

IMLS HERITAGE CENTERS SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc., Essex County Historical Society
and the Champlain Valley Heritage Network (CVHN)

Project Description

The Institute of Museum and Library Studies (IMLS) Heritage Centers Sustainability Program is for building capacity and sustainability of heritage centers located within the *Lakes to Locks Passage* byway corridor. The primary focus is for the staff and volunteers of the eight Heritage Centers in Essex County which serve the unique needs and characteristics of their communities. Each center has a unique theme for its collection and programs. Three communities chose to locate their byway heritage centers at existing museums: the Adirondack History Center, the Iron Center, and the Ticonderoga Heritage Museum. The Town of Willsboro constructed a new facility for its heritage center. Other communities created their heritage centers through adaptive re-use of historic buildings: the Essex Heritage Center, Lake Champlain Visitor Center, North Country Underground Railroad Center, and the Westport Heritage House.

The IMLS professional trainings specifically address the needs of the eight heritage centers in the Lake Champlain region, but staff and volunteers from other museums, historical societies and heritage organizations within the Lakes to Locks Passage corridor are invited to participate in the training workshops and roundtables. Each community has unique needs for developing a facility, but they all share the challenges of how to sustain operations and establish high quality services. The American Association of Museums (AAM) and American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) statements and standards for best practices have been chosen for improving the delivery of programs at the heritage centers. The AAM and AASLH standards for public trust and accountability, mission and planning, leadership and organizational structure, collections stewardship, education and interpretation, financial stability, and facilities and risk management clearly apply to the needs identified for the heritage centers.

The overarching need for the heritage centers is to receive training and technical assistance through a three-pronged effort: professional trainings for operations and management using AAM and AASLH standards and an administrative circuit rider to implement and reinforce the trainings; refinement of the byway visitor information and interpretive plan with the services of an interpretive circuit rider to develop the cultural heritage infrastructure through programs, exhibits, and education; and the "Ambassador" trainings that will create a toolkit for heritage centers to provide the "care and feeding" of volunteers, hospitality skills, and development of a stewardship ethic that will be embraced by residents and visitors alike.

The project is designed for a three year period by presenting five workshops and six roundtables, mentoring from other museum professionals and utilizing the two circuit riders to assist in implementing the recommendations from the workshops. The project is a skills and capacity building program that gains momentum through the numbers of professionals that are trained and builds sustainability by strengthening knowledge based on best practices.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Eight Lakes to Locks Passage Heritage Centers in the Lake Champlain region of Essex County are the primary stakeholders and audience for the pilot project:

- Adirondack History Center
- Essex Heritage Center
- Iron Center Museum
- Lake Champlain Visitor Center
- North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association
- Ticonderoga Heritage Museum
- Westport Heritage House
- Willsboro Heritage Center

Other museums and organizations in **Essex County** included in the project:

- Lake Placid-North Elba Historical Museum
- John Brown Farm State Historic Site
- 1932/1980 Winter Olympic Museum
- 1812 Homestead Farm/Museum
- Adsit Log Cabin
- Crown Point State Historic Site
- Penfield Homestead Museum
- Fort Ticonderoga
- Hancock House Museum
- Wilmington Historical Society
- Willsboro Heritage Society
- Westport Historical Society
- Essex Community Heritage Organization
- Adirondack Architectural Heritage
- Adirondack Women in History
- Arto Monico Historical Society
- Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Cottage
- Camp Santanoni Preserve
- Minerva Historical Museum
- Schroon-North Hudson Historical Museum.

Clinton County regional organizations:

- Battle of Plattsburgh Association
- Lake Champlain Transportation Museum
- Alice T. Miner Museum *
- Miner Institute
- Clinton County Historical Museum
- Kent-Delord House Museum *

Lake George regional organizations:

- Clifton West Museum
- Bolton Historical Society Museum
- Up Yonda Farm Environmental Education Center*
- Marcella Sembrich Opera Museum
- Lake George Historical Museum
- Sunken Fleet Bateaux Below
- Fort William Henry Museum
- Chapman Historical Museum*
- Hyde Collection Art Museum
- Crandall Public Library/Folklife Center
- Town of Chester Museum of Local History
- North Creek Railway Depot Museum
- Horicon Museum
- Bolton Historical Museum
- Fort George Visitor Center
- Frances G. Kinnear Museum
- Schoolhouse Museum
- Pulp Mill Museum
- Warrensburg Museum of Local History

Champlain Canal regional organizations:

- RiverSpark/Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway*
- Waterford Historical Museum and Cultural Center
- Stillwater Blockhouse
- Washington County Agricultural Museum
- Cambridge Freight Yard
- Fort Hardy Park Visitor Center
- Old Fort House Museum
- Rogers Island Visitors Center*
- Slate Valley Museum*
- Pember Museum*
- Skene Manor
- Salem Couthouse
- Covered Bridge Museum
- Hubbard Hall
- Fort Edward Historical Association
- Hartford Museum
- Georgi Museum
- Louis Miller Museum
- Knickerbocker Museum
- Hudson Crossing Park
- Tug Boat Museum
- Washington County Historical Association