burned out, some just went out of business. It kind of

began a downhill swing. Like I said, I feel the last best mayor we had was Jerome P. Cavanagh and he was the mayor during the riots and he was a really nice guy. And after that, it didn't do so good and it hasn't done really good for the past forty years.

BB: Why do you think that is?

MJ: Mismanagement. People taking privilege downtown instead of looking out for the people that live in the city. I live on the Northeast side, I've been on Let it Rip at least three times and Charlie Langton, who calls me the "Crazy Lady on the East Side," and I call him the "Crazy Attorney on Channel 2." Right now where I live, which is a few blocks from Denby High School, I've been there for 41 years. My block on both sides has only one, two, three, four people living on it. And the houses across the street from me have been abandoned about ten years. Eight to ten years, maybe give or take a little bit less, and on my side of the street six to eight years. And I live in fear with an abandoned house next door to me. They finally came after the Channel 2 got after them enough and boarded the house up next to me but my car sits in the driveway and I'm in fear of it catching on fire. And of course, like I said, fire doesn't pick who it gets. Plus it makes our car insurance, our house insurance, and everything just sky-high. And I take care of my property cause I've been in my house 41 years and our zip code, the -05 zip code, used to be the nicest zip code in and around because it was the last, should I say, lily white zip code in the city and it was primarily where your Detroit Police and retired ones lived. Unfortunately, we had a gentleman in the area named Donald Lobsinger who was over the John Birch Society which we know is just another arm of the Ku Klux Klan. One family, right before I moved there in '72, I believe because I moved there in '74, over on Alma Street had their home burned down because they weren't wanted there. I won't even go into the story about me and my kids on Seymour because it was rough. And I'll tell you this, the first three years we lived there, and we're a mixed family, every Saturday around noon when they would test the sirens, like for tornados or something, there would be three or four cars driving up and down the street with a dummy of Coleman Young hanging from it and banners on the sides of the cars, "Niggers get out."

BB: Oh my gosh.

MJ: And we'd wake up, well my house that my lived in on Warren off of Chene, 2256 E. Warren, it caught on fire because those houses down there, and if you notice in Hamtramck all down on that East side part of town, the houses are so close together that the roofs overlap and this was an empty house next door and I was in fear of it and one night while I was in the house with my kids and a friend of mine was helping me fix it up, my one daughter, she kept – we were tiling the floor in the living room. It was a shotgun house. You could stand in front and see straight to the back but it had eleven rooms on one floor. The bedrooms were all on that side next to the house that was empty and I had a real bad feeling about that and my daughter Gabrielle, she kept saying, we had kind of hooked them into their bedrooms so they wouldn't come out and walk on the glue we were putting the tile down. She kept saying, "Momma, Momma, let me out. There's something wrong with the house next door." And I'm like, "Be quiet, you just want to come out." And she said, "No, Momma, no. Something is wrong." And I opened the door to fuss at her and I could see the flames roaring at her bedroom window and I went to the next bedroom and opened the door and my two boys, thank God their bunk bed was on this side of the room,

‘cause their window side, their chest of drawers was already burning. And I had to get my kids. That was a horrible situation there. That’s when I moved in the house I am in. I said I will never live in a house again that doesn’t at least have a driveway in between but now I’m put in a situation with an abandoned house next door to me that could catch on fire and that doesn’t mean that someone could deliberately set it, there’s electrical. We’re always getting power – we just had one last week – power outages in that area. Oh yeah, I had to have a whole house beside individual surge protectors because it could just catch on – cause you know a few years ago, over in the Van Dyke and Seven Mile area they had that big fire storm and those houses are old and once they catch, it’s just a tinderbox.

BB: We talked about your views of what happened. Can you explain a little but about how the unrest in July affected your family in the broader picture? You mentioned that Bridget was born then—

MJ: It was scary but we were on the East side so we were not that worried. There was not the abundance of fires on the East side and then we were further out east. It was scary. It affected me because my mother and I both had things in the pawn shop on 12th because we had lived over there previously on – I just had the name in my mind a few minutes ago. It really kind almost doesn’t exist anymore, that street. But 12th Street was a nice place. You could walk up and down, I remember my mother and I would get corned beef sandwiches and a bottle of Stroh’s you know and you could buy anything you wanted and whatnot and nobody bothered anybody. There was bars, there were all kind of little stores and everything and it was just sad to see it go like that.

Excerpt from the oral history of Richard Rybinski – Detroit67

<https://detroit1967.detroithistorical.org/items/show/103>

NL: You were heading straight down Woodward at that point?

RR: Yeah, we were coming straight down Woodward at that point. And we knew something was up, okay? And I remembered the call from Ron Hewitt that morning, and then, you know, I immediately suppressed it.

We went and dropped his kids off, came back to my place on Hancock. And I no sooner got in, but the telephone rang again—it was Mary Lee Benucci, she’d just come in from New York, from the airport. She was now living on Kercheval near Van Dyke, and she said,

“Richard, I’m scared. They’re looting and burning down here.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, they kicked out the windows, and you know, set a couple places on fire—I don’t know, I’m scared”

“Well, you want to come here? Yeah, you can. George Brenner is down here.”

So she came down. And by then it's getting toward evening. And we went up on the roof of 665 and there were other tenants up there already. Flat roof, three-story building. It was hot up there, okay? It was hot up there. But it's a good view. We could see over towards Twelfth Street. We couldn't—you know, there were plumes of smoke coming up here and there. You could see Jeffries Homes, which was to the south. In fact, later that night it got even more spectacular because we could see the flames. And in fact one of the buildings at Jeffries, one of the upper stories of the high rise, had flames coming out of the windows. Okay. For the rest of the night we sat up there on the roof, having a good time. I mean, all of us, we were having a party! We were safe. There was nobody that was shooting or anything like that, but we could hear alarm bells all around us. That was the thing about that first night, the alarm bells. Anywhere you were, you heard the alarm bells going off. And they kept on going off for the rest of the night, because nobody was responding to the alarms. Along about two o'clock, the party was winding down, we went down to the, you know, down to the steps to my apartment. George appropriated the couch, Mary Lee went into the bedroom, got into bed, and I was sitting there, I was wide awake.

So I thought, well, what I should do is go for a bike ride, which is a good way to get around the neighborhood. So I rode my bike up the steps, got on it, and set off. First place I went was across the expressway headed towards Jeffries, and early on there was a store that had been looted—a convenience store—alarm bells going, lot of smell of smoke in the air. And there was a kid—I don't think he was even a teenager at that point—but he was pulling a wagon, a little wagon behind him, and it had a big TV, bigass TV. I didn't say anything. I didn't think to—I knew what had happened. I knew, you know, where the kid got the TV, probably—but, you know, I wasn't, hey, I wasn't no law—

NL: How old was this kid, would you guess?

RR: He wasn't a teenager yet.

NL: Okay.

RR: He was maybe 11, 12, something like that. I mean, he was old enough to be out—of course, you know, shit. He was a black kid, okay. He was probably living in Jeffries Homes at the time. So, you now, I asked, "Hey, kid, you got a cigarette?" He said "No." Then he stopped and said, "What kind you smoke?" I said, "Camel." He said, "Wait a minute. Watch my TV." He stepped through the window of this convenience store. He obviously knew his way around it. Went over to a counter, came out, had a couple of packs with him, and he handed me a pack of Camels. "Thank you." I went that way and the kid went that way. I continued on my ride. I was pointed towards Grand River at that point. I was specifically going to I think was called [Garrick's ?] at that time. It was a big outfitter for cameras and stuff. I got there. The place had been looted already. You know, windows broken out. More alarm bells. There was actually a guy sitting there, and I think he was probably a fireman, maybe he was a watchman. But he was just sitting there. And he was exhausted. I mean—so anyhow I continued on down, probably, yeah, down Grand River to go downtown.

I went to the front of J.L. Hudson, and there were armed guards in front of J.L. Hudson. The windows were intact. But those armed guards were there for a specific reason, to protect the J.L. Hudson Company. I turned to go back home. It's getting to be light by this time, okay? The alarm bells are still going all over the place, and going up Woodward, I don't think there was a plate glass window that was intact. Alarm bells going on, and at one point in front of a pawn shop, there were two white guys in a car, and that was unusual because there was no traffic up to this point, and the traffic people are the two white guys who were from Ohio. So I asked them, "What are you doing up here?" And they said they heard about it, and they came up to see what they could get. Okay. "Thank you, keep on moving." [sigh] I made it back to Hancock, and by this time I was bushed, exhausted. Brought my bike down into the basement, because you had to do that, because if you left your bike out, it was going to be gone. Okay? George was snoring on the couch. I tried to crash in my bed, and that woke up Mary Lee. "Wait. What's going on, Richard?" That's what she called me. It was always "Richard." So, you know, "A hell of a lot, I mean, it's bad out there." And she said, "Let's go look!" If you knew Mary Lee, you knew there was no way you could say no to Mary Lee. Okay? So, "Alright, come on, let's go." Along the way, George Brenner had woken up, so, "Where you going?" "Hey, we're going out to see the world." And, "Okay, I'll come with you." So Mary Lee got into the passenger seat of my Bus, George got in the middle seat behind me, and we set off to try to go to Twelfth Street. I mean, that's where we, you know, we're going to. To make a long story short, we got through the barricades. And we were driving right up Twelfth Street.

NL: Were there personnel at the barricades?

RR: No, no personnel. Nobody. And nowhere did I see a policeman. They'd been there. Somebody had been there, because they had put barricades across the street with—I don't even think they were using tape at that time. Here we are, three honkies driving up Twelfth Street. You know what Twelfth Street looked like, or if you don't—

NL: Would you like to describe for us that would be great, on that day?

RR: Most of the buildings had been looted. Most of the windows were broken out. A few had "Brother" written on the windows. Those windows were intact. The alarm bells were going off all over the place. Heavy smell of smoke. By this time it was early morning. I mean, the sun was up, so there wasn't too much action going on. We got up to Twelfth Street, we got up to Twelfth just south of Philadelphia, when the worst thing that could have happened: I ran out of gas—again. But this time I didn't have a lever to kick over. We were out of gas, in the middle of Twelfth Street. Three honkies. Okay, so we put Mary Lee behind the wheel, and it so happens right at Twelfth Street there was a gas station. And we weren't thinking. So George and I pushed my Volkswagen Bus up into the gas station, which was intact, and there were two guys sitting out in front of it. One of them had a shotgun in his lap. They were both brothers. And they looked over me and said, "What do you want?" "Can we get some gas?" And the guy just said, "Man, we've been shut down. You can't buy anything out here."

So I asked the guy, "Can I buy some gas?" "We've been shut down, no, no you can't." I don't know who shut them down, but probably the governor. So, okay, we got out, and we started walking. And the guy said, "Where the fuck you going? You can't leave that Bus here, get it out

of here!” So, we pushed it out back onto Twelfth Street, right around the corner on Philadelphia, and fortunately the curb was open at that point, and we—that’s it—we parked it real close to the curb on the southwest, or the southeast corner of Philadelphia at Twelfth; locked it; and we started heading east toward Woodward Avenue. We’d gotten about maybe from here to that wall when coming from behind me—a big crash. And I looked back and they tipped the goddamn bus over. I wasn’t going back! I just figured, well, you know, I wrote it off mentally, and said, “Keep on moving.” And that’s what we do. We kept on moving all the way to Woodward. We determined that, no, there was no bus service on Woodward then, so we turned south, walked past the Algiers Motel—which was not at that point infamous—

NL: Right.

RR: But it became infamous, and we went down all the way to Hancock, and I crashed out at that point. I don’t know—I’m sorry, that’s what I did. I crashed. When I woke up, I got on my bike again, and drove around. This time I went to the DIA [Detroit Institute of Arts], right across the street. There was a paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne, and his job was to guard that institute, okay? And you know why. So I knew the 82nd had just been shipped back from Vietnam. So I asked the guy, “Hey, you know, how’s this compare to where you were?” And he’s laughing and said, “Piece of cake, man.” So later that night, I’m back up on the roof, couple of other tenants—most of the tenants there had split, they had abandoned that area—but we were up on the roof when we hear something on Second Avenue, and it’s rounding the corner, and it sounds like a bigass truck with no muffler. And there’s a goddamn tank down there. And it comes down the street, down right in front of us on Hancock, and turns on Second, and it’s going somewhere. Hmm, I’d never seen that before. Where it was going was to the staging area up at old Central High School, north of Ground Zero.

The next day I go into work on my bike—still don’t have a vehicle. I go in and they say, Rybinski, your job today is to go out with George Post and do a survey of the following project areas: Forest Park, which was my area; Virginia Park, which was Hewitt’s area—I think they had probably already called, Hewitt was probably sent to Washington by that point to brief whoever he was talking with—Virginia Park; and there were a couple of other projects along the way. “And take your camera.” Okay, so, you know, I got in the city car, went to—did what they told me to do. Went and picked my camera up, made sure it was loaded. It was a pretty good camera so I could rewind the film, because I knew I was going to take a couple of pictures. Didn’t think anything further of it, and took a lot of pictures at that point.

Took Twelfth Street. Wanted to see—see, I expected the thing to be burned out. And goddamn the bus is tipped upright. The neighbors had tipped it upright because they didn’t want it burned. And I understood that. And I would have been very grateful and telling people, “Thank you very much.” So we then used the city car to push it from Twelfth and Philadelphia all the way back home to Hancock between Second and Third. I think that what I did with the bus later that week was I—since the battery acid had all leaked out, and ruined the paint on one side—I refilled the battery with fluid; refilled the gas, which I was able to buy out in the suburbs, couldn’t buy in the city anymore; started it; and drove the bus, after the worst of the action was over, to a friend’s garage on the far east side and painted the thing flat black, renamed it “Simon,” and drove it for probably the next ten years.

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Budget Period 1

OMB Number: 4040-0001
Expiration Date: 12/31/2022

UEI: (b) (4)

Enter name of Organization: Detroit Historical Society

Budget Type: Project Subaward/Consortium

Budget Period: 1 Start Date: 10/01/2023 End Date: 09/30/2025

A. Senior/Key Person

Prefix	First	Middle	Last	Suffix	Base Salary (\$)	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
						Cal.	Acad.	Sum.			
	Tracy		Irwin		0.00				0.00	0.00	0.00
Project Role: PD/PI											
	William		Wall-Winkel		(b) (6)	24.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Project supervisor, working collaboratively with Oral History Manager											
	To		Be Named		(b) (6)	24.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Oral History Manager. Responsible for project development and implementation.											

Additional Senior Key Persons: Total Funds requested for all Senior Key Persons in the attached file

Total Senior/Key Person

B. Other Personnel

Number of Personnel	Project Role	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
		Cal.	Acad.	Sum.			
<input type="text"/>	Post Doctoral Associates	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Graduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Undergraduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Secretarial/Clerical	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
1	Brendan Roney, Digital Projects Manager	24.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
1	Total Number Other Personnel						(b) (6)
Total Other Personnel							(b) (6)
Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)							131,760.00

C. Equipment Description

List items and dollar amount for each item exceeding \$5,000

Equipment item	Funds Requested (\$)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Additional Equipment: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Add Attachment"/>	<input type="button" value="Delete Attachment"/>
<input type="button" value="View Attachment"/>	
Total funds requested for all equipment listed in the attached file	<input type="text"/>
Total Equipment	<input type="text"/>

D. Travel

	Funds Requested (\$)
1. Domestic Travel Costs (Incl. Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions)	<input type="text"/>
2. Foreign Travel Costs	<input type="text"/>
Total Travel Cost	<input type="text"/>

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs

	Funds Requested (\$)
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance	<input type="text"/>
2. Stipends	<input type="text"/>
3. Travel	<input type="text"/>
4. Subsistence	<input type="text"/>
5. Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> Number of Participants/Trainees	<input type="text"/>
Total Participant/Trainee Support Costs	<input type="text"/>

F. Other Direct Costs**Funds Requested (\$)**

1. Materials and Supplies	600.00
2. Publication Costs	
3. Consultant Services	4,500.00
4. ADP/Computer Services	
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	
7. Alterations and Renovations	
8. <input type="text"/>	
9. <input type="text"/>	
10. <input type="text"/>	
11. <input type="text"/>	
12. <input type="text"/>	
13. <input type="text"/>	
14. <input type="text"/>	
15. <input type="text"/>	
16. <input type="text"/>	
17. <input type="text"/>	
Total Other Direct Costs	5,100.00

G. Direct Costs**Funds Requested (\$)****Total Direct Costs (A thru F)** 136,860.00**H. Indirect Costs**

Indirect Cost Type	Indirect Cost Rate (%)	Indirect Cost Base (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
10% de minimis rate	10.00	136,860.00	13,140.00
Total Indirect Costs			13,140.00

Cognizant Federal Agency
 (Agency Name, POC Name, and
 POC Phone Number)

I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs**Funds Requested (\$)****Total Direct and Indirect Institutional Costs (G + H)** 150,000.00**J. Fee****Funds Requested (\$)****K. Total Costs and Fee****Funds Requested (\$)****Total Costs and Fee (I + J)** 150,000.00**L. Budget Justification**

(Only attach one file.)

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Cumulative Budget

		Totals (\$)
Section A, Senior/Key Person		(b) (6)
Section B, Other Personnel		(b) (6)
Total Number Other Personnel	1	
Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)		131,760.00
Section C, Equipment		
Section D, Travel		
1. Domestic		
2. Foreign		
Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs		
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance		
2. Stipends		
3. Travel		
4. Subsistence		
5. Other		
6. Number of Participants/Trainees		
Section F, Other Direct Costs		5,100.00
1. Materials and Supplies	600.00	
2. Publication Costs		
3. Consultant Services	4,500.00	
4. ADP/Computer Services		
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs		
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees		
7. Alterations and Renovations		
8. Other 1		
9. Other 2		
10. Other 3		
11. Other 4		
12. Other 5		
13. Other 6		
14. Other 7		
15. Other 8		
16. Other 9		
17. Other 10		

Section G, Direct Costs (A thru F)	136,860.00
Section H, Indirect Costs	13,140.00
Section I, Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H)	150,000.00
Section J, Fee	
Section K, Total Costs and Fee (I + J)	150,000.00



Detroit Historical Society
Collecting Detroiters' Stories of Courage, Struggle, Loss and Resilience:
An Oral History Project

Budget Justification

Senior/Key Personnel.

Oral History Manager (to be hired)

The Detroit Historical Society (DHS) will create a new full-time curatorial position for the project, who will be responsible for project development and implementation, which includes development and management of community partnerships; management of project team (students and volunteers); researching communities and developing interview questions; conducting and overseeing project team interviews; working with staff and transcriber to ensuring project objectives are on track regarding number of interviews, transcriptions and uploads to project archive per quarter; working with DHS communications and media teams to promote and create awareness of project; and other tasks.

1 FTE at (b) (6) x 2 years + (b) (6) for fringe benefits.

Funds requested: (b) (6)

William Wall-Winkel, Field Curator.

Serving as the primary project supervisor, he will hire, train and manage the new Oral History Manager, working collaboratively with him/her to develop project protocols and processes, manage community partnerships, and support student and volunteer interviewers. He served as DHS's first oral history project manager, and has collected hundreds of oral histories for the organizations four oral history projects.

10% of his time will be contributed to project.

.10 x (b) (6) annual salary x 2 years + (b) (6) fringe benefits.

Funds requested: (b) (6)

Other Personnel.

Brendan Roney, Manager of Digital Projects.

Mr. Roney will provide technical assistance, and will create digital records of interviews, upload data, and manage the online archive and search system.

Approximately 10% of his time will be contributed to the project.

.10 x (b) (6) annual salary x 2 years + (b) (6) fringe benefits.

Funds requested = (b) (6)

The Society will contribute the costs of senior curatorial staff and communications/media relations personnel to the project. Unpaid students and volunteers will contribute at least 300 hours to the project, helping with outreach, promotion and transcribing oral histories.

Equipment.

No funds requested.

Travel.

No funds requested.

DHS will contribute any costs associated with local travel by project staff, including mileage, parking.

Participant/Trainee Support costs.

No funds requested.

Other Direct Costs.

Materials and supplies.

4 audio recorders @ \$150/each = \$600. For use in interviews by students, volunteers and staff.

Consultant services.

To support professional transcription services.

\$300/month x 15 months = \$4,500.

Total funds requested: \$5,100

Indirect Cost.

Request is for less than 10% de minimis rate of direct expenses to support grant administration and operating costs.

Funds requested: \$13,140

Total Direct + Indirect Costs:

Funds requested: \$150,000