



## 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 Challenge Grants application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/challenge/challenge-grants> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Challenge Grants 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: *103 Orchard Street Construction and Renovation*  
Institution: Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY  
Project Directors: Dr. Annie Polland  
Grant Program: Challenge Grants

**LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
CHALLENGE GRANT APPLICATION  
MAY 1, 2013  
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**LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM  
PROPOSAL TO THE NEH CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM  
ABSTRACT**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, one of the leading cultural institutions dedicated to exploring America's immigrant heritage, requests a \$500,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for construction that will prepare three additional floors of its recently acquired 103 Orchard Street building for exhibit, program, and administrative space, and to replace the roof and cornice. Specifically, the third floor will be readied for a new exhibit, with accurate representations of tenement life from 1950 to 1980, and floors four and five will be reconfigured to house administrative offices, historical archives, and collections storage spaces. Funding from the NEH will be used solely for construction work for the purpose of rendering the building's upper floors usable and preparing the spaces for exhibit installation. Funds for exhibit research, planning, design, fabrication, and installation are not part of this request.

Since its founding in 1988, the Tenement Museum has been a pioneer in developing an innovative public history approach to exploring social history, presenting the stories of ordinary people and everyday life in a pre-law tenement that it has transformed into a series of time capsules covering 1863 to 1935. Its tenement apartments set the stage for highly personalized narratives of struggle and adaptation. The Museum continually seeks opportunities to expand the stories it tells and the historical range and interpretations it covers. The new exhibit at 103 Orchard Street represents an eagerly awaited opportunity to bring this narrative through post World War II immigration.

The Museum's collections and exhibit spaces are grounded in its National Historic Landmark tenement at 97 Orchard Street, which the Museum has scrupulously researched to recreate the homes of some of the 7,000 people from 20 nations who lived there throughout its history. Skilled educators guide visitors through the building, using personal stories of its residents to highlight connections among immigrant experiences past and present. Educators explain the physical spaces, lead visitors through the restored homes, and share the primary sources through which the Museum has pieced together the stories of former residents. Visitors see how changes to the building fabric can be used to illuminate historical debates and to shed light on such diverse issues as health policy, housing laws, the labor movement, urban growth, and economic cycles. The Museum also presents a wide array of public programs and walking tours.

Interpreting post-1945 immigration extends the Tenement Museum's reach in two important ways. Chronologically, it brings the Museum's stories firmly into the realm of living memory, where oral history and archival evidence overlap. Spatially, it extends the Museum's innovative place-based model to a second tenement building, constructed at a later date and under a different regulatory regime, and expands opportunities to compare the changing conditions faced by immigrant families over time. Restoring three apartments into interpretive settings will allow the Museum to give a deeply personal, human face to the experiences of post-war Jewish, Chinese, and Puerto Rican newcomers. It will also enable the Museum to better serve visitors who identify with recent immigrant streams, something that will be of immediate benefit to the tens of thousands of NYC public school students who visit annually.

Each year, the Museum's audience and programs continue to grow, with visitor demand often outstripping capacity. In 2012, we hosted nearly 200,000 visitors, including 40,000 schoolchildren, many of whom are themselves immigrants or the children of immigrants. TripAdvisor rankings consistently place the Museum among New York City's top 15 attractions.

The capital project will serve as the centerpiece of a \$15 million capital campaign, which the Museum plans to announce publically in December 2013 and for which \$5.8 million has already been raised. The imprimatur of the Challenge Grant will provide invaluable support, spurring \$1.5 million in non-federal funding that will be essential to the success of this ambitious endeavor.

**LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM**  
**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**  
**CHALLENGE GRANT APPLICATION**

**May 1, 2013**

**A. Overview**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, one of the leading cultural institutions dedicated to exploring America's immigrant heritage, requests a \$500,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for construction that will prepare three additional floors of its recently acquired 103 Orchard Street building for exhibit, program, and administrative space.

Since its founding in 1988, the Tenement Museum has been a pioneer in developing an innovative public history approach to exploring social history, presenting the stories of ordinary people and everyday life in a pre-law tenement that it has transformed into a series of time capsules covering 1863 through 1935. Its tenement apartments set the stage for highly personalized narratives of struggle and adaptation. The Museum continually seeks opportunities to expand the stories it tells and the historical range and interpretations it covers. The addition of a new exhibit in 103 Orchard Street represents an opportunity to bring its stories into the era of post-World War II immigration.

Each year, the Museum's audience and programs continue to grow, with visitor demand often outstripping capacity. In 2012, we hosted nearly 200,000 visitors, including 40,000 schoolchildren, many of whom are themselves immigrants or the children of immigrants. Visitors come from all 50 states and more than 50 countries, and attendance has increased by 40% in the past five years. TripAdvisor rankings consistently place the Museum among New

York City's top 15 attractions, with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick Collection as the city's only other museums to achieve that standing.

The Museum's collections and exhibit spaces are grounded in its National Historic Landmark tenement at 97 Orchard Street, which the Museum has scrupulously researched to recreate the homes of some of the 7,000 people from 20 nations who lived there throughout its history. Skilled educators guide visitors through the building, using personal stories of its residents to highlight connections among immigrant experiences past and present. Educators explain the physical spaces, lead visitors through the restored homes, and share the primary sources – census records, oral interviews, death certificates, and the like – through which the Museum has pieced together the stories of former residents. Visitors see how changes to the building fabric can be used to illuminate historical debates and to shed light on such diverse issues as health policy, housing laws, the labor movement, urban growth, and economic cycles.

The Museum has also successfully woven the personal stories of past residents into broader themes that reveal how different immigrants experienced the American dream. However, because 97 Orchard Street was condemned as unfit for human occupancy in 1935, the Museum has been largely unable to tell the stories of more recent immigrants; this is despite the fact that the Lower East Side has continued to be a haven for them, and that they in turn have continued to transform New York and the nation. With the acquisition of nearby 103 Orchard Street in 2007, the Museum now has the opportunity to continue its presentation of American immigration history into the post World War II period, documenting changes in immigration policy and immigrant life that shed light on important contemporary issues.

103 Orchard Street remained active as a tenement throughout the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Under Museum ownership, its lower two floors were developed into a visitor and education center, a \$13 million investment which has greatly expanded Museum capacity and

visibility. The Museum is now planning to convert the upper three floors into exhibit, programming, and office space. Specifically, the Museum plans to build out the third floor to present the actual apartments in which immigrant families lived, interpreting the homes of Jewish Holocaust survivors, Puerto Rican migrants, and Chinese immigrants. The fourth and fifth floors will house flexible program space and offices for Museum staff. This project will serve as the centerpiece of a \$15 million capital campaign, which the Museum plans to announce publically in December 2013. The project is at the core of the Museum's five-year strategic plan, which will increase visitorship for all of our programs to 300,000 annually.

#### **B. Significance and Intellectual Quality of Humanities Programs**

The Tenement Museum interprets an 1863 tenement in the heart of the Lower East Side. Unlike historic houses focusing on one moment or one family, the Museum presents a range of critical moments in the building's history. It recreates the homes of Irish, German, Greek, Eastern European Jewish, and Italian immigrants, exploring the neighborhood's diverse populations as they evolved over nearly a century. This allows the Museum to interpret relationships and tensions among and within immigrant communities. Some visitors arrive expecting a heritage museum for Italians, Irish, Germans, or Jews. Instead, they encounter—and overwhelmingly appreciate—a larger lens on the immigrant experience and American identity. They come to understand that the story of immigration, writ large but presented in sharp personal focus, is the story of New York.

In the new exhibit at 103 Orchard Street, the Museum will draw on its experience telling the story of an earlier Lower East Side to present the history of immigration through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Substandard and therefore affordable housing dating from the earlier period, together with small garment shops whose roots also trace back to that same era, prepared the

neighborhood to become a refuge for Holocaust survivors permitted to enter the United States under the nation's first refugee act; become one of New York's major areas of Puerto Rican settlement; and, ultimately, become the largest Chinatown in the Western Hemisphere. The Museum will recreate several mid- and late 20th-century homes, interpreting the residences of the Epsteins, survivors of Bergen-Belsen; the Laus, immigrants from Hong Kong; and the Saezes, who migrated from Puerto Rico. Integrating digital technology and the Museum's time-tested methods of creating immersive spaces and educator-led tours, the Tenement Museum will highlight how contemporary immigrant waves have shaped and influenced the nation. Visitors will learn about the history of 103 Orchard Street and the interlocking and overarching humanities themes that make this building a window onto a century of immigration history. As it has done in its 97 Orchard Street exhibits, the Museum will use the physical spaces to demonstrate how immigration has shaped the neighborhood and the city, and how immigration laws powerfully impacted the city's dynamism and vitality.

The Museum has, since its inception, used humanities themes to frame its tour content and programs. Several recent NEH grants have strengthened the ways the Museum connects "real-life" immigrant stories with analyses of the built environment and, as well, how it presents stories and themes to visitors. The Museum will use these themes to frame the homes and stories it interprets at 103 Orchard Street.

The exhibit will explore six humanities themes:

*Ethnic Enclaves and Succession* and *Ethnic Enclaves and Interactions*: New York City is a composite of ethnic neighborhoods in its boroughs. Most New Yorkers today know that Sunset Park in Brooklyn is predominantly Chinese, Jackson Heights in Queens is Indian, Washington Heights in Manhattan is Dominican, and Borough Park in Brooklyn is Orthodox Jewish. As sociologist Nancy Foner has written, "The new immigration has altered the landscape of the

city.... With continuing immigration, new ethnic neighborhoods and ethnic conglomerations have cropped up in every borough.”

In many ways, the Lower East Side inaugurated the immigrant enclaves that have become one of New York City’s central features. When 97 Orchard was constructed, the area south of 14th Street and east of the Bowery was *Kleindeutschland*, or “Little Germany,” the first New York neighborhood dominated by a language other than English. When 103 Orchard was built in 1888, the same neighborhood had become the Lower East Side, or “Jewish ghetto,” as German immigrants and their children decamped to Upper Manhattan’s Yorkville or Brooklyn, and a wave of Eastern European Jews had arrived. Italians moved beyond the traditional boundaries of Little Italy into the Orchard Street area in the 1910s. As immigration laws severely limited immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe in the 1920s, the population of the Lower East Side declined for the first time; long-settled immigrants (and their children) moved out or died, and few newcomers replaced them.

When growth returned to the Lower East Side after the war, new residents came from a host of places, with no single group dominant. Puerto Rican migrants arrived in significant numbers in the 1940s. A small but highly visible stream of Eastern European Jews, many of them survivors of the Holocaust, settled on the Lower East Side in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Ukrainians took advantage of the same refugee legislation that admitted the Holocaust survivors, concentrating in the northern half of the neighborhood. The Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationalities Act, a key piece of Civil Rights legislation that it has been argued was a direct response to the Holocaust, lifted race-based, national origins quotas and blanket Asian exclusion in 1965; Chinese immigrants began to arrive in large numbers just to the west of the old Lower East Side. By the 1970s and 1980s, the expansion of Chinatown into the Lower East Side added another important immigrant element to this diverse neighborhood.

Using 103 Orchard Street as a lens to view a changing neighborhood allows us to discern chain migration, ethnic succession, and ethnic interaction. Interpreting the building will allow the Museum to show how familiar faces and voices attracted new immigrants, as well as to demonstrate how different cultures interacted with each other. This humanities theme allows us to explore how immigrant groups used ethnic enclaves as adaptation strategies, reconstituting hometown ties to find their way and reshape their new environment. Residents of 103 Orchard joined hometown associations that reflected their immigrant identities. The Epsteins, for example, were part of a local network of Jewish Holocaust survivors. They moved to the Lower East Side because they had family here; relatives gave them jobs in neighborhood sewing shops, and the neighborhood also provided the kosher butchers, bakeries, and synagogues required for Orthodox observance. Similarly, Mrs. Soo Ha Lau found a job in the garment industry through her Hong Kong ties, and Mrs. Ramonita Saez appreciated that the neighborhood's Essex Street Market sold familiar fruits, vegetables, and coffees that allowed her to recreate home recipes, as well as how its botanica articles permitted her to continue her religious rituals.

The story of the Lower East Side is also one of ethnic interaction, as immigrants from various countries met on neighborhood streets and in tenement hallways. Census records for 103 Orchard from 1920 and 1930 indicate a mix of Jews, Italians, and the American-born. By the 1960s, telephone directories show the same apartment buildings housing a mix of elderly Jewish and Italian families and Puerto Rican and Chinese families.

The theme of ethnic succession allows us to explore how the Lower East Side's diversity promoted cosmopolitan encounters. Much of "Americanization" involves interactions with other ethnic groups. A neighborhood bodega (corner store) that opened in 1969 as Esteban Grocery, reflecting the Dominican background of its owners, changed its name in the mid-1970s

to the Chinese-Hispanic grocery to acknowledge, and cultivate, the new wave of Chinese immigrants replacing the old Latino and Jewish residents. To this day, the Chinese-Hispanic grocery operates just two short blocks to the west of 103 Orchard, and demonstrates the ethnic diversity that continues to shape the neighborhood. Happiness Deli, two blocks to the east, was opened in 1984 by English-speaking Yemeni immigrants who have since added Spanish to their language toolkit.

The stories that unfolded in the mix of stores along Orchard and Delancey Streets also played out in the hallways of 103 Orchard. Bella Epstein recalled her friendship with Maria diBenedetto, how she admired her white confirmation dress, and how the diBenedettos came over to watch—often wrestling shows—on their new Zenith television. The Puerto Rican Saez family found their apartment in 103 Orchard because their young son’s Italian friend—and fellow Boy Scout—told them about a vacant apartment. Mrs. Lau remembered how Mrs. Saez would leave extra bottles of milk at her door. The story of 103 Orchard allows us to trace the daily interactions that serve as the building blocks of a cosmopolitan city. The snapshot of one apartment building at a given moment also allows us to trace, examine, and analyze the larger social intersections pulling people beyond family or ethnic identity, helping them become part of something bigger—whether an urban or national identity, or both.

*Immigration Laws: Nativism and Inclusiveness:* Immigration laws have indelibly shaped the population of the Lower East Side, New York City, and the nation. Those laws have reflected shifting understandings of what it means to be an American. Historian John Higham noted that Americans have on the whole been expansive and hopeful: “In general the American people maintained a cocksure faith in themselves, in their boundless opportunities for improvement and acquisition, and in the self-perpetuating strength of their principles of freedom.” Rather

than basing a national identity in a specific background or faith, the Founding Fathers promoted the idea of a nation united by shared ideals and political frameworks. Higham nonetheless identified three nativist trends that arose chiefly in response to new waves of immigration: mid-19th-century anti-Catholicism; late 19th-century anti-radicalism; and an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century racial nationalism that idealized “Anglo-Saxons” as true Americans.

These sentiments played out in immigration laws that excluded various groups. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a response to extreme anti-Chinese sentiment, marked the first American exclusion of a “racial” group; it also barred Chinese immigrants already in the country from naturalization. By the 1910s, proponents of the idea that only Northern and Western Europeans could really grasp the concepts of democracy established a European racial hierarchy reflecting countries of origin that placed Anglo Saxons at the top and Jews and Italians at the bottom. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 embodied that racial hierarchy in law, privileging the immigration of Northern and Western Europeans and curtailing Southern and Eastern European immigration by using the 1890 census to set quotas. In *Impossible Subjects*, historian Mae Ngai points out that the law excluded Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and other Asians entirely as “racially ineligible for naturalized citizenship.”<sup>1</sup>

The Tenement Museum’s exhibit at 103 Orchard will present this narrative and explain how these sentiments arose; educators will explore with visitors how economic crises and the fear of the unfamiliar often stimulated racial nationalism. The exhibit will note that some voices spoke out for inclusion even in moments dominated by drives for exclusion. Historian Chin Jou explains, “There are impassioned defenses of a more inclusive, equitable vision of America even in the most reactionary climates.” In New York, as Jou showed, religious and political leaders joined Southern, Central, and Eastern European immigrants to protest 1920s quota laws, with

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<sup>1</sup> Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, p. 7.

20 of New York's 22 Democratic Congressmen issuing a public statement against Johnson-Reed: "We are underhoused, underconstructed and underdeveloped and are in sore need of those who are willing to do our work both skilled and hard and laborious." Brooklyn Congressman Emanuel Celler argued that immigrants shaped New York's daily life: "Suppose they [proponents of Johnson-Reed] had their way and we awoke one fine morning and found all our population of foreign origin departed. There would be no rolls for breakfast, no sugar for the coffee, no meat for the dinner—for practically all workers in foodstuffs are aliens. Milady would have to wear last year's coat, shoes and gloves as most wearing apparel factories would be closed."<sup>2</sup>

The horror of the Holocaust and the optimism of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s led to a more generous view of immigration. As chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Celler was able to rewrite the nation's immigration laws in 1965. The Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationalities Act abolished the national origins quota system and ended Asian exclusion, thus reshaping New York City's population: immigrants composed 18% of the city's population in 1970; 24% in 1980; and 33% in 2000. The repeal of the quota law could be seen in the population of 103 Orchard; Chinese immigrants accounted for more of its residents as Chinatown greatly expanded. The 1965 law, in effect, reflected a growing confidence that Americans could constitute themselves as a people on a non-racial basis. That this confidence is under challenge today makes it all the more important to tell this story.

*Labor and Employment:* New York's garment industry was as central to the lives of 103 Orchard Street's residents as it was to New York's economy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20th centuries, when it was the largest sector in New York City manufacturing. At the turn of the 20th century, 103 Orchard's Russian Jewish residents labored in sweatshops and larger factories, assembling

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<sup>2</sup> Chin Jou, "Contesting Nativism: The New York Congressional Delegation's Case against the Immigration Act of 1924," *Federal History Online* 3 (January 2011), p. 71.

affordable, ready-to-wear garments that clothed 80% of the nation's women. Joseph Marcus, the second owner of 103 Orchard, made his fortune as a garment manufacturer. When the 1924 immigration law cut off the supply of European labor, Puerto Rican migrants and African Americans began to enter the industry. Chinese and Dominican workers entered after 1965.

Apparel production was still important in 1980, even though manufacturing in general had decreased. All three of the families that will be portrayed in this exhibit stitched together new lives by working in the garment industry. Kalman Epstein worked as a presser when he arrived in New York, and later took over his uncle's dress shop. Both Ramonita Saez and Soo Ha Lau worked in Lower East Side sweatshops. The Orchard Street blocks on which all three families lived were famous for retail and wholesale garment shops in the 1960s and 1970s.

While garment industry jobs remained important for the residents of 103 Orchard, the industry of the 1950s through the 1970s differed greatly from the booming garment industry of 1900. What opportunities were available to mid and late 20<sup>th</sup>-century immigrants compared to those available earlier in the century? How did gender affect job prospects? The exhibit will provide an overview of the rise and fall of the garment industry, and explore how it shaped the lives of Jewish, Chinese and Puerto Rican families on a micro level.

*Education, The American Dream:* Like other Chinese garment workers, Mrs. Soo Ha Lau wanted to educate her children so that they could escape the needle trades; like most other immigrant parents, she relied on public schools. The Museum's oral histories include the recollections of Mr. Yu, a Chinese immigrant who arrived on Orchard Street in 1972 and was joined a year later by his wife and family. Mr. Yu worked in a sewing shop and the couple sent their daughters to public school. Mr. Yu recalled that the girls initially struggled to learn English and fit in with other students. He was concerned that they would forget Chinese. Mrs. Lau's daughter,

Theresa, remembered that her own (ultimately successful) struggle to learn English focused her interests on math, which was the same in every language; she became an accountant. Bella Epstein recalled her parents pinning their hopes for the future on her education; she became a nurse and then went on to raise children who became doctors and nurses. The Museum will use the theme of education to explore how various immigrant populations thought about and pursued the American Dream.

*Lived Religion*: Becoming American plays out in many ways: through clothing, language, occupation, education, and entertainment. Whether Sicilian or Chinese, Irish or German, Catholic, Buddhist or Jewish, many immigrants also became American by adapting their religious and cultural rituals and customs to their new environment, and by determining how to pass on their traditions to their children. Each family the Museum will present at 103 Orchard Street regularly attended worship services; each also decorated its home to reflect its faith: Mrs. Lau created a Buddhist shrine; Mrs. Saez decorated her home with crucifixes and rosaries; and the Epsteins affixed mezuzahs, tiny boxes holding Hebrew texts, on their doorposts.

Historians David Hall, Leigh Eric Schmidt, and Robert Orsi theorized and applied lived religion in the 1990s. The concept urges historians to pay attention to the “material circumstances in which specific instances of religious imagination arise and to which they respond.” Orsi’s *The Madonna of 115th Street* focused on the daily religious lives of Italian immigrants in Harlem, and showed how infrequent church attendance did little to hamper the zeal of Italian immigrants for the religious calendar and life cycle celebrations. The humanities theme of lived religion has helped us interpret the apartments of Italian and Jewish families at 97 Orchard, helping to uncover religious rituals among families who did not attend formal worship ceremonies. As we explore the lives of the Laus, Epsteins and Saezes, we will pay

particular attention to the religious rituals that unfolded in their homes. How did parents find meaning for religious rituals in new settings? How did parents make rituals meaningful to their children?

*Immigrant Foodways:* Historian Hasia Diner, writing about German, Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrant foodways, observes that “talking about food is a way of talking about family, childhood, and community.” Many of the Museum’s recreated apartments center around kitchens in which immigrant women labored to put food on the table. The Museum’s exhibits treat food preparation as a window onto how women managed budgets, shopped for bargains, and adapted recipes to new circumstances and ingredients. The Museum has found that kitchens are powerful places in which to convey immigrant stories; visitors respond profoundly to these stories and, in turn, share and connect their own.

The humanities theme of immigrant foodways allows us to showcase how daily family rituals come to life and to explore how immigrants preserved and adapted their cultures and traditions. In one of our interviews, the daughter of Puerto Rican migrants remembers urging her mother to make more “American” food. Her obliging mother made macaroni and cheese; but she served it atop *soffrito*, a traditional Puerto Rican onion/spices/tomato casserole base.

### **Interactive Media and the 103 Orchard Exhibit**

The Museum will continue to rely on its proven educator-led, open-dialogue approach tours at 103 Orchard Street, adding an innovative multi-media introduction about immigration legislation, New York’s changing population, the garment industry, and the other humanities themes discussed above.

The Museum is working with Local Projects, a leader in museum technology (National September 11 Memorial & Museum, National Museum of American Jewish History) to conceptualize and implement this multi-media component. We imagine visitors gathering in an empty apartment featuring projected timelines. One timeline will trace the physical and demographic changes of 103 Orchard from the 1880s to 2013; another will trace changes in immigration and the city's population. Visitors will press hot spots to retrieve facts, quotations, photographs, maps, historic film footage, and other primary sources. The interactive timeline will—with the guiding presence of the educator— spark discussion about broader immigration history trends and allow for a dramatic framing of the experience to come.

Timeline content is already under development and the Museum plans to pilot the timeline as a virtual tour on the Museum's website. The exhibit will take advantage of the flexibility inherent in content management systems, enabling educators to meet the needs of visitors of varying ages and experiences, from young school children on school tours to adults on public tours. The Museum has successfully experimented with projections and touch sensitive walls and surfaces in its new (NEH-supported) *Shop Life* exhibit, engaging visitors with otherwise inaccessible primary sources. The timeline at 103 Orchard Street will build on this practice, featuring short video interviews in which diverse New Yorkers describe how immigration laws shaped their lives and the lives of their families. It will allow the Museum to reach beyond the walls of the tenement and the specific stories of its featured immigrant families to help visitors understand how the rich and changing history of immigration affected individuals and families on a personal level. It will depict moments of inclusion and exclusion, and the development of a diverse and cosmopolitan city.

**Quality of Humanities Activities:** The Museum anchors its programming on the Lower East Side, a historic neighborhood which has served as a gateway to America for hundreds of

thousands of immigrants for more than 180 years. As noted, visitors participate in educator-led tours of six upper floor apartments and a series of basement shops in the Museum's National Historic Landmark tenement at 97 Orchard Street, experiencing different historical moments through the perspective of families who once lived there. Other program offerings include a series of neighborhood walking tours and a range of innovative programs and services such as *Shared Journeys*, a workshop series for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students; *Tenement Inspectors*, a living history program in which students learn about housing laws; *Tour & Discussion*, dialogue programs through which visitors discuss their tour experience and connect it to contemporary immigration issues; and *Tenement Talks*, free evening lectures, readings, panel discussions, films, and other programming designed to provide historical and contemporary perspectives on New York City's rich culture.

The Museum's permanent collection consists of 5,582 objects from the 97 Orchard Street building (architectural elements removed during restoration and objects left behind by residents), in addition to objects donated by former residents or their descendants. The study collection is made up of 3,370 objects purchased by, or donated to, the Museum to furnish the restored apartments. Other collections include the photograph collection (1,664 images), audio collection (495 recordings) and video collection (454 recordings). The collections are available to researchers upon request; the curatorial staff also conducts research on the behalf of researchers unable to visit.

The Museum is widely recognized for its achievements. Recent honors include two White House awards: the National Medal for Museum Service and the Preserve America Presidential Award. Also testifying to the Museum's achievement is its status as a National Park Service affiliated site, paired formally by Federal legislation with Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty within the National Parks of New York Harbor. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten

Gillibrand plan to introduce legislation to expand the Tenement Museum's National Park Service designation by including its second historic site at 103 Orchard Street. The proposed bill (Appendix A) and a letter from the National Park Service supporting this project (Appendix B) are attached.

The Museum is also an affiliated site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with which it has had a long and fruitful history. The National Trust partnered with the Museum when it identified the Lower East Side as "the most culturally important square mile in the United States." The Trust's citation noted that, "More of almost everything that is distinctively American has its roots here than anywhere else."

The National Endowment for the Humanities has long been an important partner in the Museum's work, helping to fund, for example, the scholars who took lead roles in planning and implementing its exhibits. The Museum has received 11 NEH grants since its founding in 1988, including, most recently, two awards from the Division of Public Programs, Interpreting America's Historic Places: a September 2010 implementation grant for \$350,000 to support the previously-mentioned *Shop Life* exhibit about immigrant entrepreneurship which opened in December 2012, and an April 2010 planning grant of \$40,000 to update and strengthen the Museum's public tours.

### **C. Use of NEH Funds**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum requests Challenge Grant funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities for design and construction that will prepare three additional floors of 103 Orchard Street for exhibit, program, and administrative space. The third floor will be readied for the new exhibit described in this proposal, featuring accurate

representations of tenement life from 1950 to 1980. Floors four and five will be reconfigured to house administrative offices, historical archives, and collections storage spaces. Work will also include replacement of the roof, which is 30 years beyond its useful life, and a historically sensitive reconstruction of the cornice. Funding will be used to bring all floors up to code with fire stairs and an extended internal sprinkler system, new mechanical systems and lighting, and an extension of the building's elevator to the upper floors. While alterations will impact some of the building's interiors, the Museum and its architects will work diligently to minimize disruptions to the building's external appearance.

**NEH funding will be used only for the construction work detailed above and for the purpose of rendering the building's upper floors usable. Funds for exhibit research, planning, design, fabrication, and installation are not part of this request.** Specific project plans are outlined in the Challenge Grant budget, as well as in a detailed budget and scope of work from the architect (Appendix C).

#### **D. Compliance with Section 106 and Davis Bacon Act**

103 Orchard Street is a contributing resource in the National Register Lower East Side Historic District as indicated on the attached maps (Appendix D). Work on this project will therefore be conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires federal agencies or private entities using federal funding to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in working on National Register listed properties. (The extension of National Park Service boundaries to include 103 Orchard Street, which the Museum now seeks through legislation, would similarly require Section 106 review for this project.) A letter from project architects Perkins Eastman informing the SHPO of the project and inviting their participation in the development of the project plan is attached (Appendix E). The Museum

has also received a commitment from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Appendix F) to collaborate on issues that may arise in a Section 106 review.

The project will adhere to the Davis Bacon Act of 1931, which established the requirement for paying prevailing wages on public works projects.

The Museum is also including its 103 Orchard Sourcebook as part of this request (Appendix G). The Sourcebook includes photos, maps, and specific information on the physical fabric of the building.

#### **E. Long Range Plans to Advance and Disseminate Humanistic Knowledge**

Interpreting post-1945 immigration extends the Tenement Museum's reach in two important ways. Chronologically, it brings the Museum's stories firmly into the realm of living memory, where oral history and archival evidence overlap. Spatially, it extends the Museum's innovative place-based model to a second tenement building, constructed at a later date and under a different regulatory regime, and expands opportunities to compare the changing conditions faced by immigrant families over time. Restoring three apartments into interpretive settings will allow the Museum to put a deeply personal, human face on the experiences of post-war Jewish, Chinese, and Puerto Rican newcomers. It will also enable the Museum to better serve visitors who identify with recent immigrant streams, something that will be of immediate benefit to the tens of thousands of New York City public school students who visit annually. The Museum will be able to draw on its more than 25 years of successful experience in creating these immersive exhibits. The research phase, underway now, includes:

- Research on residents and neighbors, including narratives of particular residents' lives.

This work will mirror the Museum's approach to the research on the families who inhabited 97 Orchard Street, albeit without such archival materials as the manuscript

census. As a result, we will rely more heavily on oral histories with former residents who have been identified through telephone directories, utilities records, rent rolls, and the like. The Museum has hired two part-time oral historians and undertaken a two-year neighborhood oral history program to conduct this research.

- Investigation of the tenement as a built environment. This work encompasses everything from a review of the building's original construction and significant alterations to technical analyses of the paint, wallpaper, floor coverings, and other surface finishes in particular apartments. Museum research will link the stories of residents to their physical settings, expanding outward to embrace the nested contexts of building, block, neighborhood, and city as a whole.
- Curatorial research on the material culture including the education, lived religion, and foodways of the three waves of immigrants to be represented. This research will utilize contemporary sociological, journalistic, and artistic representations as well as traditional historical sources.

Key personnel who will be involved in ensuring the veracity of the research and the dissemination of humanistic knowledge through this project are Morris Vogel, President of the Museum, and Annie Polland, Vice President for Programs & Education. Vogel has been President of the Museum since 2008. Previously, he was professor of history at Temple University for 30 years, where he also served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He has written or edited six books in American social history, and served as project director for several major NEH-funded initiatives. His PhD in history is from the University of Chicago.

Annie Polland, Vice President for Programs & Education at the Museum since 2009, oversees exhibits and interpretation. She is the author, with Daniel Soyer, of Emerging

Metropolis: New York Jews in the Age of Immigration (NYU Press), winner of the 2012 National Jewish Book Award. She received her PhD in History from Columbia University, and also served as Vice President of Education at the Museum at Eldridge Street, where she wrote Landmark of the Spirit (Yale University Press). She teaches at New York University. Their resumes are attached (Appendix H).

The Museum has received significant support from colleagues and scholars for this project, in addition to the previously referenced letters of support from the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, letters from two individual scholars are attached (Appendix I).

#### **F. Impact of the Challenge Grant**

Challenge Grant funds will be used specifically to renovate the third, fourth and fifth floors of 103 Orchard Street to increase exhibit, education, and administrative space, and to replace the roof and the cornice which are essential to the integrity of the structure. This work will result in a fully accessible building that meets life safety standards and complies with all relevant building codes. Perkins Eastman Architects, architects for the visitor and education center, are creating the preliminary project design and will have a complete cost estimate by December 2013. A final project design with construction documents will be ready by summer 2014. The bidding and contract award process will take place in fall 2014. The Museum expects to begin 18 months of construction in winter 2015, opening the new exhibits and spaces in summer 2016. This schedule was developed by Museum leadership in conjunction with Perkins Eastman and Kel-Mar Design, the contractor for the visitor and education center. The design and construction schedule reflects the architect's and contractor's deep knowledge of the building, and accommodates the Museum's schedule for research and planning.

The Tenement Museum currently derives 65% of its \$7.1 million (FY2013) operating costs from earned revenue; even with its newly opened *Shop Life* exhibit, limited capacity still requires the Museum to turn away thousands of visitors each year. The new post-World War II exhibit at 103 Orchard Street thus represent a significant financial opportunity in addition to being a programmatic necessity. Museum leadership believes that growth in earned revenue will more than offset a 17% growth in operating costs, which are projected to reach \$8.3 million by FY2016 due to increased building maintenance, education, and visitor services staff. An additional 50,000 visitors to the new exhibit at 103 Orchard alone will generate at least \$1 million in tour and shop revenue annually.

#### **G. Plans for Raising Funds**

The Tenement Museum's campaign to match the \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant will be part of a \$15 million capital campaign, scheduled to publicly launch in December 2013 to coincide with the announcement of the Challenge Grant award.

To prepare for a major capital campaign, the Museum engaged Raybin Associates to conduct a feasibility study in the spring of 2012. As part of their work, Raybin conducted 26 interviews, meeting with 17 board members, four former board members, two philanthropists, and three foundations that have been long-time supporters of the institution: The Louis and Anne Abrons Foundation, The Edith A. and Herbert H. Lehman Foundation, and The Leon Levy Foundation. There were also several meetings with the Museum president and vice presidents. Raybin's March 2012 report concludes that the Museum is poised for a successful campaign; it cites invigorated fundraising, including \$3.5 million in recent capital gifts for program and debt reduction; strong earned revenue from ticket sales and the Museum shop; and a vibrant new visitor center.

The Raybin report also recommended that three major pieces of work take place prior to the formal launch of the capital campaign: that the Museum build its development infrastructure to take on the demands of an increased fundraising effort; that it make a firm commitment to board development; and that it identify a strong pipeline of major donors for cultivation. In particular, Raybin recommended hiring a Vice President of Development to oversee fundraising efforts and spearhead the campaign. In April 2012, Stephanie Wilchfort was engaged to serve in this capacity. Prior to joining the Tenement Museum, Ms. Wilchfort held senior positions in fundraising and marketing at Sesame Workshop, including senior director of brand management and assistant vice president for major and individual giving. Earlier, she was director of development at WNYC Radio and deputy director for major gifts at WNET, New York's public television station. Ms. Wilchfort holds a master's degree in economic policy from Columbia University and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

In keeping with the Raybin recommendations, during the past year the Museum launched new individual and major giving programs, concentrating on board members and individual donors who have previously made major gifts and indicated enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the expansion project. As a result of this preliminary activity, \$5.8 million of the Museum's \$15 million goal has already been committed from board members, foundations (The Leon Levy Foundation and The David Berg Foundation) the City of New York, and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation.

Moving toward the December 2013 launch, the Museum is finalizing the capital campaign committee, completing the case for support, and cultivating an additional ten qualified prospects for six and seven figure gifts. The Museum also plans to add up to two new board members, with an aggressive board recruitment effort continuing through 2015. By the time the campaign concludes in 2018, it will have generated a total of \$15 million from the

following sources in addition to NEH: Board members (\$3 million), City of New York (\$1 million which does not include annual funding from the City), State of New York (\$500,000 in new monies) and corporations, foundations, and individuals (\$10.6 million.) Of these funds, \$6.5 million will be allocated to exhibits, \$5.5 million to debt repayment, \$2 million to preservation and other capital activities, and \$1 million to the Museum's endowment, making possible the expansion discussed throughout this proposal and solidifying the Museum's financial position for years to come. Projected cash flows have been provided (Appendix C).

Above and beyond the financial successes noted above, a recent messaging exercise with trustees and major donors facilitated by an outside team led to this comment on the Museum's capacity to undertake this campaign:

*Few organizations understand themselves better than the Tenement Museum.*

*In almost 15 years of working on messaging with organizations of all kinds – for-profit, not-for-profit, and educational institutions – we have encountered no organization that is clearer than the Tenement Museum about what it is, what it does, how it does it, and the benefits it produces. Though numerous themes encompassing many aspects of the Museum's appeal and impact emerged from the interviews and the messaging discussion, a consensus also emerged that the current Mission Statement encapsulates those themes at a high level. That consensus and the passion and eloquence of the Trustees and staff during the discussion indicate an organization that is aligned on the overall mission, leaders who genuinely own it, and an institution that lives it every day.*

## **H. Conclusion**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum immerses visitors in a rare authentic experience, relaying the quintessential New York City story through the lives of immigrants, the homes they lived in, the shops in which they worked, and the neighborhood that they built. In doing so, it tells America's most important story: how we came to be a people. In its 25-year history, the Tenement Museum has woven the stories of immigrant families into an exploration of substantive humanities themes, and in the process has become one of the city's most beloved institutions.

A Challenge Grant from the NEH will allow the Museum to build out three upper floors at 103 Orchard Street, preparing the structure for an exhibit extending the story of immigration into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibit will present narratives about recent immigration in the actual homes in which Holocaust survivors, Puerto Rican migrants, and Chinese immigrants made new lives, and will explore how these different groups interacted in the neighborhood and in the city. That all three families earned their livelihoods in the garment trades will also allow the Museum to trace the story of that economic sector from its 19th-century origins to its late 20<sup>th</sup> century decline. The new exhibits will use sophisticated interactive technologies as well as educator-led tours to explore the evolution of both the American Dream and the immigration laws which determined who could become an American. Construction made possible with NEH Challenge Grant funds will also allow the Museum to create offices and program space on the fourth and fifth floors that will meet its growing needs.

With the national conversation about immigration at center stage, this new project gives the Tenement Museum an extraordinary opportunity to explore how our open society, our democratic institutions, our cultural creativity, and our economic vitality owe to our experience as an immigrant nation. A \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant will be invaluable in helping the

Museum advance this intellectually ambitious new project, and spur \$1.5 million in non-federal funding to help launch this exciting next chapter in its history.

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
Challenge Grant Request Budget**

<b>Total NEH Funds Requested</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
Year 1	\$ 200,000
Year 2	\$ 100,000
Year 3	\$ 100,000
Year 4	\$ 100,000
<b>Total Non-Federal Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>
Year 1	\$ 600,000
Year 2	\$ 300,000
Year 3	\$ 300,000
Year 4	\$ 300,000
<b>Total Grant Funds (NEH plus match)</b>	<b>\$ 2,000,000</b>

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
Budget Summary for Upper Floors, Roof, and Cornice at 103 Orchard Street**

<b>Planned Expenditures*</b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Construction	\$ 4,396,449
Soft costs	\$ 737,000
Contingency (10% of construction and soft costs)	\$ 513,345
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,646,794</b>

*\*Totals omit exhibit, planning, and installation costs which are budgeted at \$1,550,000*

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum**

**Budget Detail for Construction and Renovation of Upper Floors, Roof and Cornice at 103 Orchard Street**

<b><u>Construction</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b>
General Requirements	\$ 270,331
Selective Removals & Demolition	\$ 238,094
Asbestos Abatement	\$ 63,660
Masonry	\$ 520,730
Miscellaneous Steel	\$ 37,600
Rough Carpentry	\$ 244,512
Architectural Millwork	\$ 59,850
Waterproofing	\$ 13,500
Insulation	\$ 90,000
Firestopping	\$ 35,000
Membrane Roofing	\$ 190,730
Flashing & Sheet metal	\$ 27,072
Skylights/Windows	\$ 51,400
Joint Sealants	\$ 15,000
Metal Doors & Frames	\$ 15,000
Wood Doors & Frames	\$ 42,900
Hardware	\$ 33,150
Lath & Plaster	\$ 40,000
Gypsum Board	\$ 239,208
Tile	\$ 25,272
Wood Flooring	\$ 234,600
Painting	\$ 213,603
Toilet & Bath Accessories	\$ 18,000
Elevator	\$ 150,000
Sprinkler	\$ 78,750
Plumbing	\$ 47,500
HVAC	\$ 375,000
Electrical	\$ 272,500
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,642,962</b>
General Conditions	\$ 314,990
Insurance	\$ 127,571
Fee	\$ 218,997
Bond	\$ 91,979
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 4,396,499</b>

**LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
INSTITUTIONAL FACT SUMMARY**

**RELEVANT FACTS & STATISTICS**

**History and Mission:** The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, founded in 1988, preserves and interprets the history of immigration through the personal experiences of the generations of newcomers who settled in and built lives on Manhattan's Lower East Side, America's iconic immigrant neighborhood. The Museum forges emotional connections between visitors and immigrants past and present and enhances appreciation for the profound role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America's evolving national identity.

**Governance and Administration:** The Museum is governed by a 20-member Board of Trustees comprised of local corporate, cultural and community leaders. Morris Vogel, PhD, President of the Museum serves as its chief executive officer. The Museum has five program and administrative departments, each of which is headed by a vice president: they are education and programs; administration; development; marketing/public relations, and retail/events.

**Physical Facilities:** The Museum has three facilities: 97 Orchard Street, 10,200 square feet of exhibition space, educational facilities, and collections storage; 91 Orchard Street, 8,100 square feet of office and programming space; and 103 Orchard Street, 20,577 square feet with 10,496 square feet currently being used for office, program, and shop space.

**Humanities Staff Size & Composition:** The Museum has 116 full- and part-time employees, 51% of whom are engaged in humanities activities as educators, curators, historians, and researchers.

**Humanities Collections:** The Museum's permanent collection consists of 5,582 objects from the 97 Orchard Street building (architectural elements removed during restoration and objects left behind by residents), in addition to objects donated by former residents or their descendants. The study collection is made up of 3,370 objects purchased by, or donated to, the Museum to furnish the restored apartments. Other collections include the photograph collection (1,664 images), audio collection (495 recordings) and video collection (454 recordings).

**Accreditation and Affiliations:** The Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums. The Museum is an affiliated site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; it is also a National Park Service affiliated site, paired formally by Federal legislation with Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty within the National Parks of New York Harbor. Senators Schumer and Gillibrand plan to introduce legislation to incorporate 103 Orchard Street within the boundaries of the National Park Service site.

**DATA ON RECENT HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES**

**Program Attendance Past Two Years** 183,000 (FY 2012) and 176,000 (FY 2011)

**Percentage of Humanities Offerings:** 100%

**Size and Nature of Population Served:** The Museum serves a national and global audience. Attendance of 183,000 in FY12 included 42,000 students in grades K-12.

**Cost to Participants:** Admission for school groups is free or subsidized. Museum tours range from \$22 -\$25 for adults and \$20 - \$22 for seniors and students. Specialty walking tours are priced accordingly.

**Number of Publications Produced:** The Museum's recent publications include *A Tenement Story: A Guide for Immigrants in New York City* and *Immigrant Connections*, a workbook based on *Shared Journeys*, the Museum's award-winning ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program.

**Evidence of Success:** The Museum has received two Presidential honors: the National Medal for Museum Service and the Preserve America Presidential Award. Visitors come from 50 states and over 50 countries, and attendance has increased by 40% in the past five years. TripAdvisor rankings consistently place the Museum among New York City's top 15 attractions, with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick Collection as the city's only other museums to achieve that standing.