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Cool Culture Awarded Prestigious Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Brooklyn, NY – Cool Culture, a nonprofit committed to closing the achievement gap for low-income families by providing free access to museums, has secured a \$244,430 grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Cool Culture will use the funding to launch the Laboratory for New Audiences, a three-year project designed to cultivate new, diverse, nontraditional, cultural institution audiences by working with its cultural partners to further align museum resources with community needs, **and to diversify their outreach strategies for developing new museum audiences of underserved families with young children.**

Cool Culture is only one of ten nonprofits in the country to receive funding from this IMLS program.

“The IMLS commitment is validation at the federal level that Cool Culture is uniquely positioned to bring museums into partnerships with their community” says Cool Culture Executive Director, Candice Anderson. “Here in New York City neighborhoods, we will rally teachers, parents and museum staff to create a vibrant hub of cultural activity and visitation.”

The Laboratory will create 10 partnerships between museums and local preschools in Harlem and Chinatown. The three-year laboratory will deepen museum professionals’ knowledge of educational best practices at preschools, outreach strategies for low-income audiences, and how to align their museums’ resources and programs with community needs — a critical step in museums’ expansion and search for new audiences. In years two and three, the project will bring speakers from across the country to engage a learning community of 40 museum professionals around these important topics.

“Museum professionals play an essential role in educating and engaging audiences. This program provides opportunities to improve knowledge and skills,” says IMLS Director Susan Hildreth.

IMLS’s 21st Century Museum Professionals program supports a range of activities, including professional training in all areas of museum operations and leadership development. Museum professionals need high levels of knowledge and expertise to allow museums to play their essential role in the education of the American public: preserving our rich heritage and transmitting it from one generation to the next. In partnership with schools, community organizations and other cultural institutions, the program helps museum professionals update their knowledge and skills.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute’s mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

About Cool Culture

Cool Culture was founded in 1999 to address the absence of low-income families in the audiences of New York’s arts, cultural, and scientific institutions. Through partnerships with 90 of New York City’s cultural institutions, which generously provide free admission, Cool Culture serves 50,000+ low-income families by connecting them with programs that empower parents in their role as their child’s first teacher and encourage a lifetime of learning. Last year, Cool Culture families made over 180,000 visits to partner museums, which include the American Museum of Natural History, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, El Museo del Barrio and the Queens Museum of Art.

To learn more about Cool Culture or to donate, please contact Lindsay Booker at 718.230.4186 x305 or visit www.coolculture.org.

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