

# NEH Application Cover Sheet

## Challenge Grants

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

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**Field of Expertise:** History

### INSTITUTION

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Old Dartmouth Historical Society-New Bedford Whaling Museum  
New Bedford, MA UNITED STATES

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

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**Title:** *New Bedford Whaling Museum Humanities Endowment Challenge*

**Grant Period:** From 1/2011 to 7/2015

**Field of Project:** Humanities

**Description of Project:** The New Bedford Whaling Museum seeks a \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant, to be matched by \$1.5 million in new matching funding. The \$2 million will provide \$40,000 (\$10,000 per year for four years) in direct expenditures for fundraising staff during the capital campaign. The remaining \$1,960,00 million will be allocated to create a new restricted humanities endowment, with annual disbursements funding humanities staff salaries, interpretation and exhibitions, and humanities programming.

The new humanities endowment will build the New Bedford Whaling Museum's capacity for long-term support while providing predictable, sustainable funding for Strategic Plan priorities for long-term growth -- with particular emphasis on growth and enhancement in humanities exhibitions, interpretation, and high-quality programming for diverse public

### BUDGET

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<b>Fiscal Year # 1</b>	\$100,000.00	<b>Total from NEH</b>	\$500,000.00
<b>Fiscal Year # 2</b>	\$125,000.00	<b>Non-Federal</b>	\$1,500,000.00
<b>Fiscal Year # 3</b>	\$125,000.00	<b>Total</b>	\$2,000,000.00
<b>Fiscal Year # 4</b>	\$150,000.00	<b>Matching Ratio: 3.00 to 1</b>	

### GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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## **Project Abstract**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum, founded in 1903, is the world's largest museum dedicated to the American whaling industry in the age of sail, as well as the region's most complete historical museum. The Museum cares for a comprehensive whaling collection of national and international significance. The Whaling Museum Research Library and Archive serve as primary sources of information on the topic of whales and whaling for researchers and scholars and offers unique opportunities for study, education, and publication. The New Bedford Whaling Museum serves as the keystone institution of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and is one of a handful of leading maritime museums in the country whose combined collections form the pantheon of American maritime history.

The Museum serves a highly diverse audience of more than 100,000 visitors annually, including scholars and researchers; visitors from the region, throughout the United States, and abroad; local city residents, including ethnically diverse, and in many cases economically disadvantaged, local constituents; K-12 schoolchildren and their teachers.

The New Bedford Whaling Museum mounts rotating and permanent exhibitions drawn from among the many exceptional collections it holds. Based upon the mission of the Museum, exhibits examine humankind's historical relationship with whales and whaling and the regional history and regional maritime activities of the south coast of Massachusetts. In addition to frequent lectures, symposia, and programming for adult audiences, the Museum offers formal K-12 experiential learning programs that are integrated with classroom curriculum and correspond to state curriculum frameworks. The Whaling Museum also offers out-of-school time programs for children and families on the weekends, during the summer, and during each school vacation.

Following the acceptance of the gift of the entire world-class collection of the former Kendall Whaling Museum of Sharon, Massachusetts in 2001, the Museum created a ten-year strategic plan with concrete goals and specific strategies, for Visitor Experience, Education, Outreach and Access, Collaboration and Community, Scholarship, and Stewardship. After a highly successful seven-year capital campaign focused primarily on infrastructure, the Whaling Museum seeks to build endowment resources to fund long-term growth and expansion of its core humanities priorities.

Accordingly, the New Bedford Whaling Museum seeks a \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant, to be matched by \$1.5 million in new funding. The \$2 million will provide \$10,000 per year for four years in direct expenditures for fundraising staff during the capital campaign. The remaining \$1,960,00 million will be allocated to create a new restricted humanities endowment, with annual disbursements funding humanities staff salaries, interpretation, and humanities programming.

## Challenge Grant Budget

Total NEH Funds Requested			\$500,000
	Year 1	\$100,000	
	Year 2	\$125,000	
	Year 3	\$125,000	
	Year 4	\$150,000	
Non-Federal Contributions			\$1,500,000
Total Grant Funds (NEH + Match)			\$2,000,000

## Planned Expenditures

### Direct

Capital Campaign Staff Salaries (\$10,000 per year for 4 years)			\$40,000
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### Endowed

Principal			\$1,960,000
Rate of Return to be Expended			4.5%
Projected Annual Expendable Income			\$88,200
Uses of Endowment Income			
Humanities Interpretation & Programming		\$38,200	
Humanities Staff Salaries		\$50,000	

## Institutional Fact Summary

- 1. History** - The Old Dartmouth Historical Society was founded in 1903 and established the New Bedford Whaling Museum in 1907.
- 2. Mission** - The New Bedford Whaling Museum's mission is *"to educate and interest all the public in the historical interaction of humans with whales worldwide; in the history of Old Dartmouth and adjacent communities; and in regional maritime activities."*
- 3. Governance and Administration** - Governed by Board of Trustees (24-36 members), including a 10-member Executive Committee. Each group meets 6 times per year.
- 4. Physical Facilities** - Museum complex of 60,000 sq. ft.: 44,000 sq. ft. of exhibition and education space, a 250-seat theater, museum store, objects storage, conservation lab, and offices. A Research Library & Archive of 23,000 sq. ft is three blocks from the main Museum
- 5. Humanities staff size and composition** – 17 of 41 staff members (41%), deliver humanities programming, including curatorial/collection/exhibition/library (10), digital initiatives and photo curatorial (2), and education (5). Excludes facilities (6) and visitor services (3).
- 6. Humanities collections**—35,000 objects; 200,000 photos/images, and a library collection of 500,000. Approximately 90% in the Humanities, including scrimshaw; whaling prints; paintings, fine and decorative art; logbooks and journals; books and imprints on whaling history technology, and culture; 5 whale skeletons; and the world's largest ship model.
- 7. Accreditation or affiliation:** American Association of Museums (AAM).
- 8. Data on recent humanities activities**
  - More than 100,000 annual visitors annually. Recent new exhibitions include Whaling Prints, historic maritime paintings, "Pursuit to Preservation" (a new core exhibition), ceramics, decorative glass, whale skeletons, and a range of rotating exhibitions on loan and from the Museum's collection;
  - Lecture series (approx. 20 public lectures per year averaging 80-200 attendees);
  - Professional development for school teachers (2 2-day sessions per year);
  - Scholarly symposia (3-5 per year with hundreds of attendees);
  - History, language arts, culture and science public educational programs for K-12 school children (300+ programs for 11,000+ students);
  - Educational programming for adults, families, and children (60 per year serving 18,000+ participants/year);
  - Cultural programming and performances in partnership with local arts and culture organizations (2-4 per month with over 6,000 participants annually).
- 9. Percentage of total offerings that are in the humanities** – Approximately 90% of the Museum's programs and exhibitions are in the humanities.
- 10. Size and nature of audience or population served** - Approximately 100,000 visitors per year, including local residents of all ages and backgrounds; regional, national and international visitors; scholars and history enthusiasts worldwide; and schoolchildren (K-12).
- 11. Cost to participants** (if any): Admission Fees: adults \$10, Seniors/Students \$9, Children 6-14 years old \$6, children 5 and under free. Lectures/education programs average \$0-7.
- 12. Number of publications produced** (if applicable): Typically 10 publications per year.
- 13. Evidence for the success of these activities or offerings:** 113 years of service with continued growth in visitation and expansion of humanities programming; visitor and program participant evaluations are consistently overwhelmingly positive.

## **Narrative**

### **Significance and Intellectual Quality**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum, founded in 1903, is the world's largest museum dedicated to the American whaling industry in the age of sail, as well as the region's most complete historical museum. The Museum cares for a comprehensive whaling collection of national and international significance. The New Bedford Whaling Museum's Research Library and Archive serve as primary sources of information on the topic of whales and whaling for researchers and scholars and offers unique opportunities for study, education, and publication.

The New Bedford Whaling Museum serves as the keystone institution of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and is one of a half-dozen leading maritime museums in the country whose combined collections form the pantheon of American maritime history. The Whaling Museum holds the largest and most comprehensive whaling collection among these major whaling institutions with which the NBWM regularly collaborates.

The Museum's collections include objects across a broad range of categories: fine and decorative art, folk art, photography, domestic artifacts, artifacts that represent the history of technology, occupational artifacts, books, manuscripts, maps and charts, clothing and textiles, and extensive business and financial records. This is a very rich and diverse social history collection. The collections justify many superlatives and include the world's largest and most comprehensive collections of: scrimshaw; whaling prints; Dutch Old Master marine paintings outside the Netherlands and United Kingdom; whaling logbooks and journals; whaling books; and imprints on whaling history, technology, and culture.

From 1800 through 1900 the American whaling industry, with its capital in New Bedford, was one of the United States' most profitable industries; one with major economic, social, and cultural impact. Whaling

itself, along with the galaxy of shore-side industries it supported—shipbuilding, outfitting, sail making, boatbuilding, provisioning, spermaceti candle manufacture, and many others, provided unprecedented trade, employment, and prosperity for “the City that lit the world.” At the high point of American whaling in 1857, 447 ships, barks and schooners, an aggregate of 130,625 tons, amounting to 64% of the total American tonnage and 59% of the value of the entire American catch, sailed from the port of New Bedford on voyages of up to four years—far surpassing all other whaling ports in the world.

In recognition of the vital role whaling played in the Greater New Bedford area, the Old Dartmouth Historical Society established the New Bedford Whaling Museum in 1907. The Museum has since continuously operated in downtown New Bedford’s Bourne Building, built in 1916 by Emily Bourne, the daughter of whaling merchant Jonathan Bourne, specifically to house the Museum and the Old Dartmouth Historical Society. The main Museum complex now encompasses 60,000 square feet and includes 44,000 square feet of exhibition and education space, a 250-seat theater, museum store, objects storage, conservation lab, and offices. The Research Library and Archive occupies a historic bank building three blocks from the main Museum complex and adds 23,000 square feet of library, archives, and collections storage.

In the last decade the Museum has undergone a major expansion, received the gift of the entire collection of the former Kendall Whaling Museum, opened a new NEH-funded core exhibition, installed many new art and artifact exhibitions, including the only exhibition of a complete skeleton of a female Northern Right Whale and her fetus, and embarked upon a significant digital-based collection access program. Restoration of the Bourne building is currently in progress with an opening date in early August 2010.

The merging of the New Bedford and Kendall collections has resulted not only in the fusion of the world’s two great whaling collections, but also in bringing together the field’s major scholars. Dr. Stuart

Frank, director emeritus of the Museum's Kendall Institute and its primary consultant, is recognized as one of the country's leading whaling and maritime history scholars.

## **Holdings**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum holds the world's most comprehensive collection relating to fundamental social, economic, and ecological issues stemming from the rich legacy of whaling history. The original Old Dartmouth Historical Society collections are eclectic in nature and comprise important collections related to: many New Bedford artists including William Bradford and William Allen Wall; regional decorative arts such as furniture and the city's important art glass industry (Pairpoint and Mt. Washington); scrimshaw (the folk art of whaling men); and local business, industrial, and maritime history as well as the history of prominent families and persons of the region.

In 2001 the museum absorbed the former Kendall Whaling Museum, approximately doubling the size of its collections and increasing the percentage of the collections devoted to the history of whaling in the region and beyond, in fact worldwide. The museum's scope expanded to include not only collecting in areas that relate to whaling history in New Bedford but around the country and the world, as well as continuing its maritime and local history missions. As a result, the museum now has the world's most comprehensive collection of art, artifacts, and original documents of whaling history.

The collections include: 7,500 paintings and prints; 4,000 scrimshaw pieces; 1,000 ethnographic items; 6,000 decorative arts objects; 3,000 navigational instruments, tools, harpoons, and other whalecraft; 2,500 logbooks and journals; 750 maps, charts, and bird's eye views; hundreds of thousands of photographs, negatives, moving images, and audio recordings. The Library and Archives includes more than 520,000 individual items (1,200 linear feet), including books, manuscripts, logbooks, journals, business records, maps, charts, pamphlets, etc.

In addition, the New Bedford Whaling Museum owns and exhibit the world's largest ship model, the 89' *Lagoda*, which was built along with the building that houses her in 1916, and is a 1/2 scale replica of a 19th century whaleship. The *Lagoda* was built by artisans who had actually built whaleships in the age of sail in New Bedford, and is a time capsule of technology and artisanry. The Museum also holds what is purported to be the world's longest painting, the 1275' Purrington and Russell "Whaling Voyage Around the World" painted in 1848.

The Museum's first-floor Jacobs Family Gallery, which offers long-term and rotating exhibits, is available to all the public free of charge on a year-round basis. In addition to artifacts and interpretive displays, the gallery includes suspended skeletons of a 66' juvenile blue whale, a 35' humpback whale, and the recently-installed 49' skeleton of an endangered northern right whale and the 11' skeleton of her unborn calf, the only such exhibition in the world.

The Museum's photographic collection not only documents whaling in the region but around the world, and not just whaling but regional history more broadly. The collection includes examples across the full spectrum of photographic technology from the earliest periods of photography forward, including daguerreotype, ambrotype, and tintype. The Museum also holds extensive collections of moving images and audio recordings.

The Library collections are quite extensive and offer a great wealth of resources for exhibition and scholarly research. The collections on whaling have no equal and are built on pillars such as the world's largest collection of logs and journals of whaling voyages (over 2,500 of these) and a diverse manuscript collection associated with whaling and regional history of approximately 500,000 counted items. These materials are extensively utilized by diverse external researchers (scholars, authors, film-makers, for example) as well as a dedicated team of staff and volunteers involved in a wide variety of projects from basic transcription to complex analysis of data.

In addition to the large collection of historic materials noted above, as a working research facility the library also collects modern publications associated with whaling and regional history. These materials are available for use in our reading room (assisted by our librarian) and present a wealth of opportunities for studying in great depth the items in our collection, associated themes, and various other topics.

## **Exhibition and Interpretation**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum mounts rotating and permanent exhibitions drawn from among the many exceptional collections it holds. Based upon the mission of the Museum, exhibits examine humankind's historical relationship with whales and whaling and the regional history and regional maritime activities of the south coast of Massachusetts. Because New Bedford was not simply one of the world centers of whaling historically, but the world center of whaling between 1824 and 1880, the scope, themes and goals of interpretation efforts constitute a truly global enterprise with far-reaching ramifications stretching literally from Buzzard's Bay to Amsterdam and from Siberia to Sydney Harbor, including every littoral people in between. The interpretive focus of the history alone is necessarily large, and when coupled with whale conservation the great biological web of the world's oceans comes within the scope of the institution's interpretation.

Whaling produced profit for commercial nations, and great art came out of that enterprise. Under the umbrella of profit are portraiture of significant individuals and their families, paintings of whaling, ships, animals, and landscapes and a wide array of local and far-flung imagery of social, scientific, and geographic import. Exhibits often include disparate elements from the fine art collection either as a specific focus or tangential interpretive component.

The nature of the whaling enterprise also allowed for the creation of a broad array of vernacular artworks. As with the extensive collection of logbook illustrations, the scrimshaw collection potentially draws from

any activity witnessed by any of the tens of thousands of individuals who went whaling or any picture that they ever saw, or any carving that they felt like creating, including mechanical contrivances. This folk art also impacts a great deal of the social and even biological interpretation of whaling history. Scrimshaw was made from whale's skeletal parts and baleen as well as the ivory teeth of sperm whales and also from parts of walruses, tortoises, seals, dolphins and porpoises, shells, birds, and exotic timbers. As this particular Museum was founded while the industry it was documenting was still going on, many of the primary tools of whaling, shipbuilding, cooperage, metal work, rigging, sail making and the like were collected in direct association to vessels, people, and voyages.

Cross-cultural interpretation, including the art and artifacts of the subsistence hunts of Japanese, Inuit, Northwest Coast natives, Africans, Vikings, Polynesians, Peruvians, West Indian islanders and Tierra Del Fuegians enriches the visitor experience and broadens our understanding of marine environments and maritime cultures. Specifically, the cultures of Atlantic islanders, including Azoreans and Cape Verdeans, constitute important exhibition elements as the museum strives to document the impact of these people on American culture and vice versa. The hard history of the industry and the New Bedford region is thoroughly documented in the library collections, including photography.

Exhibitions and collections relating to modern whaling of the 20th and 21st centuries often lead into questions of conservation and sustainability, thus creating an atmosphere where the continuity of the human experience from the depths of history to the present day enables and encourages visitors to think about real issues and how they developed over time. A portion of the Museum's exhibitions, estimated at 10%, could be categorized as scientific in nature and therefore not technically humanities content. These exhibits, such as a new Hunt for Knowledge exhibition, provide important context for humanities themes, however, and help visitors to both raise and answer questions about the continuing relationship between humans and whales. Accordingly, the new NEH-funded core exhibition "From Pursuit to Preservation:

the Global Story of Whales & Whaling” invites patrons to consider the significant environmental, economic, and social impact the whaling industry has had on the world.

As the history of the region is also of primary interest to the museum, collections and exhibitions often focus on other industries and activities of the people who lived here. Included are fine art glass manufacture, textile production, coal and railroad interests, steamships and ferries, banking and finance, and many other domestic activities. Some of these collections like the glass collection are large enough to have their own galleries, while others are integrated into overall interpretive plans.

Formative evaluations have helped to guide a framework for core exhibition panels and displays that suits a variety of ages, learning styles, and interest levels. To facilitate audio, visual, and kinesthetic learning, exhibits incorporate a range of media as well as hands-on activities. Throughout the exhibitions, the Museum has incorporated interactive kiosks, audio stations (oral histories, whale sounds), and electronic image displays. In addition to exhibitions with labels and other interpretive tools like films, digital frames and listening stations, interpretation is facilitated by more than 80 highly-trained docents. Docents are able to provide tours in English, Portuguese, French, Spanish and German. The Museum has made considerable progress in reaching new audiences, and making its assets more accessible, through digital initiatives. A Director of Digital Initiatives now reports directly to the president and is maximizing use of digital technology in collections and archives management; online collections access and web-based exhibitions; and audience outreach through a full spectrum of social networking tools.

### **Programming, Activities, and Audience**

Adult audiences attend a range of annual and one-time lectures and lecture series throughout the year. Lectures address historical, cultural, and scientific themes with presentations by the Museum’s humanities staff, trustees, and committee members as well as visiting scholars and experts. Program offerings for the past two years include the yearly four-part Sailor Series, which featured individuals discussing sailing,

boats, and the sea; a five-part Man and Whales series, which features speakers discussing historical and modern topics related to human interactions with whales; and a four-part Old Dartmouth Historical Society Lecture Series, which features historical and modern perspectives on the Museum's collection.

Annual programs include the Rusitsky Lecture, which highlights a recently published author of an important work related to whaling; the two-day Whaling History symposium; and the two-day Scrimshaw Weekend. On the second Thursday of each month and every Thursday in the summer, the Museum joins with downtown New Bedford partners to provide free public programming including cultural events and performances. The Museum hosts an annual 25-hour Moby-Dick Marathon, a continuous, tag-team reading of the Melville classic with participation from scholars, enthusiasts, local celebrities, and community members. The Museum also conducts two annual professional development programs for K-12 schoolteachers, in partnership with local colleges; the Museum is currently partnering with the National Park Service to develop a three-day symposium on experiential learning.

The Whaling Museum plays a growing role as a cultural center and economic engine for the region. The Museum is the central location for an Art, History and Architecture (AHA!) cultural initiative that promotes city-wide arts and cultural programs. The Museum hosts monthly After Hours programs with free admission and live music, as well as a broad range of ad hoc cultural events throughout the year. While some of the performances and cultural events are not necessarily humanities activities, they reinforce cultural heritage themes and help engage audiences that otherwise might not be likely to visit a museum.

The Museum offers formal K-12 experiential learning programs that are integrated with classroom curriculum and correspond to Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Subject areas include History, Language Arts, Culture, and Science, with 14 formal programs delivered to more than 11,000 schoolchildren, through more than 300 school programs annually. The Whaling Museum also offers out-

of-school time programs for children and families on the weekends, during the summer, and during each school vacation.

In response to concerns about educational attainment among high school students, the Whaling Museum has secured a range of funding to launch a new Youth Mentoring Apprenticeship program, to provide humanities job skills, life skills, and a competitive stipend to at-risk high school youth. With close guidance from public school administration partners, a pilot program with six apprenticeship students launched in February 2010.

### **Collaborations**

Long-term partnerships include ongoing programming with the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, including exhibitions, programs such as ongoing collaborative development of audio tours, special exhibits, symposia, and events; monthly Art History and Architecture (AHA!) community nights in collaboration with local restaurants, galleries, and businesses; and a range of local cultural and heritage organizations. The Whaling Museum is a partner with the New Bedford Ocean Explorium, and, on a national level, with four other partner organizations—in the Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), through the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. Projects include experiential learning for schoolchildren as well as collaborative national education and cultural programs, events, and web tools. The Museum also engages in a broad range of ad hoc project partnerships with other museums and libraries and cultural, scientific, and environmental organizations.

### **Audience**

The Museum’s mission speaks to the commitment to reach and engage a wide audience with the humanities. Both the mission and strategic plan call for building capacity to serve broader and larger audiences. Exhibitions are designed to engage visitors at many different learning and interest levels to

ensure that all will have rich, self-directed, and programmatic learning opportunities. Exhibitions provide the context for exploring diverse humanities themes.

Data gathered through formative evaluations for exhibition planning has made it clear that the history of the human interaction with whales is of great interest to a broad and varied audience. Exhibitions and programs are of interest not only to scholars and maritime history buffs, but also to those drawn by American, world, and natural history as well as the arts and sciences.

Approximately half of all Museum visitors are from Massachusetts, roughly 20% is from the remainder of New England, and approximately 30% is made up of national and international visitors. A third of all visitors are children. A national and international online constituency has grown as the museum's digital offerings have expanded. The Museum's audience encompasses the worldwide public:

### **Scholars and Educators**

Scholars see the Museum as an essential resource for exploring the social, economic, literary, and cultural history of the region as well as examining the scientific and theoretical issues of whale ecology.

Considerable work in the field has been accomplished using the combined collections and humanities staff expertise. Virtually all of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century secondary sources relating to the history, technology, demography, and culture of the American whaling industry heavily utilized the New Bedford and Kendall collections. In addition to a vast array of books and articles by Museum staff and independent scholars, the collection provides great value to film makers. For example, a recent Ric Burns PBS American Experience film *Into the Deep*, relied heavily on the museum's archives, collections, and staff.

### **Local Community**

New Bedford is the state's fifth largest city with a population of just under 95,000, and a rich mix of ethnic heritages drawn to the area first by the whaling industry, later by the textile and manufacturing industries, and finally, by the fishing industry. More than half of the population is of Portuguese background—the largest such concentration outside of Portugal. Many have Azorean and Cape Verdean roots. There are also significant numbers of residents of African American, Hispanic, French Canadian, Scandinavian, and American Indian heritage.

While New Bedford was one of the wealthiest American cities at the height of the whaling industry, it is now among the poorest in the state. In its community focus, the Whaling Museum actively works to engage the large, underserved population of New Bedford, where unemployment rates consistently rank among the highest in the state, and the nation (15.3% in January, 2010 versus 9.7% nationally and 9.5% statewide; rates within New Bedford are likely even higher). More than 40% of the local population is considered low income--20% earn less than 100% of the federal poverty rate, and 20% are “working poor” earning less than 200% of the federal poverty rate. Educational attainment remains a significant challenge in New Bedford: the high school graduation rate is 56%, versus 81% statewide, and only 10% of New Bedford residents have college degrees. The Museum offers free experiential programming to thousands of local schoolchildren each year.

### **Regional, National and International Visitors**

The Whaling Museum is the largest visitor attraction in the area. Visitors come from all fifty states and about forty countries. The larger New Bedford region extends from Providence to Cape Cod, and north toward Greater Boston. The Museum works closely with the National Park Service and state and local tourism offices to advance New Bedford as a destination point in a growing heritage tourism market.

### **Long-Range Plans**

In 2001, the Museum accepted the gift of the entire world-class collection of the former Kendall Whaling Museum of Sharon, Massachusetts. The renowned Kendall collection of more than 70,000 objects—encompassing seven centuries of worldwide nautical art, history, and ethnology—superbly complements the New Bedford collection of 125,000 artifacts—focusing on American whaling in the age of sail. With what is now the world’s largest and most comprehensive collection of materials related to whales and whaling, the Museum expanded the scope of its mission to recognize its new global perspective.

Following the decision to merge the two collections, the membership and Board of Trustees of the New Bedford Whaling Museum approved a revised mission. The Museum renewed its strategic planning process to address the organizational changes necessary to accommodate the dramatic increase in the size and breadth of the Museum, and to cultivate a broader local, national, and international audience. The 2002-2012 Strategic Plan is the result of nine months’ work on the part of the Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by retired education consultant, Dr. Edwin Campbell, and supported by senior staff. The planning process was facilitated by Technical Development Corporation (TDC), a Boston-based firm specializing in not-for-profit management.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Museum’s Board of Trustees undertook an in-depth study of comparable museums, and members of the planning committee met with their staffs. New Bedford Whaling Museum staff engaged in a self evaluation process, and an analysis of museum patronage was undertaken.

As a collaborative vision for the future of the Museum began to emerge, it was articulated and endorsed by a broad constituent base. It was implemented, tested and subsequently modified through a series of focus groups, including trustees, volunteers, staff, Museum members, non-members, visitors, partnership organizations, funders, and community members. At a day-long retreat, the Board of Trustees approved the vision statement and then tested a set of core principles, goals, and strategies. The board approved the

ten-year strategic plan on October 25, 2002. The Museum's strategic plan undergoes continuous review and adjustment on an annual basis. Recent staff changes, including a new President in the fall of 2008, combined with success in accomplishing many of the Strategic Plan objectives, have re-ignited the evaluation process at the departmental level, and have resulted in plans and goals at the tactical level.

The current strategic plan positions the Museum as the world's leading interpreter of the global story of whaling. The Museum's mission "to educate and interest all the public in the historic interaction of humans with whales worldwide . . ." is reflected in the vision to "advance understanding of the profound influence of the whaling industry and the port of New Bedford on the history, economy, ecology, arts, and cultures of the region, the nation, and the world." The plan calls for the NBWM to "expand our capacity to tell the stories of the many diverse communities that shared in the creation of the rich history of the region, through excellence in our collections, scholarship, and all forms of public engagement."

Recognizing that these epic stories speak to timeless social, economic, ecological, and cultural issues, the plan mandates the Museum to take bold steps to engage a growing worldwide audience, while remaining steadfast in its role as a catalyst for humanities education and engagement in the local community. In doing so, the Museum will be recognized as "a compelling destination that inspires all visitors to reflect on the complex issues that shaped the past, remain critical today, and inform a sustainable future."

The Strategic Plan stresses the importance of providing a positive learning experience for all audiences through the highest quality of innovative programming throughout the community. Significant community outreach is an integral part of the Museum's planned growth. To accomplish this, the Museum has been following an aggressive organizational capacity building plan and has been externally focused on building public participation as well as internally focused on building an effective, responsive organization.

The plan reinforces six Core Purposes to achieve the Museum’s vision. The Core Purposes include:

- Visitor experience: create exciting, compelling, and enjoyable museum experiences for all audiences;
- Education: provide the highest quality educational experiences through innovation, creativity, and substantive content;
- Outreach and access: attract a wide variety of audiences, and provide effective access to the Museum’s resources, both on site and through technology;
- Collaboration and community: collaborate with other organizations to achieve common educational, cultural, academic, and economic development goals;
- Scholarship: produce exceptional research, publications, academic programs, and scholarly activities;
- Stewardship: be vigilant in the stewardship and development of the Museum’s resources – collections, financial, human, and other institutional assets.

The Board of Trustees and staff continue to follow the concrete goals, and specific strategies, delineated in the Strategic Plan. The capital campaign and matching challenge are specifically tailored to advance these strategites..

### **Institutional Capacity**

Letters of support, included in the appendix, illustrate the commitment from the Museum’s staff and board leadership to achieve to long-range strategic plans and to meet fundraising goals. Letters are included from the president and CEO, vice president of finance and administration, vice president of collections and exhibitions, as well as the Development Committee chair and incoming chair of the Board of Trustees.

An important goal outlined in the Museum's strategic plan is to engage in the development and stewardship of financial resources essential to achieving the goals of a vibrant and growing institution. Pursuing an aggressive plan to build the endowment is identified as a key strategy in meeting that goal.

## **Mission**

*The New Bedford Whaling Museum's mission is to educate and interest all the public in the historic interaction of humans with whales worldwide; in the history of Old Dartmouth and adjacent communities; and in regional maritime activities.*

## **Vision**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum is the world's leading interpreter of the global whaling story. The Museum's vision is to advance understanding of the profound influence of the whaling industry and the port of New Bedford on the history, economy, ecology, arts, and cultures of the region, the nation, and the world. We will expand our capacity to tell the stories of the many diverse communities that shared in the creation of this history, through excellence in our collections, scholarship, and all forms of public engagement. In doing so, the Museum will be recognized as a compelling destination that inspires all visitors to reflect on the complex issues that shaped the past, remain critical today, and inform a sustainable future.

## **Governance**

In accordance with the society's by-laws, the institution is governed by a 24 to 36 member Board of Trustees who are committed to its mission, goals, and long range plans. A Nominating Committee is charged with maintaining a Board reflective of the Museum's community and constituencies as well as the expertise to govern the society within the framework of its mission. Trustees are elected by the society from the membership at the Annual Meeting based on Nominating Committee recommendations. Trustees may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. At the annual meeting the society also elects

a Chairman and five other officers who, with up to four additional trustees appointed by the Chairman, form the Executive Committee. The full Board meets six times per year, as does the Executive Committee.

The Board of Trustees represents a broad spectrum of community leaders, each bringing a different range of knowledge, experience, expertise, and community connections. Current trustees include leaders in K-12 and high level learning, civic leaders and former elected officials, maritime historians and scientists, and executives from the media, manufacturing, legal, non-profit, and financial services sectors. Trustees are highly-engaged in governance, and all Trustees participate in committee and program activity. Trustees commit to 100% participation in the Annual Fund each year, and similarly commit 100% participation as the first lead donors to the capital campaign.

## **Staff**

As outlined in the appendix, the New Bedford Whaling Museum benefits from a dedicated and well-rounded humanities staff with considerable expertise in collections, scholarship, interpretation, and programming. Vice President Dr. Greg Galer leads the exhibition and collections team in an ambitious agenda of caring for, interpreting, and exhibiting an expansive and diverse collection. Senior Curator Dr. Stuart Frank, an internationally renowned scholar of whaling history, takes a leadership role in scholarship, research, an interpretation. Maritime curator and librarian Michael Dyer supports constituents with their researcher needs, and continually develops new interpretive content and exhibitions. A highly competent assistant librarian, as well as a part-time conservator, preparator, and registrar (and additional interns and visiting scholars) support a range of humanities curatorial initiatives. The director of education, supported by an educator, an assistant, and a docent staff with an average of eight years of experience, develop and deliver educational programs to the highest standards for schoolchildren, families, and adult visitors.

The fundraising team recently expanded in preparation for the upcoming capital campaign. The team is aligned to ensure continued long-term strength in funding for operating and special exhibitions and projects in addition to concerted campaign efforts to build the endowment. The Museum president has 17 years of highly-successful fundraising experience and remains actively engaged in cultivating major funding sources. A new senior director of development was hired in May 2009; with more than 20 years of fundraising leadership experience, she leads foundation and government relations initiatives, manages the Development departments operations, and is leading the team in the next phase of capital campaign activity. The Director of Individual Giving continues to increase income from individual donors and, with the active participation of trustees, volunteers and the president, is taking a lead role in cultivating individual contributors for the Challenge Grant campaign. The team is aided by a development associate in a newly-created position to support the capital campaign and increased foundation development, as well as a long-time manager of the membership program.

The financial aspects of both the endowment and the capital campaign will be managed by the Museum's three-person finance and accounting department and an interested and engaged Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, and Development Committee. The Museum recently took its marketing and public relations activities in house (these were formerly supported by an external agency), and hired a seasoned senior director of marketing and communications who will help with communications and marketing for the campaign.

## **Facilities**

The 60,000 square foot museum complex and 23,000 square foot of Library and Archive allows for a world-class visitor experience, including authentic historic architecture; expansive spaces dedicated to soaring displays of giant whale skeletons, an 89' ship that visitors can board, and historic whale boats; intimate exhibit spaces for collections displays; and panoramic views of the historic port. The facilities

also afford extensive climate-controlled collections storage, a conservation lab, vast archives, spaces for meeting and events, and a large reading room for researchers.

### **Stability and Sustainability**

In recent years, the Museum's Board of Trustees has placed particular emphasis on sound fiscal management. In 2007, the Museum ran an operating deficit. Since that time, the staff and Board of Trustees have made a concerted effort to manage operating expenses and reduce the institution's line of credit. Despite a challenging economic climate, and a broad range of ambitious new initiatives, the Museum completed 2008 and 2009 with a cash surplus. The approved 2010 budget also projects a balanced budget, with every indication that it will be achieved. Recent surpluses have been targeted toward eliminating the Museum's line of credit, which reached a high of \$775,000 in 2007 and is now under \$160,000. Under the leadership of a committed—and financially supportive—Board of Trustees, the Museum continues to cultivate a highly diverse mix of funding sources in support of annual operations as well as ongoing project and capital needs.

### **Collaboration**

Collaborative activities are outlined above in descriptions of exhibitions, programming, and activities. A recently-compiled list of program partners from 2009 encompassed 67 separate organizations, with partnerships ranging from research to collections and exhibitions to cultural and educational programming.

### **Challenge Grant Expenditures**

The Challenge Grant of \$500,000, and matching funds of \$1.5 million, will be used in part to fund added resources for the capital campaign, but primarily to create an endowment to support the New Bedford Whaling Museum's long-term humanities mission objectives.

Specifically, \$10,000 per year for four years will be expended directly toward salary expenses to increase fundraising administration resources during the campaign. A new development associate with experience in development administration, donor stewardship, and fundraising database coordination has been hired to support the planning, fundraising, communications, and pledge management activities associated with the campaign.

With \$40,000 allocated to fundraising expenses, the remaining \$1,960,000 million will be allocated toward the creation of a new restricted humanities endowment. Annual disbursements are projected at 4.5% of the endowment's value in the first three years (and a rolling three-year average thereafter) with disbursed funds allocated to humanities staff salaries, interpretive exhibitions, and humanities programming. The first year's endowment expenditure is estimated at \$88,200 with \$38,200 allocated to interpretation, exhibitions, and programming; and \$50,000 allocated to humanities staff salaries. This funding will significantly increase the resources available to fund growth in the Museum's highest-priority activities.

## **Assessment**

Measures of success for the NEH Challenge grant will include: Short-term evaluation of fundraising progress on objectives, including both pledge commitments and cash fulfillment. Assessment throughout the campaign will include monthly reporting to the capital campaign cabinet and Development Committee, as well as progress reporting to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees at each meeting throughout the campaign; Short- and long-term evaluation of "sight-raising"—increased giving levels—among existing Museum donors and funders; Short- and long-term evaluation of success in engaging new donors and funders and broadening the overall base of support for the Museum; Evaluation of success in educating donors about the value of investing in endowment and other less tangible means of support, rather than more straightforward capital projects; Assessment of fundraising staff skills development according to individual development goals; Assessment of building momentum for long-term growth in the endowment, beyond the short-term Challenge Grant goals; Evaluation of short- and

long-term outcomes of projects and activities funded through the endowment, as delineated in the Strategic Plan..

## **Challenge Grant Impact**

As with most museums, the Whaling Museum finds that funding investments in staff resources and core collections, interpretation, and exhibitions—while among the most essential priorities in advancing the Museum’s mission—are frequently perceived as less visible, and therefore less appealing, for individual, corporate, and foundation funders.

While the Whaling Museum continues to have strong success in securing support for new initiatives and special projects, most gifts and grants to sustain and grow core humanities activities tend to be smaller and generally relatively labor-intensive to secure each year. For example, the average membership gift is \$85, and the average annual fund gift is slightly above \$400, including a major annual giving society. At the same time, admissions fees account for only 7% of the Museum’s operating income, and all earned income sources combined account for just 17% of total operating income—and these sources tend to be difficult to increase more than incrementally each year.

A Challenge Grant campaign provides significant benefits, both tangible and intangible, in enhancing the Museum’s humanities activities for the long term. The endowment creates a sustainable and predictable income stream for the Museum’s highest priority humanities activities, many of which may not have strong appeal to funders on an annual basis. The new endowment will ensure annual funding for salaries for core humanities staff as well as their highest priority activities. The challenge grant and matching funds also will provide direct funding for fundraising resources for a campaign that will be leveraged for endowment growth beyond the \$2 million required to meet the challenge grant requirements.

An NEH matching challenge energizes and motivates donors with a sense of urgency and provides donors with a means of increasing the impact of their gifts. Similarly, the annual milestones for matching encourage accelerated pledge payment schedules. The challenge concept is a proven strategy for attracting hesitant donors and is anticipated to have a major impact in expanding the Museum's donor base. Similarly, the challenge creates a major incentive for donors to increase their level of support. The NEH imprimatur itself is highly motivating to donors in validating the importance of the Museum's mission, as well as the value of the funding priorities. Most important, increased annual income allows the Museum to expand and enhance—rather than just sustain—humanities priorities.

Annual endowment income relieves pressure on the operating budget and further diversifies the Museum's income streams, reducing risk should the Museum lose a funding source, and increasing the Museum's ability to capitalize on unplanned opportunities. Predictable endowment disbursements make long-term fiscal planning easier. The capital campaign will build donor awareness of the value of endowment over the long term, encouraging major endowment gifts in the future. The campaign will energize Planned Giving initiatives. While planned gifts will not be counted toward the challenge, the Museum anticipates that integrated Planned Giving promotional efforts will result in a long-term increase in planned endowment gifts, well beyond the duration of the campaign. A campaign that highlights endowment will encourage donors to think in terms of partnering to strengthen the Museum for the long term, rather than making a short-term investment in a capital project or new program initiative. While difficult to measure, this shift in dialogue helps to encourage long-term sustaining relationships with donors and funders.

## **Fundraising Plan**

During the fall of 2010, the Museum will begin the “quiet phase” of solicitations to secure \$1.5 million in new matching endowment funds for core humanities activities. The Museum has identified prospects for lead gifts at each level of a projected giving pyramid and is in the process of conducting feasibility

interviews with lead donor prospects. Initial feedback has been extremely positive, and at least one potential lead donor has expressed interest in offering a “mirror match.” Operating under the assumption that at least four prospects will be required to secure each of the required commitments at the various pyramid giving levels, strong prospects have been identified to secure the first 50% of an endowment fundraising goal of \$3 million, and a broad pool of vetted donors exists for the remaining 50% during the public phase.

Donor prospects are comprised of a diverse mix of individuals, corporations, and foundations. Vetted prospects include past campaign leadership donors who have been cultivated for a major lead gift solicitation in the next six months, as well as new prospects with significant capacity who are being cultivated for requests on a longer timetable. Volunteer and staff solicitor assignments, and detailed cultivation and solicitation plans, are currently in process with campaign leadership. Donors will be encouraged to complete their pledge fulfillment within three years, to maximize success in matching (and increase the percentage of complete pledge fulfillment during the course of the campaign).

In 2009, the Museum closed a \$14 million capital campaign with an emphasis on infrastructure—renovation of the historic Bourne building, restoration of the *Lagoda* ship model, installation of a comprehensive core exhibition, installation of right whale skeletons, renovation of a new building for the Library and Archive, and restoration of an historic bank lobby gallery that was original gallery space for the Museum 100 years ago. Nearly all of these capital campaign donors have completed their pledge payments. While many of the capital projects have been completed, the coming months will include major celebrations to close the campaign, re-open the Bourne building, open the newly-renovated bank building lobby gallery, and opening a major Azorean heritage exhibition.

Following a range of highly-visible openings and campaign-related celebrations this spring and summer, past donors will be highly engaged in the success of their investments in capital projects. The Museum

will be strongly positioned to begin conversations about leveraging these successful capital and infrastructure enhancements with investment in endowment to insure the long-term success of humanities programming.

## **NEH and State Humanities Council Grant History**

### **NEH Implementation Grant**

In 2006-2009, the New Bedford Whaling Museum received a \$300,000 NEH Interpreting America's Historic Places implementation grant award in support of a comprehensive new core exhibition, *From Pursuit to Preservation: The History of Human Interaction with Whales*. The new long-term exhibition opened in July 2009, and has dramatically enhanced the quality of the visitor experience. The exhibition, which is centered around the 48' skeleton of a sperm whale, takes full advantage of the ever-present human fascination with whales to provide a comprehensive introduction to the history of the whaling industry and New Bedford's place in the global whaling economy. *From Pursuit to Preservation* incorporates multiple formats to display artworks, artifacts, photographs, and archival materials from the Museum's collection—which significantly strengthens the Museum's ability to engage visitors with culture, history, literature, arts, and science themes.

### **NEH Challenge Grant**

In 1998-2000, the Whaling Museum received a \$375,000 NEH Challenge Grant to create an endowment for a senior curator position and to complete a major renovation and expansion project. In 2003, the Museum successfully complete the \$12 million Lighting The World capital campaign, and the NEH challenge was instrumental in providing the momentum which resulted not only in new endowment resources but in transformative upgrades to the facility, and significant growth in the base of donors who have remained instrumental to the Museum's continued success.

The endowment for a senior curator has generated an average of \$24,000 annually toward senior curatorial staff salaries over the last seven years, so on the most basic level it has minimized pressure on the Museum's operating budget and provided funding support for a core mission resource. The endowment funding was particularly helpful in ensuring the continuity of curatorial leadership during the transformational expansion of the collection when the New Bedford Whaling Museum received the unanticipated gift of the Kendall Whaling Museum's collection in 2001. Thanks to this predictable endowment income, the Whaling Museum has been able to expand curatorial staff to include a Vice President for Collections and Exhibitions, a Senior Curator, and a Maritime Curator and Librarian, in addition to other humanities collections and conservation staff. This depth of humanities expertise was instrumental to the development of the new *From Pursuit To Preservation* core exhibition, as well as a broad range of other exhibitions—both short-term and long-term—that have advanced the Museum's Strategic Plan over the last decade.

### **State Council Grants**

The Museum also has received the following recent grants:

- Massachusetts Cultural Council: annual unrestricted funding as a Partner in the Cultural Investment Portfolio program (\$31,000 in 2009);
- Massachusetts Cultural Council/Cultural Facilities Fund: Matching challenge grant of \$617,000 toward a capital campaign to restore the Museum's historic Bourne Building (matching funds raised; building opening in July 2010);
- Mass Humanities project grant for \$5,000 for an Azorean whaling heritage historic film exhibit (project in process; opening September 2010);
- New Bedford Cultural Council, \$500 grant for artist-led scrimshaw folk art out-of-school time educational programming (Summer 2010).

### **Institutional Size**

The New Bedford Whaling Museum can be classified as a small to mid-sized institution, based on its 41-member staff (26 full-time, 10 part-time and 5 contract) and an annual operating budget of \$3.25 million.