

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Deena Pyle, 801.201.4300, pyle@utahhumanities.org

Media Contact:

Alyssa Hickman Grove, 801.236.7548, agrove@utah.gov

Utah Division of Arts & Museums' Office of Museum Services in partnership with Utah Humanities Receives NEH Grant to Preserve Utah's Humanities Collections

Salt Lake City, Utah, February 9, 2021 – The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a three-year grant to the Utah Community Preservation Program, a partnership created by the Utah Division of Arts & Museums' Office of Museum Services and Utah Humanities' Center for Community Heritage.

The NEH received 29 eligible submissions to its Preservation and Access Education and Training program and awarded grants to only 11 of the proposals. As one of the 11 awardees, the Utah Community Preservation Program is positioned to provide local and national leadership in the cultural sector.

The Utah Community Preservation Program will support statewide efforts to preserve and improve access to humanities collections by offering support and technical assistance to Utah's museums and collecting institutions, including grant funding, training, onsite assessments, and mentored project assistance in a wide range of museum operations, preservation, and interpretation topics.

The program will preserve and improve access to Utah's humanities collections through two primary means:

- **Offer Virtual and On-Site Education and Training.** The program will offer reliable, regular calendar of virtual and regional on-site training activities specifically targeted to small museums/collecting institutions from rural areas throughout Utah.
- **Develop a Community Preservation Team.** Using community-based approach to establish a statewide network of personnel trained in collections care best practices, this project will develop and support a Community Preservation Team which will connect stewards from small, rural areas to professionals and colleagues from around the state.

The program addresses a statewide challenge expressed by Jodi Graham, Executive Director of Utah Humanities: *"This capacity-building work occurs in a challenging environment. Utah's 250+ museums (mostly small, volunteer-run) face access and turnover issues that pose real dangers to their collections. Without a state history museum, these distributed collections comprise the core of Utah's cultural legacy."*

Victoria Panella Bourns, Director of the Utah Division of Arts & Museums, sums up the critical nature of these activities: *"We are very proud of this work, and think this project will be a boon to our museum community. This will help museums care for important collections that tell Utah's diverse story. The competitive nature of this grant demonstrates the professionalism, experience, and knowledge inherent in the staff at the Utah Division of Arts & Museums and Utah Humanities."*

The portion of the program funded by the NEH will end in early 2024, but will continue as a program offering guided and sustained by Utah Field Services, which is a partnership between Utah Division of Arts & Museums' Office of Museum Services and Utah Humanities' Center for Community Heritage.



The Utah Community Preservation Program has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

About the UA&M Office of Museum Services: The Office of Museum Services' mission is to advance the value of museums within Utah and to enable the broadest physical, intellectual and emotional access to collections and programs. The Office assists Utah museums in improving their ability to: care for and manage collections, develop quality educational resources, provide access to collections for research, identify and successfully compete for financial resources. For more information, visit www.museums.utah.gov.

About Utah Humanities: Utah Humanities empowers Utahns to improve their communities through active engagement in the humanities. UH is funded by the Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts, and Parks Fund, the State of Utah, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and through gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Each year, Utah Humanities supports hundreds of educational and cultural programs throughout Utah. For more information, visit www.utahhumanities.org.

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