

# Proposal to the City of Olympia for 108 State Avenue NW

## Submitted by Olympia Arts + Heritage Alliance

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Image by Doyle Fanning

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### ADDENDA

- Letters of Support from Coalition Partners
- Job Description for Contract Staff
- Economic Impact Assessment: Thurston EDC/CBI
- Letter: Potential Funding/Lending Assistance from Olympia Federal Savings
- AHA Board Roster
- AHA Board of Advisors

## 1. Letter of Interest

October 25, 2023

**City of Olympia**  
**Attn: Mike Reid, Economic Development Director**  
**PO Box 1967**  
**Olympia WA 98507**

Olympia Arts + Heritage Alliance (AHA) is pleased to submit this proposal to transform the historic City-owned building at 108 State Avenue NW. We propose to establish a museum for arts, cultures and heritage and a create an active center for a coalition of organizations and a range of activities for the broader community.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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### **AHA was established with a specific mission:**

*To create a museum that will be a destination and gathering place for learning about, reflecting on, and becoming inspired by Olympia's uniquely rich arts, cultures and history. To establish a sustainable infrastructure that will ensure the collection, preservation and dissemination of cultural resources important to the ongoing legacy of Olympia.*

The building at 108 State Avenue NW is key to fulfilling this mission and serving our community. As envisioned, the heart of the building will be a museum celebrating, sharing and exploring the stories of Olympia with exhibits, events and projects that showcase arts, histories and cultures. It will be a place to learn about people's stories and the influences of their cultures. The building will provide artist studio space, classroom and workshop space for K-12 and college students, a retail shop and a small café, in-person and online access to exhibits and historical documents, and meeting rooms available for community groups. After completion, the building will be open daily.

Developing this building will activate a key intersection and create a hub connecting downtown, the waterfront, the Farmer's Market District and the state capitol campus. It will serve as the starting point for walking tours. It will be a community gathering space offering exhibits, cultural events, programs, lectures, festivals, meetings, performances, classes and workshops. The museum will attract those visiting the state capitol year-round, especially during the legislative sessions. We envision a space that is truly community centered.

In its current condition, the building is beyond its useful life. AHA will need City resources, including a Tenant Improvement Allowance, to return the building to a usable condition and to meet code requirements.

With AHA in the lead, this proposal is strengthened by a coalition of project partners. These are related organizations that will activate the building, collaborate on programming and participate in fundraising. Working together will enrich the community benefit as well as the health and sustainability of each organization.

As outlined below, this coalition includes:

- AHA
- Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum (OHS&BHM)
- The Squaxin Island Tribe
- Hummingbird Studio/Kokua Services
- The Evergreen State College
- Olympia Firehouse 5
- Olympia Artspace Alliance
- Thurston Economic Development Council

AHA seeks a 25-year lease at \$1 per year, with the option to extend for an additional 25 years. As a Preferred Tenant Partner, we will work with the City to negotiate obligations, commitments, roles and responsibilities to bring the building up to code and to ensure a welcoming, sustainable, and active future for the building.

AHA is prepared to work with the City to make this museum a reality in the historic 1912 City Hall/Fire Station, a site with high visibility and located in the core historic area of Olympia.

Tom Henderson, Chair  
Olympia Arts + Heritage Alliance

## 2. Proposed Use of Building: How We Intend to Utilize the Building

### 1. Activation: Frequency of use, foot traffic estimates, hours of operation, programming

AHA seeks to lease the historic City-owned building at 108 State Avenue NW to establish a museum for arts, cultures and heritage and to create an active center for a coalition of organizations and the general public.

As envisioned, the heart of the building will be a museum that celebrates, explores and shares the stories of Olympia with exhibits, events and projects that showcase local arts, history and cultures. This will be a place to learn about the full range of people's stories and the influences of their cultures. The building will also provide classroom and workshop space, artist studios, historic resources, meeting rooms, a retail shop and a small café.

Once completed, the building will be open daily. Visitors will be welcomed into a colorful and engaging entryway that leads to compelling exhibits of art and artifacts, imagery and objects of the Steh-chass people and the Squaxin Island Tribe; interactive displays for exploring Olympia's peoples, histories and identities. Volunteer tour guides will assist students on field trips; families and tourists will take self-guided tours to explore the museum displays and collections.

We expect the building will buzz with activity. On a given day, there may be an art-making workshop, historical research, a planning meeting for an upcoming festival, a study group upstairs and a talk with a visiting historian scheduled later in the day. In the retail shop, visitors would find books, postcards, souvenirs, and locally made jewelry. Some will take a break in the café that opens to the back courtyard.



*Moses Lake Museum & Art Center is dedicated to exploring the human and natural history of the Columbia Basin and celebrating the work of regional artists. This nonprofit organization is supported by the City of Moses Lake and museum members.*

### Featured permanent/long-term exhibits that encompass Olympia's art, history and cultures may include:

- Olympia art, history and cultures, past to present, created in collaboration with local communities and ethnic groups.
- An exhibit specifically curated by the Squaxin Island Tribe.

**Also envisioned are temporary exhibits such as:**

- “Women Making a Difference in Olympia”: An exhibit about women activists and community builders, and their personal stories, including a juried exhibit of art by local women.
- “Faces of Olympia”: An exhibit featuring Olympia’s people over time, including interviews, oral histories, artwork by local artists and students, and a workshop on sketching portraits.
- Programming to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States in 2026 as part of the national Semiquincentennial celebration. This would emphasize Native cultures including local indigenous histories, contemporary Native art, and community conversations.

The museum and other activities will require secure internet access and related equipment to enhance exhibits and visitor experience, and enable digital programming, hybrid meetings and virtual/online access to other collections.

A small café will be an important part of this project. We are encouraged by the concept for a *Hummingbird Café* as envisioned by Hummingbird Studio as a social enterprise and job training program providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and college students. This would be in partnership with Morningside Services, a well-established local nonprofit which provides vocational support for individuals with disabilities, and with Olympia Coffee Roasters.

The museum should be an excellent tourism draw. The state capitol draws visitors from across the state and nation, and from around the world. Importantly for this project, many students come to Olympia to visit the state capitol but find Olympia without a downtown location to learn our history in depth and explore local stories. Funding from *Inspire Olympia* funding (available starting 2024) will support K–12 field trips for Olympia students and help us create much-needed student programming for local and visiting students.

The museum will add an important connection between downtown, the Capitol Campus, the Farmers Market and the Port Peninsula. Capitol Security and Visitor Services (in the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services) documents more than 50,000 visitors to the capitol each year, including those participating in public tours led by volunteers and field trips for students during the legislative session. Thousands of other visitors engage in self-guided tours of the capitol and add to our potential visitor count.

We are excited to explore the potential of including a welcome center. This would require ongoing support from other community organizations (e.g., City of Olympia, Experience Olympia & Beyond, Olympia Downtown Alliance) as well as assistance from interns and volunteers.

This project is as a particularly important opportunity to recognize, acknowledge, honor and work with the indigenous peoples of the lands and waters of this region. At a February 2022 event, we shared the following land acknowledgement statement:

*Olympia Arts and Heritage Alliance recognizes and affirms the significance of this local land and waters. We are within the traditional lands of the Squaxin Island people. Squaxin Island Tribe families trace their lineage back to Steh-Chass in what is now Olympia. We also recognize that the Squaxin Island Tribe are "People of the Water," which includes their relationship to the artesian wells*



*in and around Olympia and celebrate that continued relationship. We acknowledge the indigenous people that have lived and cared for this land since time immemorial. We honor their ancestors who came before, the descendants here now, and those that will come, in the future. We honor their abiding respect for the land and the importance of preserving and protecting the natural environment for generations to come.*

Our vision is clear, and we are optimistic about how it will evolve over time with new partners, fresh ideas and deeper engagements. We believe the building is the best location and Olympia needs to support our community with this project. AHA needs this building and Olympia needs this project.

**Potential timeline:**

To date we have had limited access to the building. While many questions remain unanswered we know that the building needs significant renovations to meet current codes and to prepare for the active uses we envision. For that reason, we anticipate a phased approach to activating the building.

**Tentative plan as of now**

2023–2024

- Finalize the agreement with the City. Clarify roles and responsibilities for renovations.
- Hire contract staff for project coordination, development/fundraising and communications (see job description attached).

2024

- Initial building analysis; clarify necessary improvements for initial occupancy.
- Negotiate use agreements with coalition partners and establish a governance structure.
- Limited programming including kickoff event/open house, ongoing exhibits and events, and community engagement activities.
- Select project team, including architects, building designers and exhibit designers.
- Conduct a project predesign with the architect and museum designer to determine the project scope and budget including first phase work.

2024–2025

- Initial fundraising for first phase building improvements.
- Launch the early/quiet portion of the capital campaign in 2024 anticipating the public launch in 2025.
- Initiate first phase building improvements as funding allows.
- Ongoing programming and community engagement, in the building and in the community.

2025

- Secure state funding.

2025–2027

- Launch the public phase of the capital campaign.
- Ongoing programming and community engagement, in the building and in the community.
- Initiate schematics, design development and the construction document process as funding allows.
- Initiate construction of the building renovation and museum installations as funding allows.

2028

- Project completion with full slate of programming.

We are eager to utilize the building and have many ideas for programming that can be implemented fairly quickly to engage and serve a broad community. This can include exhibits, conversations, book talks and other programming to enhance Arts Walk, Juneteenth, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration and Harbor Days. Immediate steps to make the building exterior more inviting may include banners, window installations, exterior lighting, signage and secured designated entrances and exits.

### Working with our coalition partners

AHA is the project lead, seeking to contract with the City for a long-term lease. AHA will have the lead role in the following:

- Program the museum and event spaces.
- Provide ongoing programming in partnership with the Squaxin Island Tribe, OHS&BHM, and cultural, ethnic and educational organizations.
- Establish and manage use agreements with other building users, including extended sub-leases and short-term uses.
- Work with the City on facility needs and maintenance.
- Lead fundraising efforts for capital improvements.
- Manage the AHA retail shop offering exhibit-related merchandise, original art, books, photos, cards and Olympia souvenirs.

#### Envisioned roles of coalition partners:

##### OHS&BHM

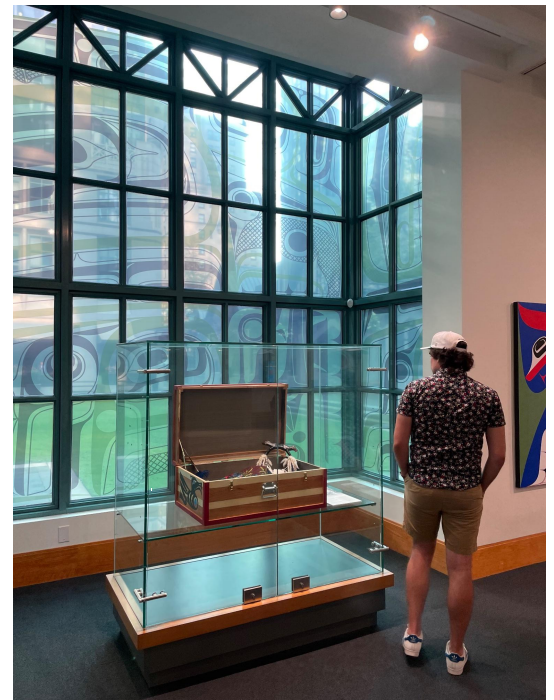
- Partner with AHA on programming including events, displays, tours, outreach and education.
- Displays, programming and outreach linking visitors to experiences at and with the Bigelow House museum.
- Curate and provide access to historic collections.
- Commit available funds and assist with fundraising.

##### The Squaxin Island Tribe

- Provide and assist with exhibits and programming, including dedicated space.
- Provide remote access to Tribal collections and programs.

##### Hummingbird Studio/Kokua Services

- Provide free and inclusive arts programs for people of all abilities, with accommodations to allow all artists to creatively express themselves as independently as possible.
- Assist with fundraising efforts.



*At the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art (Vancouver BC), window clings depict Haida imagery; a bentwood box displays smaller items.*

- Establish the *Hummingbird Café* as a social enterprise and small downtown coffee shop, in partnership with Evergreen State College/Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change, Morningside Services and Olympia Coffee Roasters.

The Evergreen State College/Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change

- Partner with Hummingbird Studio/Kokua Services on Hummingbird Café.
- Activate classroom and workshop space for exhibits, performances, meetings and events.
- Support and facilitate community partnerships and outreach.
- Provide volunteers and interns.
- Support fundraising efforts.

Olympia Firehouse 5

- Assist with content related to local fire-fighting history.
- Assist with fundraising and friend-raising efforts.

Olympia Artspace Alliance

- Manage artist studios.
- Potential “hub” for Olympia Creative District.

Thurston Economic Development Council

- Advise on business development.
- Potential for office/meeting space and entrepreneurial programs.

These visions likely exceed the capacity of the building, and we anticipate thoughtful discussions about how to best allocate and schedule space. Building use patterns undoubtedly will change over time: during the phases of construction, as the museum grows, as organizations evolve and as other partnerships and collaborations emerge.

## 2. Economic Impact:

Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) prepared an early-stage economic impact analysis as attached. The capital construction impact is estimated at \$8 million, with more than \$5 million in labor income and 62 jobs. The EDC estimates the project will generate more than \$2 million in tax revenue, including more than \$84,000 in municipal tax revenue.

We estimate direct expenses for operations will be \$435,000 per year. Anticipating two full time employees for the museum, wages and benefits will total \$300,000 annually.

In preliminary estimates, we expect 600 visitors from outside Thurston County annually.

**Employment:** We anticipate hiring/contracting one staff person as soon as we have an agreement with the City for the building. We will hire additional staff as programs are developed. Contract staff will be retained for the capital campaign, all phases of design and construction, and management of the retail shop. Once the project is completed, we envision four staff (director and programming; development and fundraising; educational programs and field trips; and facility and technology).



Coalition partners will also contribute to the economic impact. Additional staffing will include the welcome center at the museum, potentially supported by the coalition partners as well as by the City, Olympia Downtown Alliance, and Experience Olympia & Beyond.

A large volunteer component is not captured in the staffing counts, but will generate economic activity through parking, meals and downtown retail.

**Admissions revenue:** We anticipate charging \$6 to \$10 admission fees initially, with free days as well as discounts for groups, students, seniors and families. We will pursue targeted fundraising to offset admission fees. In the future, we hope to charge no admission fee except by donation in order to make the museum financially accessible to everyone.

Memberships will be offered at various levels (individual, family, corporate), with specific benefits.

Sales tax will be generated in the retail shop and café, contracted services and indirectly through purchase of goods and products. Note that the gift shop at the Northwest Carriage Museum (Raymond, WA) does \$30,000 in sales annually, generating \$3,000 in sales tax.

### 3. Comparative examples from other communities that are similar to our proposal:

#### We are inspired and informed by many museums.

- [Lacey Museum](#) receives city support including two full time staff and funding towards their capital campaign. They have ties to tourism and K–12 public schools.
- [Clark County Historical Museum](#) (Vancouver, WA) receives ongoing city and county support and provides programming throughout the community.
- [The Squaxin Island Museum, Library and Research Center](#) presents permanent and rotating exhibits in a flexible main hall, with adjacent classroom space; a shop featuring artwork, books, and gift items; and a nearby carving shed.
- [Wood River Museum of History and Culture](#) (Ketchum, ID) is a small museum offering rotating exhibits with interactive elements.
- [Wing Luke Museum](#) (Seattle) presents community-based programming that integrates arts, heritage and cultures.

#### Cultural hub/shared use facilities elsewhere will inform our governance structure:

- Youngstown Cultural Arts Center is a contemporary multi-arts space in Seattle’s Delridge neighborhood.
- Glen and Viola Waters Cultural Art Center (Hillsboro, OR) is a city-owned facility and event space.
- Station Space, in the newly redeveloped Seattle’s King Street Station, is now home to five nonprofit cultural organizations.

### 4. Alignment with City of Olympia values and plans:

#### AHA’s vision statement aligns well with the City’s values, plans and commitments.

*Olympia needs a centrally located, community-based, inclusive museum where people learn about and celebrate the rich diversity of its arts, history and cultures. We envision a space that*

*provides opportunities for everyone to deepen their understanding and appreciation of, and become inspired by, the outstanding variety of local heritage and arts that continues to weave the fabric of Olympia. An arts and heritage museum will enhance the creative and distinctive city we love.*

**Our values reinforce this commitment.**

- *Innovation*
  - *Inspiring people by sharing South Sound art, cultures and heritage.*
  - *Instilling curiosity, excitement and wonder in our audiences.*
  - *Fostering creative and innovative thinking in our programming.*
- *Stewardship*
  - *Preserving and displaying cultural material according to accepted standards.*
  - *Operating in a fiscally responsible manner that ensures longterm success.*
  - *Allocating financial and human resources legally, ethically and for the aims outlined in our Mission Statement.*
- *Community building*
  - *Providing a space in which the communities we serve feel comfortable.*
  - *Creating collaborative partnerships with organizations and individuals.*
  - *Fostering dialogue with local communities.*
- *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging (DEIAB)*
  - *Ensuring access to our museum.*
  - *Respecting and including diverse points of view.*
  - *Offering opportunities for a diverse range of groups to participate in program development.*
- *Excellence*
  - *Providing high-quality content of interest to our audiences.*
  - *Upholding scholarly standards in curation and research.*
  - *Instituting measures of success by which programs are evaluated.*

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access and Belonging (DEIAB):**

During the past two years we have reaffirmed our DEIAB commitments to foster collaborative internal and external culture rooted in the values of humility, dignity and respect for all:

- We pursue cultural consciousness through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies that lift and amplify underrepresented voices and stories in our exhibitions, education and public programming. Through cultural consciousness we will operate with equity, and reflect the breadth of diversity in our communities, while ensuring that inclusion and access are priorities.
- We acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs and services. We will strive to reduce and eliminate inequities and barriers to access for historically and culturally underrepresented, misrepresented or negatively impacted communities. In programming it is our responsibility to tell all of our stories, which will require intention, courage and a commitment to the pursuit of excellence.
- We commit time and resources to embed DEIAB principles throughout the organization. We will build an equitable and inclusive workplace, and design inclusive content and practices into our

programming, with a particular focus on education programs, as well as into our community partnerships.

**Climate/Energy Efficiency:** We will work with the City to address the long-term sustainability of the building, including necessary upgrades to building systems and explore how to optimize building efficiency. This should include transitioning to an all-electric building, installing heat pumps, solar panels and LED lighting. Working with the City, we will strive to reach net-zero carbon emissions.

**Downtown Strategy:** AHA is a member of the Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA) and has benefited from a microgrant for programming. As proposed here, we will activate this historic building in a key downtown location, bringing public programming and pedestrian activity to the designated Creative District and the Capitol-to-Market area identified in the Downtown Strategy. This project contributes to the pedestrian orientation and adds street-level interest. It will attract tourists and serve local residents. Its mix of programming for children, youth, families and tourists, and participation by volunteers and interns, will stimulate considerable downtown activity.

#### **5. Strategic Value: How we are highlighting and capitalizing on the location and history of the building**

This project centers on Olympia, who we are and where we are, how things once were and how things are changing. To date, we have presented a series of exhibitions which explore and honor these purposes. Our projects have received support and participation from the Squaxin Island Tribe, OHS&BHM, Washington Center for the Performing Arts, Thurston County, Olympia Federal Savings, and others.

#### **To date, AHA has created and presented three exhibits on the exterior of this building:**

- **“It Happened Here”** in the 108 State Street building’s south-facing windows (2022–present). This exhibit features images documenting people and groups who used the land and buildings at this location. The project was funded in part by the Olympia Downtown Alliance.
- **“It’s the Water”** (2020–2022). This project highlighted the arts, history and cultures of the South Sound in exploring the theme of water. In the 48 windows on the east face of the 108 State Street building, we exhibited historic photos, maps, contemporary artwork and artifacts about shipbuilding, oyster harvesting, maritime fleets, the fire department, beer brewing, artesian wells, festivals, Capitol Lake, rainfall, sea level rise, tribal fishing and trade routes, little Hollywood and the Port of Olympia. The project received funding from individuals, the City and the Squaxin Island Tribe.
- **“Olympia Harbor Days”** (2023). This project, sponsored by the South Sound Maritime Heritage Association, displays 48 images depicting 50 years of Harbor Days posters in the windows of the 108 State Street Building.

We are working further with the South Sound Maritime Heritage on potential programming related to South Sound, Olympia’s waterfront and significant local maritime history. This building is just two blocks from the recently designated Maritime Washington National Heritage Area (MWNHA). Stretching along

the state’s maritime shoreline from Canada to Grays Harbor, the MWNHA will tie our museum to national branding and marketing opportunities.

**These are our success markers:**

1. The museum is known for its excellent and engaging arts, cultural and history programming.
2. The museum is a place of pride that reflects and celebrates the City’s evolving identity through both art and history exhibits that are community focused.
3. The museum demonstrates responsible and appropriate practices in caring for and providing access to collections and archival material that represent diverse stories of our community. It provides the community with resources for researching local history.
4. The museum is continually taking measurable steps in and with the community to meet the values we have articulated for diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging.
5. The museum serves the local school districts, colleges and universities, and provides education and enrichment for Olympians of all ages and backgrounds.
6. The museum is an important destination in Olympia and the region for local residents and visitors.
7. The museum is economically stable and vibrant, with paid staff, substantial reserves and reliable funding sources.
8. The museum has turned an aging, unused building into a valued public asset that contributes to downtown vibrancy and economic development.
9. The museum has helped to further City objectives that intersect with our location and mission.
10. The museum works successfully with the City of Olympia and other local arts, cultures and heritage institutions, and with local K-12 public schools, colleges and universities.
11. The museum demonstrates best professional practices.
12. The museum has a strong, engaged, diverse leadership, volunteers and audience that reflect our community.
13. Olympians actively participate in and support the museum and its programs.



*The Wood River Museum of History and Culture (Ketchum, ID) is a small museum with interactive exhibits, collections and programming “designed to promote a greater sense of place.”*

### 3. Operation and Business Plan Basics

**1. Who is the customer?**

This museum will draw local residents and visitors from out of town who are interested in good stories and local history, fine art and creative expressions. This includes teachers and students, tour groups and

downtown shoppers. There is excellent potential to attract those who visit the state capitol, including those participating in guided tours.

Field trips and related programming will enhance educational opportunities, especially with new support from *Inspire Olympia* funding. We hope to partner with Visitor Services/Department of Enterprise Services to help market the AHA museum to Capitol Campus visitors. We will explore a potential partnership with Intercity Transit to transport folks along Capitol Way and between the Capitol Campus, this museum, the Farmer's Market, and downtown shops and restaurants.

## **2. What is the market demand?**

Olympia is the only capital cities in the country without a museum. For example, Salem, OR, is home to the [Willamette Heritage Center](#); New York has the [Albany Institute of History and Art](#); in Honolulu are the [Hawaii State Art Museum](#) and [Iolani Palace](#); and Providence, RI, has a group of history museums.

The Bigelow House Museum is an historic house museum offering tours and programming in the lovely Bigelow neighborhood. In downtown Olympia there is no place to learn about local history, Steh-Chass people, early settlers, and recent immigrants. There is no place for diverse communities to share their cultures, experiences, and stories. There is no downtown location for history, cultures and art.

This project also addresses other long-time goals. These include activating a long-underutilized building in the heart of the City providing a visible presence downtown for the Steh-Chass/Squaxin Island Tribe and providing a visible downtown presence for The Evergreen State College and potentially the other local higher education institutions.

AHA was established more than five years ago with a vision for this building as a museum for arts, cultures and heritage. Our efforts were delayed by the pandemic. Even so, public support continues and our small-scale fundraising to date has exceeded expectations. We now appreciate the growing enthusiasm for this project. As a coalition of partners has joined us, our vision for the building has clarified.

## **3. What is the revenue model?**

As with most nonprofit museums, the revenue model for this project requires a mix of earned and contributed funding. Sources of earned income include admissions and memberships; facility rental for events and meetings; sales including admission fees and the retail shop; and the leasing of building space.

*Inspire Olympia* funding will be important each year, including support for operations, projects and field trips. In addition, we will seek contributions from a variety of sources, including: ArtsWA/Washington State Arts Commission, local lodging tax, Thurston County Heritage Grants, Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS), American Alliance of Museums/Museum Assessment Program and individuals.

## **4. What is the financing strategy?**

After completing negotiations with the City on the lease agreements, we must complete our initial building analysis. In partnership with the City, we anticipate preparing preliminary cost estimates and budgets in 2024. We expect to launch a capital campaign in 2024-2025.



**For capital improvements:** Our capital campaign will include three years of operating expenses. OHS&BHM has committed funds to develop and utilize spaces for displays, exhibits, events, historic collections and office space.

**State funding:** We plan to request state funding in 2024 and 2026 from Building for the Arts or Heritage Capital Projects. State policy states that we can apply to one category but not both and can apply more than once. Building for the Arts and Heritage Capital Projects programs can provide up to 33% of total construction costs. Applications are due in the spring of 2024. Either application will require that we have executed a long-term lease for the building.

We will not be ready to request funding for complete renovation for the building, but we envision requesting funding for first-phase renovations, including restrooms, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations, building entries, and basic tenant improvements (lighting, floors, signage) to allow initial programming and public access to the building. We anticipate applying to these grant programs again in 2026 for funding to complete renovations.

- [Building for the Arts:](#)  
This program will fund up to 33% of total construction costs to a maximum \$2million on a reimbursement basis. This can include costs incurred and paid a few years prior to the date a contract is executed. The application requires control of the project site through ownership or executed lease for at least 15 years. Funding requirements include paying state prevailing wages and review of archaeological and cultural resources. Applications open spring 2024.
- [Heritage Capital Projects:](#)  
This program will fund up to 33.3% of total construction costs to a maximum \$1million on a reimbursement basis. The application requires the applicant to have control of the project site through ownership or executed lease for at least 16 years. Also required is consultation with potentially affected tribes, consultation with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and meeting state requirements for prevailing wages. Applications open February 2024.

### **City contribution**

We expect a city commitment to renovate and improve the building shell and building systems, meet ADA requirements and address seismic, sea-level rise, security, and internet needs. We will aggressively seek funding to reduce the City's financial contribution over time.

### **Support from foundations and other sources**

Our initial research includes potential funding from sources such as Murdock Charitable Trusts, The Norcliffe Foundation and Ben B. Cheney Foundation. We will also seek financial support from the Squaxin Island Tribe and Nisqually Charitable Funds. Private fundraising and individual gifts including bequests will be extremely important to our capital campaign. Coalition partners have pledged to assist with fundraising efforts. We continue to explore other potential funding sources.

## 4. Qualifications, Experience and Financial Sustainability

### a. Statement of relevant or previous experience

AHA was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2018 specifically to create a museum in downtown Olympia that will be a destination and gathering place to learn about, reflect on and become inspired by the region’s uniquely rich arts, cultures and history.

To date we have presented numerous programs and projects throughout the community:

- **“It’s the Water”**: This temporary exhibit (2020–2022) on the building’s exterior to explore the South Sound water stories through arts, history and cultures.
- **Howard Point historic marker**: This interpretive panel located on East Bay Drive honors the family and legacy of Alexander and Rebecca Howard. A wonderful well-attended dedication event was held in 2022.
- **Harbor House Interpretive Panels**: Working with the City, the Squaxin Island Tribe, and other partners, two new interpretive panels were created and installed on the exterior of the Harbor House on Percival Landing. These are entitled “Indigenous Culture and Economy on the South Salish Sea” and “Charles Mitchell’s Flight to Freedom.”
- **“Our Town”**: This exhibition in the Washington Center for the Performing Arts (2023) featured the eight historic “Sylvester’s Windows” paintings together with eight additional panels which provided context and further information about the history and arts of the people who lived in Olympia 1841–2001, the years featured in the paintings. The project was supported by Olympia Federal Savings and the Nisqually Indian Tribe.
- **“It Happened Here”**: This display on the building’s exterior documents the people and groups who used the lands and buildings at this location. The project was funded in part by the Olympia Downtown Alliance.



### b. Professional profiles of key executing staff

AHA is project lead. We are currently an all-volunteer organization founded by community leaders with extensive expertise and commitment. To date we have raised more than \$100,000, mostly from individuals, to support initial programming and administrative costs. We currently have more than \$70,000 in reserve.

Our board brings expertise in building and construction, arts administration, exhibitions, public history, historic preservation, public policy, community organization, business, and city and state government. AHA’s Advisory Board adds specific expertise, diverse perspectives and connections with specific communities.

Attached to this proposal are rosters of the AHA Board and Advisory Board members, and brief biographies of AHA Board members. In the coming months, we anticipate hiring contract staff for project coordination, development and fundraising and communications; see attached job announcement.

In preparing this proposal and developing our business plan, we benefit from the advice and support of Thurston Economic Development Council's Center for Business and Innovation.

OHS&BHM has many years of experience operating the Bigelow House as a sustainable museum. Other coalition partners bring additional experience, expertise, connections and capabilities to this project.

We have received funding from numerous individuals as well as Olympia Federal Savings, the Squaxin Island Tribe, the Nisqually Tribe, Olympia Downtown Alliance, City of Olympia/Grants to Arts and Cultural Organizations, Thurston County, the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound grants program, and Give Local.

#### **c. Financial ability**

1. See attached letter from Olympia Federal Savings.
2. AHA maintains Director and Officers Liability and Commercial Lines Policy insurance. We have made initial inquiries to our insurance agent (Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company) about potential future policy needs and options for this project.

## **5. Proposed Transaction**

### **1. Proposed terms of the lease including (a) length of transaction and (b) rent calculation. Community benefit specifically related to providing a benefit to low-income community members**

AHA seeks a 25-year lease from the City at \$1 per year with an option to extend an additional 25 years at the same rate. This would retain City ownership.

AHA requests this rate based on the community benefits we will provide. Our commitment to community benefit is paramount.

Community benefits include:

- Free and low-cost programming that provides opportunities for the public to learn about, enjoy and appreciate the peoples, places and events that have shaped and continue to shape our region.
- An accessible and vital community space and cultural center.
- Access to, and research capabilities for, historical collections.
- A community gathering space for exhibits, cultural events, programs, lectures, meetings, performances, classes and workshops.
- Educational programming, including curriculum and programming for school groups that meets learning objectives and standards as defined by the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

- Art studio experiences for people of all ages, including free arts programming by Hummingbird Studios.
- Programs and projects developed with/by the Squaxin Island Tribe including exhibits of Squaxin artifacts and objects.
- Programming reflecting and enhancing City initiatives.
- Use of museum space for City events free of charge twice a year.
- Potential welcome center.

## **2. Maintenance responsibilities**

We request the following:

- City maintains the building shell in good condition and repair.
- City maintains the HVAC and electrical including an emergency generator, internet, safety and security systems, elevators, water, sewer, and drainpipes, plumbing system, main entrance doors and grounds.
- City provides annual monetary allocation for repair and maintenance undertaken by AHA on behalf of the City.
- City pays utilities.
- City staffs the welcome center.
- City pays for fire and all-perils insurance for the building.
- City has no responsibility for programming the museum or for furniture and equipment owned by AHA or its partners and tenants.

## **3. Tenant Improvement Allowance request**

In its current condition, the building is beyond its useful life, as documented in the 2019 report by Sazan. City resources will be needed to meet code and bring the building back into usable condition; AHA will take the lead in coordinating all improvements for museum programming.

### ***Concluding Statement:***

*Thank you for the opportunity to propose working together to develop a community asset to share the stories of Olympia, and to enhance the knowledge and understanding of our community and our rich diversity of arts, histories, and cultures.*