

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summarize your project funding request. Include in your discussion how the project will improve the welfare, health and or economic conditions in the priority funding area, as well as encourage business investment and or strengthen public/private partnerships. Show how these elements of your project can or will be achieved within the context of community support and collaboration with residents, business and or

The Maryland Humanities Council seeks an allocation of tax credits to expand participation in Maryland History Day activities in schools (public, private, homeschools) in Prince George's County by providing a part-time staff person to coordinate the program. During 2007/2008 participation in Maryland History Day in Prince George's County was limited to one school; in the past when funding was allocated for a project coordinator, the rate of participation was much higher. By providing a staff person to again coordinate activities, it is anticipated that 1000 students would participate by 2011.

Participation in active learning projects like Maryland History Day is a proven method of improving student achievement. Students choose their own topics, methods, and working groups and work independently, supervised by a teacher. They learn much more than how to research an historic topic in depth--they learn how to distinguish fact from legend, how to solve problems presented by their research, how to work cooperatively with others, how to think strategically, how to creatively display what they have learned about their project, and how to respond to questions about their topic, research, and project development from judges at the school, county, state, and national levels. The self-confidence, intellectual curiosity, and well-researched and creatively-presented projects displayed by students at all levels of the contest attest to the amount students gain from participating in Maryland History Day.

Schools also benefit from improved instruction by teachers who have been trained by Maryland Humanities Council in techniques of research and teaching history and social studies. The network of Maryland History Day teachers who learn to know one another at workshops and gather to discuss the progress their students are making on their projects over the year, creates a more motivated teaching staff in the schools, helping to foster a better learning environment overall.

Maryland History Day provides an opportunity for the community to celebrate its bright and energetic students. Each year, Maryland History Day winners are lauded in the local press, reporting on the successes of the students in communities across the state. Student projects are often displayed at community centers--libraries, historical societies, museums, and business locations. Community members who participate as contest judges, student mentors, or volunteers are thrilled with the projects and amazed by the diligence and perspicacity of the students.

Businesses involved in Maryland History Day activities find a rewarding experience for their employees, as well as knowing they have contributed to the community good. Businesses can provide contest judges, student mentors, and volunteers who do everything from donating prizes to helping at local and state contests. Participating in a high-energy event with dozens or hundreds of hard-working, well-educated students is a wonderful experience. Long-time business supporter, Columbia Gas of Maryland, has employees return year after year to participate in Maryland History Day events and it is clear the employees enjoy the process as much as the students!

Through collaboration among schools, libraries, museums, historic societies, and businesses on Maryland History Day projects, communities gain an appreciation for the wealth of resources in the community and the dedication and interest of others in bolstering their community. Celebrating the accomplishments of students helps to focus communities on what it is that is important in the community and to foster a sense of community within those students.