



## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### **Sample of a Successful Application**

This document contains the narrative and walkthrough of a previously funded grant application. Every successful application is different, and this application may have been prepared to meet a slightly different set of guidelines. Each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations, as well as the requirements in the current notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). Prospective applicants should consult the current Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations NOFO at <https://www.neh.gov/program/public-impact-projects-smaller-organizations> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attached application is incomplete. Portions have been deleted to protect the privacy interests of an individual, and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information, and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

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**Project Title:** Enriching Museum Interpretation for the Public in Arthurdale

**Institution:** Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.

**Project Director:** Katharine Donnelly

**Grant Program:** Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations

## **Narrative**

### **Summary**

Arthur Dale Heritage, Inc. (AHI) requests \$25,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities Public Impact Projects grant program to assess and evaluate our formal museum and enrich its interpretation for the public. This grant will enable AHI staff to hire an outside consultant who will provide professional guidance and recommendations to modernize and update exhibitions in our New Deal museum to be more engaging, interactive, inclusive, and accessible.

This project will assess current interpretation and offer strategies to transform the outdated museum at Arthur Dale Heritage into a modern, thought-provoking, and engaging space. Drawing upon rich primary sources of the 1930s and 1940s related to Arthur Dale's distinct history as the nation's first New Deal community, this project will lay the groundwork for full implementation and renovation of the museum's exhibitions. By diversifying and modernizing our interpretation as well as rethinking layout and accessibility, the museum will enhance learning opportunities and better serve the public, from schoolchildren to senior citizens.

### **Audience**

Arthur Dale is an unincorporated rural area of Preston County, West Virginia. While part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area of nearby Morgantown in Monongalia County, the entire population of this two-country region tops just above 140,000 residents based on 2021 statistics. Arthur Dale itself is home to about 1,000 people. The poverty levels in Preston County are in line with similar rural areas of West Virginia, at more than 15 percent. AHI has taken steps to be a leader in reaching economically disadvantaged neighbors in the region and is honored to be the only historic site/history museum in West Virginia participating in the national initiative, "Museums for All." Through this program, any visitor with an EBT/SNAP card and up to 3 additional guests receive free admission to Arthur Dale's museum. This directly benefits economically challenged families in our area, and reports show that other museums across the country saw an increase in attendance after joining this program.

AHI is a membership-based organization, with approximately 300 members. Many of these members are descendants of the original 165 families that moved to Arthur Dale during the New Deal. They are drawn to AHI through their family connections and are vested in the preservation of the community and its history. Some still live in the local area while others have moved all across the country. We engage our members as well as the community at large through social media as well as regular emails and quarterly newsletters. These efforts have resulted in a robust family legacy donor program at AHI, with more than \$500,000 in donations over the last 20 years from 50 different families.

Arthur Dale is a well-known and beloved historic site, not only for those residing or visiting north-central West Virginia but also for visitors from other states and countries. Additionally, Arthur Dale is the top heritage tourism destination in Preston County. 86 percent of surveyed visitors reported that they came to Preston County specifically to visit Arthur Dale. In 2022, we welcomed 1,027 individual tourists who took the privately guided tour of our six-building historic site. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were partially or completely closed for most of 2020 and 2021 which impacted visitation. But even before the COVID-19 pandemic, we never

hosted more than 600 people per year, so recent visitation numbers are stellar. Additionally in 2022, 4,389 attendees came to scheduled programs and events such as heritage art classes, square dances, festivals, and special exhibitions. Tourists come from across the world, with 55 percent of visitors originating from outside the state of West Virginia.

Enriching and revitalizing the interpretation in our main museum space will help AHI engage new audiences and deepen our impact. Right now, we have a “one size fits all approach” to our interpretation. The museum space is outfitted with dated displays and cases, has limited interactives, and relies heavily on a tour guide to augment the simplistic interpretive panels. Although the museum is fairly comprehensive and organized both chronologically and thematically, it does not address more complex or difficult subjects such as racism and exclusion in the founding of Arthurdale. By deepening our interpretation and making it more engaging, we can tell the full story of Arthurdale and engage a more diverse audience including the African American community. Additionally, with a reimagined museum space, we plan to open the museum itself for self-guided tours in addition to our guided tour of the entire site. The cost and length of the guided tour is often a barrier for visitors. We believe this will increase visitation and engagement, especially through new interactives in the space.

### **Activities and Outcomes**

As Arthurdale Heritage approaches 40 years of existence, we look to enrich and reinvigorate the interpretation of our formal museum space. We desire to continue sharing the history of Arthurdale and the families that first moved here during the New Deal, without compromising any of the integrity of that experience and story. Funding for this project will help cover the salary of our Curator/Director of Education as well as the fees of an independent consultant who will work to assess our current interpretation and develop new ideas and concepts for the museum.

Over the last 10 years, AHI has worked tirelessly to restore and preserve our historic campus as well as organize and manage our archival collection. In doing so, interpretation within the museum was not prioritized. While we celebrate the completed preservation and archival projects, our next step is improving the guest experience and enriching our historical interpretation. Within five years, we envision a museum campus that will be more welcoming, engaging, and thought-provoking to individuals of all ages and abilities.

Our formal museum space is located in a 1934 stone building which served as administrative office space for federal employees during the 1930s and 1940s. Because of its original use and stone construction, the interior is permanently divided into several small rooms and one large central room. This configuration poses a challenge to public programs and engaging exhibitions, especially for large groups. During this project, we plan to assess the layout of the museum strategically, utilizing the space as efficiently and creatively as possible while maintaining the historic nature of the building.

At present, the museum is the first stop on a fully guided tour of our historic site, which encompasses 5 buildings including a blacksmith’s forge, historic Esso gas station, community center, and homestead house. While the tour and exhibits present an exhaustive view of life in early Arthurdale, they have been coordinated in a piecemeal fashion over the decades without

much consideration of the variety of audiences that would be visiting the museum, and are therefore not presented in the most efficient, functional, and interactive manner. Through this project, we hope to reconsider the museum as a space used for both self-guided and privately guided tours, therefore expanding its appeal and visitation. Many visitors to Arthurdale often remark that they do not have the time or interest in our hour-long guided tour and inquire if a self-guided option exists.

The current interpretation within the museum is lackluster, outdated, and rather flat. The guided tours themselves are engaging and well-received, grounded in strong historical scholarship and human-centered stories related to Arthurdale. This oral interpretation is, however, not well translated into the physical interpretation and artifact displays in the museum. The exhibits include old department store cases, little interpretive text, and virtually no interactive elements. Through this assessment, we plan to reconsider the appearance and presentation of Arthurdale's distinct history as well as the overall storyline and themes. Modernizing the appearance of the museum, increasing diversity in our narrative, and improving interactivity are three major goals we hope to achieve through a robust assessment of the museum.

AHI plans to work with a museum consultation firm Museum Muse on this project. With decades of experience in museums and historic sites across the country, Museum Muse and its associates will provide a fresh, expert perspective on our current interpretation. They will create a final assessment with recommendations for enhancements and prioritization of these changes. Through this assessment, Museum Muse and AHI will consider a variety of topics including exhibition layout, accessibility, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, interactive elements, technology, lighting strategies, materials and treatments, and engaging humanities content.

After an initial site visit in May 2024, Museum Muse will work closely with Curator/Director of Education Elizabeth Satterfield and other staff at AHI to create and refine the exhibit approach and develop a final assessment. Museum Muse will also provide concept drawings of the reimagined museum space as well as strategies to make our exhibitions more engaging, provocative, and accessible. Throughout the process, AHI will produce artifacts and photograph options for the exhibitions and conduct research to develop themes, topics, and label copy. Regular virtual meetings and phone calls will be scheduled between Museum Muse and AHI, ensuring clear and consistent communication.

The final product of this project will be an interpretative assessment of the museum with recommendations for change and improvement, completed by January 2025. AHI will then prioritize the recommendations to work toward a more effective, functional, and interactive museum campus. Because we are a small museum with limited capacity, the plan may be implemented in multiple phases over several years rather than all at once. The final assessment document will not only serve as a guide to implement changes in the museum, but also as a tool for fundraising. In cooperation with our Board of Directors and Executive Director, AHI will seek additional grant funding and undertake private fundraising campaigns to sustain new exhibitions and programs for generations to come.

Looking ahead five years, AHI envisions a museum campus that shares the story of the people of Arthurdale in a way that is efficient, effective, interactive, and engaging to a variety of people

from all cultural backgrounds, generations, and physical abilities. We hope to offer an experience that engages guests in provocative and myriad ways, which might include self-guided components of our museum campus, hands-on interpretation through agriculture, fiber arts, and blacksmithing, and engaging interactives including digital or virtual options.

### **Relationship to the Humanities**

Audiences served through humanities programs at AHI vary, from school children to graduate students to retirees. In 2022, AHI hosted more than 1,000 tourists who had the opportunity to view exhibits and artifacts currently on display in our five-building campus. K-12 school children from four local counties took field trips to Arthurdale or engaged with programs offered by the curator. A new program, launched in 2022, takes artifacts into the classroom and encourages the students to interpret each piece through hands-on learning. Another in-school program connects Arthurdale's storied weaving history with the physical art of weaving as students make their own potholder. Additionally, a middle school social studies lesson plan—anchored in primary sources related to Arthurdale and the New Deal—is now available through the National Park Service.

Numerous exhibitions have been on display in the museum space over the last 30 years, but the most recent iteration was completed in 2018, thanks to a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council (WVHC). The museum now includes permanent gallery space which gives visitors a comprehensive overview of Arthurdale's history. In 2021, AHI received another grant from WVHC to revise our driving tour and add an audio component to the homestead house tour. Utilizing the extensive oral history collection at AHI, visitors will now be able to listen to stories from original homesteaders while touring the house. A new permanent exhibition in our tractor garages is currently underway which will explore the agricultural and industrial history of Arthurdale, from the community's inception in the 1930s to modern times. This exhibition is slated for completion in spring 2024 and will include objects, photographs, and paper materials from AHI's collection as well as two original tractors.

Temporary exhibitions are also a regular occurrence at AHI. Previous exhibitions have focused on homesteader families, fiber arts, and the homefront during World War II. In December 2021-January 2022, AHI hosted the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibition *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* which launched many new endeavors, projects, and programs at AHI. In December 2022 through January 2023, a new exhibition *Treasured: Contemporary Reflections of Arthurdale* opened in historic Center Hall—the main gathering space at AHI. This exhibition showcased exemplary artifacts from AHI's collection, many of which have never been exhibited before. The next major exhibition, supported by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, will open in fall 2023 and focus on Arthurdale's rich fiber arts heritage.

Arthurdale Heritage holds a vast collection of items which include furniture, textiles, photographs, manuscripts, letters, books, tools, home goods, oral histories, and much more. There are approximately 5,000 items in the collection, most of which are stored in the archives or are on display in the museum. AHI holds an exemplary collection of textiles, furniture, and metal items cooperatively made in Arthurdale in the 1930s and 1940s as well as thousands of photographs, books, and archival materials—mostly related to the original 165 homesteader

families. The collection also holds materials related to Eleanor Roosevelt including correspondence and gifts from Mrs. Roosevelt to homesteaders.

AHI's collection holds immense potential for additional research, study, and public exhibition. In the past, the collection has been utilized by researchers for a variety of history projects. A former executive director relied heavily on AHI's collection to research and publish an *Images of America* book on Arthurdale in 2007. Graduate students and history professors at West Virginia University have utilized the collection for various research projects, articles, and book projects. Articles related to Arthurdale have appeared in state, regional, and national publications. AHI receives multiple research requests each year from authors and researchers outside the area, some who visit in-person and many others who receive research assistance virtually.

Our archival and museum collection will be heavily used throughout this project as we reimagine the formal museum space. We hope to present objects, photography, archival documents, and oral histories in engaging ways in these new exhibits, not as filler but as tools to engage the public meaningfully. Museum Muse, as our independent consultant, will be given full access to our collection for reference and assessment. Curator/Director of Education Elizabeth Satterfield and Program Assistant Katharine Donnelly will conduct the majority of the research for this project, utilizing primary sources in our collection as well as reputable secondary sources on Arthurdale and the New Deal. The material culture collection at AHI, which includes furniture and textiles, is particularly rich and will be the cornerstone of the updated interpretation. We expect to utilize other repositories besides our own, including the archives and photographic collections at the West Virginia and Regional History Center at West Virginia University in Morgantown, the West Virginia State Archives in Charleston, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives. Both Satterfield and Donnelly hold masters degrees in history and have extensive experience in humanities research, exhibitions, and programs, especially in small museums and rural areas.

## Organizational Profile

Located in rural north central West Virginia, Arthurdale was the nation's first New Deal community. This experimental subsistence homestead community was the first of 99 across the country, created through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's legislation during the Great Depression. The first families moved into the new community of Arthurdale, West Virginia in 1934. Eleanor Roosevelt was deeply involved in its planning and construction, visiting Arthurdale more than 30 times during her husband's presidency. Following World War II, the federal government liquidated its homestead holdings, and Arthurdale became privately owned.

In 1984, Arthurdale celebrated its 50th anniversary, but most community buildings had been abandoned or significantly damaged from fire. None were usable and its history was being forgotten. Local residents and homesteader descendants formed Arthurdale Heritage, Inc. (AHI), a 501(c)3 nonprofit, with the mission "to restore and preserve the cultural heritage of the nation's first New Deal Homestead Community through education, community events, and operation of the New Deal Homestead Museum." The organization's five main purposes are Preservation & Restoration, Outreach, Education, Acquisition & Interpretation, and Recognition. AHI is a member of the West Virginia Association of Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. More information about Arthurdale Heritage can be found at <https://arthurdaleheritage.org/>.

Since officially incorporating in 1985, AHI has fully restored eight historic structures and acquired 23 acres of the original 1,200 acre community. Our entire museum campus is part of the Arthurdale National Historic District. AHI is a self-supporting museum with a governing board of directors, two full-time employees, two part-time employees, one AmeriCorps member, and more than 90 dedicated volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of Arthurdale. Responsibilities vary widely and include assisting with events, helping catalog items in the archives, leading tours, and running our gift shop. We typically have a college or graduate student intern for additional support in the summer and some school semesters. These interns have the opportunity to help with a myriad of duties related to Arthurdale while also gaining experience in subjects relevant to their studies such as public administration and public history.

Our operating budget in the 2021-2022 fiscal year was \$412,810 with \$230,816 in expenses. Of the remaining \$167,839, approximately \$150,000 was a one-time gift specifically given for educational programming. Our expenses are chiefly encompassed by building occupancy expenses, preservation and restoration of our historic structures, and staff salaries. AHI offers public paid tours through our five main buildings, from 10am-3pm on Monday-Friday from November-April, and Monday-Saturday from May-October. Regular tours are \$12 per person with discounts available for children, students, seniors, and military. Free admission is given to all K-12 students in our county as well as those with SNAP benefits through the Museums for

All initiative. In 2022, AHI welcomed our most tourists on record, with more than 1,000 visitors, 60% of which came from outside West Virginia. More than 4,300 additional people came to Arthurdale for events and programs throughout 2022.

Although tourists visit from around the country, the primary audience for Arthurdale Heritage is Preston and Monongalia County residents. In the 2020 census, Preston County had approximately 34,000 people, and Monongalia County had 106,000, for a combined audience of roughly 140,000. We also receive visitors and participation from neighboring counties in north-central West Virginia, western Maryland, and western Pennsylvania. Both Preston and Monongalia counties are 85-90 percent white with median incomes between \$50,000-\$60,000. West Virginia's overall poverty rating is 17.9 percent, higher than the national average of 13.4 percent. Due to our topography, West Virginia is naturally a rural state, with more than 64 percent of people living in a rural area. Preston County is among the most agricultural and rural counties in the Mountain State. Because of our rural area and poverty levels, AHI strives to provide quality programming for all who may attend our programs, with many events being free or inexpensive to make them accessible to the local population.

AHI constantly maintains our buildings and supports public programs with funds from state and federal grants as well as private donations. Because AHI has a small staff and limited budget, capacity is limited, especially to undergo new projects and undertakings such as this project. Funding from this grant would allow AHI to support the salary of our current curator and hire professional consultants to dedicate time and energy to updating and enriching the interpretation in our museum.



## Work Plan

Date	Activity	Team Members
Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grant award notifications</li> <li>● Press release and newsletter/social media announcement of award</li> <li>● Review job description and send to prospective consultants</li> </ul>	Elizabeth Satterfield Darlene Bolyard Katharine Donnelly
Mar 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Select consultant and sign project contracts</li> <li>● Share all relevant museum reports and documents with consultant and project team</li> <li>● Initial team meeting (virtual) with consultant to specify goals, methods, and schedule</li> </ul>	Elizabeth Satterfield Darlene Bolyard Museum Muse consultants
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Two-day site visit with consultant at Arthurdale Heritage</li> </ul>	Consultant & AHI Staff
June 2024- Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow-up telephone or virtual meetings with consultant as needed for additional information, clarification, or schedule more visits</li> </ul>	Consultant & AHI Staff
Oct 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultants submit draft of report to Project Director, Elizabeth Satterfield</li> <li>● Report review among AHI staff to prepare comments and questions for consultants</li> <li>● Final conversations with consultants via phone or virtual meeting to discuss recommendations</li> </ul>	Consultant & AHI Staff
Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultants submit their final report to Project Director, Elizabeth Satterfield</li> <li>● AHI newsletter article discussing phases of project, distributed to 300 constituents</li> </ul>	Consultant Elizabeth Satterfield Darlene Bolyard AHI Staff
By Jan 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final Interpretation Assessment Report complete</li> <li>● Final grant reports submitted</li> </ul>	Elizabeth Satterfield Darlene Bolyard

## **Biographies of Key Personnel, Scholars, and Consultants**

### **Bolyard, Darlene–Arthur Dale Heritage, Inc.**

Executive Director

A native of Arthur Dale, Darlene Bolyard is deeply invested in her community and leaving a lasting legacy. After receiving a BA in International Studies and Economics from West Virginia University and a MBA from Emory University, she had a successful career in brand management for Chattam Consumer Products and the Kellogg Corporation. Darlene then founded Things Gone By, Inc.; an international business specializing in European Antiques and Decorative Arts. She returned to Arthur Dale in the late 1990s and joined the board of Arthur Dale Heritage. After serving as a passionate volunteer and Board Treasurer, she became Executive Director in 2017.

### **Donnelly, Katharine–Arthur Dale Heritage, Inc.**

Program Assistant

Born and raised in Morgantown, Katharine Donnelly has had a lifelong passion for history. She earned her BA in History from Fairmont State University and her MA in History from Norwich University. She worked at Prickett's Fort State Park for six years as a docent and interpreter, making Katharine an invaluable part of our exhibition and interpretation themes. She is also working on her second Masters in Museum Administration.

### **Dove, Elizabeth “Becky”–Museum Muse, LLC.**

Managing Member

Elizabeth “Becky” Dove holds an M.A. in American History and a certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Delaware. She has worked in museums for more than three decades in Delaware, Louisiana, California, and Virginia, prior to opening Museum Muse LLC in 2020. From 1989-2016, Ms. Dove served as Director of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, an official U.S. Navy Museum. Upon her retirement in September, 2016, the Chief of Naval Operations bestowed the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award, the highest Department of the Navy award for civil servants. Ms. Dove then jumped ship to St Augustine, Florida to serve as an Adjunct History Professor at Flagler College, completing her work there in 2020 in order to open Museum Muse LLC.

### **Judge, Joseph–Museum Muse, LLC.**

Founding Member

Joe Judge holds a Bachelor's Degree from the College of William and Mary and a Master's from the University of Virginia. Mr. Judge began working in the museum field during his 20's. In 1990, Mr. Judge landed aboard the Hampton Roads Naval Museum where he served as curator and acting director, earning the museum accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. In 2001, Mr. Judge helped to relocate the Hampton Roads Naval Museum from its home on the Norfolk Naval Station into the City's newly-built waterfront locale Nauticus, the National Maritime Center. He retired from federal service in 2019 in order to start Museum Muse, LLC. Together with the firm's managing partner and 26 associates, Mr. Judge adheres to a goal that reflects his personal philosophy: to provide excellent service and have fun while performing the task at hand.

**Nelson, Marta–Museum Muse, LLC.**

Associate Member

Marta Nelson graduated from the Colorado Institute of Art with a degree in Interior Design. She enhanced her career with courses in photography, graphic art, lighting and textiles. She also holds a DOD certificate as a Journeyman Sheetmetal (Aircraft) Mechanic. Marta's attention to detail, along with her subtle wit, gives each exhibit a memorable twist. Marta Nelson was the exhibit designer for the Hampton Roads Naval Museum for more than 20 years where she was responsible for exhibits, project management, graphic design and museum lighting. Since 2016, Marta has worked as a Graphic Design Contractor and has created artwork and logo designs for promotional products and exhibit design for institutions. Marta became the first founding member associate for Museum Muse in 2020.

**Satterfield, Elizabeth–Arthur Dale Heritage, Inc.**

Curator and Director of Education

Elizabeth Satterfield grew up exploring historic sites and natural wonders throughout the Mountain State of West Virginia. These trips instilled a deep love and appreciation in her for the history and people of West Virginia. Elizabeth grew up near Independence just ten miles away from Arthur Dale. In college, she pursued a BA in history at West Virginia University, then went on to receive dual Master's in Public History and Public Administration from WVU in 2021. As our Curator and Director of Education, Elizabeth creates new exhibitions, manages and digitizes the archival collection, and expands educational programming.