

Welcome to Local History!--Fundraising and Exhibit Development 101

Oneida County History Center
1608 Genesee Street
Utica, NY 13502
315-735-3642

The mission of the Oneida County History Center is to preserve and promote the rich heritage of Oneida County and the greater Mohawk Valley region. The Center makes this heritage available via collections, publications, and public programming activities designed to reach students, local citizens, and all other interested constituents.

Contact: Brian J. Howard, Executive Director

bhoward@oneidacountyhistory.org

Project Description

The Oneida County History Center is a private not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1876. Its activities include collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and archival materials that relate the county's history to the general public. The Center operates a walk-in research library, bookstore, and hosts two to four public programs each month. It does all of this without the benefit of government support, and instead relies on private and foundation investment to sustain itself.

In 2019 the Center has identified projects for which it seeks grant funding and/or private sponsorships. Among these are:

- Funding to acquire and install a new map storage system;
- Acquisition of collections supplies (acid free boxes, file folders, tissue paper, etc...) for the research library and artifact collections;
- Two to three new computers and operating systems;
- Capital improvements to the Center's HVAC and heating systems;

New exhibits are also needed this year. In addition to grantwriting, this project involves the research, design, and installation of a small scale exhibit in the History Center's main gallery. Interactivity is a priority, as is affiliated public programming (lecture, film, podcast, PowerPoint presentation, theatrical or musical production).

We are seeking a Fellow interested in a museum, archive, or public history career. At the end of the summer he/she will have gained practical experience in areas they need to work in these fields.

Regional/Organizational Benefits

These projects help the History Center advance its public outreach and provide new avenues of support for future endeavors. This is in keeping with the History Center's mission to preserve and promote the history of the greater Mohawk Valley.

A successful internship helps the History Center preserve its collections, ensuring their utility long into the future. Keeping technologically current is necessary for the Center to function in the public interest—new computers support this effort. New exhibits and programs inform visitors and enhance their appreciation of local history. All of these efforts reinforce the History Center's relevance to, and place in, the community.

Logistical Considerations

Our interest is in seeing a full time effort put toward this project for a period of ten weeks. As a dual purpose (fundraising and exhibit) project, a majority of the work will take place at the History Center. Some activities (ex.—report writing, text development, photo selection, etc...) may take place on campus at the Fellow's discretion.

Brian Howard, OCHC Executive Director, will provide general supervision and project oversight. He is responsible for all aspects of the History Center's operation, and will assess, with input from staff and project volunteers, the Fellow's progress. Interaction with our small but motivated volunteer pool is also expected.

The Fellow will need to provide his/her own means of transportation to and from Utica. The center will be open for him/her between 8:30AM and 4:30PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Training & Skills

The optimal candidate will have a specific interest in museum, archive, or public history work, and a basic understanding of United States history. This experience is structured to be a 'real world' introduction into the museum field.

The Fellow should also be:

- interested in gaining experience along a broad range of museum-specific activities including collections management, interpretation, fundraising, grant writing, and basic exhibits development;
- well-versed in social media and able to provide regular updates and/or interesting information to the public via a platform of their choice.
- possess effective written and verbal communication skills;
- a 'self starter', requiring basic guidance, but can work without supervision once given a direction.

Please direct any questions or comments to Brian Howard, OCHC Executive Director. Thank you for your interest.