

Museum on Main Street *Voices and Votes*

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities is honored to once again partner with the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street program to host one of its traveling exhibits, *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America*. The exhibit, which explores American democracy from the earliest days of the republic to today, will tour six sites in New Jersey between March 26, 2022, and January 8, 2023.

NJCH seeks applications from New Jersey's community colleges to serve as host sites for the exhibit during its tour of the state. This request for proposals offers information on what is required for host sites, what assets NJCH will provide to hosting institutions, and how to apply.

ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

When American revolutionaries waged a war for independence, they took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. They embraced a radical idea of establishing a government that entrusted the power of the nation not in a monarchy, but in its citizens. That great leap sparked questions that continue to impact Americans:

- Who has the right to vote?
- What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens?
- Whose voices will be heard?
- How do you participate as a citizen?
- How do we encourage more people to participate in our democracy?

Voices and Votes: Democracy in America is a springboard for discussions about those very questions and how they are reflected in local stories. Our democracy demands action, reaction, vision, and revision. From revolution and suffrage to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story – the story of democracy in America. (Courtesy of museumonmainstreet.org/VoicesVotes)

ABOUT MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

Voices and Votes: Democracy in America is a portable exhibit developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service through their Museum on Main Street (MoMS) initiative.

MoMS exhibits are available exclusively to the fifty-six state and jurisdictional humanities councils, who work with local partners to host the exhibit at diverse locations around the state. Easy-to-install, these exhibitions are designed for sites that may not have any experience with hosting exhibitions but do have a desire to engage their communities in the content of the exhibit. The ease of participation and widespread recognition of the Smithsonian Institute name make Museum on Main Street exhibits an incredible opportunity for host organizations to reach new audiences, raise visibility, and use the humanities to explore topics of importance to a wide range of communities.

HOSTING VOICES AND VOTES

Each host site will display the exhibit for a period of about six weeks on the following timeline:

- Site 1: 3/26/2022-5/7/2022
- Site 2: 5/14/2022-6/25/2022
- Site 3: 7/2/2022-8/13/2022
- Site 4: 8/20/2022-10/1/2022

- Site 5: 10/8/2022-11/19/2022
- Site 6: 11/26/2022-1/7/2023

The exact opening and closing dates of the exhibit at each site will be finalized once the overall travel schedule has been determined.

Hosts will also produce programming that links the subject matter of the national exhibit to the history, culture, and concerns of their local New Jersey communities. One of these programs will be provided by NJCH as part of a broader, statewide exploration of the exhibit themes. The program will be 60-90 minutes and participation in that program is required of all host sites.

In addition, each site will have the opportunity to apply for funding from NJCH to support the development and implementation of (optional) additional programs or exhibit content. This additional programming must be publicly-oriented and seek to connect the broader national narratives explored in the exhibit to local stories or interests. NJCH will host a training for all MoMS host sites that will provide examples of these types of programs and information about how they might be implemented. Applying host sites should think about how the exhibit themes might connect to local interests and how conversations about democracy and voting shape their community's worldview, as those areas will be prime consideration for additional programming.

Programs and exhibits become dynamic when members of the community are invited to actively engage as participants and collaborators. NJCH strongly encourages host sites to involve community members in program planning, with particular attention to whose voices are left out of our national narratives. Organizations might engage the community by working with them to determine the site's exhibit or program topics, involve them in design and fabrication, or enlist their help with PR and further outreach. We also encourage programs that allow community members to contribute content, share ideas, and express themselves. As you consider applying to host *Voices and Votes*, think about who else might be interested in this exhibit. What campus organizations have an interest in this topic? How about local nonprofits or community organizations? MoMS exhibits can be a great opportunity to deepen existing relationships or to meet new community partners.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOST SITES

NJCH looks forward to continuing our partnership with New Jersey's excellent community colleges to host the *Voices and Votes* exhibit. Any of the state's eighteen community colleges are welcome to apply, assuming they have the physical capacity to host the exhibition and are willing to participate in all aspects of the program.

The following list summarizes requirements for displaying *Voices and Votes*:

- The exhibit must be displayed in an enclosed interior space that is not a hallway, corridor, or passageway.
- The site must provide at least 25 hours per week that any member of the public could visit the exhibit in a handicap accessible location with bathroom facilities available for visitors.
- The exhibit must be under continuous surveillance during public hours and locked when it is not open to the public.
- The exhibit consists of 6 free-standing kiosks with one interactive digital kiosk. It requires 650 square feet of space and 8-foot ceilings (minimum), as well as four extension cords and access to electricity. (You must provide extension cords; cord covers are provided.)
- More gallery space may be required if you intend to create additional exhibitions (optional). Many *Voices and Votes* hosts have created very effective local exhibitions using extremely limited space, such as by using the walls around the exhibit to display photos, text, or documents, or to provide a space for visitor comments or reflection.
- All tools needed to install the exhibit come with it other than a stepstool or ladder. Installation will require at least 4 people (up to 6) and take 3-6 hours, not including breaks. Same for deinstallation after the exhibit closes.

- When packed, the crates containing the exhibition weight 150-300 pounds. They fit inside a normal elevator (do not require a freight elevator). If they need to be moved upstairs, they can be lifted with a few strong people or they can be unpacked and pieces moved individually.
- Gallery space does not need to be climate-controlled, but does need to be clean, cool (below 75 degrees F) and dry. Excessive humidity (above 65%) can damage some of the graphics.
- Direct sunlight can fade the panels, so gallery spaces with windows must use blinds or other light blockers to limit direct sunlight. Being able to keep the exhibit in the dark (no sunlight and no electric light) for a portion of each day outside of open hours is ideal.
- 300 square feet of storage space for exhibition crates (on site or off). Crates may be stacked once they are empty.

Upon selection, NJCH will provide each host site with additional information about exhibit layout and specific dimensions.

In addition to having the physical capacity to host the exhibit, any college who wishes to serve as a host site must fulfill the following requirements:

- Provide a staff member to serve as the site director at your institution. This person is required to attend the two NJCH *Voices & Votes* workshops and any other meetings that may be deemed necessary throughout the process.
- Develop and present supplemental programming and activities in their community during the exhibit. The only required program will be provided by NJCH; funding to support additional program development will be made available to each host site.
- Track and report the value of the time, services, and materials your organization spent, donated, or received to host this exhibit and its programs.
- Complete a final report after your exhibit period is over that will include answers to narrative questions about your experience, a budget report, and any other evaluation materials required by NJCH or the Smithsonian Institution. Every effort will be made to ensure that reporting requirements are not onerous for host institutions.

All host sites will receive the following as part of their exhibit package from NJCH:

- Free exhibit rental.
- \$2500 for each site to defray hosting costs. This funding can be used to cover costs such as installation and deinstallation costs, security, staff coordination costs, marketing/PR, etc.
- Publicity materials including posters, press kits, and banner.
- Wall-to-wall fine art insurance coverage, with standard exclusions, for the exhibit during both transit and display.
- Free exhibit shipping, arranged in consultation with each host site.
- An Exhibitor Kit covering installation, publicity, development, and education materials.
- A statewide storytelling program based on exhibit themes that will travel to all six exhibit locations and beyond (all host sites are required to host this program at least once).
- Two trainings: one on exhibit installation and one on program development.
- Access to an exhibit scholar as well as NJCH staff for ongoing questions about hosting the exhibit and additional program development.
- Additional funding to support other exhibit-related programs that you may wish to develop for your site (such as a companion exhibit, film or book discussion, public talk or series of talks, archival projects, community forums, etc.). This funding is guaranteed to each host site but the exact amount will be determined once programming has been set and will require each site to provide a program plan and budget.

Basic information about the exhibit can be found at <https://museumonmainstreet.org/VoicesVotes>.

Detailed information about the exhibit, including shipping information, detailed size and weight dimensions, exhibit text, program ideas, educational resources, photos, and much more: https://museumonmainstreet.org/content/resources?field_resource_exhibition_tid=256. This resource can be filtered by multiple criteria and provides a comprehensive picture of hosting a MoMS exhibit.

APPLICATION PROCESS

NJCH uses a system called Foundant for application and administration of grants and other program awards. You can access the system at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=njcfth>. We recommend that you bookmark this URL for easy access.

If you have applied for a grant or other program since September 2020, chances are you have already created a login. If you do not, you can create one from the application page. After creating your login, you will be required to enter basic organizational information before you are able to access the application.

Once you are logged into your account, you will see MoMS-Voices and Votes as an option on the Apply page. Click on that link to review and submit an application.

Please note: we know that your outreach and programming plans may be preliminary at this point. That is okay. We would like to get a feeling for the types of work you might be interested in doing, partnership and outreach opportunities, and/or how you have handled exhibits or programs like this in the past. Nothing needs to be set in stone at the point of application. Answers to the application questions will help us better evaluate the value of this exhibit and its attendant programs to your institution, helping us to make final decisions about the six sites that will be selected.

Deadline for applications: Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Notification of selected sites: Friday, August 13, 2021

NJCH hosted an informational session about this opportunity on June 29, 2021. You can find a recording of that session on the Resources page of NJCH's website: <https://njhumanities.org/resources/> and click on "Webinars and Materials."

If you have any questions about the program or application, or if you to speak to NJCH staff before applying, please contact Gigi Naglak, Director of Programs at gnaglak@njhumanities.org or 609-695-4409. You are also welcome to visit the webpages developed for NJCH's last MoMS exhibit, [Water/Ways](#), to get a better idea of how MoMS exhibits and associated programs make their way around the state.