

Recommended Award: Exhibit "D"

Applicant Name:	Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission, Inc.	REDC Region:	WNY
Project Type:	Tourism/Marketing	County:	Erie
Industry:	Tourism Planning	Locality:	Buffalo
Amount Requested:	\$250,000	Start Date:	07/01/2013
		Finish Date:	07/01/2015

RECOMMENDED OFFER

Recommended Total Award:	\$ 250,000
Total Project Cost:	\$ 290,000
% of Project Cost Recommended:	86 %

REGIONAL IMPACT MEASUREMENTS

Number of Jobs Retained:	0
Number of Jobs Created:	1
Average Salary of Jobs:	
Indirect Jobs Created	
Other Impact	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Heritage Area Commission seeks funding to hire/contract a project manager and some staff to develop a detailed implementation plan and to raise funds to achieve improved programming which creates true tourist destinations in the Corridor. The Area Management Plan has been sent for approval by New York State Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation. There is a short term goal to develop Corridor programming and a long term goal to attract public-private financing for the re-development of historic buildings in the Corridor.

The project deliverables are as follows:

- Establishment of a Project Management Team
- Development of an Implementation Strategy
- Development of a Comprehensive Fund Raising Strategy
- Restoration Design of 509 Michigan Street site
- Development of a Comprehensive Marketing and Branding Campaign

OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS RECEIVED

ESD:	\$	NYPA:	\$
IDA:	\$	Other:	\$

PREVIOUS STATE ASSISTANCE OFFERED OR PROVIDED

TYPE	AMOUNT	STATUS
NYSDOS Grant	\$120,000	Complete

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

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A long overlooked asset in both tourism and cultural education in the Western New York Region is its African American Heritage. As a City with a history rooted in things like the Underground Railroad and the earliest forms of American Jazz Music to hit the Northeast, Buffalo, a City still boasting a significant African American population has failed to both emphasize and capitalize on its rich African American History.

Promoting Buffalo's African American Heritage has begun thanks to the formation of the applicant Commission. The first steps taken by the Commission were to apply to the Department of State in New York for a grant that would enable this Commission to develop a plan of attack to change the way African American Heritage is consumed in Western New York.

Having experienced success in this first endeavor this organization went under contract with the NYS Department of State for grant funding to develop a comprehensive Master Plan for the African American Heritage Corridor, which includes four anchor sites and will include many future sites in the area. This \$120,000 was granted to develop the master plan which was done and submitted to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.

Now that the plan has been completed and submitted, this Commission is in need of organization for implementation of the plan. The Commission is at its most important crossroads as it needs a leader to organize the four existing sites into one cohesive working unit and to develop programming that will transform the four sites into a cultural learning experience and a tourist destination.

As a condition of this award it is recommended that there be clear milestones set forth for the drawdown of grant funding. Some of those conditions should include:

- A fair and open selection process of Corridor management and staff which will require unanimous support of the stakeholders that currently represent the existing Corridor entities.
- A management plan to be approved by the administrator of the WNYPPAB.
- Recruitment of experts from cultural tourism institutions that have had success in designing programming for like assets, so that they can provide advice and feedback on Corridor strategic planning.

When the Western New York Regional Council prioritized building up the WNY tourism industry, it called for the utilization of existing assets to enhance the tourist experience. The African American Heritage Corridor has been established to capitalize on a long undervalued asset in WNY. This Corridor and the Commission's plan to raise the profile of this corridor has been endorsed not only by the WNYREDC but also Assembly Member Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Mayor Byron Brown, State Senator Tim Kennedy and the New York State Department of State.