

# FENIMORE ART MUSEUM

Education Department

Project Proposal for 2019 Upstate Institute Summer Field School

## **Introduction**

Fenimore Art Museum seeks a motivated student to conduct education program research and assistance during the summer of 2019, under the direction of Kevin Gray, Manager of Arts Education. Fenimore Art Museum is dedicated to welcoming and connecting people to our shared cultural heritage through exhibitions and programs that engage, delight and inspire. The Fenimore is committed to presenting an extraordinary range of art to foster a deep appreciation of visual creativity and its cultural and historical context. Through dynamic exhibitions, innovative programs and engaging theatrical performances, the Fenimore will inspire visitors to appreciate and enjoy a diverse range of artistic expression, thus fostering a better understanding of humankind. Fenimore Art Museum will be recognized as one of the nation's premier mid-size American art museums. Contact info for Kevin Gray, Manager of Arts Education, is [k.gray@fenimoreart.org](mailto:k.gray@fenimoreart.org), or (607) 547-1510.

## **Project Description**

The research question Fenimore Art Museum would like to explore is, how can our museum become a stronger educational resource for children, families, and schools in rural, economically depressed areas throughout central New York? The student researcher will both assist the Education Department staff with existing on-site educational programs to experience museum work first-hand and interact with our audience. They will also conduct research on the methods other similar museums in rural areas have developed to engage these audiences, as well as investigate regional community groups and organizations to determine how meaningful partnerships might be built or strengthened. A final research report will include the students' findings, including potential program ideas and organization contacts.

## **Statement of Benefits**

Fenimore Art Museum is situated in Otsego County, which is among the most economically depressed counties in New York state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of residents living below the poverty line is higher than the national average. The research conducted by this student will assist the museum, an important cultural institution with unique resources, with developing successful methods for making our resources available and meaningful to people of the region who may otherwise not have access to them.

**Logistics**

We envision this project to be a full-time position, with duties shared between on-site program assistance and meetings/discussions with staff, and remote research and writing projects. The student will be encouraged to utilize the museum's own resources as well as external resources such as educational institutions and organizations which work with underprivileged populations in central NY.

**Training and Skills**

Candidates for this position should be task-oriented, have excellent oral and written communication skills, and have an interest in both independent research and working directly with the public. The selected student will have an opportunity to attend Education staff meetings, engage with staff members of other museum departments, interact with museum visitors, and gain a greater understanding of what it is like to be a museum professional.