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IMLS 2009 Grants for African American History and Culture

Philadelphia, October 30, 2009

Washington, DC. On July 21, 2009, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded $1.31 million to 11 organizations dedicated to preserving the history of African American life from the period of slavery to the present day as part of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture (AAHC) program.

Since 2006, AAHC grants have helped African American museums and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) build capacity by supporting professional training, technical assistance, internships, and expert consultations. The grant program is authorized by the National Museum of African American History and Culture Act and developed in consultation with the Council and Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAHHC).

"African American history is American history, and the recipients of this year's African American History and Culture grants understand that they are cultivating the next generation of stewards of our collective American story," said Anne-Imelda Radice, Director of IMLS. "IMLS is proud to support their work."

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has announced that in July 2009 it awarded $1.31 million to 11 organizations "dedicated to preserving the history of African American life from the period of slavery to the present day." The Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program has been developed in consultation with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. The 2009 grantees include: Black Archives History and Research Foundation (Miami, FL), Maryland African American Museum Corporation (Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore, MD), Living Classrooms Foundation (Baltimore, MD), BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center (Indianola, MS), American Jazz Museum (Kansas City, MO), Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant History (Brooklyn, NY), Afro-American Cultural Center (Charlotte, NC), Ohio Historical Society's National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center (Wilberforce, OH), South Carolina State U's Stanback Museum (Orangeburg, SC), National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis, TN), and Northwest African American Museum (Seattle, WA).
In addition to grant making, IMLS works closely with the National Museum of African American History and Culture to convene an annual meeting for past grantees to share lessons learned and strengthen networks. On June 25-26, representatives of 16 current AAHC grantee institutions met in Washington to share the successes and challenges in implementing their IMLS-funded projects with their peers and IMLS staff. Kinshasha Holman Conwill, Deputy Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, and IMLS Director Radice both spoke to the group.

Projects highlighted at the meeting included a national profile of African American Museums; a project to build institutional capacity and sustainability of African American museums throughout Florida; and a series of workshops and a summer internship program designed to benefit African American museums in the Baltimore area. Project descriptions and additional information are available on the IMLS website, http://www.imls.gov/news/2009/072109_list.shtm.