

Grant Application: NC Museums Council Annual Conference

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Year Founded

Mission Statement

Operating Budget \$306,136

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Brief Description Museum Assistant Hannah Gibbs will attend the NC Museums Council annual conference in April 2024 in Cherokee, NC.

Discipline 13 Humanities,

Dates April 7, 2024 through April 8, 2024

Total Project Cost \$967

Request Amount \$484

PROJECT DETAILS

Mission & Presenting/Programming History

Describe your organization's mission and presenting/programming history.

The Mitford Museum is North Carolina's newest literary landmark. Founded in 2020 by #1 New York Times bestselling author, Jan Karon, the museum narrates the ways in which the small town of Hudson, NC, helped influence Jan's life and work. Often called her 'book without covers,' the museum is a place of common ground, where people from varied backgrounds can come together to feel welcomed, cared for, and at home. In its first six months of operation the museum welcomed visitors from all 50 states and abroad.

Our mission at The Mitford Museum is to advance the common good through literacy, creativity, and community. Our objectives include:

- Delivering learner-centered programs and projects.
- Enhancing literacy skills in youth and adults including those with dyslexia.
- Providing annual awards to outstanding young creatives.
- Preserving and celebrating the history of Caldwell County, NC.
- Serving as a worldwide community for fans of the Mitford series.
- Supporting North Carolina's literary heritage.
- Bringing economic vitality to the foothills region of NC.

At The Mitford Museum, we recognize that everyone has a story. We've identified one of our primary purposes as ensuring that those stories are heard, appreciated, and passed along. We do that by seeing, hearing, and supporting our community in a variety of ways. Whether we're hosting a tea to support the

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NC branch of the International Dyslexia Association, offering a free reading program for children in the community, or preserving oral histories for future generations, we strive to make sure everyone we encounter feels seen, heard, and supported.

While most of the daily visitors to the museum are fans of the Mitford series, our non-profit intent is to serve and support those living in Hudson, Caldwell County, and the region. We are doing this in multiple ways. The museum:

- Supports economic development by bringing tourism to the area as fans travel to visit “Mitford.” We welcomed 2,000 visitors from all 50 states and abroad in our first year.
- Supports, inspires, and encourages the creative arts. We host an annual literary weekend with a writing contest for unpublished NC writers (youth and adult categories). And in 2023 we launched the Candace Freeland Photography of Merit Award for young photographers up to the age of 18.
- Supports literacy and education with a summer reading program and partnerships with the NC branch of the International Dyslexia Association as well as Caldwell County Smart Start.
- Preserves local history through museum displays as well as our new Oral History Library launching in 2024 with the help of StoryCorps.

Planned Activities Description

Provide a description of your professional development need (include details about the project, event, or planned activities) or the artist planning visit (include details about the itinerary/agenda).

At The Mitford Museum we have a staff of two responsible for administration, events, and curatorial services. Museum Assistant Hannah Gibbs has a degree in history and is currently working on a master’s degree in museum services. We plan to send her to the NC Museums Council annual conference in Cherokee, NC, in April 2024. The conference offers a variety of educational sessions, networking opportunities, and tours of other area museums. Attending offers Hannah not only the opportunity to learn more about best practices in a museum setting but also to build important connections and find opportunities for partnering with other NC museums.

Goals & Benefits

Describe the goals and the anticipated benefits of the planned activities or agenda.

Our specific, measurable goals include:

- Attending at least four workshops/sessions in topics pertinent to our work at The Mitford Museum.
- Exchanging information with at least five other museum professionals who have the potential to provide support, feedback, and/or advice as we continue to strengthen our museum.
- Visiting at least two other museums and making note of best practices, techniques, and opportunities that we can use or learn from at our museum.
- Proposing at least one new partnership opportunity between The Mitford Museum and another organization in attendance at the conference.

Activities Align Description

Explain how the activities fit your role and responsibilities within the organization. Explain why you need this particular activity at this time and why financial assistance is needed.

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Hannah's role at the museum includes managing the visitor experience, coordinating volunteers, assisting with special events, and managing curatorial operations. As she works on her master's degree in museum services, we are eager to support her in learning as much as possible about museum operations and other museums in our network. As many small museums struggle to make ends meet, we recognize the importance of staying informed and of working with other museums in mutual support. Our current budget includes a line item for training but not enough to cover the cost of a two-day conference that requires travel and an overnight stay. Assistance from South Arts will allow us to support and encourage Hannah in learning more about museums while bringing that knowledge and new connections back to Hudson, NC.

Professional Development – Past Participation

If this application is for staff's professional development, has your organization participated in this activity or event in the past

No

End of Application