



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

### **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Division of Preservation and Access application guidelines at <https://www.neh.gov/program/cultural-and-community-resilience> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

**Project Title:** Mott Haven History Keepers: Investing in Grassroots Public Humanities Infrastructure

**Institution:** Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York

**Project Director:** Amy Starecheski

**Grant Program:** Cultural and Community Resilience

## *Mott Haven History Keepers: Investing in Grassroots Public Humanities Infrastructure*

### **Project goals and humanities content**

Mott Haven is a neighborhood in the South Bronx where one out of every 165 people died during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup>. The people lost during the pandemic were disproportionately elderly. The intense loss and disruption Mott Haven has experienced since 2020 is only the most recent moment in a long history of displacement and disinvestment, beginning with colonization. One of the earliest sites of European settlement in North America, the area of today's Mott Haven is where Jonas Bronck established a colony under the Dutch crown in the early seventeenth century, forcibly displacing indigenous peoples through violence and swindle. This genocidal trend of indigenous displacement continued under English settler colonialism. By the end of the eighteenth century, the area of today's South Bronx belonged almost entirely to the prominent Morris family, whose members were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the early U.S. political system.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Morris estate was parceled off and sold in pieces, and "Mott Haven" was one such portion. It became an industrial hub in the second half of the nineteenth century, serving as a home to iron foundries, beer brewing factories, piano factories, and other secondary manufacturing industries. By the early 1920s, residents were primarily working-class Irish, Italian, German, or Eastern European Jewish. At the time, the original tenement houses were already in a state of advanced disrepair, as news articles, memoirs, and historically-based fictional accounts from the time indicate. This made the area ripe yet again for displacement during the 1930s–1950s, this time through large-scale highway projects (like what would become the Major Deegan Expressway), slum clearance projects, and other attempts at "urban renewal." This was also the period in which the Black and Puerto Rican populations in Mott Haven saw marked upticks. In many cases, the rebuilt tenement housing or newly built public housing represented a marked improvement in living conditions for the more recent populations, many coming from more crowded and expensive housing in greater Harlem.

Still, the influx of resources into Mott Haven through these government investments was short-lived. By the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, a combination of red-lining, real-estate deregulation, and municipal policies of "planned shrinkage" and "benign neglect" created a maelstrom of devastation and displacement in Mott Haven and other parts of the South Bronx. Residents of Mott Haven, by the time overwhelmingly working-class people of color, were deemed unworthy of government investment, and basic municipal services like garbage pickup and fire-fighting were severely reduced as part of the city's austerity policy. In short, by the 1970s, the people who remained in Mott Haven—often because they could not afford to move elsewhere or because they were denied loans for houses in white suburbia—were left largely to fend for themselves. And this they did.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Mott Haven residents made major contributions in giving form to multiple now global cultural phenomena, including graffiti and street art, hip hop, and the Latin Hustle; took over countless abandoned and burned-out buildings, restored them, and converted them into co-operative housing; successfully lobbied government officials for the restoration of municipal services through multiple dynamic religious and non-religious grassroots organizations; organized community-controlled health care facilities like Lincoln Detox, the first community-controlled drug rehabilitation clinic in the U.S.; and converted

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-neighborhoods.page>

hundreds of abandoned and polluted lots into community gardens. In short, Mott Haven residents were themselves responsible for rebuilding their neighborhood in the 1980s and 1990s, in spite of media pundits' predictions in the 1970s that the area would be completely abandoned within a decade. Such nearly miraculous stories of human persistence, creativity, resistance, and transformation, one would think, would occupy front and center in U.S. history curriculums. Unfortunately, few people outside of Mott Haven and the South Bronx know of these histories, and this is due to a variety of factors, some more benign than others. At the same time, parallel manifestations of cultural creativity, community resilience, and grassroots ingenuity are at play today, as various forces of gentrification and climate change threaten once again to displace community residents, who come from a larger variety of global locales but are still overwhelmingly Black, Brown, and working-class in makeup.

The Mott Haven of today has a few small row-house historic districts, and theaters-turned-grocery-stores, and impressive Catholic churches, but here cultural heritage is not mainly tied to old buildings, as the historical overview above indicates. It lives in people, their lived experiences, and their relationships to each other. With the loss of elders and the damage to social networks caused by COVID-19, some of this precious cultural heritage was lost forever. Mott Haven is also a neighborhood exceptionally vulnerable to climate change. During Hurricane Ida, basements flooded. During Sandy, the East River rose several blocks into the waterfront. As summers heat up, Mott Haven is one of the hottest neighborhoods in New York, with summer temperatures about five degrees hotter than average. High rates of comorbidities and low access to air-conditioning mean Mott Haven has one of the highest risks of heat-related illness and death in the city.<sup>2</sup> With 0 being the lowest and 1 being the highest, the CDC has determined our Social Vulnerability Index to be 0.9987 – only 0.0013% of places in the US are more vulnerable to public health crises.

As we have illustrated, the story of Mott Haven – and the South Bronx – is not just one of loss, trauma, and vulnerability. It is also one of creativity, connectedness, and community. These are the things that make Mott Haven resilient. And these are the things residents can understand and support through deepening their local public humanities practice. During the most intense phases of the pandemic, Mott Haven residents mobilized social networks, knowledge of how to survive in a crisis, and practices of mutual aid that they developed through painful experience: of fires burning through the neighborhood in the 1970s and 80s, of HIV and AIDS, of political upheaval in their countries of origin. This project will invest in and expand upon Mott Haven's already existing humanities infrastructure, both formal and informal. We seek to create conditions for residents to more easily access and make use of local knowledge of how the community handled and survived crises in the past. Our vision is pioneer new ways to safely preserve neighborhood cultural heritage through formal repositories as well as informal social practices.

**The core goal of this project is to support existing History Keepers working outside of humanities institutions, expanding what counts as humanities work and who counts as humanities workers.** On the surface, it may appear that not much history-making work is happening in Mott Haven. We don't have an arts center and lack community gathering spaces. There are few historical markers here (existing ones focus on the 19th century) and no local history curriculum for the tens of thousands of children in our neighborhood schools. However, this place is densely historical. In community gardens, workplaces, church basements, barber

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<sup>2</sup> <https://council.nyc.gov/data/heat/>

shops, hair salons, and senior centers, on stoops and sidewalks, countless informal historians keep scrapbooks, tell stories, and teach young people. They have archives in their homes, and their lives contain archives of stories – they remember our history and pass it on in whatever ways that personal circumstances, financial situation, and time allow. These are the people this project will honor and invest in. **Our core activity will be to identify and support five History Keepers and one apprentice for each history keeper.** In concrete terms, expanding what counts as humanities work and who counts as humanities workers brings previously denied resources, financial and otherwise, to Mott Haven.

The first step in this project will be to identify five existing History Keepers from a wide variety of networks and positions in the neighborhood. The kinds of people we are imagining include:

- owners in limited-equity low-income co-ops created in the 1980s who keep the knowledge, keep people connected, and keep the archives of before and after photos, flyers, and notes.
- long-time public housing residents, engaged in public life, with strong connections to young people who tell the stories.
- long-time homeowners who research their block, participate in their block association, and are involved in historic preservation.
- community gardeners who keep scrapbooks, who save seeds, who teach young people, and who tell stories.
- small business owners with deep roots in the neighborhood, who put up old pictures in their stores, and tell stories with customers.
- lay leaders in religious communities who were there before the pastor and who have guided generations of children into adulthood.
- workplace leaders whose knowledge of past organizing wins and losses informs current strategy
- musicians who collect records, flyers, and amazing stories.
- educators who know the history of their schools, who care for school archives, and who teach the grandchildren of children they once taught.

We will seek nominations and applications through broad outreach and personal connections. Finding fellows will be one of the most challenging parts of the project, but because of the project team's deep roots in the neighborhood and wide-ranging connections it is a challenge we are ready for. We will select fellows with deep roots in the community who bring wide-ranging ethnic, racial, gender, political, linguistic, cultural, and professional experiences to the group. Each history-keeper will be paired with an apprentice who will help them and learn from them throughout the project period (see our work plan for additional details on our outreach, recruitment, and selection plans). The plan is to bring people together through a series of shared meals, rotating through neighborhood spaces. Our goal is to create a cohort experience that will yield enduring relationships. We will spend time with each history-keeper, learning about how they work, documenting their history-making practices, and identifying potential areas for training, material support, and collaboration within the group. As we begin to work together, we will support each fellow to articulate, invest in, and develop their history-keeping practices. Specific resources will be determined by fellows' needs and interests but could include oral history training, scanning, and preservation support, or archival research support. Training will be developed for fellows but, to the extent possible, will be open to the broader community, and will be provided by staff from the Columbia University Oral History MA Program and The Bronx County Historical Society (BCHS).

In support of training, The Bronx County Historical Society will develop an online History Keepers' Toolkit with oral history and archival training resources, available through shared access on a platform such as Google Drive. Concise training documents of 3–5 pages each, along with relevant examples from ongoing work of BCHS, will be provided in PDF format for the following eight modules: 1) Community-Based Oral History Collection and Recording; 2) Organizing and Preserving Personal Archives (a DIY, budget-friendly guide); 3) Special Preservation Considerations (for still and moving image and recorded sound materials especially); 4) Digitizing Your Archives (with how-to guides for digitization equipment at The Bronx County Archives and suggestions for affordable at-home digitization equipment); 5) Ensuring Longevity of Your Digital Assets; 6) A Crash Course in Finding Aids; 7) Cataloging and Describing Digital Assets; and 8) Transcribing and Indexing Oral Histories. Additional administrative documents such as oral history consent forms and deeds-of-gifts for archival donations and other necessary documents will be easily accessed using this Toolkit. At the end of the project, the Toolkit will be updated and modified to include resources, products, examples, and insights of fellows and their apprentices. The updated Toolkit will then be distributed to future History Keepers.

Individually or in groups, we will support fellows to develop public humanities projects. Projects will include research and curation, and could include, for example:

- collecting oral histories in their building and sharing them with the public through an exhibit at street level.
- creating story circles within their church community and using them to introduce neighborhood history into youth programming.
- digitizing home archives, identifying historical photos in the archive, and working with a teacher to create a curriculum to use local historical materials in schools.
- developing oral storytelling performances to share at neighborhood events

All apprentices and fellows will be invited to work with staff from The Bronx County Historical Society to bring oral histories and personal archives, in physical and/or digital form, into the Bronx County Archives for permanent preservation and free online and in-person access. Additionally, the BCHS's Museum of Bronx History could provide gallery space for all of the community curators as a culminating exhibit accessible to the wider public outside of Mott Haven. We also plan to partner with other Bronx institutions to provide gallery space as needed, including several South Bronx and Mott Haven cultural spaces. Some of the topics we anticipate our fellows might focus their work on include housing access, community organizing and activism, grassroots networks of social support, neighborhood anchor institutions, and family history. We will be open and prepared to support projects documenting the experience of COVID-19 if that is what fellows choose to work on.

We will provide training and support in grant-writing, and introduce fellows to staff from the Bronx Council on the Arts and Humanities New York. We will also make connections, as desired, between fellows and existing arts and humanities institutions in the area with the aim of building partnerships to sustain and deepen their work, through possible grant-funded projects that would continue their public humanities work in Mott Haven. These local institutions may include the Mott Haven Public Library, The Point CDC, the Bronx Music Heritage Center, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education, Pregones Theater, the Bronx Documentary Center, the Universal Hip Hop Museum or, outside of the Bronx, the New

York Preservation Archive Project, Interference Archive, Museo del Barrio, or the Museum of the City of New York. All of these are places where our team has personal connections.

Because our fellows will determine the focus of their work, we cannot know what exact shape the projects will take until we begin work with them. However, to illustrate what we have in mind, the following provides an example of how this project might work for one fictional history-keeper: *Carmen Morales was one of the founding residents in her limited-equity low-income co-op. She was there when her landlord abandoned the building in the 1980s, and she was one of the main organizers involved in forming a tenants' association, collecting money, getting city funding for repairs, and eventually joining an urban homesteading program to become collective owners. She keeps a photo album with all of the before and after photos, and has boxes of old files, flyers, and other memorabilia in her closets. At co-op meetings, she often shares stories about how the co-op was formed, challenges they have overcome in the past, and lessons learned. These stories serve to orient newcomers to the group and to remind old timers of all they have accomplished. When Covid-19 hit the Bronx in 2020, Carmen was one of the people in her building who made sure everyone had masks, coordinated cleaning the common areas, and made sure vulnerable residents had food and medical care. She knows how to make sure everyone makes it through a hard time.*

*As one of our History Keepers, Carmen will work with BCHS staff to digitize the building's records and preserve them in the BCHS archive. She will select one of her neighbors, a relatively new resident who has shown an interest in learning the history, to serve as her apprentice and work alongside her. As part of this digitization process, they will identify some favorite documents to share in an informal exhibit in the building's lobby, and host an opening reception to which they will invite residents from neighboring low-income co-ops. Together, Carmen and her apprentice will get oral history training, starting off by interviewing each other. They'll then record and archive more stories of their building, and start a new tradition where each co-op meeting starts with a story - either playing a recorded clip, or asking someone to tell a story live - from the building's past. As a final public humanities project, they will work with the Mott Haven Oral History Project to create a vinyl banner to hang on the fence outside their building, an informal historical marker sharing some of their history with passers-by. Carmen will be connected with the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, a non-profit that supports limited-equity, low-income co-ops like hers, and based on these pilot projects they will develop a grant proposal to work together to develop tools, based on our History-Keepers Toolkit, to help other low-income co-ops, many struggling to remain lively and sustainable, to document and activate their history. The building and neighborhood community will be strengthened, and when Carmen is ready to pass the torch, her apprentice will be there to hold the building's history.*

In the final phase of our work, we will reflect on our experiences and use them to modify and expand upon the toolkit developed at the beginning of the project, which can be used to support neighborhood History Keepers and build connections between formal and informal humanities workers in other communities. After completing the program, fellows will be officially designated "Bronx History-Keepers" by The Bronx County Historical Society, and will receive a tangible memento of their achievement in the form of a plaque, t-shirt, and/or certificate. In sum, using embedded and participatory methods, we will:

- build cross-cutting and intergenerational relationships through preserving, sharing and creating historical knowledge.
- create spaces to learn from, honor, and document Covid-19 experiences, with focus on building resilience for ongoing change, from gentrification to climate change.

- use history, and the process of history-making, to envision and plan for the future.
- add new voices, new stories, and new documents to the existing historical archives on the Bronx, with a focus on people not already engaged in humanities institutions.

This project has significant potential for deepening and diversifying the nation’s cultural and historical record. It makes conceptual and practical contributions to the fields of oral history and the public humanities more broadly. By centering and empowering History Keepers from one of the most historically disenfranchised communities in the U.S., the project will enhance the historical agency of the community over its own past. Amplifying and promulgating the ongoing grassroots community archiving work in Mott Haven will make these histories of struggle, survival, resistance, joy, and creativity available to a broader public. Most importantly, the community archives curated through this project will embody the variety of historical practices, creative expressions, and other modes of resiliency that Mott Haven residents have developed in the face of decades-long government disinvestment, chronic unemployment, environmental racism, inequitable public health outcomes, climate change, and other social crises. As these oppressive phenomena become more widespread and entrenched in other, less historically disenfranchised communities, the accumulated wisdom and historical experiences of communities like Mott Haven provide invaluable roadmaps for survival.

Oral history as a field is going through a time of rapid change. We now recognize our roots in community organizing and indigenous oral history. We are building a more robust set of tools by combining these with the archival practices in which most professional oral historians have been trained. This project is based on that emerging scholarship and has the potential to significantly push forward the field. Oral historians increasingly recognize that our professional practices are grounded in everyday practices of storytelling and oral history which are typically unrecognized by academic and professional historians. By bringing together the tools of cultural anthropology, public humanities, and oral history, this project will identify, support, and value these widespread but often invisible humanities practices. Public and oral history will be more powerful if, rather than trying to pull people into professional humanities spaces and practices, we ground our work in the energy, ideas, and skills of people who already care deeply about history and place, valuing and investing in the history work in barber shops, living rooms, and social clubs.

Oral history is a practice which is grounded in relationships. We see our work, therefore, as intersubjective, dialogic, and co-created and treat relationships not only as a precondition for oral history but as an outcome of our work. We anticipate that our fellows will build strong relationships with each other, with each other’s networks, and with the apprentices who learn from them. They will also build relationships with core humanities institutions in the Bronx and in the city. It is these kinds of social networks that allow history to survive, circulate, and mean something in the world. Archives can be places to preserve oral history. They can also be places where oral histories go to die, if nobody uses them, if nobody cares about the stories. In this project we will work to redefine and make use of the archive as a lively space for community-based research and conversation as well as a long-term repository for historical documents.

### **Program priority**

Mott Haven is among the most disadvantaged communities in the United States. According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, we are seriously disadvantaged in terms of clean transit, sustainable housing, legacy pollution, health burdens, and workforce

development. Some statistics that stand out when comparing a census tract in central Mott Haven to the rest of the United States:

- 95% low income, lowest 1% median income, lowest 2% employment
- 95% of our low-income households are housing cost burdened
- 87% of our population over age 15 is not enrolled in school and 42% of adults do not have a high school diploma
- 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for exposure to diesel exhaust and proximity to hazardous waste facilities
- 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for asthma and diabetes, and in the lowest 12% for life expectancy
- 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for households where no adult speaks English well

### **Community participation**

Empowering people and communities to define, collect, and use their cultural and historical resources is at the very core of this project. Humanities professionals will provide support, training, and resources but local, non-professional History Keepers will be at the center of this project. Their needs, interests, and priorities will define our outcomes. They will decide how, when, and why to include their knowledge and artifacts in public historical archives.

This project will be led by trained oral historians and informed by oral history practices of ongoing consent, shared authority, and community ownership. We will build on over 15 years of work of the Mott Haven Oral History Project - <https://motthavenhistory.org/> - founded and directed by Amy Starecheski. This project is a model for non-extractive, community-based oral history practice with a focus on place-based and community-led curation. In previous projects led by community members, we have created a neighborhood sound walk, history banners highlighting stories of activism in our community, and an oral history listening party in a community garden. We have also created an oral history archive, housed at BCHS, but our focus has been as much on activating oral histories as on collecting them. This project will build on the relationships and knowledge created through the Mott Haven Oral History Project while significantly broadening its reach.

This project will also build on the ongoing work of BCHS, which in 2002, in collaboration with Fordham University, started one of the nation's leading community-based oral history projects, the Bronx African American History Project. This ongoing project, overseen by a Community Advisory Council composed of Bronx History Keepers, has collected over 300 oral histories with Bronxites of African descent since its inception. The project continues to activate these oral histories through exhibits, walking tours, book and journal publications, highly trafficked online databases maintained by BCHS and Fordham University, and other means. More recently, BCHS has also begun the Bronx Latino History Project (76 oral histories recorded to date) and the Bronx Aerosol Arts Documentary Project (11 oral histories recorded to date), both grassroots, community-based oral history projects that seek to record and activate oral histories in a similarly diverse set of mediums. These various oral history projects have facilitated intimate relationships and community networks that have allowed BCHS to begin to transform its more traditional archiving practices as well. Many of the newer archival collections at the Bronx County Archives brought in through the ongoing oral history projects are curated, organized, inventoried, and digitized by community members themselves, in close consultation with a professional archivist on staff. These community-curated collections receive the same amount of preservation care, storage space, and supply resources as any of the older, more "traditional" collections, but they contest the extractive, top-down, racially- and class-restrictive model of archiving often in place at historical societies and other legacy institutions. We make



this community archiving work freely and widely available to the public in a digital repository, <https://digital.bchslibrary.org>, which contains significant samplings of community-curated collections already.

This project will be administered by INCITE, an interdisciplinary humanities and social science research center at Columbia University with a core focus on “generating innovative knowledge and inducing novel conversations among those inside and outside academia that, taken together, lead to actions that produce more just, equitable, and democratic societies.” INCITE houses the Oral History Master of Arts Program, which Amy Starecheski directs, and provides support to the Mott Haven Oral History Project.

## **Methodology**

While Mott Haven is defined statistically as a multiply and deeply disadvantaged community, this project aims to identify, value, and build on the cultural resources already available here to meet pressing community needs. The exact make-up of the cultural resources on which the project will focus will be shaped by the fellows and their apprentices.

As far as oral history methodology goes, Project Director Amy Starecheski is a recent Past President of the Oral History Association and has played a leading role in shaping the OHA’s Principles and Best Practices. In particular, this project will follow the guidelines for social justice oral history, which emphasize ongoing consent and a deep process of building relationships to allow for community leadership of oral history work. We expect to provide a range of recording options to participants for recording oral histories, along with requisite technical training, allowing for high-quality audio-video or audio-only recording in a way that is accessible and sustainable for participants.

Because this project will be led by neighborhood history makers and shaped by their priorities, we have not yet identified narrators for oral history projects. We do expect that the fact that this project is led by deeply embedded community members will allow for oral histories to be recorded with residents who would not otherwise be accessible to humanities professionals. One of our core goals will be to move beyond public-facing neighborhood leaders and connect with Mott Haven residents who would not otherwise have contact with or access to the resources of humanities institutions.

Fellows and their apprentices will be trained in professional archival and preservation best practices to organize and process their collections, no matter if any portion of them ultimately ends up under the physical and/or digital stewardship of The Bronx County Archives. Practices consistent with ISAD(G) will be followed in organizing and generating finding aids for the archival collections. No matter storage location of the collections, all completed finding aids will be provided free to the public on The Bronx County Archives digital repository: <https://digital.bchslibrary.org/findingaids>.

As far as technological framework goes, BCHS currently has an industry-standard digitization system at the Bronx County Archives that includes a variety of equipment for digitizing most photographic mediums, standard-size and non-standard documentary materials, and the most common recorded sound and moving image mediums. Digital assets of the project, whether digitized or born-digital, will be preserved in a triple-redundancy system comprising an onsite large-capacity NAS, onsite individual external hard drives designated for each collection, and a secure offsite cloud server based in Germany that utilizes an open-source cloud interface (nextCloud). With community members’ permission, digital assets would additionally be made available for free to the public offsite and in-person at <https://digital.bchslibrary.org>. This digital

repository utilizes Omeka (an open-source content and collections management software), Dublin Core metadata standards, and the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer.

### **Deliverables**

Deliverables will include a publicly accessible finding aid for each of the collections; associated digitized and born-digital digital assets from these collections, a History Keepers' Toolkit, and pilot public history projects developed by the fellows. We anticipate that the tangible cultural resources will include 10–20 oral histories (at least 1 for each fellow and each apprentice, along with the oral histories of other community members they might record); 3–5 archival collections, each in the range of 0.25–3.75 linear ft. (based on average size of community-generated archival collections in the Bronx County Archives), consisting of a mix of documentary, still and moving image, recorded sound, and born-digital material. Additional deliverables will include scholarly writing and conference presentations to share this work in the fields of oral history, public history, and digital humanities. Intangible deliverables will include the human capital built through training and relationships between fellows, apprentices, and humanities institutions and funders. As far as intellectual property and privacy issues are concerned, community curators will determine if and in what format their collection will be made available to the public at the Bronx County Archives (digitally, in-person only, etc.). All oral history narrators will sign a consent form that they have had prior input in tailoring to this project and will be allowed to retain copyright over their interviews and other materials.

### **Work plan**

In order to make this work accessible to neighborhood residents who work long hours and/or have heavy caregiving responsibilities, we will be extending our work over a longer period of time - 18 months - to allow for a robust but still less-intensive time commitment. Monthly team meals and social gatherings, training, and mentoring will continue throughout the project period.

- Oct and Nov 2023
  - Identify History Keepers
  - Draft toolkit
- Nov 2023 - March 2024:
  - Identify apprentices
  - Introduce History Keepers to humanities institutions and professionals, at least two introductions per history-keeper
  - Identify training and support needs
- March 2024 -Oct 2024
  - Fellows and apprentices develop plans for research and curation projects
  - Provide training and support as needed, including at least three whole-group training sessions and additional one-on-one and small group training as needed
  - Fellows and partners work on grantwriting
  - Fellows and apprentices execute research and curation projects
- Oct 2024-March 2025
  - Work with fellows and partners to plan and develop resources for next phase of work
  - Revise and share toolkit for other neighborhoods to engage and support local History Keepers

- Complete all archival processing
- Celebrate, reflect, and share work

### **Project personnel and advisors**

Amy Starecheski will serve as project Director, responsible for overseeing the project team (including administrative staff at INCITE) and ensuring that we adhere to our work plan and complete promised deliverables. She will also provide oral history and curatorial training and support. Dr. Starecheski has lived in (b) (6) for almost 25 years - (b) (6) is the fifth generation of her family to live in the South Bronx, and her networks in the neighborhood will be key to outreach. She is one of the leading experts globally in oral history education, across community and university settings. Dr. Starecheski is co-PI on the Oral History Association's \$825,000 NEH-funded "Diversifying Oral History Practice: A Fellowship Program for Under/Unemployed Oral Historians" program, and so has recent experience in creating and supporting a cohort experience for developing oral historians.

Steven Payne is the Director of The Bronx County Historical Society, founder of the Bronx Aerosol Arts Documentary Project, co-director of the Bronx Latino History Project, and an active oral historian for the Bronx African American History Project. He has lived in The Bronx for ten years, and his ongoing work revolves around documenting, empowering others to document, preserving, recuperating, and sharing the histories of Bronx communities, with a particular focus on working-class people of color in the borough and the cultures and movements they have spawned. He has managed multiple multi-year funding projects at BCHS, including a \$198,000 capital equipment project and a \$150,000 building improvement project, both set for completion in early 2023. Dr. Payne will recruit for the project utilizing the extensive community ties he has fostered throughout The Bronx and will oversee the workflows of preserving, digitizing, and exhibiting project materials in the Bronx County Archives. Together with Dr. Starecheski and Mr. Crespo, Dr. Payne will also provide training and support to the fellows and apprentices in oral history, archival, digitization, and curatorial best practices.

Pastor Crespo, Jr. is the research librarian and archivist at the Research Center for The Bronx County Historical Society. He has a B.A. from the University of Texas at El Paso where he majored in history and the social sciences, and is a graduate of Lehman College's Masters in Liberal Studies program. Born and raised on Manhattan's Lower East Side, he is a second-generation New Yorker and son of Puerto Rican migrants. He retired from the U.S. Army as a research analyst after 20 years of service. Pastor currently manages the various oral history projects at the Bronx County Archives. Together with Dr. Starecheski and Dr. Payne, Mr. Crespo will provide Spanish interpretation and translation and training and support to the fellows and apprentices in oral history, archival, and digitization best practices. Mr. Crespo will also be responsible for coordinating workflows of fellows and apprentices at the Bronx County Archives, particularly scheduling digitization and/or archiving work sessions and providing additional hands-on training or support during these sessions.

One of the guiding values of this project is that humanities work should be valued and acknowledged equally when done by professionals and non-professionals, inside and outside of institutions. Our fellows and apprentices will be well-compensated for their time, at a rate of \$30/hour for History Keepers and \$20/hour for apprentices.